

Manuel Sacasa Moran

Professor G.D. Peters

10005 Killer Stories

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### Response Essay

When I first read Katherine Anna Porter's story "Maria Concepcion", to me at first it just seemed like a simple story of a woman living in Mexico but then I read Hendrick's article "My Family Country". That's when I started to see Maria Concepcion in a new and different way. After reading the article I started to understand the world that she lives in, her strengths and her traditions. In this response essay I will be explaining how I started to change my understanding of Maria Concepcion's character after reading the Hendrick reading.

In the story we are told how Maria Concepcion works so hard every day and that stood out to me. Porter describes how she does chores for her household, describes her cooking and how she takes care of the animals. When I first read this I thought of this like Renault chores anyone might do on a regular basis and didn't think much of it. But then after reading Hendricks article, it made me realize that this is very important to women who live in small Mexican villages because it was very important and essential for them for survival. Hendrick tells us how women made food from scratch, carried water and they were the ones who held families together when men would leave for work. This background made me start to see Maria Concepcion differently. To me she just wasn't a character doing chores around, she started to become to be seen by me as a symbol of tradition and strength. It started to respect her hard work and determination a lot more after learning about the real-life culture that was behind the story.

After I read Hendrick, another part to me started to make more sense and it was when Maria Concepcion has a reaction to her husband leaving and then coming back. I believed that she was just angry or jealous when I first read the story because I thought it might have been because of personal feelings. But according to Hendricks article, many Mexican villages back then at the time, communities and honor expectations were very strong. A whole family reputation was tied with what a wife's actions would be. Then I went back to reread the story and I had this in mind and I realized that Maria Concepcion choices and actions were not random anymore and all had an importance and reason. Her choices were shaped by her religion, her neighbors and the duty she had in her home, the effort she would put into it. With these actions she was trying to protect her dignity where people were always judged and watched.

Last and finally, after reading the Hendrick article it also changed the way I started to see the setting around Maria Concepcion in the story. When I first read from Porter, it was described as a small village but to me it only seemed plain but after I read Hendricks, I was able to picture the smells of the foods, the bright colors and the sounds of the marketplace. After I read this it helped me understand how and why Maria Concepcion acts with a lot of dignity, her whole life and world is built around tradition. The setting helps us understand who she is.

After reading Hendricks "My familiar Country" it helped me see Maria Concepcion as more than any other women in the story. It not only showed me but it helped me understand how proud, connected to her culture she is and how strong she is. How whenever I think about the story, not only I remember just the plot. I remember Maria Concepcion as the woman who represented her traditions and people. With Hendricks' article I was able to develop a deeper understanding.