

Conclusions from the Day One Discussion of Act I

Water Associations and Connotations

- life and fertility via plant and agriculture imagery (water as necessary for growth)
- life and fertility via procreative imagery (e.g., breast milk, conception, semen)
- production (more generally), as in Juan waters the fields (where the fruits of his labor are framed in materialistic terms)
- love and emotion: 1) the gush of water in men's mouths; 2) correlated with trembling (connotative of love, possibly emotion more generally) → María's husband's eyes tremble like "green leaves," pregnancy is like a trembling bird in the blood, conception is like the bird in the ear)
- several of the characters are defined by their relative dryness: Yerma (barren, desires flowing water in song, dying of thirst), Victor (a gush of water in his singing-- suggestive of his potential to share water in context of a previous scene), Juan (sterile, a dry character, refuses milk, Yerma wishes he would he would swim or stand in the rain, desires more water and jealously guards what water he has), Vieja pagana (fertile, thirst is quenched by relationships with men)

Relationships

- men must "water" women from their mouths to facilitate fertility (at least according to the Vieja pagana); if true, Victor seems a better match for Yerma (a gush of water in his singing-- waiting to be shared), whereas Juan waters the fields (and not Yerma) → other evidence: dream sequence at beginning with phantom child, phantom child (drowning) that Yerma hears when speaking with Victor
- love and emotion associated with trembling (barren Yerma does not tremble on wedding night, María's husband reveals emotion through trembling, pregnancy is like a [trembling] bird in the blood, Yerma trembles only with Victor [twice before marriage and once when he leaves for good], trembling linked with fertility images in songs/poems in Acts II and III)
- nature of relationships: Yerma/Juan (defined by duty → leads to negative consequences [sterility and death]), María/husband (defined by love within marriage → leads to positive consequences [fertility and production]), Vieja pagana/Dolores' daughter leads to negative consequences (love not bounded by societal norms → leads to negative consequences [logic of anarchy and the blood feud])