Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Three Legends: "La Siguanaba," "La Llorona," "La Tatuana"

Paola Michelle Contreras Mérida

The primary method employed for this research was the “psychoanalytic interpretation method,” which involves exploring or treating the subject to interpret the causes and roots of various neurotic manifestations through their discourse. Additionally, reference texts were used, which are summarized in the theoretical framework of the research and provided direction for the interpretative work on the respective legends.

According to Blanca Montevechio, Gela Rosenthal, Mario Alberto Smulever, and Masim Yampy (1990) in their work *Myths: Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Latin American Myths (Interpretación psicoanalítica de mitos latinoamericanos)*,psychoanalytic interpretation, as developed by S. Freud, allows for variations in procedures and technique across different fields, but the method remains the same:

It involves the analytical understanding of underlying conflicts revealed by explicit manifestations, achieved through an inquiry into behavior or narrative, formulating these as successive working hypotheses. The aim is to uncover the meaning and significance, motivations, and purpose of the submerged ideology or myth of an individual, family, or community.

According to this approach, psychoanalytic comprehension involves the use of empathy and intuition, which leads to "insight" through interpretation. The empathetic attitude integrates with immediate inferences and established psychoanalytic theories. "Intuitions or inferences operate within a regulated and methodical praxis, allowing for the expansion of reflective and integrated awareness of the personality."

Regarding their conclusions, the previously mentioned authors believe that the psychoanalytic interpretation of myths constitutes one of the central objectives of analytical work, "...because the myth is the underlying basic structure of human behavior, whether normal or pathological." This information remains to be verified through the Guatemalan legend for future research.

To present the methodology of this research, it is necessary to clarify some psychoanalytic concepts that could confuse the reader. In confronting a text from a psychoanalytic perspective, it is important to note that one is not dealing with a subject. Here, it is essential to distinguish between what constitutes a subject and what constitutes a text.

The subject is bound and subject to the discourse of the Other, to the great Other of language. The subject appears in the unconscious relationship established in the analytical relationship – between analyst and analysand. It is the unconscious discourse in which the individual is unaware of what they are truly saying. The subject can change position about the Other after a psychoanalytic process, exhibiting mobility and dynamically interacting with the great Other. These characteristics make it possible for a subject to engage in an interpretive analysis to find their desire, separate from the desire of the Other.

On the other hand, the text is far from being a subject. The text, as stated earlier, is complete, while the subject is unfinished and always will be, as the discourse and relationship with the Other never end. It is for this reason, the text's characteristic of being finished, that an author is never analyzed through their work. So, what is a text for psychoanalysis? Ultimately, it is not dynamic, unfinished, and subjected as the subject is about the Other.

Psychoanalysis has used various texts. But why have they been used? Theory has drawn from them to explain and illuminate various psychoanalytic concepts and developments. Lacan did this more than Freud and has proven to be a highly enriching approach to the theory.

It is for this reason that the approach to the legend in this work consisted of, first, presenting the legend as it was gathered from oral tradition, attempting to recount it exactly as it is, and avoiding any researcher bias that might influence it. After describing the legend, the significant elements found within it were identified and listed. Then, each element of the legend was linked to the corresponding clinical theory wherever these elements coincided, in structure or development, with psychoanalysis. Finally, a comparative analysis (discussion of results) was conducted between the three legends.

To standardize selection criteria, the prototype versions of each legend, as presented by Lara (1995), were used, based on his collection.

1. Procedure

The first step taken was to select three legends that could be subjected to comparative analysis. To achieve this, it was sufficient to choose three legends that shared common characteristics and had been collected and transcribed by an author. The researcher selected three Guatemalan legends: "La Tatuana," "La Siguanaba," and "La Llorona." Additionally, it was considered that, according to Lara's (1995) classification of legends, the three selected legends belong to the category of "Classic Animistic Legends," meaning they are widely known and shared among Guatemalan society.

The second step involved determining which interpretive method would be used to work with the text. Since psychoanalysis has frequently been used as an interpretive method, not only in clinical practice but also in the analysis of texts with diverse content, it was concluded that this was the best choice.

In the third place, the psychoanalytic interpretation methodology was applied to each legend. This step was achieved by confronting the text from a phenomenological perspective. The text was treated as an element that could explain a part of psychoanalytic theory. For this, an attempt was made to find and list all possible signifiers. After locating the significant aspects, an effort was made to determine which part of clinical theory they could be related to.

It should be noted that the procedure described above would only be possible with an adequate understanding of psychoanalytic theory and its development. It was not enough to find the signifiers; they had to be related to the theory and then interpreted collectively from a psychoanalytic perspective.

After completing the interpretive work, a comparative analysis (included in the discussion of results) was conducted to identify the common elements and differences among the three legends. Following this, conclusions were drawn.

2. Design

This research was of a documentary nature. As it is a study within the psychoanalytic field and uses psychoanalysis as an interpretive method, the research design also incorporated elements of hermeneutics and phenomenology.

Phenomenology is considered a philosophy, method, and approach that aims to describe and clarify experience and its manifestations as they are lived. Psychoanalysis, as an interpretive method, is related to phenomenology, as it is, in a sense, a derivation of it. Psychoanalysis also serves phenomenology by systematically interpreting and ultimately attempting to understand what occurs in context, which is the ultimate goal of hermeneutics.

3. Application of the Method

Based on the method outlined, this section includes the corresponding interpretation of each legend. First, the legend is presented verbatim, as it has been collected from oral tradition; then, the identified signifiers are listed.

Finally, it is determined which part of psychoanalytic theory the signifiers extracted from the legend correspond to.

4. Interpretation of "La Siguanaba"

The legend of "La Siguanaba" is narrated from oral tradition as follows:

> *La Siguanaba was an extremely beautiful woman who had many admirers and lovers. When she grew tired of them, she would kill them. It happened that one day she died at the height of her beauty, and when judged by God, she was condemned to return to earth. Her astral body would bathe every night at the edge of a lake or river, and her crimes would not be forgiven until a man, instead of looking at her with pleasure, turned his face away in disgust.*
>
> *Now, after her death, she is a woman who appears in water tanks, dressed in white, with loose, very black, and very long hair, bathing with a golden bowl. She appears every night in the tank at San Sebastián. She is one of the many spirits God has not allowed into heaven until she resolves her earthly situation. La Siguanaba punishes unfaithful husbands and men who, if not married, pursue any woman who crosses their path. She lures men, leading them on a long chase, only to lose them at the edge of a ravine.*
>
> *This ethereal, transparent woman wanders through the public fountains in city neighborhoods. She even stops at private homes. Many claim to have seen her. And even more men, who, though they have not encountered her charms in the dark alleys of the city, still believe in her existence (p. 25, Lara: Popular Legends of Spirits and Lost Souls in Guatemala).*

Regarding the physical traits of La Siguanaba, Lara (1995) explains that she is one of the spirits God has not allowed into heaven until she resolves her earthly situation. She is recognized as a woman who roams around in a sheer nightgown. "She appears bathing in some public tank or anywhere where there might be water. She lures men, only to lose them at the edge of a ravine after a long pursuit" (p. 29).

To organize and present clearly what has been observed from the legend, the researcher has chosen to list the signifiers of the narrative that stood out. In the case of "La Siguanaba," the following can be noted:

From the first part:

1. She has many admirers due to her beauty.
2. She kills men when she grows tired of them.

And from the second part:

1. She bathes in the water.
2. She wears white.
3. She exposes her body to attract men's attention.
4. She has a disfigured face that terrifies.

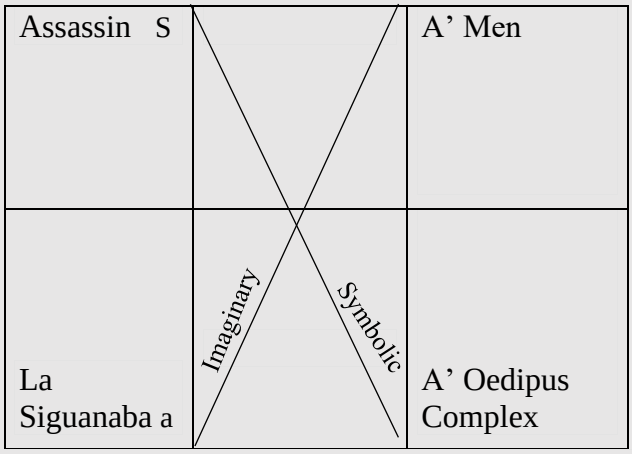
Now, the legend has two parts. These two parts are connected by the main character's death and reappearance (a magical and unreal element). The second part is determined by the first, serving as the continuous and infinite outcome of the legend. Why continuous and infinite? Because it repeats, it happens every night, simultaneously, affecting several people, depending on how many times it is retold.

Similar to "The Purloined Letter" analyzed by Lacan, there are two scenes that are part of the structure of "La Siguanaba" that produce an effect; there is an effect within the legend. Starting with the first part, when La Siguanaba was still alive, the story states that she was an exceptionally beautiful woman who attracted many admirers and lovers. The problem with this woman is that when she grew tired of someone, she would kill him. At this point, we must pause.

Why did this woman have to kill the man? The story does not explain, but it certainly constitutes an element in the legend that draws attention. What is the effect of this part of the story's structure? In other words, what Other (AS) determines the Subject (S)?

This beautiful woman uses her looks to trap men. The men become her slaves, reaching such levels of subordination and devotion that they must pay with their lives. She is the "master" in the relationship; as the Minister in "The Purloined Letter" feminizes himself, La Siguanaba hystericizes herself, reaching a point of hysterization so extreme that it compels her to kill men — this would be her symptom. La Siguanaba, then, is a hysterical woman who kills men. Now, we will explain how this unfolds.

In the "L" schema, it can be represented as follows::



As shown in the schema, La Siguanaba's relationship with the Other is fundamentally unconscious and symbolic, as she positions herself as "a master" when she kills for her desire. Only in this way, by operating along the line of desire, is she able to seduce, as she incites desire in others. In other words, she seems to take the place of the Other, moving within desire, just as a master does when demanding that a subordinate satisfy his desire.

What is a "master" in psychoanalysis? To explain the dialectic of the master, we must consider desire and demand. Demand is a demand for love, and it is impossible to satisfy. Why? Because it comes from the Other who predates the subject. For example, if someone asks if they are loved and receives a "yes," it will not stop them from asking over and over.

Demand, then, is a continuous spiral. To demand and to need, Lacan adds desire. Lacan says that desire reclaims what has been eclipsed at the level of need and introduces an absolute condition. This differs from the unconditional nature of demand. Desire, for its part, is tied to certain conditions. The master positions himself as Other for another, one who believes he knows what the other desires but is sadly unaware of his desire. By not recognizing his desire, he demands; his demand can become incessant and will always be impossible to satisfy. The master, as Dor (2000) states in his book *Clinical Structures and Psychoanalysis (Estructuras Clínicas y Psicoanálisis)*, can become the discourse of the other and, for that reason, can become the discourse of all, as it is borrowed discourse.

Much analytical work involves uncovering a subject's desire, extracting it from his incessant demands. Additionally, demand always seeks an object, while desire's object is nothing, in the sense that "the object is the lack."

La Siguanaba's demand is always to keep a man, on the condition that she does not grow tired of him because that is when she will not only discard him but also kill him. It is a capricious and fatal demand that conceals her desire. La Siguanaba ensures she remains unsatisfied because the realization of her desire does not depend on her; rather, it depends on finding a man who can make her happy. It depends on another, this perfect man who ultimately does not exist, as she ensures his nonexistence; later, we will explain how this occurs.

This woman needs men, but from a psychoanalytic perspective, what woman would need a man? Certainly, a woman is involved in

the dialectic of desire. She is the woman who, as a child, resolved her Oedipus complex by turning to her father, seeing her mother as castrated with disappointment and anger. She finds the promise of a phallus either through a man or through a child.

La Siguanaba is undoubtedly a dissatisfied woman because she cannot find a man who makes her happy (hysterical dissatisfaction) and a desiring one. After all, she is the master who desires what the Other desires. But, we still need to answer why this hysterical subject must kill men.

It could be thought that La Siguanaba, a hysterical woman who kills men, is the result of having seen her mother castrated. As Nasio (1998) explains in his book *The Pain of Hysteria (El Dolor de la Histeria)*, what the mother lacks is not a penis but the idol of the penis, the semblance called the phallus in psychoanalysis. Seeing her mother as castrated, the child discovers a lack where previously the universe was one of beings with a phallus, meaning, where everyone has one. After her discovery, there are now two kinds of beings: those who have and those who do not, not simply men with penises and women with vaginas. The child does not know if they are male or female; this is the sexual uncertainty experienced by the hysterics.

Nasio explains that, according to Freud, the girl feels resentment toward her mother and not anxiety, as with boys. She sometimes believes that her father has taken something from her mother and wants to reclaim that loss. The female version of the phantasmic scene is a girl seeing her mother's naked body and perceiving her as castrated. Previously, she believed that everyone except herself had a phallus, and now she wants that phallus. At the same time, she feels hatred toward her mother for being devoid of a phallus, but by using her father as a reference, she hopes that her future husband or, ultimately, a child can promise her to have it someday.

One might say that La Siguanaba was a girl who suffered disappointment upon seeing her mother castrated. Seeing her mother's disadvantage compared to her father, who did possess a phallus, she turned to him with the hope that he could give her what her mother could not. As Solano (2000) explains in his conference *The Child, His Body, His Joys, and Sufferings*, sometimes the daughter experiences disappointment with her father when he frustrates her demand for love. This disappointment is necessary for her to later direct her demand toward other men, substitutes for the father. It could be said that La Siguanaba's demand remained directed at the father; in life, she sought to fulfill her incestuous desire—her lost object, which she could never find. This scene underpins the construction of La Siguanaba's phantasm. Therefore, it can be said that, out of her frustration and extreme dissatisfaction, she must kill a man each time she realizes that he is not her father.

It can be thought of from another perspective: if La Siguanaba indeed suffered a disappointment in her demand for love directed toward her father, then that disappointment would have had to be a very traumatic and defining one for this character. To clarify the topic of the hysteric's father, we can refer to Dor (1989), who says that there is an imaginary relationship between the "important man" and the hysteric's "father." It is a mistake to think that this woman always seeks a man as a substitute for a paternal image. In reality, the author says, the man sought and found is never identical to the father. What the hysteric truly wants in a man is a complete father, a father who never existed (one who would answer her demand for love). Through a partner, the hysteric wants to fill in her father's imaginary deficiencies. It could be that Dor is referring to the hysteric's desire to deny the frustration she felt in her demand for love from her father. Dor explains in his own words that "she is willing to ascribe to him everything her father lacked: he must be stronger, more beautiful, more powerful, etc., than her father was. Furthermore, it is in this sense, and only in

this sense, that such a man can be the Master she seeks" (p.110).

In the case of La Siguanaba, if her situation is as described above, then each time she found something in a man that was below the father, she had to kill him because she again felt the frustration of a denied demand for love. If this man fell short of her father, it became evident that he would frustrate her demand for love even more. Only one who had been greater than her father could have fulfilled La Siguanaba's desire, but such a thing does not exist, because, in the end, the father who would answer La Siguanaba's demand for love was one that no longer exists (one who never was) and therefore is impossible to reach. The problem here, as Dor explains, arises primarily because the Master never truly occupies the position she assigns him (a father who fulfills her demand for love). When this happens, the man fails to measure up and quickly becomes a disappointing Master (whom she must kill). "Then, as he no longer meets the ideal demands the hysteric had placed on him, he becomes nothing more than an object of dissatisfaction" (p.111).

Regarding the aspects that evidence this character's hysteria, we can cite Nasio (1998), who notes that hysteria is established by the knots that the neurotic weaves in their relationship with others, upon their phantasm, wherein they embody the role of the victim, like La Siguanaba, who grows tired of men and cannot find satisfaction with any of them. Dor clarifies this idea when he says that the hysterical woman always insists that the other man has something more or better than the one currently in her life. La Siguanaba must keep her desire unsatisfied, thus sharpening her hysterical position; it is easier to do this than to confront the reality of her pain. One could even say that this woman did not have the same happy ending as "Cinderella," for example, because she remained in demand and did not access desire; her punishment now is to be a wandering soul.

La Siguanaba is now a wandering soul, condemned to pay for the murders she committed driven by her incestuous desire. This begins the second part of the legend, in which her hysterical position intensifies, revealing the nature of her "symptoms."

After her death, this character was condemned to return to earth. Her body would bathe every night in the water, and her sins would not be forgiven until a man, instead of seeing her with pleasure, looked away in disgust.

Three aspects of the second part of the legend are noteworthy. The first is the nature of her punishment; the second is the results of her actions as a wandering soul; and finally, what it teaches.

The nature of her punishment—meaning, the way she manages to resolve her situation before God enters heaven—curiously keeps La Siguanaba in her hysterical position. Lara (1995) compiles the following regarding La Siguanaba's relationship with men:

> *She appears in any tank late at night, and they see her bathing; her very attractive body is visible through her nightgown; the man who sees her goes mad with desire. Then La Siguanaba calls him, and she keeps leading him on until she pushes him to his doom. That said, La Siguanaba never shows her face, and only once she has won a man over does she reveal it…*

It should be noted that the legend explains that it is her body that will bathe every night; it is this same body that seduces men, only to frighten them to death when they see her face.

La Siguanaba's face is a variation in the legend. Some versions depict her as a woman with the head and face of a horse. Another version describes her face as a cracked skull. Lara summarizes that La Siguanaba's relationship with men is negative. "She seeks them out to

cause them harm. Hence, La Siguanaba likes to appear on the darkest nights, when there is no moon, and along the most deserted alleys in town" (p. 29).

To explain the concept of the body in "La Siguanaba" legend, it seems necessary to enrich the interpretation with another approach before delving fully into psychoanalysis. Merleau-Ponty's ontology clarifies and illuminates the concept of the body—the body with which one perceives the external world. Boburg (1996) in his book *Incarnation and Phenomenon (Encarnación y fenómeno)* explains how Merleau-Ponty emphasizes this concept in his theory.

Perception, he says, is not a form of thinking but rather a bodily operation. This bodily operation is not an objective fact but has a meaning that reveals itself in the movements and gestures of a body. According to Boburg, Merleau-Ponty seeks to recover that bodily experience, "...that is, the body we forget about when we walk when we write or converse, and with which we identify ourselves, not due to a confusion arising from a wandering of our mind, as the rationalist tradition would suggest, but because we are truly our body" (p. 93).

Boburg explains that the focus on the "object body" has limited the breadth of this concept. This is why Merleau-Ponty introduces the concept of the "phenomenal body," where physiological and psychological explanations of what the body is intersect. Boburg illustrates this with the following example:

> *... there is the case of the phantom limb in cases of people who have been amputated but still "feel" the limb that was removed... Strangely, the person with a phantom limb feels not just any arm, but precisely the one that was amputated; thus, a soldier who lost an arm still complains about the wounds on his now-missing arm... when the nerve endings of the stump are severed, the phantom limb disappears... Merleau-Ponty understands the body not as an extended thing but as existence, that is, as a lived possibility and as a project, ultimately: as time. My arms and legs are not extensions or appendages of my torso, but rather the possibility of grasping things, of walking, or of climbing a staircase... the phantom limb arises precisely from the continued demand these objects make on the amputee, and what needs to be understood is how this can happen... (pp. 94-95).*

Boburg adds that a subject's existence is not only defined by their possible achievements but also by their "already lived" possibilities. This explains why the ability to reach for objects may persist, even when the action itself is unrealizable. "To have a phantom arm or leg is to retain the possibilities that only an arm or leg can realize; 'existence' remains open to unrealizable possibilities" (p. 97).

One could think that this concept has some relation to the situation of La Siguanaba's body, which in reality no longer exists. The physical body of this woman has died, but the ghost of her body continues, by what the author explains, trying to carry out something that is now unrealizable.

Why does La Siguanaba, now a ghost, continue to project possibilities she can no longer realize? The legend says it is a punishment she must endure, but what exactly is this punishment? This question deserves an answer. To start, it should be noted that, according to Boburg, Merleau-Ponty introduced the notion of the anonymous or pre-personal layer of existence. The phantom limb is not something the subject has chosen. In reality, they may not even want an arm or leg but simply have them appear—they are involuntary. It is not an optical illusion either; the person reaches to grasp objects or walks as a normal person would, without needing to see where their leg is to use it.

Boburg's words lead one to think that this involuntary status suffered by a person with a phantom limb is similar to what a neurotic subject experiences with their symptom, which is also involuntary. Just as La Siguanaba sets out to seduce with a body she no longer has, the person with a phantom limb believes the amputated arm or leg still exists because these possibilities remain present. This woman's punishment is to inhabit a ghostly body from which she still sees the possibility of realizing her desire to find the man who will make her happy. Even though men follow her, presenting the possibility of satisfying her desire, the men ultimately die, rendering her desire unattainable and unrealizable; her desire becomes, more than ever, impossible to satisfy.

In psychoanalysis, the body inevitably connects to hysteria in this context. It is in the body that the hysteric reflects her pain; it is the place where the symptom is expressed. In hysteria, the traumatic representation affects the body, resulting in an erogenous body and a desexualized genital area. It is La Siguanaba's imaginary body that keeps her in this involuntary act, in which she continues to seduce from a place where the possibility of finding satisfaction no longer exists.

Nasio (1998) explains that the body of the hysteric is not her real body but a body of pure sensation, open outward like a living animal, with an extremely voracious hunger that reaches toward the other, arouses an intense sensation in them, and feeds off it. This is the body of La Siguanaba, the body that seduces men every night, leading them to their deaths. It is also worth mentioning that Nasio describes the act of "hystericizing" as giving birth to a burning focal point of libido within the other's body.

The outcome of La Siguanaba's actions is once again the death of a man. It is interesting to observe how she kills them: she does not push them over the cliff or throw them but simply shows them her face, and they, upon noticing her monstrousness, fall into the ravine and die.

Why the face? Because it is in the fact that one can read the truth, and if there is anything the hysteric suffers from, it is precisely a lack of "truth." Nasio explains that the hysteric, as "master," lives through the desire of the other, and beyond that, through what the other or others desire. For this reason, she is described as the most elastic structure, able to transform into anything that helps her capture the "other," but in doing so, she loses herself, suffering from a loss of identity. Her face is empty, and imprecise, one that cannot be recognized as hers, a face that does not match the attractiveness and seductiveness of her body. In this way, La Siguanaba's body does not match her disfigured face, which shocks the men. They see a beautiful body offering sexual satisfaction, but they encounter her truth when they discover that her face evokes suffering and ugliness, and in that face, they perceive the unbearable reality of the hysterics.

In life, La Siguanaba enjoyed men before killing them. Now, as a restless soul, men die just at the moment they are about to respond to her demand. This is, in fact, her punishment. Before, she could use them to amuse herself for a while, and when she grew bored, she would kill them. Not anymore; now the faint possibility of satisfaction is erased. La Siguanaba, like a true hysteric, is pure dissatisfaction, lacking even the trace of pleasure she once experienced in life.

The end is the same as the fate of the men when she was alive: death. The man follows La Siguanaba because he is attracted to her body. Similarly, when she was alive, men sought her out because she was beautiful. These men follow La Siguanaba because they see an opportunity to satisfy their sexual desire in her. But, as Nasio states, hysterical sexuality is not at all genital sexuality but a simulation of sexuality. The hysteric is a creator of sexual signs that are rarely followed by the sexual act they announce. In La Siguanaba's case, her signs are followed by the truth, reflected in her face, which leads to death. And if this was true when she was alive, it would only be more pronounced now that she is dead. Any man who follows her will inevitably die

unless he uses amulets to counteract the influence of this "spirit," which could be equivalent to passing a test of anguish.

La Siguanaba is now a restless soul who has lost her pleasure in seduction; she is now more dissatisfied and has been left alone. She takes on the role of the excluded, which is very characteristic of hysteria. According to Nasio, hysterics create conflict, stage dramas, interfere in conflicts, and then, once the curtain falls, realize in their lonely suffering that it was all just a game where they played the excluded part. This is, in fact, La Siguanaba in death, a pain of absolute dissatisfaction. Her punishment has been to suffer to the maximum extent a hysteric can suffer.

On the other hand, the man becomes the victim of La Siguanaba's neurotic demand. His punishment, death, arises because he gives in (out of his desire) to the hysterical demand that seduces him and leads him to his end.

As for the elements listed at the beginning of the interpretation, we have already answered why she kills men, who she is, what her body evokes, and the significance of her face. It remains to explain the meaning of the water and the fact that she dresses in white.

Regarding water, it is a symbol commonly associated with movement, life, and birth. The concept of movement is perhaps the most useful for this analysis. Why focus on movement? Because it is an inherent characteristic of the legend, the movement it sustains. The fact that it flows through the people who make up a society, serving to regulate undesirable behaviors for the stability and uniformity of populations, makes the legend essentially an act of movement. The legend, though static (since its character is dead), inserts itself into life to regulate it from within, from her death. This is why La Siguanaba must appear alongside something alive to capture the attention of men; if it were obvious that she was dead, no one would follow her.

Finally, her white dress represents and symbolizes another aspect of her hysteria. La Siguanaba presents herself as someone pure, chaste, and virginal by dressing in white, attempting to appear unwilling to engage in a sexual relationship, even though this is what she truly desires. Her desire may be represented in the fact that the dress, though white, is translucent, revealing parts of her body.

This ambiguity is what awakens desire in the other, a desire that, as the legend says, will lead him to his death.

5. Interpretation of "La Llorona"

The legend of "La Llorona" is recounted in oral tradition as follows:

> *She was a woman who drowned her son to run away with a man, but she doesn't remember where she did it. And as punishment from God, she wanders, searching for him near bodies of water.*
>
> *This unfortunate woman roams the world in desperate search of her son. She wanders through the streets, the borders of cities, and the fields. Every time she cries, she does so three times in a row. Her wail is long and sharp. Those who hear it feel an unfamiliar chill run through their blood.*
>
> *La Llorona laments the loss of her son and calls for him: ...Juan de la Cruz... that's what she says, while one hears it as just a scream. She passes by so quickly that you feel the air from her dress (p. 40, Lara, Leyendas Populares de Aparecidos y Ánimas en Pena en Guatemala).*

Among the physical traits that Lara (1995) describes is that this woman wears black, crying in despair by washing stones, rivers, and other bodies of water. No specific physical

features can be detailed because she is never seen, only heard.

La Llorona rarely makes contact with people. Typically, it is her scream that frightens people, letting them know she is there. It is said that the fright is so great that it leaves one unable to move. Whoever hears her first cry must make a tremendous effort to run, because if they hear her third cry while still in the same place, they are sure to be possessed by this tormented soul.

Another interesting element recorded by Lara is that, as a woman, La Llorona does not harm other women, since she is searching for her son, not a woman. The son La Llorona killed was male, and now she searches tirelessly for him. For this reason, because she seeks a male, her cry is directed only at men.

Some variations of the story that Lara found include beliefs that if her cry is heard close, she is far, and if it's heard far away, she is close. In this version, the influence of her cry is secondary, not going beyond frightening the affected person. However, in another version, the situation is different: "When, in addition to hearing La Llorona's cry, one sees her, that's where one dies on the spot…" (p. 41). Despite the difference between these versions, both are similar in the enormous anguish that this character awakens in those who believe they have witnessed her manifestation.

This version, where the proximity of her cry varies, can be related to psychoanalytic practice. It is known that in therapy, subjects sometimes arrive, speaking figuratively, with their symptoms in hand. Under such circumstances—when the symptom is screaming and exposed—it will take more work to find the subject's authentic position. On the other hand, when the symptom is distant, there is a possibility that the subject's unconscious might emerge unexpectedly at any moment. This might explain why the legend says: "When her cry sounds close, she is far, and if it sounds far away, she is close."

At first glance, La Llorona's case is similar to La Siguanaba's due to the elements they share in common. However, when applying psychoanalytic theory to the legend, it becomes clear that they belong to different structures, and the way each relates to the Other, as will be examined below, differs from the "hysteric-murderer" position of La Siguanaba.

As with the legend of "La Siguanaba," an enumeration has been made of the elements that caught our attention in the story of "La Llorona":

Part One:

1. She kills her son.
2. She kills her son to leave with a man.

Part Two:

1. She searches for her son near bodies of water.
2. Her crying.
3. She wears black.

What kind of woman is La Llorona? This is the primary question. Psychoanalysis has made the distinction between being a woman and being a mother very clear. Estela Solano (2000), in her lecture on children in Guatemala City, noted that while not all women must be mothers, it is an irrevocable truth that every mother will always be a woman.

Furthermore, it must be remembered that a mother was always a woman before. This is the case of La Llorona; she was a mother. She renounced that role by killing her son to return to the status of a woman and run away with a man.

Here we are not dealing with just any woman. We are dealing with a woman who was once a mother but rejected this role. Additionally, she stopped being a mother to become a "woman" and fled with a man. An interesting point Solano emphasized is that the woman precedes, for one is not a woman because one is a mother; rather, one can be a mother because one is a woman. So, how does the issue of femininity arise? This is the question at hand.

As we saw earlier, the girl expects to receive from her mother what she lacks, according to Solano. To the extent that this mother of desire is all-powerful, she codes the entire response system herself. The girl believes the mother has because she gives, perceiving her as the power of giving; to the girl, the mother "has."

For things to go well, this mother must be replaced; the girl must discover that the mother doesn't know everything because she is marked and determined by language, subject to the discourse of the Other like anyone else. If this does not happen, the consequences are terrible, as in La Llorona's case.

What must happen is that the girl subjectivizes the mother's castration and removes her from her position as the imaginary object that holds the meanings of what she lacks (phallus). The mother then ceases to be the primary object of love, and the girl turns to the father. This father will provide the girl with the possibility of becoming interested in men. When the girl leaves the mother as a love object and adopts the father (who has something to offer), the metaphor for future motherhood is inscribed in her; above all, the desire to be a mother is inscribed.

Child

Phallus (Ø)

The child substitutes for the phallus that the mother lacks.

GIFT

Father = **Child**

Mother **Phallus (Ø)**

This scheme can be interpreted to mean that the father has what is necessary to give the mother the phallus she lacks. Through a gift, he can provide her with a child who will be, by the mother's desire, her phallus during the early stages of life. This only occurs when the girl is marked with the metaphor for future motherhood.

The daughter experiences disappointment with the father because he frustrates her demand for love. This is necessary so that she can later direct her demand toward other men who stand in for the father.

However, sometimes it happens that the girl never shifts her demand from the mother to direct it toward the father. Therefore, if she has a child with a man, it will be a child of the uncastrated mother. On the other hand, the demand may separate from the mother and be directed toward the father. A problem arises when, due to certain circumstances, the demand directed toward the father results in no man being suitable for her.

What could be the case of La Llorona? Ultimately, it's that of a girl who keeps her demands directed toward the mother. Why? Because she does not want that child whom she cannot dialectically accept as her own. She is the product of an all-powerful, phallic mother. This mother was everything to La Llorona, so much so that she is rendered incapable of becoming a future mother.

What typically occurs in the Oedipal triangulation is that the father enters, as the phallic representative, to break the symbiosis between mother and daughter. It is at this point that the mother says "no" to the girl: "You are not what I desire," thus allowing the intercession of a phallic representative and permitting what could be called a "normal" Oedipal resolution. In other words, with that "no," the mother frees the daughter from the possibility of occupying the mother's phallic position, granting that place to the father.

As mentioned, in hysteria, the girl becomes attached to the father upon seeing with resentment that the mother is castrated; but this case points to obsession. In obsession, there is a father who can never be "killed." The issue is that

if the father is “killed,” the child remains with the anguishing task of occupying the place of the mother’s phallus. This is why the obsessive subject is determined to maintain a constant rivalry with the father, all to be in the oscillation of being or having.

Obsessive neurosis occurs when a father does not completely break, as in this case, the mother-daughter relationship, while leaving the daughter some possibility of occupying that place as the mother’s phallus. This is why she must rival the father, to keep him alive, because if he dies, it could mean her death, being overtaken by the mother. This is the dilemma of La Llorona, and it will explain why.

The obsessive maintains a dialectic between being and having. In these cases, it is difficult to prevent the father from ceasing to represent the phallus because it is necessary to keep him "alive" through rivalry, to avoid incest. The obsessive is someone who feels overly loved by his mother, as Dor (2000) explains. He says the obsessive presents himself as a subject who was the privileged object of the maternal object, "...that is to say, privileged in its phallic investment." (p. 130). This is why it is said that obsessives are nostalgic for being. Being what? Nostalgic for being their mother's phallus.

Regarding being the phallus, Dor says it is not about replacing the object of the mother's desire, because otherwise, it would involve psychosis or perversion. What is really at play is to replace the satisfaction of the mother's desire. However, it is assumed that this satisfaction was presented to the child as deficient. All the ambiguity between being and having for the obsessive revolves around this dependence of the mother's desire on the father. To further explain this point, Dor's words can be referenced directly when he states:

What the mother signifies to the child, even without knowing it, can be reduced to two meanings that do not fully overlap. On the one hand, the child perceives that the mother is dependent on the father from the perspective of her desire; but on the other hand, she doesn’t seem to completely receive from the father what she supposedly expects from him. This gap in maternal satisfaction induces, in the child who witnesses it, the favorable opening to a possible replacement.

This is how the child confronts the law of the father but also receives the message of the mother's dissatisfaction. The author notes that it is important to clarify that the mother is not completely unsatisfied. In the child’s eyes, she tries to fill her partial vacancy with him, which is why the child feels privileged. “Hence, there is always in the obsessive a constant tug-of-war between an aggressive return to such identification and obedience to the Law and its implications!” (p. 132).

The obsessive woman will make absolute demands. As Diez (1999) explains in her book titled *The Labyrinths of Obsessive Neurosis (Los Laberintos de la Neurosis Obsesiva)*, she performs feats where, in the end, she is left with nothing. Additionally, in this structure, there is a voluntary servitude accompanied by a repetitive complaint, like that of La Llorona. She also declares herself guilty, which in this case would represent the crying of the character, as an expression of guilt for having killed a child.

Dor (2000) mentions the imperative nature of the need and duty that surround the obsessive organization of pleasure. He also indicates that obsessives have a weakness for the demand for satisfaction and a marked ambivalence. Other symptomatic traits he lists include obsessive formations, isolation, retroactive nullification, ritualization, reactive formations, the trio of guilt, mortification, and contrition; and the clinical picture, called by Freud, "anal character."

How does desire work for the obsessive? Dor says that normally, desire separates from the need to then enter demand. For the obsessive, *... as soon as desire separates from need, it is immediately taken up by the unsatisfied mother, who finds in this a possible object for

replacement." (p. 138). The nature of obsessive desire is explained by the hastiness of this assumption. Indeed, the author says, desire always carries an imperative and demanding mark of need. This occurs because when a need arises, the mother never gives time for it to be suspended so that it may be articulated as a demand.

Based on the above, Dor points out two essential traits of the obsessive. On the one hand, the obsessive's desire involves the mark of need, and on the other, the obsessive suffers from an inability to express his demand. He maintains a passivity that prevents him from demanding. This is why he strives for others to guess and articulate what he desires. It is this same inability to demand that subjects him to voluntary servitude. It is this same inability to demand that leads him to have to accept everything. In this way, he occupies the place of the Other's object of enjoyment.

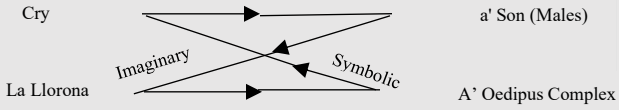
The paternal image is omnipresent in obsessives; it is the Father's Law that governs obsessive desire and produces the inevitable guilt experienced by those who suffer from it. Due to its omnipresence, Dor explains, this image can only awaken or provoke rivalry: these subjects incessantly attempt to replace the father and, therefore, feel the pressing need to "kill" him to take his place as the mother.

In the case of La Llorona, why kill the child? The legend explains it was to go off with a man. But as previously explained, this woman was not driven by the desire to be a mother. How, then, can she leave with a man if she is an obsessive woman whose demand is directed toward the mother?

The only (neurotic) way was by killing the child as a means of being her mother's phallus. It may be that this woman never set aside the possibility that the obsessive's mother suggests to the child—to be her phallus. The death that should have occurred was a symbolic one, in which she would die as the possibility of being the phallus to yield that position to the father. Had this happened, her demand would have been directed toward the father, thus providing an exit from the "normal" Oedipal stage. What failed for La Llorona was that she enacted the death of her child to leave with a man. She did what her mother could not do but in action. She ignored the possibility of negotiating her roles as both mother and woman to maintain herself.

What is her punishment? To suffer, as an obsessive neurotic knows well how to do. Her punishment is to ruminate, to search everywhere without being able to stop, to look for something she will never find. Her punishment is not being able to distract herself with anything else to forget her guilt; all her diversions will circle what causes her such pain, and all her searching will be directed toward the child she murdered.

Her punishment extends even further, as it originates in the obsession of eternally searching. On another note, her crying and eternal suffering from the thought of having killed her child underscores the castration threat through her voice—the father's voice, as occurs in the obsessive's phantasm. There is a mandate of super-ego enjoyment that comes from the father. Nasio (1998) explains that the erogenous zone of obsession lies in the voice, like La Llorona's cry. It is this guilt that La Llorona truly proclaims—the guilt of having killed her child, the act performed to make way for her desire, the desire to access the phallus. Through Lacan's "L" schema, La Llorona's position can be viewed as follows:



Here, it is evident that even though she has an unconscious relationship with the Other, her symptom—crying over a loss—occurs more in the realm of the imaginary: she accepts the guilt imposed by the Other and resigns herself to weeping. In this case, the subject, La Llorona, is a slave to the desire of the Other.

La Llorona dresses in black, a mourning attire she must wear to eternally remember and evoke the time it takes for the pain of her loved one's absence to subside. Once the loss no longer affects her as deeply, she may be able to wear other colors. La Llorona will be in mourning for eternity, for she cries not only over the loss of her child but also for the guilt over his death.

This woman, dressed in black, searches for her child in places where there is water. She must search for him in the very place where she took his life. Unable to remember exactly where she killed him, she is condemned to investigate every place that resembles the scene of the crime. Any place with water will rekindle La Llorona's cries of pain and guilt.

Water is a highly significant symbol in the legend of "La Llorona." This character cries out by the water's edge whenever she realizes her child is not there. The water, always in motion and visited by many, will carry La Llorona's message of guilt. It serves as a symbolic way to communicate her pain and despair to the population. Alongside the water, La Llorona is inevitably reminded that perhaps it was there where she took her poor son, Juan de la Cruz's, life...

6. Interpretation of "La Tatuana."

The legend of "La Tatuana" is recounted in oral tradition as follows:

> *There was a woman here in Guatemala City, during the times of Carrera, who lived over by La Barranca and in great poverty, for her husband had passed away. Almost no one spoke to her because they were afraid, as it was said she was a witch.*
>
> *The old woman was so poor that she had nothing to eat, and the owner of the shop on Mercaderes Street had refused to give her bread on credit.*
>
> *One morning, she returned to the same shop, and again the owner denied her credit. Then the strange woman said to her:*
>
> *...I know your husband has left your side, but I can arrange for him to return to you. Take this small leather strip: at eight in the evening, call him by name, tap the leather three times on the pillow, and place it under it.*
>
> *Grateful, the shopkeeper gave her a basket full of vegetables. That night, she did as the woman advised, and her husband appeared instantly. While she kept the leather strip, her husband remained faithful. Four days later, the strange woman returned to the shop and asked for the strip back. The shopkeeper protested:*
>
> *—Look, my husband will leave me again.*
>
> *La Tatuana (for she was none other than La Tatuana herself) told her she needed it for another task. Reluctantly, the shopkeeper returned it, and her husband left her once more.*
>
> *The witchcraft and strange deeds of this woman became famous throughout Guatemala until General Carrera ordered her imprisonment on charges of witchcraft. While held in her cell awaiting execution, she requested a small favor: a piece of charcoal. The soldiers complied. With the charcoal in hand, she drew a small boat on the wall, climbed aboard, and slipped through the bars, vanishing. When the guards entered to take her to the stake, all they found in the cell was the dreadful stench of sulfur. The devil had claimed her. This is the legend of La Tatuana. (p. 69)*

La Tatuana's physical appearance is that of an old woman who knows all the arts of black magic and is a friend of the devil. She dresses in black and leads a mysterious life.

There is no definitive practice associated with this character. It is believed she is a flesh-

and-blood woman who appears throughout the city. Nor is there any amulet that can counter her spells.

Lara (1995) explains that it has been discovered that La Tatuana was indeed a real person during General Carrera's rule. She was rumored to perform many miracles, as it was believed she was a sorceress. However, it is claimed that she was merely a mad widow and that people invented stories about her. The prototype of the legend is illustrated as follows:

> *La Tatuana was a woman who had a physical existence. She is mentioned both during the long period of Spanish domination and in the 30 years of the 19th century.*
>
> *Tradition holds that La Tatuana was a witch condemned by the Inquisition to be burned alive in the Plaza Mayor of Santiago de Guatemala. Captured by order of the Captain General and imprisoned, "La Tatuana requested a small favor: to be given a piece of charcoal. The soldiers complied. With the charcoal in hand, she drew a small boat on the wall, climbed into it, and flew through the bars. When the guards entered to take her to the stake, all they found in the cell was a horrible stench of sulfur. The devil had claimed her soul. This is how my grandmother told me the legend of La Tatuana." (pp. 68-69)*

The author notes that, upon comparing the versions with the legend's prototype, he found no major differences. What does change is the internal timeline of the legend as recounted by the informant. Two distinct times emerged: the colonial period and the 19th century, under Rafael Carrera's rule. Lara therefore concludes that the previous prototype accurately summarizes the legend.

The legend of "La Tatuana" is still widely recognized through 19th-century Guatemalan chronicles. Lara further notes that this legend has been associated with the Inquisition Tribunal and the witch burnings of the 17th century since its creation. Another notable fact is that this legend also survives in the narrative folklore of other countries. In Peru, the same theme is found in Guatemala. "The same is true in Mexico, where Luis González Obregón places it on Calle de la Perpetua during the Viceroyalty and the Inquisition Tribunal." (p.70)

When Lara speaks interpretatively about "La Tatuana," he explains that this legend likely originated during the colonial era. At that time, there must have been a woman considered a witch to whom these acts and practices described in the tale were attributed. "Over time, it became folklore, and the factual became part of the legendary, and so it endures today in oral tradition. This legend is a clear example of the folklorization process that emerges from real events in a dynamic society." (p. 71)

Lara finds it interesting that the real timeframes of the legend are the colonial period and the 30-year rule, "...when Guatemalan society endured moments of acute oppression. Undoubtedly, it emerged as an escape from the tensions to which the sickly, fanatically Catholic minds of our ancestors were subjected." (p.71)

This is a legend with rather different characteristics from the other two previously studied. Although concrete information about the character and her functions is limited, the following elements have been identified:

Part One:

1. She was a poor woman because she was widowed.
2. She paid her debts by performing witchcraft.
3. The legend gains significance during a repressive government.

Part Two:

1. Accused of being a witch, she is sentenced to death.

2. As a last wish, she asks for a piece of charcoal, with which she draws a boat and escapes from the cell on it.
3. When they search for her, they only find the smell of sulfur, and it is believed the devil took her soul.

Starting with the first point, La Tatuana was a poor woman who had become a widow. The legend says she suffered poverty because she was a widow. This raises the question: what is the relationship between being poor and being a widow? From a psychoanalytic perspective, it can take on very interesting nuances.

First, it would be wise to define what it means to be a widow. A widow is a woman whose husband has died. After her husband's death, La Tatuana was left so poor she could not even afford food, which is not the case for all widows. This woman's husband had completely met her needs, such that, following his death, she was left with nothing.

The legend does not say how the husband died, who he was, or what relationship he had with La Tatuana, but it does make it clear that he left her with nothing. In the psychoanalytic realm, the husband is a substitute, a replacement for the father who left traces in the daughter's resolution of the Oedipal complex; essentially, he substitutes the daughter's frustrated demand for love from her father. Moreover, he may represent, if successful, the phallic function known in Lacanian theory as the "Name-of-the-Father."

In hysteria, the father frustrates the demand for love, and the daughter may be directed toward him; in obsession, the demand for love is directed toward the mother, rivaling the father figure. In *The Psychoses (Las Psicosis)*, Lacan (1998) explains that what characterizes the hysteric's position is a question related to the two significant poles of masculinity and femininity. The hysteric asks, "How can one be male or female?" implying that the hysteric has the reference in either form. The obsessive, on the other hand, is neither one nor the other, and for this reason, one could say that he is both at once, meaning he also has a reference. What, then, occurs in psychosis? Lacan explains that it is a position that fundamentally opposes each of the two major neuroses previously mentioned.

In psychosis, there is an absence of a phallic signifier, a lack of reference that neurosis possesses. Psychosis occurs when the necessary break between the mother-child relationship fails to take place—a break that only a phallic representative can perform to establish in the child the signifier of the father's name. What happens in the absence of this? The result is a psychotic subject. Lacan explains in *The Psychoses*:

> *If we now accept, as a common fact of experience, that failing to undergo the Oedipal test, failing to confront its conflicts and deadlocks, and failing to resolve them leaves the subject with a certain deficiency, a certain inability to establish those proper distances called human reality, it is certainly because we believe that reality involves the integration of the subject into a certain play of signifiers. (p. 357).*

Then, what happens as the ultimate consequence in the absence of phallic signifiers that allow the imaginary, symbolic, and real to be established and connected within a subject? The results are psychotic subjects. It could be said that La Tatuana was fine as long as she had the support of a phallic signifier represented in her husband. When he died, she was left impoverished. And not only did she become impoverished, but, if we go further in the legend, we observe that she became a witch, having to make a pact with a supernatural force to survive.

The relationship that the psychotic has with the Other is unique. It could be said that while the neurotic subject has a relationship with the Other—in other words, the subject is that part of the person that is "held" in a relationship to the discourse of the Other (which may relate to the figure of the mother, father, or, in any case, the

Oedipal complex as a whole)—in the case of psychosis, the psychotic "belongs" to the Other. The psychotic suffers from being possessed and inhabited by the Other. Lacan explains it as follows:

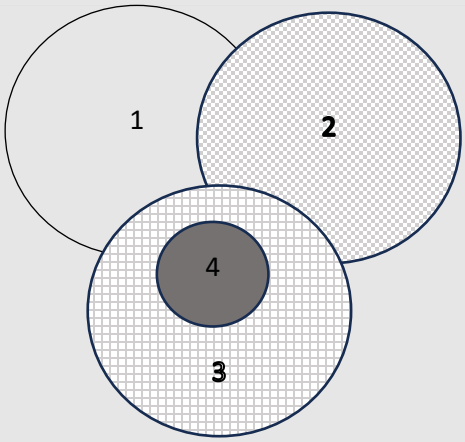
> *In my talk about Freud from fifteen days ago, I spoke of language as inhabited by the subject, who takes up speech within it, more or less, with all his being, that is, in part without knowing it. How can we not see, in the phenomenology of psychoses, that everything, from beginning to end, has to do with a certain relationship of the subject with that language, suddenly promoted to the foreground of the scene, which speaks on its own, out loud, both in sound and fury as well as in its neutrality? If the neurotic inhabits language, the psychotic is inhabited, and possessed by language. (p. 358).*

The character of La Tatuana, as the legend explains, was possessed by the devil. But her problems only began after the death of her husband. Why should this fact hold so much importance? As previously mentioned, in the absence of a phallic representation, it is likely that, in this character's case, she was invested by her husband. From this point, one could say that the absence of her husband forced her to submit to another representative to avoid the psychotic outbreak that occurs in analytic practice. Nowhere in the legend does it say that she was a witch before her husband's death, which is why it can be said that his death was the phenomenon that gave rise to the figure called La Tatuana? Lacan explains what is triggering in the clinical setting and says that it is what happens when pre-psychotics are taken into analysis and the results are psychotic: "… after the first slightly stirring sessions of analysis, the handsome analyst quickly transforms into a transmitter who makes the patient listen all day to what they should and should not do." (p. 360).

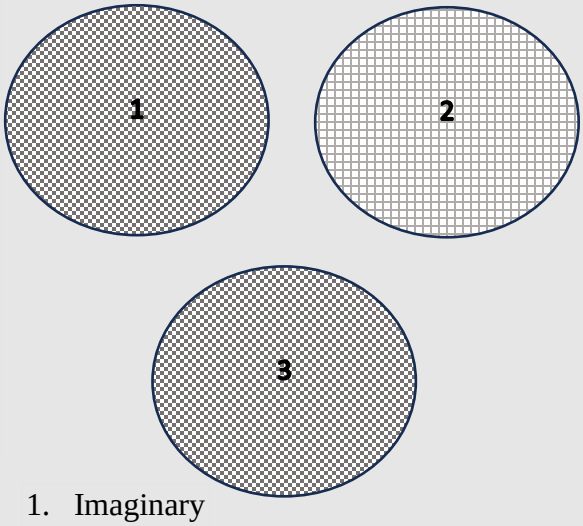
Based on the above, it can be established that the core of entry into psychosis lies in taking up speech. Lacan says that about taking up speech: "It is the hardest thing that can be proposed to a man, and to which his being in the world does not often expose him: it is what is called taking the word, I mean his word, the exact opposite of saying, yes, yes, yes to the neighbor's word" (p. 360). In psychosis, one cannot take up the word because, unlike neurosis, where a referent (a metaphorical value) is established to situate a relationship with the Other, in psychosis there is a permanent lack. Therefore, the psychotic cannot take up the word because, in a certain sense, he is the word and relates to it, unlike the neurotic, who uses it.

Thus, what happened to La Tatuana is that, upon the death of her husband, she was unable to represent herself. Without finding any other referent, she had no choice but to become a poor witch possessed by a superior and pre-existing force (an artificial Other) that represented her and provided her with what she needed to continue living. Possessed, because if she had ceased to be dispossessed, she would have fallen into madness. If La Tatuana had not relied on some magical force, she would have been irreversibly the victim of a psychotic episode.

Psychoanalysis has shown, on numerous occasions, how there are cases of psychosis that did not fully break out because they had the artificial support of the father's name as a signifier. This is the case of Joyce, who named himself through his literature, the case of Van Gogh, who invented himself in painting, and the case of the psychotic who is sustained in analysis through the analyst-analysand relationship. If the artificial support disappears, the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real become untied, causing the well-known delusions in the mental health literature. This can be illustrated as follows:



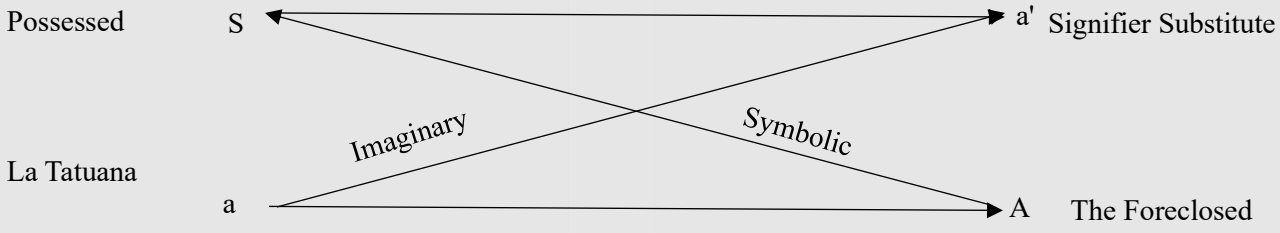
1. Imaginary
2. Symbolic
3. Real
4. Name of the Father



1. Imaginary
2. Symbolic
3. Real

Regarding the "L" schema, the psychotic's position about the Other can be illustrated as follows:

Chart 2



In the "L" schema (diagram 2), it can be seen how the subject exists in a strictly unconscious relationship. There is no reflection at the imaginary level, and the subject is taken by the field of the Other. What happens is that, due to the absence of an Oedipus complex, the metaphorical identification process is truncated, and the subject is left lost in the symbolic realm.

The first diagram (diagram 1) attempts to show that what binds the three registers together is the Name-of-the-Father, and in psychosis, this must be constructed within the analysis. The so-called reconstruction will not be like the "cure" of the neurotic; it will rely on something artificial constructed around the subject's "object a."

The emergence of this particular legend during a time of repression is notable. What happens during these dictatorships? How is the population positioned, and what does the dictator represent? In psychosis, the Other of the unconscious becomes the subject's dictator, telling them all day long what they have to do. The same occurs in dictatorships. There is a figure at the front who controls the entire population, and all the dictator's wishes must be fulfilled, or there will be death. This real fear of death results in a paranoid population, with people acting cautiously and refraining from expressing themselves to avoid being killed by a repressive government. Similarly, the psychotic is overwhelmed by paranoid ideas, akin to those experienced by a population under a totalitarian regime. They suffer because they feel persecuted and suffer. After all, they are told what to do, how, and when. Thus, it can be concluded that dictatorships are ultimately a reflection of the psychotic in which the population does have access to speech but refuses to participate in discourse out of fear of severe consequences. Furthermore, it is often seen that when these governments end, the population is left dispossessed; these countries are generally characterized by disorder and uncertainty, much like the psychotic is left due to a lack of signifiers.

In the second part of the legend, we see how La Tatuana is accused of being a witch, for which she is sentenced to death. No one understands her, because, although she is in language, she is not inscribed in discourse. La Tatuana belongs to the Other; she is possessed, and therefore, she cannot explain herself because she cannot represent herself. It is because of this inability that she is sent straight to prison and condemned to die.

Once captured and sentenced, La Tatuana asks for one last wish. This character, who does not desire because her desire is that of the Other, paradoxically asks for a piece of charcoal. She asks for it to draw a ship on the wall and then escape in it. What we can see is that she requests the charcoal to once again let herself be possessed by another, perhaps the very same Other commanded her to ask for it—another stronger one that would keep her possessed even after death. This is how it is said that she sold her soul to the devil.

It is also notable that she escapes in a ship; one might think she flees across the sea, where perhaps she is lost forever. The vastness of the sea can give the impression that things are lost in its infinite distance. Thus, just as the psychotic is lost in the language of the Other, La Tatuana is lost in her ship (her psychosis) over the sea. There is no mention of the character's death, as in other legends. In this case, La Tatuana disappears, reappearing only to perform witchcraft and spells.

La Tatuana surrendered herself to the devil, which can be seen as the ultimate possession a person can suffer. This possession drives people mad and turns them into beings who act in the name of evil. For this reason, exorcists exist to free souls from possession. Similarly, it can be said that psychoanalysts exist who have dared to tie something of the psychotic together, approaching and interpreting their scattered, seemingly incomprehensible discourse.

7. Discussion of Results

Several deductions can be made following the completion of this investigation. To avoid extending beyond the main points, this discussion will focus on the role of legends within psychoanalysis. Based on the application of the method, it is suggested that legends, in a subtle way, explain human behaviors; although this could only be definitively asserted after appropriate intervention (which is not the objective of this study). One point of interest is that these legends do not merely expose certain behaviors but also portray extreme behaviors, borderline situations, and drastic actions. On the other hand, the punishments imposed on the characters are equally decisive.

At first glance, the function of the legend might appear to be to set norms while entertaining people. What legends may convey is, if you do this or that, this will happen to you... What is intriguing is that if this is the case, the legend manages to disguise its real objective effectively. People in the community share these stories as entertainment, unaware that they are spreading the discourse of the Other. Perhaps the discourse of the Other becomes obscured within the story, embodied in oral tradition, thereby ensuring its survival. These ideas suggest the need for further in-depth research on this theme in future studies.

This study established that, for psychoanalysis, legends can also serve as a tool. Just as Freud discovered that interpreting his subjects' dreams provided a more direct path to the unconscious, it could be said that interpreting legends offers more illustrative explanations of psychoanalytic theory. Just as Lacan saw a model of the Oedipus Complex in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter," this research has identified new ways to illustrate clinical psychoanalytic structures. Furthermore, by using legends as tools to clarify its theories, psychoanalysis not only benefits from them but also elevates them, giving them a more formal meaning that will increase their value over time.

As demonstrated through the method, the legends interpreted in this study can be used as representations of psychoanalytic structures. Why can these structures be found in something that belongs to the collective imagination? Freud and Oppenheim (1911) attempted to reveal this in their study, "Dreams in Folklore," which compares dreams with folklore. They found that the symbolism in the dreams they studied coincided entirely with psychoanalytic assumptions and that the people understood some of those dreams as psychoanalysis would interpret them: "... as fulfillments of desire, satisfactions of needs that manifest while sleeping" (p. 183).

Freud explains how it is easier to study dream symbolism in folklore than in subjects' dreams. He explains:

> *"The dream is compelled to conceal and only reveals its secrets through interpretation; in contrast, these anecdotes dressed as dreams aim to communicate for the pleasure of both speaker and listener and therefore do not hesitate to add interpretation to the symbol. They delight in unveiling the concealing symbol."*

It is believed that people create material to share that concerns wish fulfillment and satisfaction of needs because it is easier this way than interpreting it through their own experiences. Working with folklore, specifically with legends in this study, leads to the belief that perhaps the truths and sufferings of the population are indeed explained and communicated in their unique way. Thus, it can be thought that legends—and beyond them, oral tradition—may serve as a resource that communities use to prevent behaviors that might lead people to suffering. Although this may seem obvious to some, much research is still needed to confirm this with certainty.

Regarding this study, three representative discourses were identified for three different clinical structures in

psychoanalysis. The legend of La Siguanaba was representative of hysteria; La Llorona, of obsessive neurosis; and La Tatuana, of psychotic structure.

Each of the three legends has its signifiers. In some cases, the signifiers were the same, but in all three cases, the meanings differed. In the case of La Siguanaba, the signifier was the body. For La Llorona, it was weeping; for La Tatuana, an empty space.

Common signifiers found were clothing and water. In all three legends, the main characters have assigned attire. La Llorona and La Tatuana are dressed in black but for very different reasons. La Llorona dresses in black because it is required by the force that possesses her, a color necessary for her magical practices. As can be seen, while the color is the same, it represents in each case the assigned clinical structure. Black, in La Llorona, emphasizes guilt; in La Tatuana, it highlights possession.

La Siguanaba, on the other hand, wears a translucent white robe. This was necessary to represent the discourse of hysteria. Wearing black, like La Tatuana and La Llorona, would not have supported the nature of her structure, which is highlighted in the body. The character needed to reveal her body while also covering it. The translucent white color is perfect for this because it conceals by revealing.

In all three legends, water is present. This signifier is perhaps the one with the most uniform meaning across the three stories. In each case, water represents the element of life. Water is movement, a communicator, a transporter that keeps the legend alive. La Siguanaba needs water to present herself as a desire. La Llorona needs it to search for what she will never find. La Tatuana needs it to carry out her great escape. The distinctive signifier of La Siguanaba is her body and the disfigured face she shows at the end of the story. The body appears as the character poses as the desire of the Other. This signifier provides a foundation to explain the hysterical structure within psychoanalytic discourse. Similarly, the disfigured face represents truth, which perhaps only some subjects can bear in analysis. It was explained as the ultimate test of anguish one can experience.

The distinguishing feature of La Llorona is her weeping. She uses this weeping to announce her sorrow, confess her guilt, and enforce the law. What's interesting about this character is that she's heard but not seen. Supposedly, if someone sees her, they die on the spot. Because of this, no one can give an accurate description of her physical features. Her most defining trait is her weeping, which reflects her obsessive nature. Just as La Siguanaba uses her body, La Llorona uses her weeping to communicate her subjective position.

La Tatuana is a legend that stands out for its lack of precision. It illustrates a psychotic structure—it cannot be precise. In this absence of a defining signifier, various interpretations attempt to fill the void. First, it was her husband, then witchcraft, and finally, demon possession. The legend explains that she has no specific practices or known protective amulets. Psychosis, likewise, lacks a defined signifier, and the psychoanalytic intervention that could be applied remains unclear, generating much debate.

All three legends belong to the classification known, since Lara (1995), as Classic Animistic Legend. This classification indicates that these legends are widely known and commonly recounted among Guatemalans. It is believed, therefore, that these three female figures might represent the feminine position of each clinical structure, although further investigation would be necessary to confirm this. Future studies should explore what these male figures, also classified under the same category, might represent in psychoanalysis.

The relationship with men is present throughout the three legends. In the story of La Siguanaba, she was known for killing men who no longer satisfied her during her lifetime. After her death, she was condemned to kill any man she

could seduce with her alluring appearance. La Llorona's tale tells of a mother who murders her child to be with her lover. Her punishment is to search for the child she drowned and to weep with the guilt it causes her. The story of La Tatuana tells of a woman who becomes widowed and, as a result, becomes impoverished. In the end, La Tatuana surrenders her soul to evil to escape the prison where she awaits her death at the stake.

Each of the three legends has two distinct parts. The first part describes the character's life before their death. Something occurs in this first part that introduces the second part of the legend. In the second part, the legend outlines the punishment the character endures as a consequence of their actions in the first part. This second part also explains how the character haunts and in what way they impart lessons to the community.

The findings are unique and are believed to be valuable to various groups interested in the topic. On one hand, the legends illuminate and offer a new explanation for a part of psychoanalytic theory; on the other, they allow psychoanalysis to be understood through a segment of Guatemala's cultural heritage. The same conclusion reached by Lara (1995) is drawn here, with the liberty taken to adopt her aspiration, recognizing that the work does not end with this study. It is her deepest wish, as well as a source of profound satisfaction, that these materials be saved from oblivion and used to better understand the collective mindset of Guatemalans. This work was born from the Other's desire and is offered to others, inviting them to be captivated by the unfamiliar land of this Other, concealed within the vast array of symbolic forms that exist in its name…

Bibliography

Aguilar, M.

1979 Estudio de las figuras y tropos del Popol Vuh con énfasis en la Prospopeya. Guatemala.

Boburg, Felipe
1997 Encarnación y Caballero, M. García
1991 Mitología histórica geográfica y ritualidades de Culturas indigenas incaicas, muiscas, maya, aztecas, producto de leyendas medievales europeas. Revista Cultural de capacitación superior y magisterio. 0001. 31-36 Bogotá. Campbell, Joseph
1997 El héroe de las mil caras. Barcelona España.

Paidos.
Carvalho-Neto, Paulo
1961 Folklor del Paraguay. Sistemática Analítica.

Quito, Editorial Universitaria.
Cassirer, Ernst
1975 Las ciencias de Brevarios Fondo de fenómeno. la cultura. Cultura Económica. México, D.F.

Cifuentes F.
1993 La Tradición Oral, un enfoque psicológico. Tesis de licenciatura no publicada. Universidad De San Carlos de Guatemala.

Degh, Linda
1971 Procesos de formación de leyenda. Traducción Anatilde Molina. Seminario de Folklor, dirigido

Prof. Susana Chertudi de Nardi.
Deiz, Amelia
1999 Los laberintos de la neurosis obsesiva. Madrid,

Editorial Grupo Cero.
Dor, Joel
2000 Estructuras clínicas y psicoanálisis. Amorrortu Editores. Buenos Aires.

Freud, Sigmund
1990 La intrerpretación de los sueños. Obras Completas. Madrid. España. Ballesteros.

Garza, O.M.
1983 Moisés y la religión monoteísta. Buenos Aires. Argentina.

Geertz, C.
1992 La interpretación de las culturas. Gedisa.

Barcelona
Heisig, J.
1976 El cuento detrás del cuento. Un ensayo sobre Psique y mito. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Lara, Celso
1973 Leyendas y casos de la tradición oral de la ciudad De Guatemala. Guatemala. Artemis & Edinter.

Lara, Celso
1984 Por los viejos barrios de la ciudad de Guatemala. Guatemala. Artemis & Edinter.

Lara, Celso
1995 Leyendas populares de aparecidos y ánimas en Pena en Guatemala, Guatemala, Artemis & Edinter.
Lara, Celso
1991 Cultura, artes populares e historia en Guatemala. Colección — Tierra Adentro. Guatemala.

Lara, Celso
1997 Cuentos y consejas populares de Guatemala.
Guatemala, Artemis & Edinter.

Leader, D.
1995 Lacan para principiantes. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Massota, Oscar
1995 Lecturas de psicoanálisis. Buenos Aires, Paidos.

Nasio, Juan David
1998 El dolor de la histeria. Buenos Aires, Paidos.

Pinon, R.
1965 El cuento folklórico. Buenos Aires EUDEBA.

Rodríguez A.
1997 Identidad Social y Nacional. Mito o realidad.

Santamaría, M.
1997 Análisis de tres mitos como nuevo complejo de La teoría psicoanálitica. Revista Intercontinental Contemporáneo. Junio, 1997. P. 21-32.

Solano, Estela
2000 Conferencia dictada en la ciudad de Guatemala en Instalaciones de la Universidad Rafael Landívar. 11 febrero 2000.

Taracena, José
1993 Formación y reconstrucción histórica de la vida Social del barrio de Jocotenango 1851- 1950. — Estudio de un área urbana de la Nueva Guatemala De la Asunción a partir de una base metodológica Sustentada por la tradición oral. Tésis de Licenciatura inédita. Universidad de San Carlos De Guatemala, Guatemala. Verhaeghe, Paul
1999 Existe la mujer? Editorial Paidos. Buenos Aires.