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REALITY AND FANTASY IN THE CREATIVE LITERATURE OF
ENRIQUE ANDERSON ILMERT

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Allen Forrest Murphy, A.B., M.A.

The Ohio State University
1972

Approved by

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TO MY FAMILY
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although it is impossible to acknowledge individually all those who, in one way or another, have helped me on the long and often difficult road to the doctorate, I feel there are some who must be mentioned by name. First of all there was the late James R. Browne, Professor of Spanish at Kenyon, who initially awakened my interest in Spanish American literature and who later gave me invaluable aid as a young teacher and graduate student. My thanks also to Professor Richard Armitage whose wise counsel, "Murphy, it doesn't take intelligence to get a Ph.D.; it takes perseverance," was often all that kept me going. A special acknowledgement is due to my adviser, Professor Marta Morello-Frosch who not only saw me through my M.A. but stuck with me through the darker hours of the writing of this dissertation. I would be remiss if I failed to mention the kindness of Enrique Anderson Imbert himself in answering my questions and in assisting me by sending references, information, and bibliographic materials. Last but not least I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to my wife Gene and our four children for all their many years of understanding, patience, and confidence. Most certainly without their support this dissertation would never have been completed.
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Eighteenth Century Spanish Literature. Professor Kenneth Scholberg.

Spanish American Literature. Professor Marta Morello-Frosch and Richard Armitage.
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I
ENRIQUE ANDERSON IMBERT AND MAGICAL REALISM

Enrique Anderson Imbert was born in Córdoba, Argentina, on February 12, 1910 and received his schooling in the cities of La Plata and Buenos Aires, graduating in 1946 with the degree of Doctor en Filosofía y Letras from the University of Buenos Aires. During these years as a student he came under the influence of four teachers who contributed significantly to his development both as a writer and as a man: philosophers Alejandro Korn and Francisco Romero and critics Pedro Henríquez Ureña and Amado Alonso. He has acknowledged his debt to these teachers in several places:

Excelentes maestros—Alejandro Korn, Francisco Romero, Amado Alonso, Pedro Henríquez Ureña y otros—me habituaron al estudio disciplinado y sistemático.¹

En mis años de adolescencia en La Plata ... tuve la suerte de poder arrimarme a dos grandes maestros: Alejandro Korn y Pedro Henríquez Ureña. Al lado de ellos me hice hombre. Les debo mi primera formación intelectual. Vacilaba yo entonces entre la filosofía y la literatura. Filosofía era lo que yo quería aprender con Korn; y literatura con Henríquez Ureña. La verdad es que todo lo fui aprendiendo de ambos por igual.²
La vocación de Francisco Romero no es publicar libros ... a lo que él se ha consagrado con un ánimo fresco, jovial, cordialísimo, es a la formación de jóvenes estudiosos de filosofía. Y gracias a este plasmar de conciencias, no a la distancia solemne de la cátedra, sino en la conversación, y en el paseo, y en la amistad de todos los días, Francisco Romero ha conseguido que, en un círculo cada vez más vasto, la Filosofía pueda presentarse sin que le den coces.³

Gracias a Amado Alonso, entonces director del Instituto de Filosofía de la Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires, me inicié en el análisis estilístico.⁴

Besides these statements, his writings—both creative and critical—bear ample witness to what he learned from these teachers in his formative years. During those same years he was also obtaining valuable experience as literary editor for the Socialist newspaper La Vanguardia of Buenos Aires. In that capacity he wrote articles which dealt with social and political, as well as literary, topics. Some of these articles were later collected and published under the title La flecha en el aire.⁵ In 1940 he began his teaching career at the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo and has continued in that profession at several universities in Argentina and in this country. He was for many years (1947-1965) on the faculty at the University of Michigan, leaving there in 1965 to become the first Victor S. Thomas Professor of Hispanic American Literature at Harvard—a position which he presently occupies.
When Anderson Imbert began his literary career, Spanish American literature was emerging from a period of uncertainty and fluctuation, after various "ismos"—ultraismo, vanguardismo, creacionismo—flourished briefly in the late 1920's and early 1930's. For the most part these short-lived movements affected mainly poetry; prose was, to a great extent, untouched by the vanguard movement since Modernism and seemed to go generally in the direction of realism and social purpose. The novel of the Mexican Revolution, the indianista novel, the political novel all flourished during this period; and the short story generally followed in the steps of the novel. Anderson Imbert's Vigilia (1934) was one of the first prose works of this time which did not see its purpose as social rather than aesthetic, thus turning away from the Realistic-Naturalistic literature. With this new work the author showed he was looking toward the European novels of stream of consciousness as his models, as he employed interior monologue, psychological rather than chronological time, private symbols. If we follow the definition of stream of consciousness fiction given by Robert Humphrey, "a type of fiction in which the basic emphasis is placed on exploration of the prespeech levels of consciousness for the purpose, primarily, of revealing the psychic being of the characters," Vigilia does not fulfill all
the particulars in that it does not deal with the main character on the prespeech level—the protagonist's thoughts are too well-ordered to be considered as being on that chaotic, disjointed plane. Nevertheless, the novel shared some of the stream of consciousness techniques and themes and thus it is important historically as well as artistically, since it pioneered a new trend in Argentine letters. The author recalls, "Amado Alonso ... me felicitó por mis experimentos en las técnicas del 'stream of consciousness', novedosas en la Argentina, donde el estilo de narrar era a la sazón uniformemente realista." Vigilia's literary worth was recognized by contemporary critics who awarded it a Premio de Literatura de la Municipalidad de Buenos Aires. Anderson Imbert himself feels that it is a personal milestone since, "está allí el sello poético, lírico, imaginativo" which characterizes all his works. His second novel, Fuga, continues this lyrical view of reality with the dual meaning of its title: "flight" and "fugue," the postulate that the novel itself is the only reality. The short stories and microcuentos of El grimorio, El gato de Cheshire, La sandía y otros cuentos, and La locura juega al ajedrez, while they run the gamut from realism to fantasy, all have in them certain elements which constitute what has come to be called magical realism, a movement which
will be discussed later in this chapter and which is basically a blending of reality-in-fantasy.

Although Anderson Imbert is probably best known in this country as an outstanding literary critic and theoretician, he has always considered himself to be more a creative than a critical writer, as he stated in an interview with Robert G. Mead, Jr.:

> Mi vocación de escritor es más poderosa que mi vocación de erudito. Prefiero opinar con libertad, con riesgo personal, aun con capricho, antes que someterme a técnicas más o menos académicas que prometen objetividad y, al final de cuentas, nos dan sólo una descripción exterior de los objetos literarios.11

His literary production consists of approximately two dozen books including text books, collections of essays, books on literary history and literary theory, two novels, and four books of short stories. In addition to this, several of his short stories have appeared in anthologies; and English translations have recently been made of two of his works: *Fuga* (Fugue) and *El grimorio* (The Other Side of the Mirror). Even in his non-creative works his concern for style is constant as Mead points out in his comment on *Historia de la literatura hispano-americana*:

> El talento del autor en la literatura de fantasia ... le ha sido de gran valor porque le ha permitido escribir un libro de texto que se lee con gusto ... No todas las historias que se han escrito se adaptan al uso escolar, pero el libro de Anderson Imbert se presta admirablemente a tal
If his ability as a creative writer has aided him in the composition of his critical works, the reverse is also true. He brings to the field of creative literature a vast knowledge of authors, works, philosophies, and movements, a knowledge which is equally present in his novels, short stories, and microcuentos, all of which are firmly placed in the realm of the mind, or more specifically, of the intellect.

As we have placed Anderson Imbert's fictional works in the realm of magical realism we will try to define this elusive term. According to Luis Leal, the term originated with the German art critic Franz Roh about 1925 and was first used with reference to Spanish American literature by Arturo Uslar Pietri in *Letras y hombres de Venezuela* (1948). Leal took a rather negative view of magical realism and attempted to define it more by what it is not than by what it is. In an earlier article, Angel Flores, on the other hand, took a more positive viewpoint and included among the magical realists Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Casares, Silvina Ocampo, Juan Rulfo, Enrique Amorim, Juan Carlos Onetti, Julio Cortázar, and Enrique Anderson Imbert. While it is not my purpose here to argue what magical realism is
or what it is not, I find myself more in agreement with Flores' concept of the term. To date, perhaps the best definition of magical realism is by E. Dale Carter, Jr. incorporating the elements enumerated by Flores:

... el realismo mágico es ante todo la combinación de la realidad y la fantasía; ... es la transformación de lo real en lo irreal; ... crea un concepto deformado del tiempo y del espacio; y finalmente, es una literatura dirigida a una minoría intelectual.

This is specific yet flexible enough to include a variety of subject matter and styles. In discussing his works with Mead, Anderson Imbert puts himself in this school:

Acaso debemos llamar "realismo mágico" a mi estilo. La energía de la imaginación y la habilidad sofística para dar visos de verisimilitud a las visiones más absurdas es lo que me propongo como escritor: mi prosa, pues, tiende al lirismo, a la metáfora, a la transformación de la realidad en un orden ilógico, pero estéticamente valioso.

The ensuing study will examine the ways in which Anderson Imbert gives an air of verisimilitude to the fantastic and, conversely, the ways in which he gives a feeling of unreality to occurrences which are within the realm of possibility. The method followed will be to discuss Vigilia, Fuga, his short stories, and his microcuentos in that order, noting in each the expression of reality and fantasy as well as a development which ultimately arrives at what the author says are "mis sonrisas sin gato"—a phrase which he took from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.
NOTES ON CHAPTER I


3. EAT, "Voluntad de sistema y pensamiento inquisitivo," La fleta en el aire (Buenos Aires: Editorial "La Vanguardia," 1941), p. 48. For ease of reference the initials "EAT" will be used to identify all works of which Enrique Anderson Imbert is the author.


5. Besides initiating him into the field of literary criticism, his job on the newspaper had another important aspect since a position with a newspaper is the point of departure for Miguel Sullivan in Fusa. The autobiographical element is present in Virilia and in the short stories and microcuentos as well as in Fusa. Some of these elements are as follows:

   Virilia—(1) takes place in La Plata, Anderson Imbert's boyhood home; (2) Beltrán Mulhall, the protagonist, is the same age as Anderson Imbert; (3) as el Histrión, Beltrán shows the same interest in the theater as Anderson Imbert.

   Fusa—(1) Miguel Sullivan is the same age as Anderson Imbert; (2) La Vanguardia, like La Antorcha of the novel, was a Socialist newspaper; (3) Anderson Imbert, like Miguel, attended the University while working for the newspaper.
short stories, microcuentos:—(1) a young journalist interviews a government minister ("El político"); (2) the main character is a professor, "Andert" ("Los ojos cerrados"); (3) a young Argentine receives a scholarship to go to the United States ("El viaje"); (4) the story takes place in La Plata, the protagonist's grandfather was French ("La Reina del Bosque").

6 A notable exception is the Modernist short story which was interested primarily in aesthetics rather than in social purpose.

7 The following quotation indicates that Anderson Thurber's generation was not characterized by a negative attitude but was looking positively for new methods of expression: "Los muchachos que aparecen en la década de 1930 no traen los consabidos 'anti' con que toda generación suele presentarse a la prensa. No fueron antimodernistas porque Rubén Darío era ya un tema bibliográfico, muerto y enterrado en los programas de los colegios secundarios. ... También fueron antivan guardistas porque no tomaban en serio la orgía de 'ísmos' de posguerra. Esa literatura se había negado a sí misma: no era posible negarla más. Los ultraristas más serios estaban prometiendo enmendar sus primeras bromas con una obra firmemente construida: los muchachos que empezaron a publicar desde 1930 no podían estar contra esas promesas. Sea, pues, porque el pasado se hubiera hecho inexplicablemente clásico o porque se hubiera desintegrado solo hasta no ofrecer resistencias o porque hubiera pedido una moratoria, lo cierto es que en 1930 había que lanzarse a la literatura sin el tramnolín de los 'anti'." FAT, Historia de la literatura iberoamericana (2 vols.; 4th ed.; Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1964), II, 151.


11 Ibid.


15 The following quotation summarizes Flores' concept of magical realism and those writers who practice it: "Meticulous craftsmen all, one finds in them the same preoccupation with style and also the same transformation of the common and the everyday into the awesome and the unreal. ... It is predominately an art of surprises. From the very first line the reader is thrown into a timeless flux and/or the unconceivable, freighted with dramatic suspense: ... From then on the narrative moves smoothly, translucently bound for an infinite, timeless perspective ... Time exists in a kind of timeless fluidity and the unreal happens as a part of reality. ... [A fantastic occurrence] is not a matter of conjecture or discussion: it happened and it was accepted by the other characters as an almost normal event. Once the reader accepts the fait accompli, the rest follows with a logical precision. Nowhere is the story weighed down with lyrical effusions, needlessly baroque descriptions or 'cuadros de costumbres,' ... The practitioners of magical realism cling to reality as if to prevent 'literature' from getting in their way, ... The narrative proceeds in well-prepared, increasingly intense steps, which ultimately may lead to one great ambiguity or confusion, ... The magical realists do not cater to a popular taste, rather they address themselves to the sophisticated, those not merely initiated in aesthetic mysteries but versed in subtleties. ... Their style seeks precision and leanness, ... their plots are logically conceived ... " Flores, "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction," Hispania, XXXVIII 2 (May, 1955), pp. 190-191.


II

VIGILIA: THE NIGHT JOURNEY

In discussing reality and fantasy in the creative literature of Enrique Anderson Imbert it is advisable to begin with his novela Vigilia for two reasons: first is the fact that it is the earliest of his creative works, having appeared originally in 1934; second—and more important from the critical point of view—is Anderson Imbert's statement that Vigilia contains those elements which characterize his narrative literature and which appear in a more mature state in his short stories and in his second novel Fuga. After Vigilia was published the author did not view it as a finished piece of work, as he states in the prologue to the edition of Vigilia and Fuga published in 1963:

Pedro Henríquez Ureña, que leyó el borrador de mi primera novela, me aconsejó que ... suprimiera los pasajes más novelescos. Así lo hice, y en 1934 el taller del diario La Vanguardia ... me imprimió Vigilia. ... ahora restablezco el texto original, con los retoques que fui haciendo aún después de sacar a luz el tomo. Porque a pesar del tirón de las linotipos, que me arrancó de las entrañas un libro, Vigilia siguió alimentándose dentro de mí. Los amigos ... me hablaban de la versión impresa. Yo me daba cuenta ... de cuáles eran los tejidos sanos que debía mantener bien irrigados con mi sangre y cuáles los que convenía dejar secar. ... Y así la carpeta donde
guardaba los originales completos de Vigilia continuó formándose. Aquella carpeta de manuscritos es la que publico, un cuarto de siglo después.  

It is this final version of Vigilia with which we are concerned in this chapter—the original text as modified during the middle and latter part of the 1930's.

By examining the world as it is seen through the eyes of the protagonist Beltrán Mulhall and noting the conflicts which he experiences and the manner in which he resolves (or attempts to resolve) them we shall then be able to turn to Fuga, the short stories, and the microcuentos, observing the reality found there and discovering what Anderson Imbert called, in his interview with Mead, his "expresiones más maduras."

In this chapter I shall at times refer to "exterior reality" and "interior reality," two terms which should be defined prior to beginning the study. By the former is meant the everyday world around Beltrán—his parents, his friends, etc. The phrase "interior reality," on the other hand, means that transformation which Beltrán makes of those everyday things—whether the transformation be in his mind or in the entries in his Diario íntimo. The term—in this chapter—is also synonymous with "fantasy." The problem of exterior and interior reality is found in four different "areas" of Vigilia: (1) the pandilla, (2) Beatriz, (3) the Diario íntimo,
and (4) the physical world around Beltrán. On many occasions two or more of these elements are intertwined to such an extent that it is impossible to say to which category a given incident belongs. This, of course, serves to stress the fact that fantasy, in Beltrán's world, is an all-encompassing factor and not limited to one small segment of his life. Everything and everyone with whom he comes in contact is sooner or later transformed into something different—something which fits more easily into his purely mental world.

Before discussing these four areas let us pause to consider the theme of Vigilia and how it is developed throughout the novel. The work gravitates around a Quest—a quest that is as real, and at the same time as nebulous, as that of the Holy Grail. Although I do not intend to imply that Beltrán's search for himself is a twentieth century version of the search for the Grail, there are some similarities between these two searches. In his study The Quest for the Holy Grail, Frederick W. Locke makes the following observation:

Among the archetypal images of mankind, the image of a spiritual quest is fundamental, and for this reason is one of the most profound of all literary themes. . . . It is the search for the ultimate foundation of his being, for that which lies behind all the images of reality and which creates for him those images. The truth that the quester discovers at the end of the Journey is essentially incommunicable and can be only obliquely suggested.
Throughout *Vigilia* Beltrán is searching, attempting to discover this "ultimate foundation of his being"; and this quest is seen in three elements suggested by the title of the novel—elements which are essential to the comprehension of the work—wakefulness, night, and sleep or dream.  

In the novel Beltrán is awake, observing, commenting, searching; and the continuing nature of his quest is emphasized by Anderson Imbert's choice of images which, for the most part, are characterized by continuous movement. His entire life—or rather that portion of his life which we see in *Vigilia*—consists of a kind of vigil in which he is constantly examining himself and his thoughts, searching for something definite and concrete upon which he will be able to build his existence. He is essentially a lost and lonely soul, groping with the problems of adolescence and attempting to discover who and what he is. He seeks physical, mental, and emotional companionship and longs to be a part of something—part of what does not really seem to matter.

Often Beltrán's search—as most quests—is confused as exemplified by the aimlessness of his wanderings, the frequently chaotic nature of his dreams, and by the night that serves as background for most of the story. Here again is a similarity to the Quest for the Grail:
It is a dark voyage, a night journey from which no man will return as he left, if he returns at all. The way is long and the dangers almost insurmountable, and if he be alone, man cannot succeed in the high adventure.

Beltrán is alienated from his parents and seeks to alleviate his loneliness by the companionship of boys his own age, creating the Genio which unites the five members of the pandilla into a single unit. In the members of the gang he sees others whom he would like to have join him in his quest (although they are seemingly unaware of the turmoil in Beltrán and indeed of the very existence of a quest), but they cannot be his guide. This role is reserved for Beatriz, the idealized love with whom he desires a platonic relationship and by whom he is finally rejected. Beltrán feels that there is—or must be—a basic sense of order to the world, but he is unable to find the key which will make ultimate order out of the present chaos. This is best expressed in a passage, while thinking about the city of La Plata (the ajedrez loco), he metaphorically refers to the whole of his life:

El, Beltrán, jugaba a solas con un ajedrez loco, y veía los cuadros simultáneamente, desde todas las piezas: desde la torre, desde el caballo, desde el alfil, desde el peón, desde el rey, desde la reina; y el tablero adquiría así vértigos de ruleta.

The image of the chess game implies a basic order since each piece moves in a prescribed manner; however, if one views the movements of all pieces simultaneously, the
result is complete and utter chaos. This is further stressed in the last part of the metaphor where a precise game of strategy, chess, has become roulette, a game of chance. Another element seen in this passage is the haunting idea of solitude and loneliness which is ever present in Beltrán. It is made evident by stating that he is playing alone—even though at the moment he is in the company of the other members of the gang, himself the center of attention. Another dimension of the protagonist's confusion and turmoil is evident in the fact that, by playing the ajedrez loco alone, he becomes his own adversary in life. A chess game is basically a contest between two opponents in which each one attempts to overcome the other by virtue of intelligence and skillful playing. Having no other opponent, Beltrán is contending against himself—a match which may well bring about a loss of self.  

The titles of the four sections of Vigilia also complement the movement-journey motif: "Primer nocturno, hacia el otoño," "Segundo nocturno, hacia el invierno," "Tercer nocturno, hacia la primavera," "Cuarto nocturno, hacia el verano." The numerical sequence, the preposition hacia, the logical and normal sequence of the seasons—all indicate movement and forward progression. Moreover, the succession of one season after another
reminds us of the basic order of natural cycles, patterns underlying the confusion in Beltrán. Since he is unable to discover his own order, he remains lost and lonely; and it is this loneliness that he is at last forced to accept when his imaginary world, stripped bare of the creations he had placed in it, refuses to disappear and holds him fast in his solitary and self-made prison.

Turning to the second connotation of Vigilia, we find that Beltrán's searching is indeed "a dark voyage, a night journey" since many important incidents—incidents which have a profound and lasting impression upon him—take place during the hours of darkness with a small and bitter illumination at the end. The pandilla, which is the center of his actions throughout the greater part of the novel, comes together every day at five o'clock in the afternoon and embarks upon its journeys through La Plata during the evening hours. Beltrán's visit to the bordello (a frustrating attempt to prove his virility to himself), his clumsy and unsuccessful attempts at love-making with Sabina, his somewhat unwilling romance with Rina—all occur at night. In fact, the first two mentioned occur not only at night but also during an electrical power failure, i.e. in virtually total darkness. Man-made night is likewise of great import in Vigilia since it is in a movie house—a "night" created by man—that Beltrán experiences his most traum-
matic moment—rejection by his beloved Beatriz. Anderson Imbert further emphasizes the importance of night by entitling the four subdivisions of the novel "nocturnos" rather than "capítulos" and by preceding each nocturno with an epigraph whose theme is night. All these epigraphs, incidentally, are taken from the Diario íntimo of Beltrán. The exterior darkness which serves as a background for a large portion of the novel is a physical manifestation of the darkness found within the protagonist himself. Just as one can be deceived by sounds and shapes in the night and become confused and even lost, so Beltrán Mulhall, in his quest for himself, becomes disoriented in the night of his mind. His generally aimless wanderings through the darkened streets of La Plata (whether alone or in the company of others) parallel the meanderings of his mind in search of his own identity. In this all-pervading atmosphere of darkness—whether it be man-made or not—the fact that things and people often tend to assume shapes and seem to become that which they are not, creates a new reality, the kind that Walter de la Mare has described:

The world without appears to have been lulled into a tense reverie of attention, or to have withdrawn itself into its own private affairs... the recurrent onset and lulling of the wind is less like a mere formless noise than the accents of a voice roaming through a world countless centuries before the spirit of man stirred its dust...
Each gigantic tree wears a gravity and solemnity as of Keats' forest senators. Every flitting moth becomes a private visitor with an unspoken message. Every owl-squeak is a half-secret countersign. And every drift of open grass or road or meadow becomes at length as familiar as was the forest of Arden to Titania, to her lovely Indian boy and her elves. At the same time we find ourselves straying into far less familiar regions than usual of the mind . . . . The imagination bestirs itself in the dark; the serpent sloughs its daily skin. And perhaps because night actually attracts less kindly phantom fauna than the day, evil and disaster are associated with darkness: dark thoughts, a darkened outlook, dark deeds, the night of the soul.11

In addition to being the realm of the fantastic, the mysterious, the unreal, or the unknown we see night as a disguise for reality in the sense that the metamorphosis which takes place under cover of darkness obscures (literally and figuratively) the true being of a given thing. In Vigilia, Anderson Imbert stresses principally the idea of the transformation which occurs—or appears to occur—during the night and the new reality which emerges with darkness. We thus see Beltrán, the wakeful one, existing primarily in a world which lends itself quite readily to flights of fancy, to creations more compatible with his inner self than those which surround him.

The third component of the title, "sleep" or "dream," is present by implication rather than by actual statement. In much the same way that in word associations a given term will often suggest its opposite, vigilia can easily
intimate its opposite, sueño. The idea of sueño—par-
ticularly with reference to its meaning "dream"—opens
up a new dimension at the same time that it continues
the themes already treated. A good portion of Beltrán's
time is spent in dreaming, mostly while he is awake.¹²
These daydreams, or reveries, occur constantly and their
structure will vary considerably, from the coherent and
realistic to the chaotic and fantastic, serving Beltrán
as a means for transforming the world around him or to
create some special situation for his own purposes. The
metamorphoses of things in the everyday world will be
treated in the appropriate paragraphs dealing with the
Diario íntimo (in which he records these changes) and
the mutation of conventional scenes into his fantastic
world.

There are, however, two specific types of daydream
which should be treated here since they are neither dealt
with in the Diary nor are they transformations of an
exterior reality. The first type occurs at the beginning
of the "Segundo nocturno" and exemplifies the free asso-
ciation of images in Beltrán's mind. As this section
begins, Beltrán is seated at the piano playing the fox
trot "Japonesita ven..." as the following images flow
through his mind:

("...Pedir dinero a papá, antes de que
llegue el Boletín del Colegio. ¡El Boletín
vendra con aplazos, seguramente! 3, 3, 3..."
Notas en rojo. El rojo de los domingos en el calendario. ¡Ojo! Yo, Beltrán, domingueo demasiado en el Colegio. Bueno ¿no es mejor ser domingo que ser miércoles? A propósito. Pegando las hojas arrancadas del tacón del calendario podría hacerse una alfombra. Por esa alfombra he corrido y me he arrastrado. Curioso: las largas horas en que me aburrí las recuerdo comprimidas en un instante, y los fugaces instantes de vida intensa ahora se estiran en el recuerdo. Moraleja: correr, no arrastrarse, por la alfombra de días del calendario. "Japonesita ven, que quiero yo libar..."...

In the paragraph above there is no logical progression from one thought to the next. They are not, however, completely random thoughts for Beltrán since each one is occasioned by the one preceding it. What this particular series of images reveals is the complex nature of Beltrán’s concerns: money, school, nature of time, Beatriz ("Japonesita ven..." recalls the time when she was costumed as a Japanese girl). To be sure, this is not the full extent of his thoughts; but from the passage we do gain an insight into the different levels of consciousness at which he is functioning. Some of the specific items are rather minor and concrete (money, school), others purely emotional (Beatriz) or metaphysical (time). His inner self is jointly dealing with reality and fantasy.

The second type of daydream occurs in the "Cuarto nocturno" and is actually a series of daydreams. Beltrán becomes aware of a strong sexual urge and fears his
love for Beatriz may be merely carnal. Since these mus-
ings are all essentially the same, it will suffice to
treat only one here:

---Acabo de salvarla de un naufragio. Los
detalles no importan. Está desvanecida sobre
la playa, desnuda, con los cabellos derrama-
dos. ¡Qué hermosa! Es necesario dar aire a
sus pulmones. Ya está. He puesto mis labios
sobre los suyos en un beso desesperado y
casto. Es necesario darle respiración artifi-
cial. Mis manos recorren las curvas suaves de
su cuerpo; a veces tropiezan con la turgencia
del seno... Esos senos blancos y enhiestos
¿me producen algún deseo impuro?... ¡Hurra!
¡Se ha salvado la pureza de mi amor! 14

While this is basically a realistic dream in the sense
that the situation as given is within the realm of possi-
bility, it is also fantastic as throughout the dream
there is a partial distortion of the real world in that
Beltrán creates a situation to conform to his desires.
Here we find no free association of thoughts; Beltrán
exercises rigid control over the dream as he seeks to
prove the desired pure quality of his love. Everything
that appears in the dream is pertinent as an element of
self-examination. The structural dissimilarity between
this reverie and the one quoted form the "Segundo noc-
turno" points out the difference in purpose between the
two—or rather, the fact that one was created for a spe-
cific purpose, while the other has no predetermined
function. In spite of the lack of resemblance in form,
we see that there exists a basic similarity between the
two in that they both expose to the reader the problems which Beltrán faces in his quest. As with the other connotations of Vigilia, Anderson Imbert has made use of the idea of sueño in the development of the theme of his first novel. Let us now turn to the four "areas" of Vigilia mentioned previously and observe how they constitute the interior reality of Beltrán's mind.

Looking first at the pandilla, we see that it must be viewed from two different perspectives: (1) we must deal with the five members as individuals and (2) we must look at the group as a collective entity. The members themselves stand out not because of their physical appearances—which are dealt with in rather general terms—but because of their psychological attributes, which are treated in much greater detail. Frequently the only physical characteristics mentioned are those which tend to underline or reinforce the psychology of the individual concerned. Each member of the pandilla is seen as representing a certain quality from his first until his last appearance in the novel. Basilio—la Materia, Roberto—la Neura, Esteban—la Norma, Aníbal—el Egoísta, Beltrán—el Histrión, the characters of all five are defined by what they represent. Even Beltrán, through whose eyes we see most of what occurs in the work, is always the Actor; and it is always from this point of view that he is presented. He is treated in
greater depth than any other individual, always assuming (or attempting to assume) the role of someone or something else. He is defined in terms which refer either directly or indirectly to acting: "imitar," "actor," "representar," "simulación," "disimular," "engañar," "comportarse," "en la postura de." Although it might be argued that some—particularly the last few—do not refer specifically to histrionics, the manner in which they are used in particular passages can definitely be interpreted in the light of this major characteristic of Beltrán's. For example, the word "engañar" can easily be applied to an actor since he does "deceive" his audience, i.e. those watching him see him as being someone (or something) that he is not. And it is precisely in this sense that the word is used with reference to Beltrán. He consciously assumes an attitude in his attempt to make Rina think he is fond of her when—in reality—he feels nothing. His deceit is carried off so well that the comment is made by the author that he even ends up by deceiving himself. Unfortunately, his pretense is not so complete as he might wish it to be, and Rina chides him saying that he does not know how to disguise (disimular) his lack of love for her. The point to be made here is not how well or how poorly Beltrán carries off his role but merely the fact that he does assume an identity that is not his and that he believes in it.
Essentially the same thing is true with the verb "comportarse." In his dreaming about Beatriz, it is stated that he might be pardoned for his pride in behaving (comportarse) like a man. Here again is the Actor—being something other than what he is. Near the end of Vigilia, disgusted with himself, Beltrán falls on his bed "en la postura del feto." Having previously expressed his desire to be un-born ("¡Si pudiera desnacer, volver a la nada!")¹⁵), by assuming the fetal position he is once more the Actor—although through pantomime rather than words; and Beltrán, a young man in the form of an unborn fetus, physically but silently expresses his desire to withdraw from his present self.¹⁶ This is not to be interpreted as a complete negation of life; to do so would denote a termination of the quest. When this scene takes place Beltrán has not yet been rejected by Beatriz and therefore still has her before him as an ideal. Consequently, this negative attitude must be viewed as a stage in his constant searching—a momentary frustration from which he will recover and proceed onward. The important element in this scene is that Beltrán is best able to express himself through imitation: his self-disgust imitates the negative view of Roberto la Neura toward life; his futile attempts to play the lover are a sorry parody of the sexually oriented (and successful) Aníbal; even his Intimate Diary, he remarks, is written in imi-
tation of the styles of others. Beltrán's entire "being," i.e. his state of existence, is one of "becoming"; it is characterized not by permanence but by changeableness. This shifting of identities is a further reflection—and a constant reminder—of the basic theme of *Vigilia*: Beltrán becomes this or that. He does not, and cannot, remain the same since throughout the novel he is looking, questing, searching for his own Grail; and—so long as he has before him the vision of Beatriz—he will strive to reach this difficult, and possibly unattainable, goal.

What is true of Beltrán is also true of the other four members of the *pandilla*. From beginning to end not only the physical characteristics but also the actions and the speeches of the young men emphasize the particular psychological attribute of each one. The stress upon the psychological characteristics accentuates the point of view from which each youth views the world and the other members of the gang. Thus Basilio—the fat one—is concerned with his physical well-being and cares little for anything else. Roberto's outlook and comments are uniformly negative; he looks on, and sees, only the black side of life. Esteban, representing the Norm, is always well-ordered and is the one who attempts to brake any potentially extreme actions on the part of his companions. He is also the one who is the least influential
among the five. Aníbal, as the Egotist, always wishes to be foremost in the group and is oriented primarily toward sexual exploits. For him all girls are the same, and they have only one purpose: to provide enjoyment for him. The result of the one-sidedness of these characters is that they appear to be allegorical figures like those in some Medieval morality play, although devoid of its didactic intent. Anderson Imbert's unidimensional presentation of characters has a twofold purpose: first, Vigilia is established as a novel centered around the study of a character rather than as a novel of dramatic conflict; second, the flatness of the characters provides a type of necessity for joining them into a unit—a point which will be discussed later.

Edwin Muir, in his essay "Time and Space," notes that all prose fiction leans toward being a work either of character or of dramatic conflict but that these divisions are not mutually exclusive:

There are of course no novels purely of character or merely of conflict; there are only novels which are predominantly the one or the other.18

Given this division, he goes on to say,

... the imaginative world of the dramatic novel is in Time, the imaginative world of the character novel is Space. In the one, this roughly is the argument, Space is more or less given, and the action is built up in Time; in the other, Time is assumed, and the action is a static pattern, continuously redistributed and shuffled, in
Space. . . . On the one hand we see characters living in a society, on the other figures moving from a beginning to an end. These two types of the novel are neither opposites, then, nor in any important sense complements of each other; they are rather two distinct modes of seeing life: in Time, personally, and in Space, socially. 19

In Vigilia Anderson Imbert shows us that chronological time is passing, but this movement of time is made less important and less obvious by having the main "action" of the novel take place in Beltrán's thoughts. 20 The Beltrán we find at the conclusion of the work is virtually the same one we met at the outset—little, if anything, about him has changed. Muir points out the handling of time, noting,

... another striking difference between the feeling of time in the character and the dramatic novel; how it seems to linger in the one and fly in the other. If we open Vanity Fair at the first chapter and listen to Becky Sharp, and then take it up toward the end, when we know that a great number of things have happened and many years elapsed, we shall have a curious feeling of having marked time, of still being on the same spot; somewhat the same feeling one might have if one were to fall asleep in a room where people were discussing some question, and wake up to find the discussion at exactly the same stage. 21

A similar situation exists in Vigilia where we see that Beltrán, at the close of the novel is still vainly attempting to find himself. It is true that with the loss of Beatriz his quest has taken a different turn, but the very fact that during the year of searching his various attempts have resulted not in any forward move—
ment but rather in lateral movement—if indeed we can assign any specific direction to his actions. The fact that Beltrán has made no progress gives the reader the "curious feeling of having marked time"; he realizes that there has been no real development in Beltrán's character (since development of character implies forward movement of time) and that chronological time is not of utmost importance in *Vigilia*.

The second purpose of presenting the characters of the gang as "flat" is seen in the fact that it is Beltrán who underscores the characteristic of each youth and refers to them either by words (v. p. 24) or phrases which identify them or by terms which—by their implication—carry out the basic characteristic assigned to each individual. By stressing one characteristic only, Beltrán makes each member of the *pandilla* but one part of a complete individual, thus imposing the idea that to be complete they all need each other (and, by inclusion, they need him). He creates the *pandilla* as a unit made up of differing facets just as all individuals are composed of many different (and often conflicting) characteristics. The unity of the *barra* is expressed by Beltrán in the opening pages when he thinks,

("Somos cinco yo. Nos sumamos unas cosas, nos restamos otras y resulta un nosotros. Cinco yo igual a un nosotros. Y este nosotros nos sujeta a todos. Nos sujeta como una barra de barco.")22
The five-in-one unity is expressed in other ways by Beltrán, but all are merely different means of indicating his personal need to identify with the other four. His awareness of, and his need for, this imposed unity is closely tied to his character as el Histrión. As the Actor he must have an audience before whom he may perform; he needs to be appreciated just as he needs air to breathe. While he is the center of attention of the pandilla he generally feels a part of it and vice versa. His need to identify has been temporarily satisfied. When he is separated from the rest, he is able to draw upon the idea that the five of them form a single unit, that their gestures, their speech, their thoughts have become so intermingled as to be the gestures, speech, and thoughts, not of five individuals, but of one being, the barra.

As the symbol of the unity of the pandilla Beltrán invents the Genio de la pandilla, a being that is as real to him as any of the individual members of the gang. Although he seeks identity with the others, Beltrán is hindered from sharing his deeper thoughts and feelings with them because of his being the Actor. Once again this characteristic keeps him from a full and free relationship with his friends; his role is to "deceive"—to hide his true personality behind some assumed identity (or identities)—and this deception must be played out
to the end. His only real attempts to communicate his inner thoughts are his conversations—actually his monologues—with the Genio. The Genio fulfills several functions for Beltrán: he is a type of God-figure before whom Beltrán can and does lay bare his soul and confess such things as his dislike for Aníbal; furthermore, he is the reason why five youths, so diverse in their attitudes, associate. Beltrán sees the Genio, in this respect, as a manifestation of the elusive term "friendship." Early in the novel we read: "...La amistad había plasmado a los cinco ... acercándolos y fundiéndolos en una sola modulación." This statement is followed closely by the introduction of the Genio as the one who unifies the five individuals:

While Beltrán does not say specifically that the Genio stands for the friendship that exists among them, his awareness of the "cement" provided by the Genio to join them together definitely assigns this role to him. With the Genio, Beltrán wishes to fix permanently the idea that the pandilla is a character, one that is independent of its several members and a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. He clings desperately to the
belief in the unity of the **pandilla** and wishes to keep them together since—aside from Beatriz—they are the closest thing to an absolute in his life. The gang does not function as the absolute as does Beatriz; Beltrán does not seek to make himself worthy of them, nor are his actions directed toward receiving their approval. He seems conscious that this "collective self" of the **barra** is a fiction, so that even the particular image he uses to identify it—that of a constellation—denotes a certain falseness. Constellations, as such, do not exist; individual stars exist. A constellation is created by man when he imposes upon these separate entities a type of unity so as to create an imaginary order in the heavens. In exactly the same way Beltrán has imposed a unity upon five separate individuals with the purpose of grouping them into a single character. If he is able to believe in the **pandilla** as a unit, he has something fairly definite to which he may cling; but if he ceases to believe in this unit he will see only the five individuals who are together only as a result of "amistad accidental" (Beltrán's own phrase near the end of the novel). And, as the one who benefited most from the togetherness of the gang, he will be the one who suffers most from its disintegration. This, in fact, is exactly what does happen. As a part of renouncing elements of his world near the conclusion of **Vigilia** he rejects the
even to denying that it ever existed other than as an "accidental friendship." Far from freeing him, the destruction of this element of his fantastic world removes the last vestige of permanency from him and leaves him alone in the shifting, changing, formless prison of his own mind.

The second creation of Beltrán's is quite different from the members of the gang in that she appears physically once in the novel, speaks only two sentences for a total of nineteen words, but nonetheless is a motivating force throughout the work. She is constantly in the thoughts of Beltrán and exists both in fact and as his creation. This character is Beatriz. The name chosen by Anderson Imbert for Beltrán's beloved can hardly be accidental; immediately there comes to mind Dante and his idealized Beatrice, his guide through Paradise. Beatriz serves much the same purpose for Beltrán. She is the absolute in an ever-changing world; she sustains him and spurs him onward in his quest. Since she also exists as a creature of flesh and blood outside Beltrán's fantastic world and since—until the movie house scene near the close of the novel—there is no juxtaposition of the real and the fantastic (as there is in the case of the barra and its members), there is a tension between the two Beatrices. This tension is suggested by Beltrán in the first mention of Beatriz when—perhaps
subconsciously—in his thoughts he parallels "la bella imagen de Beatriz ... esa fea sensación de Beatriz." The comparison is no longer than the pronouncement of the phrases, but the necessary contrast between the two is introduced. Furthermore, these two expressions set up the domain of Beltrán's interior and exterior worlds. The former is the world of images and is beautiful, while the latter is the world of ugly sensations. Since these phrases are uttered in connection with the first mention of the Diario íntimo, we are also made aware of the basic content of his writing and the general nature of the transformations which take place within it.

This is the sole reference to the real Beatriz, i.e. the Beatriz of the exterior world, until the scene in the theater when she makes her only appearance. Her prolonged absence enables Beltrán's fancy to enlarge on "la bella imagen de Beatriz" and to envision her (as Dante envisioned his Beatrice) as the symbol of all beauty, all good, all virtue, all purity—in short—the perfect being of whom he must attempt to make himself worthy, following in the tradition of Amadís and Oriana or Don Quixote and Dulcinea. To separate even further the two Beatrices, Beltrán often thinks of her as "disfrazada de japonesita," her appearance when he first became enamored of her. Thus Beltrán's created image of her is based not on the real Beatriz but on a Beatriz
who is herself a distortion of reality, and it is this image twice removed from the exterior world that inspires Beltrán in his quest. Wherever he may turn, whatever he may wish to do, he is continually confronted with the thought of his beloved; things and places which have little or no significance for others become symbols or remembrances and perform the function of recalling to him his ideal. 28 Other creations of the exterior world of Beltrán fluctuate and change form, e.g. his various terms to describe the pandilla. He is continually searching for the perfect concept which will completely and ultimately define the barra or the exterior world, and the shifting images reflect the quest of his mind for this essence. Only in the case of Beatriz is there constancy. As the center of his interior world, she is the one invariable, the one constant. He has created her as the sumnum bonum of all things, and it is this position that her image must maintain if Beltrán is ever to make order of the confusion that is his existence. Throughout the novel he is searching for an absolute on which to build, and Beatriz is that absolute until she rejects him. Her function is different from that of the members of the gang because of the relationship that exists between her (i.e. the "created" Beatriz) and Beltrán. Although he sees himself reflected in the pandilla and a component of it, neither the gang as a unit
nor the members as individuals are ideals against which he measures the worth of every act. This is perhaps best seen in the "Tercer nocturno" when Beltrán, after being rebuffed by Sabina, has made his decision to gain sexual experience by visiting a brothel. Beatriz' name is mentioned only once during the entire episode when the thought "... si Beatriz se enterara ..." passes through his mind. Although we have no indication as to what the conclusion of the thought might be, the fact that her bella imagen does not appear until he has left the bordello and purged himself of guilt feelings clearly indicates her function as a measurement of absolute good. This is the outstanding difference between Beatriz and the pandilla: the latter is an important part of Beltrán's interior world but not the hub around which everything else turns and on which everything depends. Secondly, the two pandillas—that of the exterior world and that of the interior world—are continually in contact with each other, leaving no tension between the two such as exists between the two Beatrices. Beltrán does not have—or does not take—the opportunity to create individuals (i.e. Basilio, Roberto, Esteban, Aníbal) who are quite far removed from their flesh and blood counterparts. In the case of Beatriz, as mentioned previously, her physical separation from Beltrán provides the means for his creation of an idealized image. So real has
this invented Beatriz become for Beltrán that, during
the series of daydreams in which he tests the quality of
his love, the comment is made that

Esa Beatriz con la que operaba en sus expe-
imentos—mucho más concreta que la verda-
dera—era una Beatriz inexistente, hecha
con volúmenes atisbados en otros cuerpos. 30

Here is an echo of the tension between the "bella imagen"
and the "fea sensación": the statement that the nonex-
istent Beatriz is far more substantial than the true one.
The tension introduced early in the "Primer nocturno"
reappears when the Beatriz de carne y hueso is seated
beside Beltrán in the movie house. The scene which Bel-
trán had expected to be one of pure bliss is instead one
of disenchantment.

Beltrán se sentó junto a Beatriz y la
miró. Y a pesar de que para eso había ido,
la miró extrañado como si ella acabara de caer
de una nube. Extrañado de que estuviese a su
lado. Extrañado de que ella, de carne y hueso,
acudiera a la cita. Extrañado de sentir muy
en sus adentros, que la presencia real de Bea-
triz no era de veras necesaria, que, paradójic-
camente, cierta distancia física entre ambos
favorecía la perspectiva para ver mejor la
belleza de su amor. Beatriz había cambiado.
Aquella Beatriz disfrazada de japonesita, en
el lejano Carnaval, ahora, vestida de azul,
había crecido. 31

Beltrán's surprise at his own reaction is evident by the
repetition of the word "extrañado" four times during his
contemplation of Beatriz. The tension created by bella
imagen and fea sensación is recalled here in the phrases
disfrazada de japonesita (representing the fantastic
Beatriz of Beltrán's imagination) and vestida de azul (representing the real Beatriz of the exterior world). The only solution to the problem presented by these rivals is the destruction of one or the other since Beltrán, who had consciously or unconsciously created the original tension, shows no capacity or desire to reconcile the differences between the two Beatrices. It is possible that another solution—that of physical distance suggested in Beltrán's thoughts—might also be feasible, but we do not know whether or not it would come to pass since Beatriz makes the decision and breaks the tension by uttering the words of farewell:

—Beltrán, yo no siento por usted lo que sentía antes. Perdóname, pero, ¿no crees que es mejor que terminemos?  

With these nineteen words Beltrán's worlds—interior and exterior—begin to crumble. Her rejection of him has removed the only absolute from his life; all that remains now is the shifting, changing non-absolute upon which it is impossible to base anything firm. Without the fantastic Beatriz he no longer has any criterion to guide him; and it is the destruction of the Beatriz of his interior world and the final separation from the Beatriz of his exterior world which leads to his divorcing himself from the pandilla. Left without the constancy provided by his idealized Beatriz, Beltrán is condemned to an untenable situation. He can destroy his fantastic world com-
pletely (since it has no firm foundation for him to con-
tinue his quest) and remain in the real world—from which he is completely alienated; or he may retreat into his fantastic world where he will have to exist minus the vision of Beatriz which had given meaning to his life and a sense of polarity to his every action. In either case the road leads only downhill; and, from this point on to the end of Vigilia, we observe the total disinte-
gration of Beltrán which terminates with his imprisonm
within the fantastic world he has created.

A diary, by its very nature, is a somewhat unique
genre since

A consciousness of some literary capacity, how-
ever meagre it may be or however unjustific
ified any such assumption may be, stands
behind every other form of writing except
letter writing. In diary writing no such conscious
ness need exist nor indeed is any
literary capacity necessary. Diary writing
is within the reach of every human being who
can put pen to paper and no one is in a more
advantageous position than anyone else for
keeping a diary. . . . Diaries may or may not
be called literature, some undoubtedly have
literary value, but this has nothing whatever
to do with their merit as diaries.33

In this dissertation we are concerned with Beltrán's
Diario íntimo as a reflection of his inner self and not
as literature, although its literary qualities are unde-
niable. Diaries and journals are kept for a wide variety
of reasons, and critics seem divided even as to what may
or may not be a "diary."34 Beginning with Arthur Pon-
sonby's definition, "the daily or periodic record of personal experiences and impressions," we find that Beltrán's journal can generally be considered as falling within that area. Beltrán's Intimate Diary contains many of the characteristics Ponsonby sees in this genre; and it is necessary to point these out in order to understand—in conjunction with the discussion of the reality-fantasy question in the Diary—its exact makeup.

Any diary is by nature fragmentary, i.e. a diarist cannot possibly record every single occurrence of every single day; therefore, the basic task of the writer is to be selective and to record only those things which he believes to be important. Anderson Imbert utilizes this feature of the diary and even carries it one step further by atomizing the fragments. He has not presented with an entire "Diario íntimo, escrito por Beltrán Mulhall" but only isolated portions of such a work. His choosing to record only selections from it intensifies the essentially fragmentary nature of Beltrán's life. His existence does not go along smoothly—the four sections which make up Vigilia are mere fragments—and the fragmentation of the Diary accentuates the jumbled, incomplete nature of Beltrán's world.

The motif of the diary also aids in the continuation of the basic theme throughout the novel; and again we turn to Ponsonby:
Diarists are interested in themselves, they are watching themselves journeying along the road of life . . . They are awake, alert, and alive to all that concerns them, and this degree of egotism will make the busiest of them find time and opportunity for writing notes.\(^{36}\)

Concerning this point the question as to the exact nature of Beltrán's Diary and his attitude toward the world around him is irrelevant. Regardless of the content of the Diary or Beltrán's feelings, the fact remains that he shows enough interest in life and in himself to keep some type of record. Implicit in the definition of a diary is a connotation of the passing of time which in turn recalls the idea of "journey" found in the theme of *Vigilia;\(^{37}\) and Beltrán's "vigil" is accentuated in his noting incidents in his *Diario íntimo.*

Coupled with this general purpose in writing his journal, the diarist usually keeps his record without the thought of a reader in mind. Although there are exceptions to this rule\(^{38}\) and although we cannot definitely say for whom the individual writes if not for some ultimate reader, it is generally held that the writer is more concerned with recording an experience than with communicating it to others. The private nature of a diary is also emphasized by the fact that frequently it was not known that certain individuals were diarists until the record itself was discovered after their death. This ignorance on the part of one's contemporaries con-
cerning the existence of a diary is present in *Vigilia*. In spite of the importance Beltrán attaches to his Diary, the members of the *pandilla* seem unaware of its existence by the fact that no one alludes to it at all. From this it is safe to assume that Beltrán kept it to himself. Another method of insuring the secrecy of a diary—in this case its content—is to keep it in some sort of cipher, as did Samuel Pepys. Beltrán's transformations of exterior reality, while not designed for this purpose, effectively function as a means of cloaking the reality from which the contents of the *Diario íntimo* are taken. He is conscious of this fact when he comments,

... si alguien leyese su *Diario íntimo*, no reconocería, ni siquiera en los pasajes más narrativos, la realidad de la que él, Beltrán, emergía; pero tal vez conocería que él, Beltrán, embotellaba toda la realidad, fermentada en vino tinto.

The transformation-as-cipher is, however, a very minor point as we see in the continuation of the above:

En su *Diario íntimo* todo se transformaba. Precisamente por eso, porque el *Diario* es un transformador, se lo llama "íntimo". La intimidad hace cambios, trastuerca, trabuca, tergiversa. Un *Diario íntimo* es un cambalache, ¿no? y sus páginas son unas hijas de la gran Catacresis.

Beltrán's record is much more than a mere recounting of events and observations concerning those events; and the Diary is most assuredly intimate since these changes that he effects come from within him and are not effected as
the result of logical associations. The above statements raise the questions as to the what, how, and why of the transformations—questions which must be answered in order to see the place of the Diario íntimo in Vigilia.

As a result of the fragmentary nature of the Diary mentioned previously, we cannot know completely the answer to what is transformed; all that we can say is that, based upon the evidence in the novel, the incidents recounted in the Diary are mutations of the exterior reality—even though we may be ignorant of the specific occurrence which motivated the transformation.

In several cases the how of the changes is likewise unanswerable. For example, we know that the epigraphs which are placed at the beginning of each nocturno are from the Diario; and from this we may assume that they are transformations of reality. We have seen also (pp. 17-18) that these epigraphs serve as agents of the "night" theme, emphasizing it at each major break in the narrative; and, once we learn the nature of the world within the Diary, these same epigraphs also show the lyrical nature of the novel itself by stressing the poetic world created by Beltrán in the Diary. However, since we do not know the reality upon which any of these epigraphs is based, we cannot hope to guess what it might have been. On the other hand, there are three separate incidents where we
can compare the exterior reality (that which actually happened) with the interior reality (the reshaping as it appears in the Diary). An examination of one such incident can answer the question as to how the transformations are made; and from there we may proceed to answer the final question. The following quotation shows an incident as Beltrán saw it and as he changed it for inclusion in the Diario íntimo:

... Beltrán estaba en la puerta de su casa, conversando con Roberto. Pasó por la vereda, lento, Tato, el hijo de Don Andrés, el zapatero remedón. ... Tato era gurrumino. Tato era flojo. Tato era el hazmerreir de los de su edad. Y la leyenda de su vida ridícula había caído de los mayores a los menores. Tato, hijo de zapatero, avergonzado de su padre zapatero. Tato, que se gastaba todo el sueldo en ropa pero no iba a ninguna parte. Tato, sin novia, sin amigos. Tato, que a los veinticinco años no había podido terminar la escuela primaria y asistía a una escuela nocturna. Pasaba Tato, lento, con talante digno, por la vereda. Y Roberto le gritó: "¡Gordo! ¡Eh, gordo! ¿Qué hacés, qué hacés?"

El flaco Tato no pareció oír. Por lo menos ni miró a quien le había gritado. Cruzó la calle, lentamente, y fue acercándose. Tenía en la cara algo de la estúpida dignidad del camello. Llegó adonde estaba Roberto, le dijo: "De mí no se burla ningún pendejo", le plantó una bofetada en la cara, "Tenés boca, pero no dientes", le dijo, dio media vuelta y siguió, lento. Roberto no hizo ni la parada.

... Nada apuntó en el Diario sobre el bofetón de Tato a Roberto. Apuntó, en cambio: "La mano que abofetea se parece a la mano que acaricia: es cuestión de cambio en tempo y forza".42

In this situation the transformation is such that no attention whatsoever is paid to the individuals involved.
Both Tato and Roberto disappear when the reality of life becomes the fantasy of the Diary. The entire focus of this incident is not on the persons involved, nor on the incident itself, but on a hand coming in contact with a face. In Beltrán's mind, the central issue is not even a slap but merely the statement of a disembodied hand coming in contact with a disembodied face. The specific incident has become the basis for a generalized statement. If we were to begin with the Diary (as is the case with most excerpts), it would be impossible to reverse the procedure and attempt to reconstruct the situation which occasioned the entry. What has happened is that the basic structure of an event (or of an individual) has been altered completely. The fact that one cannot follow any logical sequence of events from exterior to interior reality shows that Beltrán's mind is a completely free world where associations are made easily, and the recollection of a single incident will bring forth an unknown—yet somehow related—association. As a result of this free association of thoughts (which we have already seen operate in his daydreams), we cannot hope to predict, with any degree of accuracy whatever, the transformation which will take place for any given incident which he chooses to record. All that can be done is to juxtapose reality and fantasy and by examination determine what course Beltrán's mind has followed. In recording
happenings he wishes to evoke the feelings and attitudes occasioned by the event; he does not necessarily wish to recall it. Things which occur in the exterior world are not recorded as they happened— they are changed into a poetic reality, a fantastic world which is completely different from the everyday world in which a given incident took place.

The last statement brings us to the final question: the why of all these changes in the Diary. The answer is to be found in the very first mention of the _Diario íntimo_ in the text of _Vigilia_ when Beltrán places in opposition the _bella imagen_ and the _fea sensación_ of Beatriz. As noted previously (pp. 34-35) this introduces the tension between the real and the fantastic Beatrices, but it also expresses Beltrán’s attitude toward his two worlds. The exterior world is one of sensations, meaning that it is a world in which the response to a stimulus is through one of the senses, a physical world which is ugly, based primarily on animal instincts (as his visit to the brothel was based on a need to prove himself sexually). The interior world, on the other hand, is a world of images, of the intellect, of beauty from which every _fea sensación_ has either been expelled or purged of its ugliness and transformed into a _bella imagen_. On another plane, the exterior world is fleeting in the same way that a sensation will momentar-
ily capture us only to pass or be replaced by a new one while the image, once conceived, halts the progress of time in an eternal present. For Beltrán, the diarist,

... translating the ephemeral stuff of everyday existence into words lends an illusion of permanence to what is passing, of completeness to the inconclusive. It both intensifies and imposes a satisfying sense of order upon the fragmentary business of living.44

The Diary is the one place where he is in complete control of everyone and everything he puts there. He selects what he will use and reshapes it to what he wishes it to be. Yet, even here, Beatriz is the force which gives direction and purpose to his work as he notes when he briefly reviews the history of the Diario:

Lo había comenzado anotando cosas, a la buena de Dios. Después empezaron los ambages y rodeos. Y desde que conoció a Beatriz tuvo necesidad de inventar vuelos a las palabras. Los fingimientos de su imaginación eran anteriores a su encuentro con Beatriz; pero Beatriz se le había metido en la cabeza, para avivar su anhelo de belleza.45

In order to sustain his Diary, he must have Beatriz—his fantastic Beatriz—at the center of everything; and when she is destroyed, his sure foundation is destroyed. His attempts at the end of the novel to break out of his world, to find another absolute that will replace the lost Beatriz are futile.

Y él quería libertarse. Y si quería libertarse debía hacerlo con sus propias fuerzas, con sus músculos, con las armas de sus brazos. Arremetió al monstruo a puñetazos, a patadas. Nada. Quedó exhausto, más preso que antes. Buscó en
These final lines of the novel show the protagonist’s pitiful state. Enclosed within a monster that is real yet fanciful (real because for him it exists and fanciful because it is within his mind), all of his efforts to break out come to naught. His physical efforts are of no avail since his enemy is his own imaginative world; and, without Beatriz to sustain his interior world, it collapses. Instead of controlling his fantastic world, he finds himself being controlled and finally submits—dying—to this creation which has become a monster and turned on its creator. Yet this is not a physical death but a retreating from the knowledge that he cannot adjust exterior reality to conform to interior fantasy, that he is imprisoned within his own mind where reality and fantasy are identical.

The physical world in which Beltrán lives his everyday life is one which undergoes continuous and continuing changes. As he goes through his daily activities he is constantly imagining, personifying, transforming. Virtually nothing remains untouched by his fertile and poetic imagination. His transformations are primarily of two types: one is merely playing with words, changing them, employing the double entendre, etc.; the second one is
used more often and involves the poetizing of a situation and is often extended for several pages. They differ also in the fact that the other characters in the novel will at times participate in the word play while the second is performed by Beltrán alone and is therefore more a part of his private world. Nevertheless, since the two types appear in several places and since they are equally types of transformation of reality, we must consider both. For Beltrán language is much more than a mere means of communication. It is another element which can be changed into a new reality. Occasionally this new reality has little purpose other than to amuse Beltrán (and to amuse or confuse the person with whom he is talking). Such a situation is seen in the brief encounter with Paula, the servant at Basilio's house. His pun on the two meanings of the verb "tocar" and his metathesis-like transformation of "arriba" to "barriga" are done purely for their humorous effect. Much the same can be said of Aníbal's remark a short time later when, desiring to awaken Boltrán from his reverie, he says, "¡Qué cabizbundo y meditabajo estás!" Once again the primary purpose is humor with no deeper thought intended. Even though this particular statement is not made by Beltrán, it can be considered as being associated closely with him since Anderson Imbert has already established the basic unity of the five members of the pandilla through
Beltrán's thoughts of "somos cinco yo" and the statement that the members of the gang all imitate one another. Given these facts plus Beltrán's complaints that the others lack wit and brilliance in their conversation, one may assume that a statement of this nature might well have originated with Beltrán and that Aníbal is simply adapting or repeating something that he had heard previously. Further proof of the possibility that Beltrán is the ultimate inventor of these linguistic games is found in an earlier scene in which Beltrán is looking for Esteban and, upon reading the nameplate ("Doctor Guillermo Holmberg") on the door, muses on the relationship between "médico" and "medicina," "enfermera" and "enfermo," and "hospitalaria," "hospitalidad," and "hospital"—the last mentioned recalling the cool but correct manner with which Esteban's father is accustomed to greet Beltrán. Besides supporting the contention made above concerning Aníbal's statement, these thoughts border on the second type of transformation of the exterior world since Beltrán is not only playing with words and word relationships but is—in effect—creating a new reality by converting a curt nod of the doctor's head (an action which Beltrán knows is not intended to be "hospitable") into the cold, sterile correctness which is frequently associated with a hospital.
Chapa de doctor en la puerta. "Doctor Guillermo Holmberg". ¿Tocaría el timbre? No, con seguridad que Esteban ya había salido para lo de Basilio. Además, eso de llamar a la casa de un médico... Médico, medicina... La enfermera, los enfermos... ¡Brrrr! Para peor, podría encontrarse en el vestíbulo con el doctor Holmberg en persona, quien lo saludaría con una inclinación de cabeza aparentemente hospitalaria—una hospitalidad de hospital...

This transformation is brief, but the elements of the second type of change are clearly visible. Similarly, the nonsense words which Beltrán cites as having been invented by the members of the pandilla ("requetemorrágica, jolilacha, trilatrilaba, tilinginosamente") are humorous because of their lack of meaning but—at the same time—they are a part of the constant mutation of reality which occurs in Vigilia. Just as in the case with darkness, Beltrán's character as the Actor, the image of Beatriz disfrazada de japonesita, and the entries in the Diario íntimo, language has become matter with which a new reality may be created.

Often in his poetizing of actual situations into fantastic ones, Beltrán uses metaphors and plays on words which emphasize shifting, confusing, or mutually exclusive concepts. This is natural to his entire existence. Two of the best examples of this transformation are found in the "Tercer nocturno" when all of the members of the pandilla, on one of their nightly excursions through La Plata, come upon a celebration with
many young girls dancing in the street to the admiration of the *galanes* of the city. As stated in the early part of this chapter the function of night as the realm of the fantastic when people and objects assume—or appear to assume—other shapes is of paramount importance since it facilitates the transformations which Beltrán makes. With the interplay of light, darkness, and shadows, things seem to be in a state of perpetual change; nothing remains for any length of time as a fixed image. In this celebration the particular image upon which the whole passage is based is that of a flowing river—a figure which accentuates the fluid nature of this ever-changing reality and underlines the subjective and constantly varying views which Beltrán has of the scene. In addition, the dual idea of changing stresses Beltrán’s constant searching and his uncertainty about life in much the same way as the continual modifying of the metaphor in describing the *barra* reflects his unceasing search for its exact essence. As the figure begins, the exterior reality—now being converted by Beltrán—appears as chaos in motion before it assumes a definite, yet flexible shape.

Eran casi todas jovencitas, hermoseadas por el claroscuro y tan difíciles de distinguir una de otra que las miradas de Beltrán, turbias por el placer que le entraba a chorros por los ojos, fluctuaban sobre sus indecisas figuras escarceando acá, cabritteando allá y confundiendo a todas ellas en
una misma masa fugitiva. Pasaban entrelazadas del brazo, en versos sucesivos, circulando siempre en idéntico sentido, como una corriente.53

We notice immediately the preponderance of words stressing the lack of definite form, the interplay of darkness and light, and the confusion of movement. Only with the last lines, with the phrase "en versos sucesivos, circulando siempre en idéntico sentido" is there a suggestion of order; and not until the final word of the paragraph are we introduced to the precise figure which will be followed. Rereading the passage we can see that Anderson Imbert has prepared for this word—and for the extended aquatic image which follows in the words "escarceando" and "cabrilleando" which can be applied to the movement of waves. Just as in the Diary where he is in complete control of his own world, Beltrán here exerts control by creating order from chaos—although this is not a scriptural-type prescribed order but rather a partially ordered world which maintains itself in a single yet constantly changing form. The aquatic figure continues for approximately two pages, but I shall quote here only one paragraph to indicate in what way the figure is developed and carried on.

¡Con cuánta avidez se asomaba Beltrán a su pasar, para que su propia imagen se reflejase en ese espejo limpio! Ellas alzaban sus caras de sonrosada luz y sonreían respirando hondo y difundiendo la fragante frescura de su piel como si retozaran en un baño, desnudas
bajo las estrellas, pero protegidas por las ondas que sus ondulantes cuerpos comunicaban a las espumas de seda que vestían. Y esa desnudez, a punto de despuntar, la iba descubriendo el viento, que al soplar sobre los bullones que envolvían a las muchachas hacía emerger, entre la agitación de las telas, muslos, bustos y vientres desnudos, o, mejor dicho, casi desnudos, porque cuando ya iban a desgarrar la superficie y gritar su blan­cura se fluidificaban otra vez y desaparecían bajo los velos.

The undulating bodies and the rippling waves continue the theme of movement; and, together with the listing of "telas, muslos, bustos y vientres desnudos, o, mejor dicho, casi desnudos," the constant motion expresses the ordered confusion of the entire scene. The nakedness which is there but never quite revealed is a continuation of the feeling of uncertainty begun in the quotation with which the figure commences. From here the simile becomes a metaphor, and the author proceeds with several ramifications of the basic thought—each one continuing or amplifying the water–movement–uncertainty theme. At times the men watching the procession are the river banks, at times they are rocks, at times water plants. The women themselves are seen as fish as well as water. The overall effect of this extended metaphor is to create an overwhelming sense of movement within a semi–ordered world of fantasy and beauty. The poetic reality created by Beltrán has replaced the exterior reality—the procession of dancing young girls. Another
level of fantasy is explored when a power failure darkens the city, and the only illumination that remains is the light of the moon. The loss of man-made light and the new type of darkness create a completely different realm.

La fantasmagoría de la plaza se hizo más sobrenatural pues no hubo otra iluminación que la del cielo; y al mismo tiempo, que a su paso, licuó la materia, la luz lunar creó, con sus sobrantes de poesía, mármoles ideales, lentiscos de verdor, arenas y glaucos pabellones.

This is a fantastic world created by the light of the moon, but it is still to be considered in the category of a creation of Beltrán's since the description is his reaction to the sudden and unexpected blackout. He immediately incorporates this as a part of his own interior world, noting the increased supernatural quality of the plaza under the pale moonlight and the changes which the lunar magic works on his surroundings ("licuó la materia," "creó ... mármoles ideales, lentiscos de verdor, arenas y glaucos pabellones"). Besides creating a third level of reality, the blackout also provides the opportunity for Beltrán's brothel experience by separating him from his companions; and in this double darkness we see the second example of the transformation of reality mentioned earlier.

His abortive romance with Sabina provides Beltrán with the immediate impetus for desiring to prove his vir-
ility to himself, while night allows him to hide somewhat from himself. The blackout darkens the brothel and permits him to imagine and change things at will, and his being separated from his friends allows the experience to take place on a lyrical plane free from any coarse jokes or remarks by the pandilla. During this experience we see the same general type of figure which characterizes virtually all changes in Vigilia—that involving a continuing movement. The water image reappears, although it is not sustained throughout as in the preceding case. Nor do we see the lyrical beauty found in the earlier image but a foreshadowing of the disgusting nature of the adventure which is to ensue:

Colpeó con los nudillos en los vidrios de la cancel, forrados por dentro con cortinas desteñidas, de ese color cerdoso de los pantanos. Se sintió inspeccionado, prolongadamente, por una cara inexpresiva, fría, abotagada y agua-nosa que había llegado por un costado de los visillos y ya estaba con la napia en el vidrio, inmóvil y obstinada, clavándole unos ojos tan pequeños, tan redondos, tan extrañamente deshumanizados por los lentes de miope, que parecían incapaces de verlo como los ojos de un cristiano. ¿Qué ve un pulpo en el hombre? Seguramente sólo los rasgos que interesan a sus ventosas. También aquella cabezota, adherida al cristal como a la pared de un acuario, no parecía ver en Beltrán la figura que a Beltrán le devolvía el espejo, sino sólo lo que le interesaba para vivir: su edad, su posición social, sus condiciones de cliente. Desapareció el cefalópodo y en un decir amén la cancel abrió sus aguas y recibió a Beltrán en sus profundidades.
The madam of the brothel becomes his guide, replacing Beatriz, and leads him through a tunnel of blackness to the room where the prostitutes and their clients are transformed. We note that, as Beltrán passes from one part of the house to another on the way to his goal, darkness and ugliness increase:

Ella torció hacia un pasillo, negro como un pozo, para guiarlo a la morada de las voluptuosas criaturas que él iba a buscar. Entonces la luz de la vela corrió hacia la vieja, la alcanzó, la penetró, la transverberó y fue a tender sobre la pared la calañúa que le había arrebatado de su físico, sombra del calamar que con sus tintas estaba ennegreciendo el vestíbulo. La vieja rodó lentamente hacia el hueco del pasillo y se sumergió. Beltrán detrás. Y conforme iba hendiendo las negruras del túnel, en cuyo término una tenue claridad y un sofocado chispeo anunciaban el placer. Beltrán advirtió que también él había dejado de caminar y que, con los hombros encogidos, contenida la respiración, las nalgas apretadas y los músculos tensos, perdía pie, sometido ya a las leyes que le imponía aquel medio.

Llegó, por fin, al albergue donde bullían las rameras. Era una caverna de emboscados tránsitos, abierta al cielo por una claraboya que vivía en lo alto en orgullosa soledad y flanqueada por habitaciones tras cuyas herméticas puertas se gozaba. El serrallo no estaba alumbrado sino indirectamente gracias al aceitoso color que se desperdiciaba por las banderolas de los cuartos, surtidos hasta los bordes con el incesante borbotar luminoso de estufas y lámparas a kerosén. Aquí y allá había manchas renegridas que carcomían las paredes, las horadaban, las hacían retroceder. Y todo eso daba al salón el aspecto de una gruta musgosa, subacuática, poblada de seres con formas de mujer y de hombres que, para poder pasar unas horas a su lado, habían consentido en metamorfoverse en anfibios y se aletargaban obscenamente en los rincones. Pero Beltrán no distinguía con nitidez ni a
las mujeres ni a los hombres pues unas y otros habían ido a refugiarse allí donde el cangrejal era más espeso y estaban invisibles o sólo se mostraban como masas vagamente humanas, fundidas en una impúdica promiscuidad, resbalando lascivamente cuerpos sobre cuerpos, como serpientes que se desenroscaban. A veces enrojecía en las tinieblas el diminuto ojo de un cigarrillo, ojo que miraba con terquedad un segundo, incendiaba una pequeña zona del aire verdinegro y luego iba a hundirse otra vez en el fango, a dormir su sueño batracio. ¡Y cuántos murmullos batuqueaban en el salón! Murmullos que hervían en lo hondo, muy tímidos, e iban hinchándose, levantándose en rápida fermentación hasta concluir en una carcajada tan flatulenta que se la veía desprenderse del barrizal, ascender por todo el recinto, evacuar por la claraboya, a la que se asomaba una mejilla de cielo con dos estrellas, y estallar allí, en la superficie rielada por la luna, como una burbuja.

We notice numerous words and phrases referring to darkness ("negro como un pozo," "sombra," "estaba ennegreciendo," "negruras del túnel," "caverna," "manchas renegridas," "gruta musgosa, subacuática," "tinieblas," "aire verdinegro"). We likewise find several expressions which suggest an essential dislike in Beltrán for what he is going to do ("se aletargaban obscenamente," "cangrejal," "masas vagamente humanas, fundidas en una impúdica promiscuidad, resbalando cuerpos sobre cuerpos," "fango," "barrizal"). It is true that there are a few references to light, but these are so overbalanced by the items cited above that the overall effect is to accentuate the blackness which surrounds Beltrán and the creatures from the dark both literally and figuratively.
These elements also reinforce one another in such a way that Beltrán's negative attitude feeds upon the idea of blackness which in turn generates a further feeling of disgust. In this atmosphere, attenuated only by a flickering candle and moonlight filtering through the skylight, Beltrán's lingering fantasy attempts to create a beautiful image ("voluptuosas criaturas"); but the lascivious element soon dominates the scene: "anuncianaban el placer." It is almost a parody or reversal of la noche oscura del alma of the mystic. Beltrán's goal is more easily attainable, and the main difference lies in the direction of the trip. For the mystic it is an upward yearning for the ultimate union with God. Beltrán, on the other hand, undertakes a downward journey— not purged of his sensations but mastered by them—which terminates in a prostitute's bed. The darkness is not a means whereby he may reach illumination but a contaminating agent ("La oscuridad le ensuciaba el alma con su barro espeso"). Virtually choking on the blackness his cries for light are demands for release from mental as well as physical contamination, but the light brings only horror and disgust:

Beltrán se asustó al ver esa cara. ... sintió un choque inmundo. Ese rostro largamente besado se desbarataba en facciones insospechadas. Rasgos masculinos, hasta entonces en otra dimensión, invisibles a los sentidos, ahora triunfaban llenando de asco a Beltrán. Y por un segundo—lo bastante intenso para
This entire scene contrasts greatly with the change Beltrán effected upon the procession of dancing girls. In the former only his mind was involved in bringing about the change; in the latter he was involved both physically and mentally in the scene. Since he could not rely on the absolute of Beatriz (v. p. 37), he was not the complete master of the situation; and, despite his attempts to beautify a sordid situation, he found himself forced to abandon his world of darkness, calling for light which he hoped would bring relief. This episode to a certain extent prefigures the end of Vigilia when Beltrán finds himself permanently without Beatriz. Here for the last time he is caught and held within his own world, except that he is incapable of freeing himself from its clutches, and—as previously noted—he is overcome by his own relative world.

Regardless of the outcome of the second incident its basic existence as a creation of Beltrán’s remains important. In both scenes discussed Beltrán’s poetic eye has taken a given physical reality and created a lyrical one from it. The fact that the bordello description revolves around sordidness is not the central issue here; what does matter is that Beltrán has managed to
transport an exterior reality—for a moment at least—to an interior reality and in doing so has made even the sordid lyrical in his expression of it.

In his first novel Anderson Imbert, in presenting reality and fantasy, has presented an adolescent who is searching for his own being. As he continues in his search, he finds he must change everything and everyone around him into a more beautiful image. Beltrán Mulhall is the agent by which the author presents two worlds in conflict—that of reality and that of fantasy. In Vigilia we see no reconciliation between the two worlds nor can an individual from one world inhabit the other (everything, in some way or other, is transformed prior to becoming a part of Beltrán's interior world). Nevertheless, the seed for Anderson Imbert's later realismo mágico is still to be found there in the figure of Beltrán himself. He is the link between the two worlds, the one in whom both reality and fantasy exist. It is but a short step to move the fantasy of Beltrán's mind from the intellectual frame and place it in physical surroundings thus making the fantastic a part of everyday life.
NOTES ON CHAPTER II

1 Prior to 1934 occasional stories had appeared in La Vanguardia.

2 Mead, "Tres entrevistas," Temas hispanoamericanos, p. 109. In that interview Anderson Imbert stated, "Mi novela Vigilia (1934) ... ha circulado poco. Casi no se la conoce. Sin embargo, ya está allí el sello poético, lírico, imaginativo que he tratado de estampar a toda mi creación artística. Los cuentos de Las pruebas del caos (1946) y mi novela corta Fuga (1951) son expresiones más maduras de esa tendencia mía hacia una literatura impresionista, fantástica, subjetiva, poemática."

3 EAI, Vigilia, Fuga, pp. 7-8.


5 The fact that "sueño" can be translated as both "sleep" and "dream" easily allows this association.

6 Some of these images are as follows: "El serpenteaba, y las calles eran las serpientes" (p. 30); viewing scenes as movie montages where one scene superimposes itself upon another (pp. 23, 35); the aquatic image of girls dancing (pp. 71 ff.); the brothel incident (pp. 77 ff.). The last two mentioned are treated on pages 52-56 and 57-61 respectively.

7 Beltrán's uncertainty as to the exact goal of his Quest is similar to the lack of certainty as to the exact nature of the Grail. Locke touches on this question on pp. 4-7.

8 Locke, The Quest for the Holy Grail, p. 3.

9 EAI, Vigilia, Fuga, p. 30.

10 In his latest published collection of short stories and microcuentos, La locura juega al ajedrez, the title story deals with this specific incident—an individual who competes against himself in a game of chess and goes mad as the result of splitting his personality completely so as to provide himself with a true adversary.
Walter de la Mare, Behold, This Dreamer! (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., Publishers, 1939), pp. 19-20. Permission granted by the Literary Trustees of Walter de la Mare and the Society of Authors as their representative.

Werner Wolff in The Dream—Mirror of Conscience (New York: Grune & Stratton, Inc., 1952) states, "... Freud emphasizes that daydreams and dreams result from the same thought processes or are structurally the same thought processes ..." p. 69. From this we may use the definition of "dream" as given by Calvin S. Hill and Richard E. Lind and apply it to "daydream": "Succinctly defined, a dream is an hallucinated behavior or episode or series of such episodes in which the dreamer is usually both a participant and an observer." Dreams, Life, and Literature: A Study of Franz Kafka (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p. 7.


Ibid., p. 98.

Ibid., p. 93.

He had previously expressed his self-contempt verbally: "¡Ah, cómo se despreciaba a sí mismo! No le había dicho al señor Sacchi toda la verdad. Toda la verdad era que él se despreciaba, se despreciable." p. 91.

"Becoming" does not mean progress but merely "changeableness" or "alternatives to the self."


Ibid.

A. A. Mendilow in Time and the Novel (London: Peter Nevill, Ltd., 1952) speaks to this point when he states, "By transferring the events to the mental plane, it [the stream of consciousness novel] can dispense with ordinary chronological sequence and forward moving continuity; for these are valid only by external standards, and have no justifica-
tion (apart from the convenience of the reader) in the evocation of mental processes where associative memory follows purely private and individual laws of sequence," p. 75. (Quoted by permission of Humanities Press, Inc.) As has been noted Anderson Imbert does not dispense completely with chronological time, but the emphasis of Vigilia is placed more on the spatial plane than on the temporal plane.


23 Some of these expressions are as follows: "estrella de cinco puntas" (p. 11); "Se saludaron, con tal coincidencia de gestos, que ... pareció surgir el gesto único de un único organismo" (p. 42); "Los cinco. Quinteto. Quinario. Quinterno. Quintilla. Quinquefolio. Los cinco. Pentacordio. Pentagrama. Pentámetro. Pentápolis. Pentarquía. Pentasilabo. Pentateuco. Los cinco: como un puño." (p. 42); "su árbol de cinco ramas" (p. 70); "La pandilla salió del cine, compacta, en bloque." (p. 105).

24 EAI, Vigilia. Fuga., p. 15.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid., p. 13.

27 The pertinent section of this passage is as follows: "... él había estado garabateando, en su Diario íntimo, su inventario de sensaciones (de sensaciones no; de imágenes, más bien: la bella imagen de Beatriz y no esa fea sensación de Beatriz que le andaba por el aparato digestivo o por ahí cerca) ... " p. 13.

28 In one scene, Beltrán, while talking with Roberto's younger brother, suddenly—and without any preparation by the author—becomes aware that a bit of glass is the color of Beatriz' eyes (p. 16). In another instance, when entering the street where
she lives, he feels the whole atmosphere permeated by her essence (p. 45). In these two incidents no one else notices or remarks about the almost electric charge which arouses Beltrán. The glass and the street are private symbols which have meaning for him alone; they are a part of his world separate from those around him.

29 EAI, Vigilia. Fuga, p. 77.
30 Ibid., p. 98.
31 Ibid., p. 103.
32 Ibid., p. 105.
34 In her book English Diarists: Evelyn & Pepys (London: Longmans, Green & Company, 1963) Margaret Willy includes as diaries those journals kept by explorers while Ponsonby considers that those writings, as well as records such as Darwin's, belong to a different category.
35 Ponsonby, English Diaries, p. 1.
36 Ibid., p. 29.
37 The connotation is there in the definition of the genre even though Beltrán's Diary is devoid of chronology: "Era un Diario sin crónica, sin tiempo ... " (p. 66).
40 EAI, Vigilia. Fuga., p. 25. The lack of chronology (v. note 37 supra) is also a means of hiding reality.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., pp. 65, 67.
43 The fact that one can neither predict how any given incident will be changed nor reconstruct reality
from fantasy is another element which emphasizes the completely personal nature of the Diary.


47 The evidence that Beltrán is not dying physically is found following the epigraph of the "Primer nocturno," "Del Diario íntimo de Beltrán Mulhall (Argentina, 1910–1934)," (p. 11) and from the statement on page 84 that the current year was 1926.

48 Two examples of word play by other characters are as follows: (1) Esteban and Basilio engage in a brief exchange when the former asks, "—¿La Maleva?, ¡hermana de Celedonio? ¡Fantástico!" and receives the reply, "—Histórico, che, histórico." (p. 23) and (2) "—¡Qué cabizbundo y meditabaso estás!—dijo Aníbal." (p. 26).

49 The pertinent sections of this conversation follow:

--- ... ya me ha contado un pajarito que usté toca el piano muy lindo.
---Conque un pajarito, ¿eh? No sé. Alguna vez me tendrá que oír, para saberlo.
--- ... ¿Va a tocar para mi sola?
---Para usted solita, Paula.
---¡Qué honor, para una pobre muchacha como yo! ¿Y qué va a tocar?
---A usted le toco cualquier cosa.
---¡Jua, jua! ¡Miren las cosas que le han enseñado, on estos últimos tiempos! Como siga así me voy a tener miedo. ¡Jua, jua! El niño Basilio está arriba.
---¿Solo y su barriga? (p. 19)


56  Ibid., p. 77.
57  Ibid., pp. 78-79.
58  Ibid., p. 81.
59  Ibid., p. 82.
III

FUGA: TIME AND TIME AGAIN

Chronologically, Fuga is some seventeen years later than Vigilia, having been written originally in 1951. At the request of Daniel Devoto, Anderson Imbert wrote a work with a musical theme for inclusion in the former's Cuadernos del eco. His first thought was an essay dealing with the borrowings that music makes from literature, but he soon abandoned this idea in favor of composing a novel which would have a musical structure: this was Fuga. The novel was to have been printed in 1953 by Ediciones Jano but was confiscated by the police prior to its publication. Ten years later, reworked and refined, it appeared together with Vigilia in a single volume published by Editorial Losada; and it is this amended text that has been used for this study.

The theme of Fuga is time and is presented in two different aspects: linear and circular. The voices of the variations of this theme are, respectively Miguel Sullivan and Irma Keogan; and it is through their words and actions that we see the development of the theme with the eventual triumph of circular time. Linear
time, i.e. time that moves in a progression from a beginning to an end, may be viewed either positively or negatively. The following quotation emphasizes the former and is characteristic of Miguel:

Time . . . moves in the direction of "creative evolution," or makes manifest the creative, productive element in the evolutionary process. We speak of the "womb of time," or, in a curious mixture of metaphors, of "father time"; in short, of time as the begetter of all things, the permanent possibility of creation, novelty, and growth. Viewed from this perspective, time is a productive, creative element in experience—the permanent source of making and improving things, goods, and the self; in Aristotelian terminology, the permanent condition for converting becoming into being, potentiality into actuality, imperfection into perfection. The direction of time becomes the condition under which we cling to belief in the realization of hopes and aspirations, in the opportunity for creation and progress, in effort and striving as a means for personal happiness and salvation.4

Miguel's movement through most of the novel is definitely linear. We find out in the opening lines that he has moved from dependence to independence ("... había abandonado la casa de mi madre, ... "). After two years of working on the newspaper, seeing that he was repeating himself, he decides to take courses at the University ("Yo propuse escribir menos y estudiar más."). From journalism and socio-political oriented writings he turns to literature and imaginative writing ("... abandoné el diario. Sí, yo debía escribir algo personal, algo imaginativo."); and, finally, he makes
up his mind to be a creator of fantastic literature ("En adelante ... escribiré literatura fantástica."\(^8\)). In all of these steps there is the feeling of progression; Miguel is moving forward, striving to achieve a goal, seeking satisfaction through the bettering of himself.

To aid in giving the appearance of linear motion in *Fuga*, Anderson Imbert also carefully documents the time of each action and notes the passing of the days; he gives Miguel's age; he mentions the coolness of the autumn weather. All of these items, while they serve another purpose which will be discussed later in the chapter, combine to give the reader the feeling that time indeed is passing in normal chronological order, from beginning to end, from life to death—in short, all this tends to assure us that we are in the real world.

In contrast to Miguel, who embodies linear time, is Irma, the voice of circular time, who continually attempts to make the uncomprehending Miguel aware that history is repetitive and that what they are doing they have already done in a prior existence and will do again in a future one. Her endeavors to explain this to Miguel are numerous, but the following statement perhaps best sums up her thoughts:

No es un viaje por el tiempo. Yo me quedo en el mismo sitio. Como quien diera una vuelta completa a una circunferencia y se parara en el mismo punto, y tuviera conciencia, no del viaje, sino de haber estado en ese mismo...
¿Comprendes? No tengo conciencia del intervalo entre este minuto que estoy viviendo y el mismo minuto que viví. Claro que toda la rueda del mundo ha recorrido esa vuelta, pero las gentes no recuerdan. Yo tampoco recuerdo la vuelta y todo el curso del pasado, pero sé que la rueda es vieja y que, de tanto en tanto, ciertas veces más vivamente que otras, recuerdo que la situación en que estoy ya ha vivido...

This is a more lyrical but nonetheless faithful rendering of Nietzsche's hypothesis of the Eternal Recurrence:

Eternal Recurrence is the idea that whatever there is will return again, and that whatever there is, is a return of itself, that it has all happened before, and will happen again, exactly in the same way each time, forever. Nothing happens that has not happened an infinite number of times and which will not happen again, for all eternity, in exact iterations of itself. There is no beginning and end, and no middle either to the story of the world: there is only the monotonous turning up always of the same episode, time and again.

Besides being aware of the repetition of incidents, Irma also exhibits a purity of innocence which is a necessary adjunct of recurrent time:

... eternal recurrence would be unbearable if the old moral values survived—if there were such things as guilt, sin, absolute evil. Therefore it constrains those who would say Yes to revalue the old values. The result of discarding those cardinal points of "absolute morality" is ... a kind of second innocence. Accordingly "the innocence of becoming" forms part of Nietzsche's joyous affirmation. He finds it "a great restorative" that there is no God, no cosmic purpose to which we are responsible, and that nothing whatsoever is to blame for things being as they are; our world is cleansed of all resentment, revenge, punishment.
Irma's innocence is a child-like lack of awareness of the implications and complications of her actions and words. Typical of her guileless outlook is her announcement that she does, in fact, live with Miguel and in her willing compliance to his wishes. (It should be noted here that Miguel himself is not overly concerned with any moral questions involved in their living together and only mildly concerned with the practical one—the possibility of Irma's becoming pregnant.12)

Of all the characters in the novel, Irma Keegan is the only one aware of circular movement of time; thus Anderson Imbert has placed her in direct opposition to Miguel. Having set up these poles he balances one against the other. Miguel accepts without question the forward progression of time; Irma, just as unhesitatingly, accepts its circular movement. Like Miguel she is neither surprised nor bewildered at the phenomenon she experiences. Her attempts to explain herself are every bit as sincere as his endeavors to convince her of his point of view. When he cannot comprehend what she is trying to say, she becomes irritated with him—just as he becomes annoyed at her lack of acceptance of his ideas. By balancing linear and circular time, Anderson Imbert has created a dramatic tension which must be resolved in favor of one or the other.
As the speaker for circular time, Irma desires that Miguel fulfill his destiny as a poet. An important element of the Eternal Recurrence is that man is no longer forced to justify his existence by doing or creating something of lasting value. Poetry, while it does have lasting value, here symbolizes that which has value in itself and needs no other justification. (This point is covered more fully later in the chapter.) In this same connection she desires that he forsake his world of the Socialist newspaper *La Antorcha* which is involved in a world not yet "cleansed of all resentment, revenge, punishment" and which must still do battle for some great "cosmic purpose." Along with Irma is Gabriel O'Brien, the mirror image of Miguel whom the latter does not recognize as himself in a former existence. While Gabriel says nothing which actually supports Irma, the fact that he is identical to Miguel in appearance and that he dies as Irma had predicted he (Miguel) would reinforce her assertions of the circular nature of time. In the course of the novel Miguel himself articulates Irma's theme occasionally; and it would be well to examine some of these situations.\(^\text{13}\)

The first instance occurs when Miguel is struck by Irma's appearance as she enters the University:

... el rostro manso de esa muchacha era un pedazo de mis propios ensueños objetivados para que yo, por fin, pudiera contemplarlos.\(^\text{14}\)
Although by itself this statement means little more than a feeling by Miguel that he is seeing the incarnation of his dreams, when viewed in retrospect with the rest of the novela as a background it emerges more clearly as an element in the theme of Eternal Recurrence. It is true that this is the first encounter with Irma—at least, it is the first encounter in this time sequence—however, his memory has already prefigured her to such an extent that she is immediately recognizable as the embodiment of his dreams. In the world of \textit{Fuga} it is entirely possible that Miguel, like Irma, retains bits and pieces of memory and is able to recall certain things and people from another time sequence, the difference being that she is aware of this fact and he is not. That same evening we see another precognition of later events related in such a casual manner that it slips by virtually unnoticed until subsequent happenings confirm what appears to be an almost accidental clairvoyance on the part of Miguel. As he leaves the uncommunicative Gabriel standing on the river bank, he thinks: "Parcée un suicida que alzara la vista por última vez hacia las estrellas, antes de tirarse al agua."\textsuperscript{15} He has given us a prescience of an event which is to come and about which he learns some days later. This scene is not the only suggestion of Gabriel's suicide. The next evening, while he is contemplating the river from his room, Miguel...
recalls Gabriel and imagines him still on the bank staring at the waters. At this moment—perhaps as a result of the "partial memory" suggested above—Miguel makes another association which is also a portent of a future occurrence. For some reason, unknown to him, he thinks of Irma and is annoyed by this linking of the two. And still later, while searching for Irma, he—again for some unknown reason—associates them by asking for Gabriel's address after learning that Irma is not enrolled in the University. Much the same situation can be seen in his duermocheva in which he imagines living with Irma in his Bohemian apartment. While the idea is a conscious fabrication of a wish on his part, Miguel immediately passes it off as impossible and dismisses it from his thoughts. That very evening he finds fulfillment of this dream when he returns to his lodgings and finds Irma there. His reaction—complete surprise and bewilderment—shows that he was completely unaware that, earlier that day, he had actually been dreaming the future, i.e. what he supposed to be a mere reverie was in fact subconscious clairvoyance on his part. Although all the incidents mentioned occur at different intervals in the book, when they are juxtaposed it must be concluded that Miguel's seeing Gabriel as a suicide, his association of river—Gabriel—Irma and Gabriel—Irma, and his half wakeful musings which turn out to be prophecy are not the result of chance
but the result of actually having lived the suicide of Gabriel and actually having lived with Irma in some previous time sequence. Although he does not remember events in their entirety, he nonetheless recalls certain elements and makes correct associations. This mirrors the feeling Irma expresses in her first conversation with Miguel:

— La memoria se me ha roto a pedacitos. Se quedó en el suelo, hecha pedazos. Menos un pedacito, que soy yo. Soy un pedacito de memoria ambulante. Se me ha olvidado todo, menos lo que recuerdo con el pedacito que anda conmigo.  

By means of this "pedacito de memoria," although it exists within him without his knowledge, Miguel truly voices Irma's theme of circular time. It might be argued that these incidents are primarily in the area of clairvoyance rather than under the heading of Eternal Recurrence, but I believe that the circular structure of the novel negates this contention. Despite the fact that Miguel is pictured as the exponent of linear time, he changes position as the novel progresses; and, at the conclusion, he announces that he will compose a novel entitled Fuga and quotes the very words with which the work we are finishing begins. By becoming the creator of the circular novel, he has shown that whatever he has done in Fuga is something that has occurred before and that it will occur again and again; thus his dreams and
thoughts are themselves repetitions of a previous existence and their fulfillment merely serves to validate the contention of the circular nature of time. The ending-beginning of Pura shows the fusion of these two aspects of the theme of time—linear and circular—with the latter being triumphant.

The ontology involved in Eternal Recurrence is expressed in the struggle or tension that exists between linear and circular time. If time is eternally repetitive, we are forced to one of two extreme positions: the ultimate of nihilism (the stupid recurrence of meaninglessness) or unbounded joy (the ecstasy that nothing is lost). George A. Morgan, Jr., in What Nietzsche Means points out

The moral import of eternal recurrence, therefore, places an infinite weight on every moment of life, forcing us toward one extreme or the other: either the weight will crush us or we shall overcome "the spirit of heaviness." Hitherto mankind has faced an unsolved dilemma: either this life is all, and in that case the last word is vanity of vanities, for nothing abides; or there is a Beyond which indeed makes life a serious business, but at the cost of condemning it as illusory and evil. . . . Nietzsche offers the eternal recurrence as a view which solves the dilemma, and without the fanaticism of the older religions—its sole punishment for unbelief will be the consciousness that one's life is utterly transient.17

As linear time Miguel feels the need to "do something" with his life, to justify his existence; and the justifi-
cation consists—at the outset—of his devotion to journalism as the medium by which he may make known his Socialist beliefs. But this, at best, can give only momentary satisfaction and establishes no real purpose for life; for, as Hans Meyerhoff states,

The historical record reproduced by the daily "news" of our mass media of communication, though vastly extended in spatial coverage, is temporally confined to the immediate present. Communication of news rarely serves to establish any "meaningful," or significant, relations between the events of one day and another, let alone one year and another; it rarely attempts to introduce any principle of organization, continuity, or structural relationship into the assemblage of isolated, cumulative facts considered newsworthy. News must be "hot," as we say, that is, of momentary appeal and significance, or it is not newsworthy. News must be "sensational," it must provide momentary excitement and titillation, or it does not sell. Again, what cannot be consumed now is worthless; and once it is consumed, it is worthless.¹⁸

Miguel's dissatisfaction with journalism and his continuing need to feel that he is doing something of lasting significance lead him to the University and to his association with Irma. Her desire that he write poetry is indicative of the positive attitude of the Eternal Recurrence as the poetry which Miguel will write fulfills the necessity of creating something with intrinsic value—a worth in and of itself—as contrasted with journalism which has only extrinsic value in the sense that Meyerhoff explains above ("News must be 'hot' . . . or it is
not newsworthy"). Poetry, on the other hand, attempts to seize thoughts and emotions from the flow of time and shape them into something more lasting and beautiful than they were in the ordinary course of human experience. . . . the imagination, working at fiery intensity, selects one element to be expressed and burns away all irrelevant material that clings to it.9

Also, " . . . true poetry has no great interest in improving or idealizing the world. . . . It only wants to realize the world, to see it better."20 While these two quotations do not pretend to define poetry in its entirety, they illustrate the function that poetry has for Irma and, consequently, its function in the novel. It symbolizes that effort that an individual puts forth to create something which in and of itself is beautiful and which requires no justification for its existence. Miguel's decision to write fantastic literature is not a denial of Irma's wish but rather (and again we are within the domain of Eternal Recurrence) an act of ego fatum, an affirmation that

. . . fate is not something external that compels us against our wills; it partly acts through our willing, and therefore gives no reason for resignation or passivity. What we do is part of the process: "Ego fatum—I myself am fate and condition existence from all eternity,"—all existence, even past and present, since time is circular. And belief in eternal recurrence, as it becomes "assimilated," will shape our lives.21

And the triumph of circular time in Fuga is accomplished as Miguel's belief in Irma increases to the final chapter
where he does in fact shape his own life by creating the novel in which he himself is the protagonist.

Turning from the theme of the novela to the title, we find that Fuga, like the title Vigilia, has great importance in the understanding of the work. Comprehended within the word "fuga" are two meanings, "flight" and "fugue," both of which are found in Anderson Imbert's novel. The story is a flight in and through time while, as has been previously mentioned, the novela was composed with a musical structure.

Looking first at this structure, we find that the work is divided into three main sections, each of which bears a title taken from the vocabulary of music: "Primer movimiento: andante" (Chapter I), "Segundo movimiento: fugato" (Chapters II-XXIV), and "Tercer movimiento: andante sostenuto" (Chapter XXV). These three main sections, incidentally, correspond generally to the three standard divisions of a drama: setting the situation, the entanglement, and the denouement. Chapter I, structurally, is a prelude to the fugal movement; in it the author sets up the basic situation upon which the later complications will be built. Here Miguel tells of his arrival in Buenos Aires, his obtaining a position with the newspaper, his lodgings, his relationships with other characters, some information about himself, and the reason behind his decision to enter the University.
Although a period of two years is covered in slightly more than three pages the movement is "andante"—moderately slow and deliberate. The reader is not rushed from event to event but rather each incident is presented completely before the author passes on to the next. The second movement, "fugato," demonstrates those elements which make the work a literary similarity to a musical composition.

Based on a continual interweaving of horizontal strands and written in two, three, four, five, or even more voices, the fugue is unquestionably the most complex of polyphonic designs. . . . it is primarily concerned with the elaboration of a fundamental musical idea called the subject. Fugues also incorporate other ideas, however, including imitations of the theme in different tonal areas . . . which are called answers, or the interpolation of a countersubject, which may appear in juxtaposition against the main idea.

. . . the first section to appear is the exposition wherein the subject and its answers are announced by the several voices. Subsequently, an episode presents digressions away from the subject, including announcements of the countersubject. But the dynamic first theme continues to dominate the piece by reappearing frequently in a variety of contexts and keys. Some fugues have a third section known as the stretto or codetta. Unfailingly, the latter suggests a climactic effect, which occurs near the end of the fugue when the several lines are converging prior to a final citation of the subject.²³

The main voices are—as has been noted—Miguel and Irma, each of whom presents one of the major aspects of the theme. Since Gabriel is Miguel in a different time sequence, his function is primarily that of an answer to
Irma. Nevertheless, the fact that he is identical to Miguel physically and lives out a fate announced by Irma for Miguel links him with the latter. The "real" characters, i.e. those individuals who are pictured at the outset as being part of the everyday world (don Mario, Genovesi, Accvedo), can be considered answers to Miguel. The conversations between Miguel and Irma constitute the reappearing of the theme while Miguel's intermittent associations with the real characters are the digressions of which the quotation speaks. Gabriel is not physically present from Chapter IV until Chapter XXIV; nonetheless his melody is heard in the background as Miguel thinks about him and notices his own similarity to him. Although there is no direct communication between Irma and Gabriel until she disappears with him in the mirror in Chapter XXIV, the two are united upon occasion by Miguel in his thoughts. Irma's Irish surname recalls Gabriel's family name (O'Brien) to Miguel. The two other instances where they are linked together directly have been discussed previously (pp. 75-76) and therefore will only be mentioned here: (1) while recalling Gabriel standing by the river, Miguel suddenly thinks of Irma and is disturbed by the association of the two and (2) after being told Irma is not enrolled in the University, he asks for Gabriel's address. While the association is made very rapidly and without any real preparation on the
part of the author, it definitely establishes the Irma-Gabriel relationship which is climaxed in Chapter XXIV.

As the second movement approaches its conclusion (Chapter XXI), we see that there is a closer identification of Miguel's melody with that of Irma—a closer identification than we had realized before—as Miguel begins to express belief in what she has been contending:

La insistencia con que Irma dejaba caer esas alusiones a una existencia previvida iba horadando, gota a gota, mi lógica de piedra. ... comprendía cada vez más lo que ella sentía: que éramos dos granitos en un reloj de arena, que nos rozábamos en el camino cada vez que el reloj se invertía... 25

This reaction is completely different from that expressed earlier (Chapter VIII) after Irma had first mentioned the idea that they are reliving a previous existence:

"Entendí muy poco. ¿Muy poco? Creo que no entendí nada." 26 Chapter XXIV is the stretto with the sudden and climactic disappearance of Irma through the mirror and into the waiting arms of a triumphant Gabriel. This scene definitively seals the fantastic nature of the novel since what occurs cannot be explained away by any of the laws of our real world.

The final movement, written in "andante sostenuto," returns to the newspaper office, the scene of the opening of the novela—a physical return which foretells the conclusion of the work—where Miguel carries on a conversation with the editor don Mario. The measured tone of the
first movement is repeated (another aspect of the Eternal Recurrence) and even prolonged as Miguel is sidetracked by Don Mario who does not understand that he is to be (or actually is) a character in a novel. This concluding chapter also functions as the codetta where "the subject is reaffirmed in strong resonant terms in the tonic key." This tonic key is sounded by Miguel as he brings Fuga to a close—and also to its own beginning—by saying,

—Mi novela, Don Mario, comienza así:
"Jugamos... Apenas llegué a Buenos Aires (yo había abandonado la casa de mi madre, en Tucumán, para lanzarme al periodismo)...

With these words Miguel unites all the voices in the theme of circular time; the fugue ends strongly, repeating the opening melody which affirms the triumph of repetitive time over linear time.

The other element contained in fuga, that of "flight," is found in the structure and also in the devices used by the author to persuade the reader that time is actually moving forward when, in fact, it is moving—by Anderson Imbert's design—in a circle. Let us examine those factors which give the appearance—and it must be kept in mind that it is only an appearance—of chronological progression and realism.

Foremost among the devices for creating the aura of forward movement is the musical structure of the novel.
While the particular selection of the fugue form enables Anderson Imbert to interweave different aspects of the theme, the choice of a musical structure suggests progression in one direction and requires that the reader have a good memory. Calvin Brown, in his study *Music and Literature*, notes these similarities:

The auditory arts [which he had previously defined as music and literature] are dynamic and have their extension, development, and relationships in time... The reader of books and the hearer of music... must have a very retentive memory. One who forgets Hamlet's conversation with his father's ghost cannot possibly make sense of the rest of the play. Similarly, the hearer who does not retain the subject of a fugue, or who forgets a theme used as the basis for a set of variations, has no chance of following the composer's intentions...

Music and literature, then, are alike in that they are arts presented through the sense of hearing, having their development in time, and hence requiring a good memory for their comprehension.29

In order to make sense of a work of music or literature, one must start at the beginning and proceed through the sequences as set down by the composer or author; one cannot begin at any arbitrary point, as with a painting or a piece of sculpture,30 and roam as he will over the work. This thought is perhaps most succinctly expressed by A. A. Mendilow in *Time and the Novel*: "A time-art by its nature demands a period of time within which to be itself."31 By allowing *Fuga* the time to develop, the reader is accepting as true the forward motion of time.
Closely allied to the structure are the chronological and physical elements of reality. In Virilia it was noted that relatively little attention was paid to the passing of time (although it definitely did move forward); in Fuga we have essentially the reverse of this coin. Anderson Imbert carefully documents not only the month (April) and the year (1930) but also—throughout most of the novel—the particular day of the week. He is equally precise in the physical aspects of the story, locating it in an actual city (Buenos Aires) and mentioning specific places and streets within the city (the University, San Martín Plaza, Viamonte, Reconquista). We read also rather complete descriptions of the real characters:

Don Mario,

Grandote, de hombros cargados, echados para atrás; mesurado, parsimonioso; voz de bajo; pelo renegrido, lacio, largo, de artista finisecular; cara oscura, lampiña, en forma de un pentágono de frente angosta, pómulos salientes y una aguda barbilla que se clavaba en el pecho de pichón. Me sonreía por los agujeros oblicuos de su máscara incaica.

Acevedo, the owner of Miguel’s rooming house,

Trigueño. La mirada escrutadora, la voz nasal y el nudo de llevar alzado un hombro eran de cuchillero del 900. Tenía unos cincuenta años, pero las señales de alguna sífilis antigua le daban cierto rosado aire de juventud.

Or the shorter, but still precise, description of his coworker Genovesi:
In *Fuga* we do not find the minutely detailed attempts at verbal reproductions of scenes and individuals such as one reads in a nineteenth century novel; however, the author has given us just the proper amount of description to enable us to believe that *Fuga* is a tale about "real" people and that Irma Keegan and Gabriel O'Drrien, however strange, are not fantastic.

For every real element that Anderson Imbert introduces in *Fuga* he has used what we may term a fantastic "reaction" as a clue that this is, in fact, a fantastic novel. The structure assists in creating this illusion of realism, and it also destroys this illusion; chronology and description, while ostensibly adding to the sense of realism, are likewise employed to establish the fantastic nature of the book.

While the circular novel is not a necessary element of fantastic literature, Anderson Imbert has used it in conjunction with the narrator-protagonist point of view to create a fantastic, self-contained world. As a result of *Fuga*’s circular nature there is no outside reality to which it relates. The natural laws of *Fuga*’s world are thus not those of our world; its people behave and react accordingly. Through the device of the circular novel, the author has freed himself from any necessity of por-
traying life as we see it. At the beginning, *Fuga* appears to be dealing with everyday life. As the novel progresses, the reader sees Miguel slowly being drawn into a fantastic world until, in the last two chapters, appearances vanish totally with the mirror scene and Miguel's composition of his fantastic novel, *Fuga*. The cyclical form destroys the illusion of forward progress of time; and we see that the *novela* takes place not during April of 1930 but during an April of a 1930—one of the innumerable Aprils of the infinite number of 1930s in an endless repetition of years.

The narrator-protagonist point of view is an artistic device which, together with the circular form, creates this enclosed and repetitive world. The advantages gained by having the narrator placed within the story are mentioned by Percy Lubbock; and, although he is speaking in this instance of the narrator-witness rather than the narrator-protagonist, his assertions are still valid for our purposes.

If the story-teller is in the story himself, the author is dramatized; his assertions gain in weight, for they are backed by the presence of the narrator in the pictured scene. It is advantage scored; the author has shifted his responsibility, and it now falls where the reader can see and measure it; the arbitrary quality which may at any time be detected in the author's voice is disguised in the voice of his spokesman. Nothing is now imported into the story from
without; it is self-contained, it has no associations with anyone beyond its circle. 36

But this device also brings with it certain inherent limitations as Norman Friedman and A. A. Mendilow point out:

The protagonist-narrator . . . is limited almost entirely to his own thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. Similarly, the angle of view is that of the fixed center. 37

There are bounds which the I of the autobiographical novel cannot, except by means of unlikely and artificial tricks, overstep. He cannot present his own character or analyse his unconscious reactions and prejudices convincingly. . . . There are furthermore other difficulties of knowing what other characters feel, or what is going on outside the actual knowledge and presence of the narrator. 38

We do know, in addition to Miguel's actions, his thoughts; but he analyzes only those thoughts which have arrived at the speech level, whether or not he actually utters them. Besides being limited to the knowledge available to the protagonist-narrator, we may not know what he does not choose to tell us. Miguel, however, does not try to conceal anything from himself or from the reader. 39

Another limitation is that we must see everything through Miguel's eyes (although we are free to make our own judgments and to recognize errors which he might make—nevertheless, all our decisions can be based only upon knowledge which Miguel has, or which he learns in reports from others). Lastly, we must draw our conclusions about him from what he does—there is no outside individual to make objective
comments about him and thus guide or influence our judgment. Anderson Imbert has taken advantage of these elements to create the enclosed, independent world of fantasy which we find in Puga.

Detailed description does not necessarily mean realism since an author may describe most minutely a creature born of his imagination, but in Puga Anderson Imbert uses this device as a means of differentiating between the real and the fantastic characters. The former, as we have already seen, are drawn in detail while the latter are pictured in quite general terms, as in the following description of Irma:

Sus ojos tenían un brillo tristón y eran demasiado grandes para unos labios tan finos. Su busto, demasiado pequeño para unas caderas tan anchas.

From this outline we are able to gather only the vaguest idea of her physical appearance, and this haziness sets her apart from the precisely described Don Mario, Acevedo, and Genovesi. Looking at the two remaining characters, Miguel and Gabriel, a problem arises since they belong to both the real world and the fantastic world. Gabriel, it might be argued, belongs only to the fantastic world; but, since he is identical in physical appearance to Miguel, it must be remembered that any description of him applies equally to Miguel. From Miguel's position we see a similar difficulty: if he is portrayed
as completely as, say, Don Mario, we are likewise describing Gabriel; and the separation of real and fantastic characters no longer exists. It is more correct to consider Miguel among the fantastic characters since he does make this change (from real to fantastic) during the course of the novel, becoming a fantastic character—a literary creation—by his own action at the conclusion of the work. As a result, we have one description—not two—of the character Miguel-Gabriel. Like Irma, this person is treated in only the most general terms:

Hi imagen ... las mismas melenas flotantes—
caminaba con un paso más cansado. Su porte
se me agobiaba levemente. Hasta su cara, muy
parecida, era más desvaidía y avezentada.

Eramos como dos gotas de agua. La misma cara
huesosa, los mismos ojos duros. Pero allí,
en el espejo, mi expresión era más sana.41

There is one specific item of description furnished by
Irma who mentions his "ojos azules,"42 but these elements afford at best only a broad physical outline: longish hair, a somewhat bony face, and hard, blue eyes. The descriptions of Irma and Miguel-Gabriel are alike also in that they deal in relative, not absolute, terms. Irma's eyes are "demasiado grandes" and her bust "demasiado pequeño"; Gabriel's manner of walking is "más cansado" than Miguel's, his face "más desvaidía y avezentada"; and Miguel notes that his own expression is "más sana" than that of Gabriel. This treatment contrasts directly with
the exactness of the adjectives referring to the real characters and helps to establish a line of demarcation between the two types.

Besides differentiating between the real and the fantastic characters on the basis of description, Anderson Imbert has also separated them physically. At no point in the novela do the real characters and the fantastic ones come into direct contact; in fact, in only three chapters (XI, XV, XXII) are both types of characters present. The only exception to this statement are the "group scenes," such as the afternoon when Miguel first goes to the University. It is his first encounter with Gabriel and Irma, but there are also many other students in the building. We assume that these other students are real characters, but since we are interested only in contacts between one individual and another and not between an individual and a faceless group of people this incident and others like it may be discounted as contact between the real and the fantastic characters. The only link between the two types is Miguel while the others are all limited to their own sphere of action. His ability to associate freely with both groups indicates that fantasy permeates the entire work.

All of these devices used by Anderson Imbert to create an air of realism only to destroy it and replace it with fantasy have a particular purpose in that they draw
the reader along into the fantastic world of Fuga in much the same way as Miguel. The difference is that the reader observes Miguel become a part of the fantasy of the novel without realizing that he himself is also being enveloped by the same fantastic world. Throughout the book there are clues—as in any well written detective novel—which foretell the outcome. The overall plan of the work—Miguel's gradual separation from the world of reality and his growing obsession with Irma—parallels the reader's gradual involvement in the novel; however, this clue—as in mystery novels—is evident only in retrospect.

From the first word of Fuga we are informed that the book is going to be a game: "Juguemos..."; and since "... the novel depends completely on the keeping of a 'let's pretend' bargain struck by writer and reader," the game begins. As a part of our "willing suspension of disbelief" we accept the existence of Miguel Sullivan as a human being and thus miss an important clue. Miguel makes the statement: "Estoy hecho de papel y tinta," and we accept this for what it seems to be—a metaphor expressing his complete devotion to his journalistic calling when it is actually an indication that Fuga is a self-enclosed reality created by its main character: himself a creature of paper and ink, having no existence beyond the printed page. In a curious paradox we are
operating simultaneously on the levels of belief and disbeliefs. We accept the author's invitation to participate in the game and, by so doing, agree to abide by the rules he has set up. The basic principle of Fuga is that it is a game and that the reality of the novel is a reality which springs from within the work itself—a result of the circular form. By rejecting the statement "Estoy hecho de papel y tinta"—or rather by not accepting it at its face value—we are not abiding by the rules which Anderson Imbert has created; and it is this coexistence of belief and disbelief which results in our being unaware of the true nature of Fuga until its conclusion.

The world of Fuga is quite different from that presented in Vigilia and shows two important steps forward toward the expresiones más maduras of which Anderson Imbert spoke in his interview with Mead cited in the preceding chapter. Fuga, first of all, represents a truly fantastic world while in the world of Beltrán Mulhall fantasy existed solely within his own mind. Fantasy permeates all fictional levels of Fuga. In the microcuentos, to be discussed two chapters later, it is not the characters but the reader who participates in the creation of fiction. Although the choice of the protagonist-narrator device tends to put distance between reader and narrator, Anderson Imbert has overcome this difficulty through the use of the circular form; and, while the
reader does not identify himself with Miguel Sullivan, he feels that the novel is taking place before his eyes.

The reader's active participation is discussed in the chapter on microcuentos; but, prior to that, we must examine an intermediate step between Anderson Imbert's novelas and his microcuentos: his short stories.
NOTES ON CHAPTER III

1 "Como poeta, crítico literario y musicólogo se ha destacado Daniel J. Devoto (1916), en cuya poesía se combinan las mejores esencias hispánicas—desde Berceo hasta García Lorca—con su conocimiento de la literatura francesa. Estudió en la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Buenos Aires y en la Sorbona de París con el ilustre hispanista Marcel Bataillon. Ha colaborado en Sur, La Nación y otras importantes publicaciones. ... Posee una profunda cultura que incluye clásicos y modernos; literatura francesa y española; además de filología, crítica literaria, estilística y poética." Orlando Gómez-Gil, Historia crítica de la literatura hispanoamericana (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), pp. 717-718.

2 In a letter to this writer (October 15, 1971) Anderson Imbert told of the confiscation of the original edition of Fuga by police of the dictator Juan Perón. In an effort to eliminate anti-Perón writings "... la policía solía intervenir las imprentas sospechosas, clausurarlas y confiscar todo el material impreso, tratara de lo que tratara. En uno de esos abusos del poder los peronistas se apoderaron de una imprenta, en la ciudad de Tucumán, donde se acababa de imprimir mi novelita Fuga. Toda la edición quedó, pues, secuestrada en el depósito. Es posible que mi nombre, asociado en Tucumán con el anti-peronismo ... tuviera algo que ver con la incautación policial de los ejemplares de Fuga. No creo, sin embargo, que la policía la leyera; en realidad mi novelita transcurrió en 1930. Pero la policía tenía la mala costumbre de perseguir a los opositores sin leer lo que escribían."

3 This is the same text which was used for the discussion of Vigilia; Anderson Imbert (in the letter cited in note 2) calls it the definitive edition of Fuga.


5 EAI, Vigilia. Fuga, p. 121.

6 Ibid., p. 122.
7 Ibid., p. 172.

8 Ibid., p. 162.

9 Ibid., p. 160.


12 This practical concern is expressed only once when, after Irma's statement that she already lives in Miguel's apartment, he thinks, "(Mi madre con un nietito, ¡qué bueno!)" (p. 166).

13 These same situations also have the value of "clues"—a point which will be discussed later in the chapter.

14 DAI, Vigilia, Fuga, p. 128.

15 Ibid., p. 133.

16 Ibid., p. 139.


18 Meyerhoff, Time in Literature, pp. 110-111.


22 The analysis of the musical structure of Fuga is done from a layman's point of view since the writer has no expertise in music.

In this chapter the term "real characters" will be used as in this sentence to indicate Don Mario, Genovesi, and Acevedo; the term "fantastic characters" will refer to Irma and Gabriel.


Ibid., p. 142.


Although it is true that the painter or the sculptor may, by various means, attempt to direct the eye of the viewer to a certain point, the viewer is not obliged—as he is in dealing with music or literature—to begin at that particular point in order to comprehend the work.

Mendilow, Time and the Novel, p. 23.

Descriptions of the fantastic characters will be treated later in the chapter.

EAI, Vigilia. Fuga, p. 121.

Ibid., p. 122.

Ibid., pp. 122-123.


Norman Friedman, "Point of View in Fiction," The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism, p. 159.


It might be argued that Miguel does conceal until the final page the fact that he is the author of the novel Fuga, but this deception comes from a literary necessity and is an essential element in drawing the reader into the world of fantasy.
40 EAI, Vigilia. Fuga, p. 128.

41 Ibid., pp. 125, 133.

42 Ibid., p. 142.

43 Other group scenes in the novel include the Latin class and the street scenes with Miguel and Gabriel and Miguel and Irma.

44 That Fuga should be somewhat like a detective novel is not surprising since Anderson Imbert uses the pattern of the detective story as the basis for some of his short stories; moreover, this type of literature is an influence on the writers of magical realism. In his article "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction" Angel Flores states, "This concern of the magical realists for the well-knit plot probably stems from their familiarity with detective stories, which Borges, Bioy Casares, Peyrou, and other magical realists have written, translated, or anthologized." (pp. 191-192).

45 A fantasy-reality relationship can be noted in the function and use of clues in the detective novel. The clues are "reality" since they are facts supplied to the reader. On the other hand, they are "fantasy" in that their purpose is to seem to be something different from what they are. In other words, a clue when it is misinterpreted by the reader— as is often the case in mystery literature— becomes for him something that it is not, and its reality (its true meaning) is made known only with the final solution.

46 EAI, Vigilia. Fuga, p. 121.

47 Mendilow, Time and the Novel, p. 50.


49 Mendilow in Time and the Novel points this out when he says, "Contrary to what might be expected, a novel in the first person rarely succeeds in conveying the illusion of presentness and immediacy. Far from facilitating the hero-reader identification, it tends to appear remote in time. The essence of such a novel is that it is retrospective, and that there is an avowed temporal distance between the fictional
time . . . and the narrator's actual time." (p. 106). Fuga is one of those novels he mentions that "rarely succeeds in conveying the illusion of presentness and immediacy."
THE SHORT STORIES: "DEL CAOS UN UNIVERSO NUEVO"

Before discussing Anderson Imbert's short stories we must first differentiate between them and his microcuentos; and, initially, this distinction will be made on the basis of length. Those narratives consisting of more than approximately six hundred words are considered short stories while those of less than that number fall under the heading of microcuentos. This is not to say that length is the only distinguishing feature of these two types, but this point will be covered more fully in the chapter which deals with the microcuentos. For the purposes of this chapter, it is sufficient to distinguish between the two on the basis of length. The short stories are found in four volumes: El grimorio (1961), El gato de Cheshire (1965), La sandía y otros cuentos (1969), and La locura juega al ajedrez (1971)¹ and total about sixty in number. A good portion of those tales found in El grimorio had appeared in earlier collections by Anderson Imbert, El mentir de las estrellas (1940) and Las pruebas del caos (1946), while others had previously been published in various periodicals in Argentina, some with dates of composition in the middle and early 1930s.

¹
Although the stories were written over a period of some thirty years, one finds in them a definite unity of theme and expression—a subjective approach to reality, an interest in the fantastic, and a carefully worked prose style. His sources are quite varied, coming mainly from outside the Hispanic world, as he states in the Prologue to *El grimorio*: "... mis fuentes literarias son las de la biblioteca inglesa de mi casa ... mis estratagemas en el arte de contar comenzaron como ejercicios aprendidos en el humilde O. Henry y en el no tan humilde Chesterton ... "2

Although there are several ways of classifying his cuentos, in this study they will be divided into fantastic and non-fantastic. Slightly less than half of the tales in the four volumes will within the category of fantastic stories, i.e. narratives in which the element of the supernatural is clearly evident. Most of the remaining cuentos, while not dealing with patently fantastic situations, involve what might well be called a kind of "marginal reality"—situations which exist as possibilities; although unlikely, they do not involve the supernatural. An example of this type of short story is "El general hace un lindo cadáver," a detective story which deals with the commission of the perfect crime, an attempt thwarted by the stupidity of the police. The stories—whether fantastic or realistic—have an aura of
credibility about them. This is generally accomplished by intermingling real and fantastic elements together with the characters' acceptance of this ambivalence as a probability. Thus, we see Alicia in "Los duendes deterministas" going in search of goblins; Pedro's wife ("El leve Pedro") is not surprised when her diseased husband calls, "¡Hebe! ¡Casi me caigo al cielo!"; and Professor Andrés Bent Miró ("Los cantares de antaño son los de hogaño") accepts his trip backward in time to carry on a conversation with the seventeenth century poet Luis de Tejeda. The result of this interweaving of real and fantastic as a matter of course is the kind of magical realism we have already seen in Vigilia and Fuga. Conversely, among many of the stories which do not enter the realm of the unreal, there is an air of fantasy, as Isabel Keade states in her introduction to The Other Side of the Mirror:

The stories of El grimorio go all the way from apparent realism to pure fantasy. Apparent realism because Anderson is not a realistic writer: the stories that seem most realistic—"Tsantsa," "Mishina," "Taste of Lipstick," "The Wall"—have surprise endings that bring the reader up short, make him rearrange his whole concept of the story's situation. What he had been trustingly following was a false reality, a playing with reality.

Of the cuentos mentioned perhaps the best example of the "false reality" of which Mrs. Reade speaks is "Sabor a pintura de labios" ("Taste of Lipstick") which seems to
be a scene between a man and his mistress. Only in the final lines do we learn that the "man" is a señorita and that the story has dealt with a Lesbian relationship.

In order to see the reality expressed by Anderson Imbert in his short stories, let us examine three different tales: (1) a completely fantastic narrative, "Los duendes deterministas"; (2) a story which begins as if it were dealing with real life but passes into the realm of the fantastic, "El grimorio"; and (3) "El general hace un lindo cadáver," a tale within the realm of possibility. Since these represent the three major types of short stories, conclusions drawn from them are applicable to Anderson Imbert's other cuentos.

"Los duendes deterministas" is written in the dramatic form, but this does not exclude it from the category of short story. The author views it and four other similar tales as "cuentos dialogados" rather than as "piezas teatrales." The dramatic form does serve a definite structural purpose since it directly opposes reality (Alicia) and fantasy (the goblins) without authorial mediation. By its very nature it imparts a sense of immediacy to the reader, as we note in the following quotation from The Dramatic Experience:

The reader of drama is always in the presence of the dramatist's characters at the very moment when they speak and move. . . . the present tense always takes the place of the past, for what he "hear" are the characters
themselves speaking. . . . when we give our belief to story or novel, we tend to feel that we were "there". . . . But in the drama . . . we are "there."9

Although this statement is made with reference to a play to be performed before an audience, it is taken from the chapter entitled "On Reading Drama" and is therefore applicable to "Los duendes deterministas" and the other cuentos dialogados.

The title introduces the element of the fantastic with the word "duendes" as well as the element of real order by "deterministas." The first word implies complete freedom while the second denies the action of the free will in favor of a preordained course of action.

With the title itself we find established the dramatic tension which forms an integral part of the tale. The first two characters who appear—Alicia and the son of the King of the goblins—make the reader immediately aware of the coexistence of reality and fantasy in this story as does the opening description of the scene:

Alicia ha subido por los senderos de la montaña y ahora la selva la aprisiona en su blando hueco. El alma se le está yendo por los ojos ansiosos. No parece fatigada, aunque el viaje ha sido largo. El vestido, desgarrado por las zarzas, es violeta, tan luminoso que en la penumbra del bosque Alicia parece andar bajo el móvil reflector que sigue a las bailarinas en el tablado. El sol se filtra—verde, oro—por los intersticios del follaje.9

The detail of the torn dress, the fanciful playing of light and shadows together with the luminous quality of
her clothing unite in Alicia—the only human who appears in the cuento—both reality and fantasy. Her name and her situation as the only "real" individual in an unreal world recall Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass, and her desire to find the duendes is quite similar to Alice's curiosity which leads her to follow the White Rabbit. An important difference exists between the two in that Anderson Imbert's Alicia comes searching specifically for the goblins while Carroll's Alice embarks upon her adventure without any definite goal in mind. Two other parallels between the works are found in Alicia's ready acceptance of the fantastic world in which she finds herself (although she does not return to her own world as does Alice) and in her statement "... haciéndolo todo al revés, llegué a este monte," which calls to mind how Alice (in Through the Looking-Glass) performs certain actions in reverse precisely to keep order. The tension between reality and fantasy is not found, as one might expect, in a confrontation between and the duendes but inside the kingdom of the goblins. The King is the personification of reality within a supernatural world as he attempts to impose human laws upon his subjects. Opposed to him are duendes unwilling to submit to these regulations and wishing to remain unfettered and free to perform acts of magic at will. Although these two worlds
are diametrically opposed, they not only coexist but one inhabitant of each world (Alicia and the King) is intent upon crossing over and becoming part of the other world which seems better. This is accomplished without any note of surprise except for Alicia who expects the fantastic world and the people in it to be quite different from her own. Thus, she refuses to believe the boy in the forest is a duende because he resembles the youths in her world. This expectation that the fantastic be different is found in "El fantasma" when the protagonist sees himself lying dead on the floor and thinks,

¿Con que eso era la muerte?
¡Qué desengaño! Había querido averiguar cómo era el tránsito al otro mundo ¡y resultaba que no había ningún otro mundo! La misma opacidad de los muros, la misma distancia entre mueble y mueble, el mismo repicar de la lluvia sobre el techo... \( \text{12} \)

His disillusionment takes a more pessimistic turn than Alicia's. His existence as a spirit unable to communicate with his family does not remove him to a different world. The trasmundo is very similar to the real world, and only he has changed; the point of the story is that even ghosts are lonely. Returning to "Los duendes deterministas," we notice that Alicia's disappointment is only momentary, that the more important element is the intermingling of the two worlds and the acceptance of each one's existence by the inhabitants of the other. Neither the King nor Alicia evidences surprise at the existence
of the other; they only express astonishment that one should wish to leave his own world for what he believes to be a superior one. This exchange brings about a dramatic reversal of roles. Being human, Alicia is expected to act reasonably. On the other hand, true to the capricious nature of the duendes we expect the King to act accordingly. In neither instance do we see what would be considered normal. Alicia arbitrarily demands a miracle of the King's son as proof of his being a goblin and—just as suddenly—decides to run off with him. The King attempts to reason logically (as a human) and to shun the disorder of his own world. The key to Alicia's ability to feel comfortable in the fantastic world of the duendes is her imagination. It allowed her to believe in the existence of the goblins and impelled her to search for them. This same ability to conceive and accept the duendes allows her to applaud the miracles she sees and, not being bewildered, to become a part of the fantasy herself. This is perhaps the major difference between Anderson Imbert's creation and Carroll's Alice: the latter, although she accepts what happens to her, continually thinks of returning to her own world, while Alicia's purpose in searching for the goblins is to stay with them. This is achieved as she and the King's son are carried off on the back of a gigantic dragonfly. Her idealization of the freedom enjoyed by the elves has allowed her
to transcend human limitations to become like them. The King's fate is the reverse of this. His idealization of reason—as opposed to imagination—is a limiting factor that makes him forbid the performance of miracles, since these are not logical. He further states that, when he was studying among humans,

He avergoncé de mi magia como de un secreto impúdico. A nadie le dije que era un duende. Y para disimularlo fingía tropezar por las escaleras, usaba lentes ahumados y hablaba una lengua sin imaginación.13

These traits alienate him from his subjects as they reject his ordered world for their free, anarchical existence. In the King's sorrowful last speech, "Ahora soy un hombre de veras,"14 reality and fantasy—so closely interwoven throughout the story—are completely and definitely separated. Alicia has become a part of the whimsical world of the duendes while the King, having achieved his desire to become a part of the world of men, is unable to reenter the world of which he was once ruler.

In the second story we find a somewhat different situation from that of "Los duendes deterministas." While the title, "El grimorio," immediately prepares us for the fantastic element in the narrative, this is introduced gradually. In the Middle Ages the grimoire was a magic book which contained all manner of incantations, spells, and general aids for witches and warlocks. The grimorio of the story contains none of these items; its
peculiar magic consists of being readable only when one starts with the first page each time one recommences reading, since it is an eternal book. The basic structure of "Il grimoio" is that of the story within a story; the history which so engrosses Professor Rabinovich is the well known Tale of the Wandering Jew. Around this legend Anderson Imbert has created a world in which reality and fantasy freely mix and in which the character is caught up in a supernatural cosmos. Due to his being a professor of ancient history Rabinovich approaches the puzzle of the magic book with the same reverence as if it were the Rosetta stone. He is surprised at the book's extremely light weight, the indestructibility of its pages, and the fact that he can read it in any one of several languages; but this surprise is of short duration and quickly gives way to his desire to solve the puzzle he finds. As the story unfolds, the reader is caught up in it as he realizes—long before Rabinovich—that the Jewish history professor and the Wandering Jew are one and the same individual. Along the way there are several clues which clearly point out the identity of the two; the professor, however, being so concerned with solving the mystery of the book, fails to perceive them until the very end of the tale.

As it has been stated, fantasy is introduced gradually as curious things occur culminating in the emergence
of a fantastic world. This contrast makes the fantasy even more striking, as a reviewer of El grimorio pointed out:

La fantasía, para surtir efecto estético, tiene que brotar de un contraste. Cuando más violento sea éste, mayor será su impacto, como es más fulgida la chispa, cuando más recio y sesco es el choque de dos piedras. Este contraste está aquí dado por la realidad, punto de referencia incluíble en la intención y en la gestación creadoras. No es una realidad concreta, ceñida, quizás mezquina o simplemente lugareña.  

Further on he makes a statement with which, in the specific case of "El grimorio," I would take issue:

Pero de pronto, en esa realidad maciza, de contornos nítidos, se cuela un elemento de imprevisión, algo que quebranta las secuencias habituales.  

While this statement may be true in many of the stories, it does not apply to "El grimorio" where the rupture of "las secuencias habituales" is brought in by degrees. The story opens with realidad concreta as Rabinovich is planning a trip for his summer vacation after a hard academic year. As he makes his way toward the railroad station we read:

Tomó por Reconquista, bajó hacia Leandro Alem y, al doblar en las recovas, descubrió una librería de viejo.

Curioso: nunca la había visto. No lo juraría—después de todo, pocas veces recorría ese camino—pero no recordaba haberla visto. Intró.  

The realistic details, the names of specific streets are interrupted by his discovery of the second-hand book-
store; but Anderson Inbert stresses that the professor merely does not remember having seen the store before. The steps leading to the definite establishment of a fantastic world follow, as Rabinovich makes a series of discoveries about the strange book he has picked up: (1) it is extremely light; (2) the contents are apparently chaotic, no separation or punctuation and completely unpronounceable combinations of letters; (3) the handwriting seems to be identical to his and, at the same time, from the ninth century or before; (4) the pages are made of some unknown material which resists wear; (5) the text, he discovers by chance, is written in Spanish; and (6) it is also written in any of several other languages. With these two final discoveries, we see the world of fantasy firmly implanted in "El grimorio" since there can be no real explanation for a book's being undecipherable then suddenly readable in any one of several tongues if one starts with the first letter on the first page. 

Yet as the supernatural is taking hold of the story, we see the device by which the two worlds will eventually converge: the similarity (or identity) of the handwriting of Rabinovich and the author of the grimorio; and, just as the world of the fantastic was gradually made evident, so the confluence of the two worlds is brought about step by step throughout the remainder of the cuento. The more the history professor penetrates into
the book, the more he seems to resemble the protagonist; and the closer their two worlds move. Rabinovich seems to hear the words of the book being read aloud: "Sus palabras parecían pronunciadas por alguien a su lado. Más: era como si el mismo Rabinovich las pronunciara." With regard to the prose style, "Era la prosa que él, Rabinovich, escribiría." He imitates what he feels were the actions of the Wandering Jew and notices the similarity of some of their ideas:

Rabinovich sonreía mientras leía estas supersticiones católicas. Sonreía porque el Judío Errante debió de haber sonreído al describirlas. ¡Si sus estudiantes pudieran leer este libro! Él, en sus clases en la Facultad, insinuaba algo parecido.

The physical appearance and mannerisms which the professor imagines for the Wandering Jew are his own:

... le imaginaba un rostro, un gesto, un modo de andar; rostro, gesto, andar parecidos a los de él mismo, Rabinovich.

Besides these coincidences in the story, Rabinovich's reading and rereading of the book is equivalent to reliving the life of the Wandering Jew. Just as the latter was forced to journey throughout history, so the Jewish professor of ancient history is (by his own desires) forced to continue the search for the elusive author of the ancient—and contemporary—book. Once Rabinovich decides to undertake this "journey" all else becomes insignificant, and he willingly gives up everything—even
his life—to chase after his unattainable goal. Only at the very end of the tale, when he is about to die, in a moment of illumination, does he realize the truth of the situation:

Antes de perder el conocimiento creyó que él, Rabinovich, era el Judío Errante, leyendo su propio libro; que con los ojos lo escribía y lo leía al mismo tiempo; que él era, al final de cuentas, el protagonista, ...25

This final paragraph is the union of fantasy and reality in the story as they are joined in the person of Rabinovich-Ahasuerus. The two elements of this fantastic-real world—the world of magical realism—have been artfully and completely fused into one.

The third basic type of short story—the tale which occurs entirely within the world of reality, with no recourse to the supernatural—will be considered by an examination of the detective story "El general hace un lindo cadáver." Technically, this is no ordinary detective story since the central figure is not the detective but the murderer.26 This possible objection can best be answered by stating that the word "detective"—in this discussion—refers to the fact that the art of detection is engaged in order to solve the mystery. Detection is used by the reader (who knows that Quiroga murdered General Belgardejo) to solve the question of how he was murdered while the police, by the same manner, attempt to discover what happened to him. The influence of the
detective story on the magical realists in general was mentioned in the preceding chapter, and it is convenient to discuss this genre before analyzing "El general hace un lindo cadáver."

The world of detective fiction, be it a novel or short story, is a world of implausible happenings, realisim, riddles, and logic—even though some of these terms may appear to be mutually exclusive. Ralph Harper points out the element of implausibility in this type of literature in his study The World of the Thriller:

Theoretically, there is no reason why the implausible should not occasionally happen. In the abstract there is no reason why God should not appear to men, but it is unlikely. In thrillers the implausible not only happens all the time . . . but the almost impossible also happens—the hero succeeds.27

After discussing the characters, the same author states: " . . . only the situation out of which the plot evolves is unusual or unlikely."28 Coupled with the basic unlikeliness of the situation, there must be an air of reality about the rest—not that events portrayed do happen, but that they might conceivably happen.29 Harper again states,

The writer of a fairy story has no scruples about playing fast and loose with plausibility. . . . The thriller writer does have scruples, at least to the extent of providing a more detailed rendering, only up to a point sometimes, of the factual world. In more sophisticated thrillers . . . realistic characters are set against a realistic background . . . .30
It is true that many famous fictional detectives—Sherlock Holmes, Father Brown, Hercule Poirot—have definite idiosyncracies; but they are still believable individuals whose powers of deduction or observation are more highly developed than ours.

The riddle or puzzle is the base of detective literature as one critic points out:

... it is ... a complicated and extended puzzle cast in fictional form. ... Indeed, the structure and mechanism of the cross-word puzzle and of the detective novel are very similar. In each there is a problem to be solved; and the solution depends wholly on mental processes—on analysis, on the fitting together of apparently unrelated parts, on a knowledge of the ingredients, and, in some measure, on guessing. Each is supplied with a series of overlapping clues to guide the solver; and these clues, when fitted into place, blaze the path for future progress. In each, when the final solution is achieved, all the details are found to be woven into a complete, interrelated, and closely knitted fabric.31

Logic is the means whereby the puzzle is solved, and everything in the detective story must fit together logically. In addition, as implied in the above quotation, the reader must be an active participant if he wishes to solve the mystery.32 He may, of course, merely sit back and allow the riddle to be solved for him; but, in general, a reader of mystery stories finds himself searching for clues and attempting to unravel the tangled thread of the tale. With this combination of elements, the detective story is admirably suited to the mixture of reality
and fantasy which forms magical realism. As Angel Flores notes,

The practitioners of magical realism cling to reality as if to prevent "literature" from getting in their way, as if to prevent their myth from flying off as in fairy tales, to supernatural realms. The narrative proceeds in well-prepared, increasingly intense steps, which ultimately may lead to one great ambiguity or confusion, "Verwirrung innerhalb der Klarheit," to a confusion within clarity, to borrow a term used by the Austrian novelist Joseph Roth in a slightly different context.33

The primary difference one notes between this description of magical realism and detective literature is that the latter terminates with a solution in which all loose ends are neatly brought together while a magical realist may end his story without any such resolution.

"El general hace un lindo cadáver" exemplifies a type of mystery story appreciated by writers of magical realism. Reality and fantasy are present in the story not as subject matter—although the plot is somewhat implausible—but in the narrative style. The opening paragraph is a carefully written, concise parody34 of the opening pages of Cervantes' Don Quixote and sets the tone for the rest. No sooner does one read "En un lugar de Sudamérica, de cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme,"35 than there springs to mind Cervantes' knight errant who set out to right the wrongs in the world. There is also a great deal of irony involved since Doctor Alfonso Quiroga (an echo of Alonso Quijano el Bueno) sets out not to right
wrongs but to commit murder. The effect of this parody is to establish the character quickly and definitely. The hero being a criminal, the author was faced with the problem of establishing Quiroga as a sympathetic character, and the parody accomplishes that. Likewise, the reader is made aware that he is about to enter a world of fantasy—fiction in this case—while at the same time the details concerning the doctor's personal appearance, house, and servants give reality to the story. A third advantage gained from the parody of Cervantes is the creation of a general intellectual mood which is continued throughout the cuento, softening what would otherwise be merely a grisly, second-rate murder story. This air is sustained as the reader participates in the unravelling of the mystery concerning the death of General José Melgarrejo. In this way, the reader identifies somewhat with Major Rosas (to whom Quiroga, in his imagination, had assigned the role of "detective"); and the real historical names, as fictional characters, add to the melange of real and fantastic. Anderson Imbert continually tantalizes the reader and draws him into the story by furnishing him clues which seem to be important but whose meaning he is unable to discern. Thus the contest of wits, characteristic of detective fiction, between author and reader is established—a contest which parallels the mental fencing between criminal and detective. Irony
enters the tale as Quiroga's perfect crime is frustrated by the police and the opponents of Melgarejo who do not "play the game" but turn his mysterious disappearance to political advantage. It is a bitter pill for Quiroga to swallow: to see a crime which had been conceived in the purest of motives—an intellectual exercise—sullied and dragged down to the level of a political assassination. He is left with no satisfaction other than a withdrawal into his own mind where the original idea had been conceived and pretend that he is explaining the details of the crime. Only at this time, when Quiroga describes the step by step process and that "Melgarejo falleció en el curso de la delicada operación quirúrgica," do we become aware that the purity of the crime ("purity" for Quiroga in the sense that it was devoid of motive, "Y, como la poesía pura, debe ser desinteresado") and the methodical manner in which it was carried out have, for the doctor, a truly ritual significance which gives a new dimension to the number of religious references found in the story. The fiesta is now seen in retrospect as a parody of the Mass; and we recall Quiroga's seemingly innocent question, "¿Se habrá ido a misa?" when he and Rosas are unable to locate the general. Melgarejo has indeed gone to Mass where he himself is the Host and such words as "sacrificio," "cordero," and "mártires" become terms of double significance, as does the doctor's order—
ing the musicians to play a carnavalito as the meat
dishes are served and the cry "¡Viva el general Melga-
rejo! ¡Viva, viva!". The story ends in a truly ritual-
istic offering:

¡Qué hermosura, qué hermosura! ¡Oh, si sólo
hubiera habido un criminólogo digno de tal
crimen! Beatamente, con resignación, Quiroga
levantó los ojos al cielo. Algo de aquel
candoroso resplandor que, después del holo-
causto de Abel, debió de iluminar el rostro
de Caín, brilló también en el rostro de Qui-
roga. "Dios y yo—repitió—sabemos que, a
pesar de todo, el crimen fue perfecto". Y
ofreció a Dios, espectador único y mudo, su
homicidio redondo como una hostia.

The reality of a cold-blooded murder, a vivisection of
the victim, and a cannibalistic disposal of his flesh
have disappeared and been replaced by religious devotion.

The question of reality also appears with regard to
the main character and his intended victim. Quiroga had
used chance in order to choose the name of "el elegido
para el sacrificio" and secretly hoped that José Melga-
rejo was indeed a fantastic, i.e. nonexistent, creation.
When the victim materializes, as if he were a character
stepping out of a dream to assume an independent exist-
ence, the doctor finds himself caught up in his own fan-
tasy—a victim of his own creative genius. Quiroga is
trapped in a way reminiscent of Rabinovich, when the pro-
fessor of ancient history was driven to his destruction
by his own desire to solve the riddle of the eternal
book. Quiroga is driven on to the commission of the per-
fect crime by his own pride. The element of the supernatural is replaced by the element of chance which provides the victim for the murder, and Quiroga—the creator of a fantastic José Melgarejo—is caught in the web of his own making, disposing of a flesh and blood José Melgarejo—a dream become reality. The "creation" of the victim as a result of chance adds to the feeling of unreality and, along with the doctor's dispassionate approach to the murder, attenuates the effect of the deed upon the reader. Indeed, we are so intrigued by the mystery of how the crime was performed that, like Quiroga, we forget that a cold-blooded murder has been committed. Anderson Imbert, by carefully stressing the intellectual aspect of the story, has shifted the emphasis away from the crime.

The participation of the reader, more active than in the other two stories discussed, creates a new dimension of reality which links the world outside the cuento to that of the story.

The tales discussed here exemplify the elements of the world of Anderson Imbert's stories. A balance is achieved between the real and the fantastic so that a realistic presentation will balance a fantastic subject and vice versa. The mingling of the real world and the fantastic—as seen in Pura—is evident also in the short stories, while the greater reader participation—particularly in those stories which are related to detective
literature—anticipates the reader's involvement in the
microcuentos which are discussed in the following chap-
ter.
NOTES ON CHAPTER IV

1 The last two collections cited, La sandía y otros cuentos (Buenos Aires: Editorial Galerna, 1969) and La locura juega al ajedrez (Mexico: siglo xx editorcs, s.a., 1971), were published after this study was well under way and, consequently, are not dealt with directly but only referred to occasionally in a note. Nevertheless, statements made about the short stories in the other collections are generally valid for those in La sandía y otros cuentos and La locura juega al ajedrez.


3 This recalls the statement Miguel Sullivan made to Don Mario at the end of Puca: "... yo hablaré de lo imposible como si fuera probable," (p. 192). This is a resume of the stories he (Anderson Imbert) had already written as well as a prophecy concerning the tales he would write in the future.


6 Here is a brief history of "Los duendes deterministas" as told to this writer in a letter (March 22, 1968) from Professor Anderson Imbert. "Acaso porque sabia que yo tenia cierta experiencia en teatro de titeres, Daniel Devoto—poeta, musico, filologo y hoy distinguido profesor en una universidad de Paris—me pidió que escribiera una pieza representable para que él pudiera componer música. Teniendo en cuenta la colaboración musical de Devoto, pues, escribí 'Los duendes deterministas'. Por eso hay tres escenas escritas especialmente para que Devoto les pusiera fondos musicales: el ciervo de agua, la marcha militar y el desbande final. Daniel Devoto compuso, en efecto, su partitura; pero nunca representamos ni pieza porque tanto él como yo tuvimos que dedicarnos a otras ocupaciones más urgentes. La música de Devoto sí se tocó."

7 EAI in his essay "Teatro y literatura," Los domingos del profesor, p. 52, defines "theater" in the following manner: "Si quitamos del concepto 'theatro' todas las notas accidentales—edificio, escenario,
The term "teatro" refers to a form of spectacle that consists, at the very least, of an actor and an audience. 

Prod B. Millett and Gerald E. Bentley (The Art of the Drama (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), p. 5) also point out the necessity of presentation: "In a very real sense, a play is not a play until it is acted in a theater before an audience."

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10 Ibid., p. 15.

11 It must be noted here that Lewis Carroll's influence is not limited to this one short story since the second collection of Anderson Imbert's tales, El gato de Cheshire, takes its title from a well known character in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and refers specifically to the conversation between Alice and the Cheshire Cat, the pertinent portion of which is cited below:

"... I wish you wouldn't keep appearing and vanishing so suddenly: you make one quite giddy!"

"All right," said the Cat; and this time it vanished quite slowly, beginning with the end of the tail, and ending with the grin, which remained some time after the rest of it had gone.

"Well! I've often seen a cat without a grin," thought Alice; "but a grin without a cat!" (Chapter VI)


14 Ibid., p. 24.

15 This is not the Eternal Recurrence of Nietzsche discussed in Fuga since Rabinovich does not reread the same material each time he turns to the first page.
As long as he continues reading, the first page will contain different material; the repetition occurs only if and when he stops reading. Since he ceases reading at different places each time, his rereadings are recurrences only up to the point at which he had stopped.

16 The protagonists in several other stories express either mild surprise or no surprise at all when confronted with the supernatural. Alejo Zaro ("Alejo Zaro se perdió en el tiempo") is described as "aturdido" but this seems to be primarily a reaction to hearing the music rather than a result of his having been pulled backward in time. In "Patricio O'Hara, el Libertador" O'Hara is not the least bit perturbed at the unreal countryside and the sleeping natives he finds; and Dorantes of "Dios se justifica" says only, "¡Ah, qué suerte encontrarte!" when he stumbles across an angel who had been sent to explain God's seeming lack of justice toward him and his companion.


18 Ibid.


20 There is a logical key to deciphering the strange book and a definite series of steps which must be followed: (1) one must begin with the first letter; (2) one must use a language which is read from left to right (Rabinovich was unable to decipher the text using Hebrew); (3) one must read continuously without allowing his eyes to stray from the page. The cryptographic nature of the grimorio is typical of most sacred books since one needs a key—translation, interpretation, revelation—in order to understand the work.


22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., p. 98.


25 Ibid., p. 108.
One can make a great many differentiations in this type of literature, separating detective, mystery, crime, thriller, and spy stories one from the other; but such distinctions are unimportant for our purposes. Taking a very general view of "detective" literature we can include not only "El general hace un lindo cadáver" but also "El crimen del desván" and "La bala cansada" in this grouping.


Ibid., p. 16.

Anderson Imbert, in "El crimen del desván," a tale in which all the characters are played by a duende, violates this precept; but this story may be viewed as a parody of the detective story since the characters and the situation are all set up as hackneyed types taken from mystery literature.

Harper, The World of the Thriller, p. 16.


Logic, carried to an unforeseen yet predictable end, and active reader participation are two important elements of the microcuentos which are discussed in the next chapter.


Anderson Imbert's ability as a parodist, although not germane to this study must be mentioned. In A Parody Anthology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904) Carolyn Wells discusses the elements of a good parody: "The requirements of the best parody are in a general way simply the requirements of the best literature of any sort; but, specifically, the true parodist requires an exact mental balance, a fine sense of proportion and relative values, good-humor, refinement, and unerring taste. Self-control and self-restraint are also needed; a parodist may go to the very edge, but he must not fall over." (p. xxiii). This quotation describes perfectly the opening paragraph of "El general hace un lindo cadáver." Anderson Imbert is not throwing literary darts at Cervantes but acknowledging that there
could be no better way to establish both the protagonist and an air of fantasy than to parody the opening pages of his immortal novel; it is a parody of love—not ridicule.


36 The problem the reader faces is different from that faced by Rosas since the reader knows that Quiroga has murdered Melgarejo but is unaware of exactly how it was done and how the doctor has managed to dispose completely of body and clothing. Rosas knows only that the dictator has disappeared without a trace and without any hint as to what might have occurred.

37 The names of the characters have definite importance, as Anderson Imbert pointed out in a letter to this writer (October 15, 1971): "... elegí como víctima del 'crimen perfecto' a un dictador desaparecido: Melgarejo (antiguo dictador de Bolivia). ... todos los personajes de mi cuento llevan apellido de dictador: Melgarejo (Mariano), Quiroga ('Facundo'), Rosas (Juan Manuel), Villa (Pancho). Con estos nombres yo esperaba dirigir la atención del lector al dictador ausente: Perón." This last statement refers to the fact that the story was first published in 1956, after Perón had been overthrown and had gone into exile.

38 Irony, as Isabel Rcade points out in her introduction to The Other Side of the Mirror, "... is another principal characteristic of these stories. The monk who longed for sanctity as union with God finds that it is precisely his sanctity that has separated him from God; the perfect crime planned to vanquish the intelligence of the police is itself vanquished by the lack of intelligence of the police..." (p. xii).


40 Ibid., p. 119.

41 In his reverie concerning the crime, Quiroga thinks, "Crimen de sagrado simbolismo, con magnificencias de liturgia," (p. 135).

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., p. 135. The double significance of the final phrase—"his homicide as a perfect sacrificial act" and "his homicide round like the host"—is pointed out by John Falconieri in his edition of "Los duendes deterministas" y otros cuentos (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 141.

45 Holgarejo's physically appearing to take part in the story after having been "created" is similar to the way in which characters of the interpolated novels of the Quixote subsequently appeared to take part in the action of that novel.

46 This is an element found in all well-structured detective stories. Anderson Imbert alludes to this point in "La bala cansada" when the protagonist, Jorge Greb, transforms a scene he witnesses into a detective story: "Su misantropía lo llevaba a tratar ... a los personajes como cifras. Sea una ciudad X cualquiera; sean A, B y C los tres vértices de un crimen... Víctima, asesino, detective, irreciales como los signos algebraicos de un triángulo ... Había entrado en un aire de novela de detectives, donde puede haber golpes, y sangre, y muerte, pero no puede haber sufrimiento porque nada vive, nada es real." (El grimorio, p. 203).
Before proceeding to the study of Anderson Imbert's microcuentos, it would be well to look at them in relation to their literary antecedents, in order to discover in what ways they resemble each other and in what ways they differ. The result of this investigation will be a workable definition of the microcuento, one which may be used in analyzing specific stories.

The general criteria for determining the forebears of the microcuento are (1) that they be of "micro-length," i.e. of only a few hundred words and (2) that they be narrative rather than discursive. The first criterion does not mean that literary types of some four hundred words and less are by definition "microlength" and thus qualify for inclusion here, while those of four hundred one words and more are excluded because they exceed an arbitrarily selected length. All that is meant is that length is a determining factor. Similarly, with regard to the second criterion established, a work is not included simply because it is short: such literary types as the proverb (including the epigram, maxim,
aphorism, apothegm, and gnome), the essay, the sermon, and the sketch have not been considered because they are discursive rather than narrative. In other words, those categories of literature which are properly considered to be ancestors of the microcuentos are those which fulfill both the "micro" and the "cuento" aspects of Anderson Imbert's works.

First among the various types to be considered is the fable which has appeared in ancient Egyptian papyri as well as in the twentieth century writings of James Thurber, but whose two primary exponents have been the Greek slave Aesop (c. 600 B.C.) and the seventeenth century French fabulist LaFontaine. Although the fable has been used for satiric purposes, its primary objective is to instruct the reader in a particular item of conduct which is applicable to daily life and which—if the individual is wise enough to follow the advice—will keep him from falling into unhappiness and grief. The microcuento, on the other hand, is primarily for enjoyment, although the reader may glean from it a certain moral, or at least some advice on a point of ethics. Generally in the fable, the point to be made is implicit throughout the narrative and explicitly stated at the end of the fable so that there may be no doubt in the mind of the reader as to what he should (or should not) do under similar circumstances. Anderson Imbert, in his stories,
chooses not to state a specific moral at the end but to allow the reader to draw his own conclusions from the story. If the didactic element is present in Anderson Imbert, the reader must find it for himself. In the fable we see a definite teacher-pupil relationship paralleling the story-reader relationship. The reader participates only passively in the story, i.e. having read the narrative and having received unquestioningly the stated moral, he is expected to go out and put his knowledge into practice. In Anderson Imbert's works the author is the primus inter pares in that he engages the active participation of the reader in his microcuento. Often there are no morals, solutions, or explanations to complete a given microcuento; thus the reader finds himself obliged to supply his own. If, on the other hand, a solution is furnished by the author, one often finds that it tends to create more problems than it solves, as in the following microcuento:

Entre en mi cuarto. Todos mis muebles habían desaparecido y, en su lugar, había otros muy antiguos. Sé que era mi cuarto, y no sala de museo, por una mancha en la pared. Tres caballeros vestidos con armaduras de conquistadores se pusieron de pie, me miraron con extrañeza y dijeron algo que, gracias y mis estudios de filología, supe que era un castellano del siglo XVI.

—Perdón—le dijo—. Me he equivocado. Y me retiré.

Here we see a fantastic situation arising from what ostensibly should be a normal act: entering one's own...
room. Upon seeing that it has turned into something out of the sixteenth century, the narrator accepts the situation calmly and unquestioningly. He even withdraws asking forgiveness for his intrusion and leaving the reader to explain for himself (if he can) the meaning of the fantastic occurrence. One of the main differences between the microcuento and the fable now becomes apparent. In the former Anderson Imbert deals with or suggests the aesthetic possibilities of any given situation, many of which are in the realm of the fantastic. The fabulist is not interested in the aesthetic possibilities of his tale which serves a didactic purpose. In the fable, the situation may be fantastic, as when two animals or a tree and a reed converse; but the strangeness ends with this original premise: animals acting as human beings. The rest is quite ordinary. In the fable this original point is incidental to the moral, while in the microcuento quite often the situation is the entire story. The greatest dissimilarity between these two literary types is that the fable has one explicit purpose: didactic, while the microcuento is a purely literary creation whose purpose is primarily intellectual.

A second brief type of narrative which can be considered among the ancestors of the microcuento is the parable which was one of the more popular methods of conveying moral truths among the Eastern peoples. 4
Unlike the fable which often violates the laws of nature (e.g. animals, inanimate objects speak and reason) and which upon occasion ridicules the weaknesses of men while presenting merely practical virtue, the parable deals exclusively with situations taken from the common, everyday life and is designed to teach ethical—as opposed to practical—morality. The parable is similar to the microcuento in that it also invites—and, at times, even requires—the participation of the listener (reader) in order that he may render a judgment with regard to the story. The judgment which the listener renders, however, is one which has been "forced" upon him by the person relating the parable; this of course is to be expected since the basic purpose of the parable is didactic. The classic example of this is found in the parable of the Good Samaritan when Christ, after telling the story, inquires of the lawyer, "Which of these three do you think was neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" and receives the expected answer, "The one who showed him kindness." (Luke 10:36, 37). Given the parable, the lawyer could hardly respond otherwise. Christ's purpose—to show the true meaning of the term "neighbor"—is accomplished by the lawyer's supplying the only possible answer to his own question. There is no room for equivocation or evasion on this point; the tale has been told, and the lis-
toner has arrived at the only conceivable conclusion—the one which Christ has planned from the outset of the parable. Quite a different situation is seen in one of Anderson Imbert's microcuentos "Fábrica de fingimientos." In this the situation presented is a possible (even probable) occurrence in which one individual, upon seeing an outlandishly dressed woman, laughingly exclaims, "¿Vio qué loro?" The answer of his companion, "Sí. Es mi mujer." causes tremendous confusion in his mind and results in the following thought sequence by the first man:

Rodríguez fingió que ese mamarracho era su mujer para castigarme por mi falta de caballerosidad. Si de veras ese mamarracho fuese su mujer su voz habría sonado ofendida. Pero no. Dijo "es mi mujer" con tal calma que equivalía a probarme que no lo era; y así, al mismo tiempo que me daba una lección moral, ponía a salvo su vanidad de hombre guapo, de quien es inadmisible que se haya casado con una mujer tan fea. Sólo que Rodríguez debió de haber previsto que yo iba a pensar de este modo y, para no dejarme escapar de mi situación desairada (para no aliviarme de la vergüenza de haberme tirado una plancha) exageró su tranquilidad; adrede la exageró hasta que la tranquilidad resultara increíble, como si Rodríguez quisiera simular que estaba simulando para que yo, al descubrir su juego, no me deje engañar y comprenda que de veras ese mamarracho es su mujer, con lo cual, después de todo, tendrá que avergonzarme de mi metida de pata. O sea, que el capcioso Rodríguez simuló que simulaba que simulaba nada más que para que yo me avergüense de haberme avergonzado de mi vergüenza. Sospecho que Rodríguez ha calculado que voy a salir del vértigo de fingimientos proliferados dentro de fingimientos con la duda de si efectivamente ese mamarracho será o no su mujer. A menos que
el mismo laberinto mental que yo le he supuesto a Rodríguez él me lo supuso a mí, y cuando oyó exclamar "¿vío qué loro?" creyó que yo estaba tratando de hacerlo caer en una trampa porque el tal mamarracho era nada menos que mi mujer.

Here Anderson Imbert has done exactly the opposite of the Christian parable. Instead of leading the reader down one single path and requiring him to give some prefigured answer to a problem, he has given several possibilities and has left it to the reader to select that which he believes to be the correct one. We see also a certain mistrust which exists between Rodríguez and the narrator who does not accept Rodríguez' statement on faith but reasons out other possibilities. In a similar manner the reader, by reason (as opposed to faith), may also doubt any or all of the narrator's statements concerning the woman. There are three basic possibilities regarding the loro, Rodríguez, and the narrator: (1) the loro is the wife of Rodríguez; (2) she is the wife of the narrator; (3) she is the wife of neither one. Beginning at that point, Anderson Imbert weaves a series of mental labyrinths enveloping not only the three persons of the microcuento but the reader as well. No hint is given as to the true identity of the mamarracho; the reader must work it out for himself. The options open are not limited by anything set down by the narrator. This plainly shows one of the greatest differences between the parable and the microcuento:
the former, being concerned only with moral questions, follows one particular thread from beginning to end; the latter, based on intellectual questioning, is free to develop along any one of a number of possible lines.

With regard to the didactic element, this is either plainly evident or carefully explained—or both—in the parable, while it may or may not be present at all in the microcuento. To be sure, one can conceivably find an element of didacticism in "Fábrica de fingimientos"; but this would require a complete distortion of the story which is, first and foremost, an intellectual exercise and not a vehicle for inculcating moral precepts.

What has been stated about the fable and the parable is generally applicable to two other didactic literary forms, both prevalent during the Middle Ages: the apologue (or exemplum) and the bestiary. In these, the moralizing purpose was paramount, since they were devices to teach Christian doctrines and give Christian admonition. Aside from the title "Bestiario" which Anderson Imbert gives to a group of ten microcuentos in El gato de Cheshire, there is no relationship between his creations and the Medieval allegories, since the element of didacticism can be discounted and since there is no reason to require that the use of actual or fantastic animals by Anderson Imbert be occasioned by his knowledge of bestiaries such as the Physiologus of Bishop Theobald.
A stronger case can be made for the linking of the apologue with the microcuento since no less than ten of Anderson Imbert's tales are based on situations found in the *Gesta Romanorum*, including four which are headed by this very title. Once again, as noted several times previously, what is important is the situation and not the didactic or moralizing element. The tales of the *Gesta Romanorum* are allegories with each character and action having a symbolic value. The interpretation, which is given following each apologue, is necessary for the understanding of the story and to complete the purpose for which it was written. Anderson Imbert, however, takes a situation as presented and, using it as a point of departure, creates an entirely new tale free of allegory and not limited by the ulterior motive of didacticism. A typical example of how Anderson Imbert creates a new reality from a situation as given in the *Gesta Romanorum* is the tale in which the emperor Vespasian has made the rings of memory and forgetfulness. For the author of the *Gesta Romanorum* these rings symbolize respectively prayer and fasting. The wearing of the former ring by Vespasian (the human soul) shows him to be the bride of Christ and reminds him to pray without ceasing. His wife (the body) wears the ring of forgetfulness (fasting) in order that the soul may separate from the body, forget
the enticements of the flesh and—as the emperor Vesperian wished to do in the story—return to his native land (Heaven). This story, which could be a highly unlikely way for a man to leave his wife, opens several doors to the speculative mind. The wife is eliminated completely, and the emperor has only one ring made—a ring which bears both the images of memory and forgetfulness and works its magic depending upon which way the wearer turns it. By having memory and forgetfulness do their work only partially, Anderson Imbert creates three similes which clearly indicate the hazy zone of the character's mind:

... ni las remembranzas aparecían en su vasto conjunto (como aparecen las estrellas en una noche limpida) ni las amnesias lo borraban todo (como un manto de nubes borra las luces de la noche). Lo que Vespasiano sentía, moviera el anillo a la derecha o a la izquierda, eran más bien videncias y cegueras que se erosionaban mutuamente (como nubarrones sueltos que, soplad os por el azar, al descubrir unas constelaciones encubren otras).9

The story closes with Vespasian's throwing the ring into the river after observing that it added nothing to the magic of consciousness, i.e. one's natural faculty of remembrance, that he remembered neither more nor less of the past than he did without the ring. The tale is complete in itself, neither needing nor demanding further interpretation for total comprehension. In fact, one of the most striking things about this microcuento is its
completeness in that it begins with a creative act (making the ring) and concludes with a destructive act (hurling the ring into the river). This balancing of creation and destruction is carried out throughout the slightly less than two hundred words which comprise this narrative by other pairs which offer alternatives and thus complement the creation-destruction equilibrium: "Memoria"/"Olvido"; "hacia la derecha"/"hacia la izquierda"; "remembranzas"/"amnesias"; "videncias"/"cegueras"; "descubrir"/"encubren"; "emergían"/"se sumergían"; "con anillo"/"sin anillo." The feeling that these pairs do balance is brought out by the use of the words "a medias" (describing how memory and forgetfulness were working) and "mutuamente" (how the remembering and not remembering wore each other down).

Just as with the other types of didactic literature cited, the apologue is merely a vehicle for another purpose while the microcuento, a creation which stands independently—even of other microcuentos—needs no further justification.

Turning from didactic literary forerunners to those types which were originally created mainly to explain some aspect of nature or merely to amuse, we find that we are dealing with folklore, touching on three areas: the anecdote, the legend, and the myth.
In using the anecdote and the legend, Anderson Imbert will generally effect some sort of change that removes the story from the strictly "real" world and places it in the world of fantasy. He records a conversation in Hell between the Marquis de Sade and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch; he relates the invention of Taoism as a practical joke conceived by Lao-tse; the love affair of Heloise and Abélard is consummated by the mental images each has of the other; Gutierre de Cetina's ghost seeks to know more of the man who has just murdered him. It is this changing of the basic facts that involves the reader, causing him to make a comparison between the original tale and the literary creation of Anderson Imbert, as in "El don de Jahveh" which is based on Isaiah 22:1-3. In the Bible it is a simple story of Hezekiah's asking Jehovah to remember him and not let him die. Jehovah grants Hezekiah an additional fifteen years of life and, as a sign that He will do this, causes the sun to go backward. Anderson Imbert jokes together the fifteen years and the reversal of the movement of the sun, putting these words in the mouth of Jehovah:

—Ve y díale a Hezequías que he oído su oración y he visto sus lágrimas. Morirá el día que ya he señalado, pero cuando llegue ese día daré marcha atrás al cielo y a la tierra y a cuanto existe; y los pondré en el punto en que estaban hace quince años. Así, se añadirán quince años a la vida de Hezequías.
This response evokes a strong negative reaction from Hezekiah who does not wish to relive fifteen years that he has already lived. He begs that he be given additional life—if only fifteen days—not time which he has already spent. The microcuento ends simply with "Jahveh no quiso". The comparison of the two tales points out startling differences in the character of Jehovah. In the Bible He is the omnipotent God who recalls how well Hezekiah had served and obeyed Him and willingly grants him what he asks even temporarily reversing the natural movement of the sun as a token of His power and as a seal to His promise. Anderson Imbert's Jehovah is more interested in his display of power than in acquiescing to the wishes of a good and obedient servant. This Jehovah will grant Hezekiah's request only in accordance with his (Jehovah's) own desires; and the closing words ("Jahveh no quiso.") serve not only to emphasize the arbitrariness of Jehovah and his lack of ability—or desire—to communicate with man but also give a definite ironic, if not completely sarcastic, tone to the title "El don de Jahveh." These fifteen years which Hezekiah will now relive are more a curse than a gift. However, not all of the legends employed by Anderson Imbert are of such a serious tone. "Sadismo y masoquismo," a fantastic conversation between the Marquis de Sade and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, shows the lighter side of the anecdotal microcuento.
Even if we leave aside the locale of the conversation it would still have to be considered in the realm of fantasy since the Marquis de Sade died nineteen years before the birth of Sacher-Masoch. Disregarding these items and looking at the story itself, we see the confrontation between the sadist and the masochist. Each one wishes to gratify himself by making use of the other, and the result is either mutual success or mutual failure, depending upon the reader's point of view. Sacher-Masoch naturally wishes to have pain inflicted upon himself, since it is from this that he derives pleasure; and the Marquis de Sade is willing to comply until he realizes that to strike him would in fact not be punishment but satisfaction. The Marquis de Sade can therefore inflict a greater pain upon Sacher-Masoch—and thus derive enjoyment for himself—by refusing to strike him. This would seem to signal victory for sadism; but, continuing this train of thought, we can see that Sacher-Masoch, by not being beaten, might well be achieving his own purpose, i.e. gratification through suffering, since he will suffer
from not being beaten and conceivably will receive enjoyment in this way. Yet, because no pain is inflicted, neither one receives pleasure since each has his desires frustrated by the actions of the other. The more the reader thinks about the tale, the more he becomes entangled in the complicated mental labyrinth of the story.

In it Anderson Imbert introduces the element of deliberate ambiguity (as shown in "Fábrica de fingimientos") and proceeds from that point to develop—or to make the reader develop—the tale. The logic which Anderson Imbert sets up is often applied to non-logical situations such as "Sadismo y masoquismo." The rigorous application of logic may result in the confusion mentioned above—the reader can never really be sure whether both de Sade and Sacher-Masoch derive pleasure from what happens (or does not happen), whether only one is content, or whether both are completely frustrated. A second possibility is that this rigorously applied logic will bring about a surprising result, but it will be an outcome logically in keeping with the situation. This, which I call the "logical unexpected" ending, is treated later in the chapter.

In virtually all cases this deliberate ambiguity forms an integral part of the microcuento and engages the reader's active participation in the story by forcing him to face many alternatives any of which may be considered to be "correct."
One of Anderson Imbert's favorite sources of material for his microcuentos is Greek mythology to which he adds his own personal touch, changing motivations or attitudes of the characters, thereby creating new works. Such is the case in "Orfeo y Euridice." This has been customarily treated as one of the greatest love stories of all time with Orpheus braving the terrors of Hades in an attempt to rescue his beloved. According to the usual tradition he would have succeeded in his mission but for one second of weakness when he glanced over his shoulder to catch a glimpse of Eurydice prior to their emerging into the Upper World. In the microcuento Orpheus' act does not spring from an overwhelming desire to see his wife again but is a conscious act designed to rid himself of her once and for all. The motivation is Orpheus' homosexuality and is made evident when we read that Orpheus "... por naturaleza, no estaba hecho para amar a ninguna mujer ..." and that the last thing he hears of Eurydice's voice is "... ese 'adiós' de mujer ... con todo el desprecio de una terrible acusación." Similarly, in another microcuento Sisyphus responds to an expression of pity for his punishment by saying that he is merely playing. This answer not only negates his suffering but has the further effect of making the Judges of the Dead (who had ordained the castigation) appear completely ridiculous. Another tale constructed along
these same lines treats the myth of Actaeon who saw Artemis bathing; and—lest he boast of having seen the goddess naked—was changed by her into a stag and torn to pieces by his own dogs. The basic facts remain the same in Anderson Imbert: Actaeon sees Artemis and her nymphs bathing; he is changed into a stag; his own hounds destroy him. The difference is found in an ironic turn given to the story. Artemis causes his death not because he had seen her but because he was unconscious of the fact that he had seen the goddess. Anderson Imbert has him so entranced by the beauty of one of Artemis' nymphs that he is completely unaware of the presence of the goddess herself; thus he is killed not to prevent possible boasting but as a result of Artemis' jealous rage at having been outshone by one of her nymphs. Once again, what stands out is the irony of the situation as presented by Anderson Imbert, and we see how he has adapted a well known story and made it his own creation. In the prologue to El gato de Cheshire he tells why he often employs tales from other sources:

El narrador de gusto clásico—para quien la "originalidad", a diferencia del narrador de gusto romántico, es más estilística que temática—junta sin disimulo lo que ha inventado y lo que ha construido con invenciones ajenas. En el acto de aprovechar antiguas ficciones siente la alegría de pellizcar una masa tradicional y conseguir, con un nuevo movimiento del espíritu, una figura sorprendente.20
The microcuentos already discussed bear out the fact that he has followed his own statement exactly, always suggesting that we might look at a popular myth from a different point of view. As a result of this, the tragedy or intended lesson is removed from a tale giving us an antididactic, demythic microcuento. His primary concern is not with originality of plot with originality of style.

The same concern with style and surprise which is evident in stories that are reworkings is also found in those microcuentos which were born of his own fertile imagination, an excellent example of which is "Tabú" from El grimorio. The situation itself is not original, but the characters are and the irony that it is Fabián's guardian angel who precipitates his death.

El ángel de la guarda le susurró a Fabián por detrás del hombro:
—¡Cuidado, Fabián! Está dispuesto que mueras en cuanto pronuncies la palabra zango-
lotino.
—¿Zangolotino?—pregunta Fabián azorado.
Y muere.21

The element of surprise is introduced with the final two words of the story which, although they leave the reader somewhat perplexed, were implicit in the angel's warning to Fabián. This conclusion is found in many microcuentos and is the "logical unexpected" ending referred to earlier. Another type of conclusion is what might well be called the "non-ending." Here Anderson Imbert merely
presents a situation and concludes with a climax rather than a denouement. One of the microcuentos found in the series "La granada" in El gato de Cheshire exemplifies quite well the "non-ending":

Una noche entró por una ventana en una casa ajena y hundió la mano en un cofre lleno de joyas. En las tinieblas sintió entre los dedos los dedos de otra mano que también estaba acariciando el tesoro.  

The tale stops abruptly; it is not brought to a conclusion in the sense in which we usually think of stories as being brought to a conclusion. The reader is left hanging with the situation presented and (just as in "Fábrica de fingimientos" or "Sadismo y masoquismo") must work out a solution for himself. Perhaps no solution is necessary, since Anderson Imbert said in the prologue to El gato de Cheshire, "Si se pudiera, narraría puras intuiciones, pero la técnica obliga a darles cuerpo." In a great number of his microcuentos there is merely this suggestion of a plot, a barely visible outline of a story in order that he may relate his "sonrisas sin gato." The result of this method of narration is a kind of "tachiscope" idea of the microcuento. Just as a tachiscope flashes an image on a screen for a fraction of a second and that image is impressed upon the retina almost subconsciously so that it is perceived rather than seen, so many times a microcuento flashes across the mind of the reader only to be perceived after it has disappeared.
notice that he does not speak of "explaining" a work but of "perceiving" it. The reader as well as the author
perceives the work, and it is this mutual perception that allows the two to communicate. Although the above paragraph was written as part of an essay contrasting theater and literature, it is nevertheless valid as Anderson Imbert's creed with regard to the relationship that exists between the creator and the reader through a work of literature.

Regardless of whether a given story is a reworking of an earlier tale or an original creation, Anderson Imbert infuses it with his own personal inventiveness to give the reader a different insight into the characters or to suggest a different attitude toward a well known happening. It is at this point where the world of the fantastic often enters into what had begun as a completely possible and credible tale. "La montaña" is just such a story, beginning with a small child who is climbing up his sleeping father and ending with the same child, lonely and frightened, on a mountain peak.

El niño empezó a treparse por el corpachón de su padre, que estaba amodorrado en su butaca, en medio de la gran siesta, en medio del gran patio. Al sentirlo, el padre, sin abrir los ojos y sotorriéndose, se puso todo duro para ofrecer al juego del hijo una solidez de montaña. Y el niño lo fue escalando: se apoyaba en las estribaciones de las piernas, en el talud del pecho, en los brazos, en los hombros, inmóviles como rocas. Cuando llegó a la cima nevada de la cabeza, el niño no vio a nadie.

—¡Papá, papá!—llamó a punto de llorar. Un viento frío soplabía allá en lo alto, y
el niño, hundido en la nieve, quería caminar y no podía.
—¡Papá, papá!
El niño se echó a llorar, solo sobre el desolado pico de la montaña.

No explanation is given as to how or why the father has suddenly changed into a desolate, snow-covered mountain; but an examination of the microcuento reveals certain things about the transformation. The scene begins with an emphasis on the ordinary, everyday elements: the armchair, the siesta, the patio. As the child begins his climb, the story begins to change. The father stiffens ("se puso todo duro"), and the first hint of the outcome is mentioned ("solidez de montaña"). Nevertheless, the reader—knowing that this is nothing more than a child's game—sees nothing untoward in the expression. As he continues climbing, there is an intermingling of the world as he knows it and as he is imagining it in his fantasy. Various parts of the father's body are mentioned ("piernas," "pecho," "brazos," "hombros," "cabeza") but they are referred to in geological terms ("estribaciones," "talud," "rocas," "cima nevada") until at last—with the son's reaching the peak (his father's head)—the fantasy has become reality. The rigid application and a different approach to a given situation, both discussed previously, are applied once again: if the father has become "todo duro" so that his son may pretend he is climbing a mountain, why should we not consider the father a moun-
tain, and why—logically—does he not become what he is pretending to be? The son’s play affects the father, the transformation is made, and the child is left to his fate on the mountain top. Anderson Imbert makes no attempt to offer an explanation for the metamorphosis. From this and other microcuentos we get a total view of reality as Anderson Imbert sees it: that which is conceived in the mind of each individual so that, for the child in his game, the father becomes a mountain. The father, by his willing participation, adds to this reality being created by his son; and the result is that mental reality becomes physical reality. When this is achieved the story stops. The author is concerned with creating a relativistic view of the world where anything imaginable is possible, a world in which the fantastic is ordinary. The creation of such a world in effect does away with the terms "real" and "fantastic" (although for ease of reference I continue to use them) since if anything—or everything—falls into the realm of what is possible, there can be no "real" world to contrast with the "fantastic." There is only the world of magical realism, or as Anderson Imbert stated in the prologue to El gato de Cheshire, "He preferido siempre las formas breves: se ciñen mejor a una teoría relativista del mundo y a una práctica imaginista de la literatura."27
As used by Anderson Imbert, the microcuento is a piece of narrative prose of up to approximately five hundred words, which often is based on a known tale or incident. If the original model was primarily didactic, he divests it of this characteristic, often incorporating instead an ambiguous element or giving it an ironic twist. The narration may be in either the first person or the third person; and, although it is possible in some cases to attribute a didactic meaning to a given microcuento, its basic purpose is to convey to the reader the author's concept of reality. The tale is generally characterized by a swift exposition of a given situation and several possibilities for conclusion. It may be a "complete" story, i.e. have a clearly recognizable beginning and end (although this type is usually found with the "logical unexpected" ending rather than the neatly contrived conclusion), treating one incident from start to finish. As another possibility it may terminate with the "logical unexpected" ending which startles the reader momentarily. Third, the microcuento may conclude with the "non-solution" which leaves the reader with the realization that he has been trapped by the author. Or again, Anderson Imbert may supply the reader with a variety of possible solutions inviting him by this device to participate in the creation of the tale by suggesting his own outcome—or outcomes. Here the reader is encouraged
to become an "accomplice" in the creation of the microcuento. The final type of conclusion is the "non-ending" where the reader's attention is focused on a particular moment of a particular situation giving neither that which created the situation nor that which follows the moment of the story. By virtue of their microlength, these narrations can give only a brief view of a larger proposition. The microcuentos are a necessary part of the relativistic world of Anderson Imbert. The fact that they fall into the area of expressive (personalized) rather than discursive (depersonalized) prose aids in the creation of this new reality.
NOTES ON CHAPTER V

1 The distinction between discursive and expressive prose is made by Anderson Imbert in Crónicas de la prosa (2nd ed.: Buenos Aires: Colección Esquemas, Editorial Columba, 1963).

2 Anderson Imbert himself denies the presence of conscious didacticism on his part, as evident in a statement made during an interview with Head ("Tres entrevistas," Temas hispanoamericanos, p. 108): "No discuta la literatura impura, contaminada con preocupaciones no estéticas. Descríba la prosa—scepts. ... lo que importa en arte no son los temas, sino el tratamiento original, sorprendente, que cada escritor sea capaz de dar a los temas universales." Furthermore, in a letter to this writer (October 15, 1971), he stated. "... mis 'minucios'—o 'casos' como yo los llamo—no son didácticos. No se pronuncian en ninguna lección, ni filosófica ni moral. Son pura literatura y deben leerse y juzgarse por su fantasía o su humor o su juego sorpresivo o su tono poético, etc."


6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., n. 115.

8 Although many of the stories of the Gesta Romanorum are traceable to other sources, I believe that Anderson Imbert's use of this title for four of his microcuentos plus the fact that the basic situations are as they are presented in the Gesta Romanorum argue for this work as the source of these ten microcuentos.

"Anecdote" and "legend" in this instance are used synonymously in the sense of stories about well-known historical personages. The tales themselves may be fictional, but the main participants are historical.

EAI, "El don de Jahveh," El grimorio, p. 84.

Ibid.


The fact that there are several possible answers to the question and that each answer has seemingly conclusive arguments in its favor recalls Frank R. Stockton's famous short story The Lady or the Tiger? in which the author gives no answer as to whether the beautiful maiden or the fierce beast emerged from the door on the right. Anderson Imbert in "Sadismo y masoquismo" and other tales (e.g. "Fábrica de fingimientos") confronts the reader with multiple—not dual—possibilities.

Still another treatment of this same myth is found in Anderson Imbert's latest collection of short stories and microcuentos, La locura juega al ajedrez. In "Ovidio lo contó de otra manera" it becomes the story of an alcoholic wife eventually abandoned by her husband.


Ibid.

This complete reversal of effect of an intended punishment is spelled out exactly in "Licaón" (El gato de Cheshire, p. 83): "En aquel tiempo—contó Licaón a Calisto—yo reinaba en los bosques. Una noche se apareció un viejo, y algunos pastores empezaron a adorarlo. El viejo se dejaba adorar. 'A éste—pensé—hay que probarlo para ver si es un dios o un hombre.' Le di de comer carne humana y ya lo iba a asesinar cuando el viejo—que resultó ser Zeus—me lanzó, rabioso, un rayo. Escapé de entre las ruinas de mi palacio y eché a correr por los bosques. Mientras corría me creció el pelo por todo el cuerpo, las manos se me convirtieron en patas de lobo, la boca, abultada en hocico, se llenó de espu-
morajos y las maldiciones sonaron como aullidos.
Desde entonces soy más violento que nunca. Nunca he sido tan feliz como ahora. Todo me es más fácil:
no sólo mi modo de ser tiene sentido, sino que es mi
destino. El imbécil de Zeus creyó castigarme al
hacer más violenta mi violencia, y es fuerte mi
fuerza, más bestial mi bestialidad. ¡Me habría cas-
tigado más si me hubiera sacado de mi naturaleza
para hacerme un dios!"

20 EAI, El gato de Cheshire, p. 8.
21 EAI, "Tabú," El primorio, p. 86.
22 EAI, "La granada," El gato de Cheshire, p. 16.
23 Ibid., p. 7.
24 Ibid.
25 EAI, "Teatro y literatura," Los domingos del profes-
sor, p. 56. He had made the same point in another
essay, "Variaciones al tema de la crítica," from the
same book. There he employed a metaphor saying,
"Tenemos que buscar, detrás del cristal del estilo,
el rostro del autor, quien, a su vez, está buscando,
a través de ese mismo cristal, nuestro rostro de
lector," (p. 31).
26 EAI, "La montaña," El gato de Cheshire, p. 64.
27 Ibid., p. 7.
VI
CONCLUSION

This study has analyzed one aspect of Enrique Anderson Imbert's creative literature in relation to the contemporary trend towards magical realism. We must note that the progression to his "expresiones más madur- ras" was not strictly chronological since some short stories actually antedate the publication of Vigilia; rather this development followed more a structural line—from the longer to the shorter forms. Anderson Imbert's creative works are, for the most part, short stories and microcuentos; and, since 1951 (the original date of completion of Fuga), he has published no single creative work of more than a few pages. Although he acknowledges this preference for the briefer literary forms ("He preferido siempre las formas breves ..."¹), certain elements are common to all of his works; and one can note a progression towards brevity in the Vigilia-Fuga-short story-microcuento succession.

Vigilia is a novel existing primarily in the dimension of space. It is a quest by Beltrán Mulhall to find himself, and in the course of this search he trans-
forms everyone and everything around him into diary material. It is this transformation that introduces the reality-fantasy relationship into the novel. Beltrán’s poetic imagination and the changes he effects in all around him create the fantasy which pervades the work. Nevertheless, the fantasy exists only within his mind and in his Diario íntimo. Despite the fact that there is practically no reader participation in the story, we see one important item which is essential to magical realism: the role played by the intellect; and upon it Anderson Imbert has created the worlds of fantasy and reality in his first novel.

In some respects the world of Fuga is completely different from that of Vigilia. The most obvious difference is that in Fuga Anderson Imbert fashions a totally fantastic world which, as a result of the circular form of the work, is a self-contained reality. Just as in his earlier novela, the author uses the protagonist, Miguel Sullivan, as the link between reality and fantasy. The theme of time in two aspects, linear and circular, coupled with the musical structure (implying forward movement) add to the blending of fantasy and reality. The author also introduces elements which, when joined to other aspects of his writing, culminate in the microconcento, his sonérnas sin gato. First is the reader’s participation as he is drawn into the fantastic world of
Irma Keegan and Gabriel O'Brien. The second item is linked closely to the first and is the presence of various "clues" in *Fuga* which show the true nature of the novel. These clues, placed along the reader's way and generally recognizable only in retrospect, invite him to solve the "mystery" of *Fuga* and to identify it as a novel of the fantastic. Whereas in *Vigilia* reality and fantasy mingled in a real world, here they join together in a fantastic world populated by unreal individuals.

Turning to the short stories we find that in general the sense of equilibrium between fact and fancy that was seen in the *novelae* is continued. Stories which deal with the real world are often narrated in a poetic manner so as to give an aura of unreality to them while tales that are openly fantastic tend to be written as if the illogical (i.e. the fantastic) were the most common of occurrences. In the latter case there is no attempt to explain what happens in the short stories. In the relativistic world which Anderson Imbert is developing in his creative literature we see that it is as natural for an individual to fly backward in time or to converse face to face with an angel as it is for him to perform any daily task. There is a type of logic in this world as when Rabinovich must follow a definite series of steps to be able to read the mysterious book, but the basic how and why of the existence of the *grimorio* is an unanswered--
and unanswerable—question. The fantastic exists, and it is accepted.

The last type in the series, the microcuento, is perhaps the most finished example of Anderson Imbert's magical realism. Being directed to an intellectual minority, the microcuento is first of all designed to appeal to those who not only have an intellectual background but to those who are willing to use their minds actively while reading. Anderson Imbert appeals to this public and invites or compels them to participate actively in the creation of his microcuentos. Devoid of didactic intent, they exist for the sole purpose of stimulating the reader's mental options. He may consciously or unconsciously compare Anderson Imbert's creation with the original, or he may be faced with the necessity of selecting an answer from among several choices. He may even be confronted with the possibility that there is no solution to a given situation; it is presented, the problem is set before the reader, and the microcuento stops. Angels, devils, God, men, mythological beings, animals—all are found in these brief narratives and each one can be found in the realm of another as easily as in his own world. There is no firm delineation between what is real and what is fantastic. This, then, is the world of magical realism as found in the writings of Anderson Imbert: a cosmos in which any—
thing is possible; and, since anything is possible, nothing which occurs is truly fantastic.
NOTES ON CHAPTER VI

1. EAI, El gato de Cheshire, p. 7.
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