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THE WRITING OF CRISTINA PACHECO:
NARRATING THE MEXICAN URBAN EXPERIENCE

DISSERTATION

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

By
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********

The Ohio State University
1998

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ABSTRACT

Cristina Pacheco (b. 1941) is a highly prolific Mexican writer whose subject matter is the great, sprawling Distrito Federal, Mexico City. Although the urban experience is depicted with brutal honesty, Pacheco's cityscapes and peoplescapes exude a subtle yet strong force that transfixes and transforms the reader. Even though her presence can be readily seen and felt, through her newspaper columns and her multi-media productions, her sixteen publications have received comparatively little critical attention.

This study aims to rectify that situation and focuses specifically on six of her publications: Sopita de fideo (1984); Zona de desastre (1986); Imágenes: Renovación Habitacional Popular (1987), with photographs by Guillermo Soto Curiel; El corazón de la noche (1989); La rueda de la fortuna (1993); Oficios de México (1993), with photographs by Ricardo Kirchner. These texts are analyzed in terms of how topics fundamental to contemporary urban life, particularly among the marginalized communities of Mexico City, are expressed through a hybrid narrative discourse which combines strategies from several genres. Thematic concerns such as housing issues, employment circumstances,
family situations, disaster responses, and international financial trends are developed through a unique combination of language, urgency, personalization, silence, and visual narratives.

Although implicitly related to theoretical issues raised by subalternity, feminist criticism, and analyses of concerns relating to testimonio, crónica, and ethnography, Pacheco's mode of expression is an emerging hybrid form of narrative discourse that celebrates and legitimizes literary, artistic, thematic, and structural marginality. I hypothesize that Pacheco's hybridized and supplemented cultural products are a direct manifestation of the fragmentation and multiplicity of Postmodernity. This study develops the concept of the narragraph and proposes that it best encapsulates the diversity of Pacheco's narratives. Furthermore, this study concludes that Pacheco's works, her narragraphs, exemplify and use this narrative amalgamation as a resistance strategy: of seeing what hegemonic society would prefer remain unseen, of hearing what is unheard, of voicing what is unvoiced.
Dedicated to myself:
Not out of narcissism nor egotism,
But rather as a recognition that I am
a compendium and a reflection
of those who surround me.
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Yo busqué a estas personas marginadas, y hasta la fecha yo sigo y es lo que más me interesa. No soy una reportera que cubra la fuente de nada. Voy rastreando la realidad.

Cristina Pacheco

Cristina Pacheco's cityscapes and peoplescapes immediately invite, connect, and ultimately capture the reader. Pacheco's world is depicted in all its honesty, vivacity, and brutality. Her works exude a subtle yet strong force that transfixes and transforms the reader.

Cristina Pacheco (b. 1941) is a highly prolific Mexican writer, who is recognized as much by her long career as a professional journalist as she is by her weekly television program and her daily radio show from Mexico City. In general terms, Pacheco's subject matter is the great, sprawling Distrito Federal, Mexico City: the city itself, its inhabitants, and their lives. Curiously enough, although her presence can be readily seen and felt, through her columns and her radio and television programs, her
sixteen publications have received comparatively little
critical attention.

This study aims to rectify that situation. Although
most of her texts will be discussed in an introductory and
referential manner, this study will focus specifically on
six of her publications. In chronological order, based on
publication date, they are: *Sopita de fideo* (1984); *Zona de
desastre* (1986); *Imágenes: Renovación Habitacional Popular*
(1987), with photographs by Guillermo Soto Curiel; *El corazón
de la noche* (1989); *La rueda de la fortuna* (1993); and
*Oficios de México* (1993), with photographs by Ricardo
Kirchner.

All of Pacheco's works, taken separately or taken as a
collective corpus, blend the boundaries of literary genre,
slide through narrative limitation, and call into question
both the authority of the author and the critic as well as
the role of the reader.¹

Pacheco's form of expression is an emerging hybrid form
of narrative discourse that celebrates and legitimizes
literary, artistic, thematic, and structural marginality.
This study hypothesizes that Pacheco's works exemplify and
use this narrative amalgamation as a way of voicing what

¹ Naturally, Pacheco is not the only author whose work
challenges both the literary canons and the roles writer and
reader. Some of the female Mexican writers/journalists
whose work can be analyzed in this manner are: Rosario
Castellanos, Elena Poniatowska, Guadalupe Loaeza, and María
Luisa Mendoza.
hegemonic society would prefer remain unvoiced, of seeing what is unseen, of hearing what is unheard.

1.1 BIOGRAPHY OF CRISTINA PACHECO

Although biographical data about Cristina Pacheco is relatively limited, some basic facts are available. She was born on September 13, 1941 in San Felipe, Guanajuato. Located to the Northwest of the state of Mexico, Guanajuato is one of the states in the Bajío ("central lowland") plateau that has traditionally been recognized for its mines (silver as well as other precious minerals) and its fertile soil. Indeed, Pacheco is seemingly quite proud of the fact that her family is from a rural background: “Pertenezco a una familia dedicada a la agricultura y a la pequeña ganadería.”

Due to increased impoverishment of the countryside, Pacheco and her family were forced to abandon the countryside. They first moved north to San Luis de Potosí (although no specific reference is made to whether they moved to the state or the city). But, by the time that Pacheco was five (in 1946), her family had relocated to the capital of the Republic, Mexico City. About this period Pacheco states:

\[\text{Footnotes:}\]

\[1\text{ Cristina Pacheco, } \textit{Sopita de fideo} 10\text{th ed.} \text{ (Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 1994) Back Book Jacket.}\]

\[2\text{ Pacheco, } \textit{Sopita de fideo}, \text{ Back Book Jacket.}\]
La emigración familiar ocurrió en años en que
venir a la capital representaba todo lo contrario
de lo que hoy significa: posibilidad de obtener
empleo, casa y sobre todo educación.  

Indeed, it would appear that Pacheco did reap these
same benefits. As a youngster she studied at the "José
Arturo Pichardo" preparatory school. Then, she continued on
to study Spanish Literature for four years at La Universidad
Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). By 1960 she had begun
her career in journalism, writing for the daily Mexico City
newspapers Novedades and El Popular. In 1962 she married
José Emilio Pacheco, who is now a well-known Mexican
journalist, essayist, translator, poet, and literary critic.
It is interesting to note that, aside from a rare comment or
an occasional dedication, the marital link between Cristina
Pacheco and her husband is very seldom mentioned.  

Thus, from her journalistic beginnings until the
present day she has written, (and, in some instances, still

4 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo, Back Book Jacket.
5 In a reprint of an anonymous article, Cristina Pacheco
mentions her husband, although not by name: "Debo agregar
que conté con todo el apoyo de mi marido. Un hombre que se
dio cuenta de que si no escribía me iba a amargar toda la
vida." {"El registro de lo cotidiano," Gaceta UNAM [Mexico
City] 24 Aug. 1987. Rpt. in Pido la palabra: cuarto nivel,
by Carolina Cordero, Cecilia González, Mónica de Neymet, and
Silvia Peña Alfaro (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional
Autónoma de México, 1991) 184}. She also dedicates two of
her collections to her husband: "A José Emilio." [El
corazón de la noche, (Mexico City: Ediciones El Caballito,
1989) 3] and "Para José Emilio: porque sabe interpretar el
silencio de la luna." [Amores y desamores, (Mexico City:
Selector: Colección Aura, 1996) 7]. The use of the italics
in the dedication is Pacheco's.
writes), for a number of the major newspapers and magazines in Mexico: Sucesos, El Universal, El Sol de México, Siempre!, El Día, Unomásuno, La Jornada. During the late sixties and early seventies, she was also the acting Director of three “women's” magazines: La Familia, La mujer de hoy, and Crinolina. Interestingly, when writing for the magazine Sucesos, her column, titled “Ayer y hoy” (“Yesterday and Today”), which she did for three years beginning in 1963 (or 1964, depending on the source), she wrote under the masculine pseudonym of Juan Ángel Real.

In addition to her narratives in periodicals, Pacheco also has worked on at least two television programs, one radio show, and is often invited as a guest speaker to local artistic events. For instance, on November 1, 1996, I had the opportunity to attend an act of “Performance Art,” of a Día de los Muertos altar/offering for the Mexico City prostitutes, where Pacheco was the invited guest speaker.

Over the years, Pacheco has won several awards. In both 1975 and 1985, she was honored with the Premio Nacional de Periodismo in the genre of “Interviews.” And, in 1986, for her television program “Aquí nos tocó vivir,” she won an award from the Asociación Nacional de Periodistas in the category of “Best Community Service Program.” More recently, she was recognized with the Premio Manuel Buendía (1992) and the Premio de la Federación Latinoamericana de Periodistas.
Nevertheless, the most significant detail about Pacheco's biography is her own personal history as a migrant to the urban metropolis. This element will become, later in her writings, an oft-mentioned point of reference because it represents her authenticity and authority to verbalize the experience of migration not just as an observer but also as a participant.

1.2 OVERVIEW OF CRISTINA PACHECO'S WRITTEN TEXTS

Currently, Pacheco is most known for her column "Mar de historias" ("Ocean of Histories") which appears every Sunday in the newspaper La Jornada. The historias, or case studies, portrayed in this column are the everyday elements of the lives of the ordinary people of Mexico City. As Mercedes Charles comments: “Las historias que Cristina nos presenta parten de una situación o de un problema cotidiano enmarcado en un contexto: la crisis por la que atraviesa México.”

Her column occupies an essential position in the paper, both in terms of topic as well as physical location. In reference to topic, Charles summarizes the role of Pacheco's narratives by pointing out that her chronicles present a reality that usually is not presented in the typical "macrosocial" focus of Mexican daily newspapers:

En los diarios se enfatiza la imagen de la mujer heroína, de la mujer espectáculo, de la mujer víctima y de la mujer sobresaliente, pero nunca se habla de la mujer común de los sectores populares.

Although Charles' focus is specifically on the presence of women, her point, in light of Pacheco's multiple protagonists, can be extended to include all individuals from the "popular" segments of society (women, men, children, elders).

In tandem with this inclusive narrative scope and objective, Pacheco's "Mar de historias" column occupies an important position physically: it is situated on and covers the majority of the back page of La Jornada. It may initially seem that being on the "last" page is undesirable. However, this is not the case in that the back page is actually considered to be a desirable position. Since the Sunday version of La Jornada consists of multiple pages folded around a vertical left axis, the back page is actually a space that is as easy to access as the front page. It must also be noted that, aside from captioned photographs, Pacheco's column is the only text to appear in its entirety on either the back or the front page. Due to this accessibility as well as the amount of the page that is devoted to her column and its complete presentation, the

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Charles 38.
position of her column is fundamentally one of power and recognition.

Indeed, in my own informal survey conducted in Mexico City and Cuernavaca during the Autumn of 1996, I observed that about six out of ten people, when reading this newspaper, would read the last or back page as the second stage of their reading. First, and naturally, the initial procedure was to read or scan the front page. Then, instead of following the continuations of the front-page articles into the inside pages of the newspaper, the tendency was to flip the paper to the back to read or scan the articles there. Finally, then, most of the readers would return to the front section, open the newspaper, and begin to read in numerical order.

In addition to her "Mar de historias" column, Pacheco is an active writer and has produced countless articles for a variety of newspapers and magazines. Many of the texts written for these periodicals have been republished in compilations or collections. Indeed, if one examines her list of works, it would seem that since 1983 Pacheco has set a pace of publishing a new book practically every year.

Her sixteen published works can be divided, for preliminary classifications, into four basic sections:

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8 This brief survey was based solely on my observations of 34 individuals, predominantly male, of whom 21 exhibited the tendency to flip to the back page of La Jornada after first scanning the front page.
(1) works that follow a more journalistic format based on question and answer interviews; (2) works that follow a more literary format of stories or fictionalized narrations; (3) works that combine a mixed journalistic format (question and answer) with blocks of straight testimony and fictionalized discourse; (4) works that are yet another combination of this last style which are presented with photographic displays. For this last group, Pacheco supplies the written text, while professional photographers provide the visual text. It must be stressed that there is a flow between these four groupings. A chronological examination of her works, according to publication date, clearly shows how the styles used are increasingly intermingled: the earlier texts tend to follow a "purer" journalistic interview format while the later works reflect a mixture of narrative style.

Finally, it must be noted as well that these textual divisions based on discursive style were done strictly for my own purposes of analysis.

The first grouping of Pacheco's texts includes four books whose format is based on an interview style. First, she published *Orozco: iconografía personal* (1983), which is a collection of her interviews with thirteen individuals who recollect their personal and private memories of the famed Mexican muralist, José Clemente Orozco (1883-1949). In all but one of the thirteen chapters, the actual question/answer format has been suppressed by design; the one exception
keeps the open interview format per the request of the interviewee. This book also includes one-hundred-twenty-two photographs of Orozco.

In 1984, Pacheco published Testimonios y conversaciones. This particular book was/is conceived as an homage to the renowned publishing house based in Mexico City, Fondo de Cultura Económica. In 1984, this respected firm celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its establishment. This text is composed of interviews that Pacheco conducted with ten individuals who had been key figures in the founding of the Fondo de Cultura Económica. Pacheco writes in the dedicator note:

En ellas [las entrevistas] se recoge la voz de algunos (no todos los que hacía falta: el tiempo, los imprevistos, las imposibilidades se confabulan siempre) de los personajes que vivieron las primeras etapas del Fondo de Cultura Económica: su puesta en marcha, los trabajos iniciales, la tarea tenaz de la consolidación.

The third book in interview format book is La luz de México: entrevistas con pintores y fotógrafos. First published as a collection in 1988, this book reissues interviews that Pacheco originally published in newspapers between 1977 and 1988. These interviews are with a variety of painters and photographers, both those who are world famous and those who are not. Each of the forty interviews

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is first set up with an introduction in which Pacheco provides details of the interviewee's life and of her own experiences with the interviewee or his or her art. Then, a question/answer format is used. Photographs of the artists, and sometimes of the artist with Pacheco, are included in two sections in the middle of the book.

Los dueños de la noche (1990) is Pacheco's fourth publication of interviews. It is a compilation of previously published interviews with thirty-two entertainers. Each chapter is dedicated to a particular performer and is organized, once again, with an introduction to each entertainer, Pacheco's experience with his or her art-form, a localizing of where, when, and how the interview transpires, then the question/answer format. Yet, also included here within the dialogue are fragments of song lyrics, fans' comments, headlines, etc. Included in every chapter are several photographs of each artist, and at times, photographs of Pacheco with the interviewee.

Although these four collections of interviews are interesting in and of their own right, they will not necessarily be the focus of this study. They do serve well, however, as examples of Pacheco's journalistic style, particularly in terms of her interview technique: the types of questions she asks, how she forms them, and how she elicits dialogue with both cooperative and uncooperative interviewees. Her depth of preparation and knowledge, her
attention to detail, and the range of topic (from well-known artists to common entertainers) is also noteworthy.


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10 This particular text is a reprint of Pacheco's short narrative “La dimensión de un hombre” together with the recompilation of Oscar de la Borbolla’s “El hereje rebelde” and José Revuelta’s “Dios en la tierra.”

11 Although *Amores y desamores* is not analyzed in my study, it does warrant a brief note. The narratives of this collection still exemplify Pacheco's singular discursive techniques and general thematic but, the subject matter that they convey is slightly distinct from that of the narratives in the other collections of this category. The stories in this particular collection all focus on both positive and negative amorous relationships. The narrating subjects relate realities characteristic of a wide range of social and class contexts, not just from the humbler classes, but also from the middle and upper classes of Mexico City.

The verbal "play" at work in the title reiterates this thematic. This title posits a seemingly typical binary opposition which contrasts "amores" with its counter-part "desamores." Although the two ideas are related, "amores" is not exactly a direct contrast to "desamores," as can be seen in the English translations wherein "amores" would be "loves" or "love affairs" while "desamores" would be more akin to the plural of "indifference" or "coldness." The multiple connotations of these words relate to the varied narrative situations that are depicted in the stories.

Furthermore, it may seem that this collection, by not focusing solely on the marginal elements of life in Mexico City, is a break from Pacheco's other works. I suggest the opposite: it is yet another example of the hybridization of her work. Mexico City is not defined by just one type of inhabitant or situation. It is an amalgamation of many;
distinct, there are some similarities. For example, each collection contains between twenty-eight and forty-three short texts whose subject matter is invariably every-day life in Mexico City and its environs. These stories, practically verbal cityscapes, are imbued with a sense of urgency and immediacy evident not only in their brief format (most of the stories are less than three pages), but also in the themes constantly reiterated in and between them and the narrative structure used to convey the story.

Thematics such as the solitude, the violence, and the poverty which constantly effect society's marginalized communities in general and women in particular are prevalent. And, considering Pacheco's own background as an emigrant to Mexico City, the process of migrant urban subjectivity and experience is vital to her stories. Additionally, techniques such as immediate dialogue, addressing the reader, use of first person singular and plural voice are just some of the methods used to incorporate the reader. Two of these collections, Sopita de fideo and El corazón de la noche, will be discussed in depth as part in this study.

The third classification of Pacheco's print publications is formed by Zona de desastre (1986) and La rueda de la fortuna (1993). These works are very similar in therefore, cultural products that reflect this complex and multiple reality must also be hybrids.
style to the collections of stories that comprise the third section. However, in these two texts Pacheco also includes portions of question and answer interview format and blocks of testimony in addition to short literary texts. *Zona de desastre* recounts actions and reactions to the 1985 earthquake that devastated Mexico City while *La rueda de la fortuna* collects an assortment of vignettes that manifest Mexico's economy as reflected in the everyday lives of the inhabitants of Mexico City: their habits and habitats, their buying tendencies, their work routines, and even their eating preferences.

The fourth category of Pacheco's published works is composed of *Imágenes: Renovación Habitacional Popular* (1987), with photographs taken by Guillermo Soto Curiel, and *Oficios de México* (1993), with photographs taken by Ricardo Kirchner. These publications are a mix of all of Pacheco's styles (interview style, collections of testimonies, fictionalized stories) with photographs. *Imágenes: Renovación Habitacional Popular* deals with the effects of the 1985 earthquake and *Oficios de México* is an homage to craftspeople. These texts form a dialogue with *Zona de desastre* and *La rueda de la fortuna*, respectfully. This multi-sensory intertextuality will be analyzed particularly because I propose that the photographs are not just a visual accompaniment to Pacheco's printed text, but rather
constitute a narrative in their own right as well as in
dialogue with Pacheco's text.

1.3 SUMMARY OF CRISTINA PACHECO'S MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

In terms of multi-media operations, Pacheco is also
active. Her television debut was a joint project with Juan
de la Cabada. This talk show, which lasted for two years,
was titled "De todos modos, Juan te llamas" ("Anyway, your
name is Juan"). Then, in 1980 she began hosting her own
informative and investigative television program, "Aquí nos
tocó vivir," subtitled "Testimonios de la vida en México con
imágenes y palabras" ("This is Where We Happen to Live:
Testimonies, with Images and Words, of Life in Mexico").

Her program appears on Channel 11, the television channel
supported by the Instituto Politécnico Nacional. This half-
hour show, uninterrupted by commercial broadcasts, is still
being produced and airs weekly on Sundays. Often, the show
is repeated at least once during the rest of the week and
re-broadcasts of shows from previous seasons are also
frequently shown.

The topics of "Aquí nos tocó vivir" also present a wide
range of variety: from the sad reality of depending on one

12 The term "Mexico" in the subtitle of Pacheco's TV
program can be interpreted in two possible ways. It can
refer specifically to Mexico City and generally to the
entire country. I prefer the latter, particularly in light
of the cross-country broadcast range of the show and the
wide variety of topics it presents.
of Mexico City's medical shelters for services to the traditional skills of dyeing and weaving in the state of Chiapas. Some additional specific topics have been: the Zapatista movement in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas; life in one of the shelters for displaced peasants in Chiapas; the adjustment to the new “Spring Ahead/Fall Back” Daylight Savings Program in Mexico City; the economic crisis and the Day of the Dead practices in Xochimilco; the tenuous and often volatile, literally and figuratively, relationship between the PeMex (Petróleos de México) gasoline refineries and the residential San Juanico neighborhood in which they are located.

Regardless of the topic, however, the motif that links all of these programs is the opinion of the common person. Pacheco interviews an eclectic group of individuals: flower sellers and bucket vendors, teenagers and ninety-seven year olds, shoe-shinners and toy sellers, etc. She makes a point of finding out who they are (their full names, their family, their neighborhood background) and what they think and feel about particular situations. As she approaches her “guests” in the beginning of the segment, she is also generally quite precise in presenting herself, though typically by her first name only. Since most of the interviewees have provided their full names, it is unusual that Pacheco refers to herself only as “Cristina.”
This can be interpreted in several possible ways. One option is that since she is fairly well-known it would be redundant to mention her last name again on camera, especially since her full name is included in the title and the over-voice introduction of the show. This informality may also be reflective of current popular television programs, such as “El show de Cristina,” in which an informal atmosphere is established and then reiterated through the use of the informal subject pronouns and conjugations (as represented by the use of the “tú” format). This is not entirely the case for Pacheco’s show, however, in that she maintains the Mexican usage of formal linguistic markers in her speech register: the use of “Usted” and “Ustedes”. Another option that correlates to her perspective, is that by focusing on her interviewee’s complete names, they are given a fuller identity and authority while she, who is only represented by her first name, is in a secondary, pseudo-anonymous position.

This last interpretation can be supported by the physical logistics of most of the interviews. Quite often during the interview, she actually positions herself on a

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13 “El show de Cristina” is a popular talk-show/variety show hosted by Cristina Saralegui and produced by the Univisión network.

14 These observations are based on my personal viewing of a sampling of her shows. The only exception to the formal usage that I have seen is when she talks with children, which is within the traditional Mexican use of the familiar forms.
lower plane than the interviewee so that she (and the camera and subsequent viewer as well) is looking up at the interviewee, thus placing that individual in a position of power. A particularly clear example of this can be viewed in the episode in which she interviews people who are staying in the Albergue La Esperanza while they are awaiting medical treatment. She begins the segment squatting or kneeling in the midst of a semi-circle of people, mostly women. As the interview proceeds, she continues to remain in a squatting position. Later, she moves on to interview another woman and actually switches emblems of authority with her: Pacheco hands the woman the microphone and accepts the lady's crochet needle and yarn in return.

Indeed, making physical contact with the person with whom she is speaking is also a key element in these programs. Handshakes, a hand resting on a shoulder, a hug are just some of the examples of prevalent contact behaviors. One particular image, in the episode subtitled "San Juanico: el tiempo congelado," is quite telling. The woman that Pacheco interviews is situated in a small store front that is entirely covered by chain-link fence. She ends the interview by poignantly pointing out that the fence is a metaphor for the neighborhood's need for security. The last image is the brief contact that can be made between her fingertips and the interviewee's fingertips through the
chain-link fence. As always, genuine contact with real people is the center of Pacheco's work.

This contact is also reiterated via Pacheco's daily live radio talk show called "Aquí y ahora" ("Here and Now"). The show is broadcast not just within the Distrito Federal, but also throughout various other states within the country. Pacheco's hour long show (which includes three commercial breaks that occupy approximately thirteen minutes), airs Monday through Friday from two o'clock until three o'clock in the afternoon.\textsuperscript{15}

The format of the radio show is, to say the least, eclectic. It is composed of Pacheco's opinions, interviews over the phone with individuals, and the reading of messages that have been called in by listeners.

Specifically, the introduction of the show begins with the title of the show, a sub-title or description, and a presentation of the host: "Aquí y ahora: nuestras realidades vistas a través de los comentarios de una periodista de toda la vida, Cristina Pacheco" ("Here and Now: Our Realities Viewed Through the Commentaries of a Life-Long Journalist, Cristina Pacheco").\textsuperscript{16} Immediately

\textsuperscript{15} Pacheco's show airs during hours which are considered part of the mid-day lunch hours in Mexico City. Attempts to obtain precise statistics regarding peak radio rating hours have not yet been successful. However, through an informal survey of Mexico City multi-mediaists, I have ascertained that these hours, after the morning and the evening commute times, are among the some of the higher rated hours.

after this, Pacheco begins with a greeting to her audience, a repetition of the technical aspects of the station (the four telephone lines at the local phone number and the toll-free long-distance phone number), and a request to the listening audience to call in and share their opinions, preoccupations, desires, and needs. Pacheco then typically presents an update or a continuation of the previous day's topics (often in the form of reading one or more comments that had been called in by the public or by relating her own personal perspectives) and then outlines some of the topics for the current show. In any given show she will usually read about seven to fifteen messages that have been called-in by the listeners. In every case, the listener is identified by name and neighborhood or state. Moreover, the participants in the live phone interviews, of which there are at least two per show, will also be identified by name, geographic location, and institutional affiliation if applicable.

During any given show a variety of unrelated topics may be discussed. The “Aqui y ahora” show that aired live on November 15, 1996 serves as a valid example. Within the hour program, the topics covered were as follows: a community service announcement to several Mexico City neighborhoods regarding a scheduled shutting down of the water system due to repairs; an update about the San Juanico area that is returning to normalcy after the previous week's
PeMex refinery explosion; a discussion of the approaching Christmas holiday, the tradition of the "aguinaldo," (a pseudo-mandatory end-of-the-year bonus), and the insidiosness of commercialism; the importance of traditional Mexican cuisine as a cultural and historical marker and the proposal to renovate the historical Claustro de la Merced by converting it into a culinary museum and café; the tragedy of world-wide malnutrition; a phone interview with the Governor of the state of Mexico, particularly as regards the San Juanico situation; a reading of a listener's called-in message about her missing father, which Pacheco accompanies with information about Alzheimer's disease and phone numbers for organizations that can offer assistance; an interview with the Director of a free breakfast program for impoverished elementary school students; another called-in message about a missing person; an interview with the organizer for the "Feria del Libro" in Guadalajara; various called-in messages: questioning the use of water to put out the fires during the PeMex explosion, demanding justice for a husband that was erroneously killed by the authorities, requesting a prosthetic leg; and finally, Pacheco's closing comments which acknowledge her gratitude to the public and her production crew.

Indeed, the amount and type of information that is covered within such a relatively short period of time is dizzying. Yet, at the same time, it does reflect and is
molded by the needs of the listening public. As Pacheco repeats often throughout almost all of the radio program episodes: "Aquí y ahora seguimos comentando con Usted lo que nos interesa, lo que nos ocupa, lo que nos llama la atención." 17

This focus is also particularly notable in the transmission of social service information (i.e.: phone numbers for medical assistance, shelters, local representatives). It would appear that her show is not just an open forum for personal, local, and national problems, but is also, and perhaps more importantly, a support network for resolving difficult situations.

One particular case returns again to the aftermath of the PeMex explosion in San Juanico. During her program on Friday, November 15, 1996, Pacheco interviewed the Governor of the State of Mexico. During their conversation, Pacheco relayed to the Governor some of the specific concerns that had been called in to her program, particularly the need to provide a bridge so that the residents would have an accessible escape route in case of future problems. She also provided him with the names of several neighborhood organizational figures, where to locate them, and even a solution to the problem (the large local industries, such as PeMex, could donate most of the funds and the inhabitants of the neighborhood could donate part of the labor). The

17 Pacheco, Aquí y ahora, 18 Nov. 1996.
Governor agreed that this was a concern and invited Pacheco to serve as a "watch-dog" in order to monitor the responsiveness of the government to the public's concern.

During the next show, on Monday, November 18, 1996, a caller from the San Juanico area reported to Pacheco that a temporary bridge had already been installed and that plans were in the works for the construction of a permanent structure. Naturally, this one example is not necessarily representative of all of the situations aired on Pacheco's show. Indeed, it would be remiss to believe that all problems are so easily and rapidly resolved. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the "Aquí y ahora" show does function as a communicative outlet for people's concerns and as an active and practical search for and application of solutions.

1.4 A REVIEW OF THE CRITICAL RESPONSE TO CRISTINA PACHECO'S WORK

When turning to the critical response to Pacheco's works, one is faced with a near void, an unusual situation if one considers the length and breadth of her work and that she has been the recipient of several national and international journalism awards.

This limited analytical response can be divided into three categories: academic analyses of her works, general reviews of her books, and bio-bibliographic summaries. As
can be observed in the listing of the critical bibliography of her works, half (twelve out of a total of twenty-four) of the entries are literary critiques, nine are reviews, and three are bio-bibliographic entries. In terms of the literary analysis of Pacheco's work, one finds that while a few focus on some of her works in a comparative manner, the majority of the entries focus exclusively on Pacheco and her works, though generally these deal specifically with a limited number of texts.

The previously cited article by Mercedes Charles is one such treatment. In her text, titled "Imagenes de mujer: navegando por el mar de historias," Charles focuses primarily on Pacheco's weekly La Jornada column, "Mar de historias." Charles' emphasis is on the presentation of normal, typical women in Pacheco's articles. She is quick to point out that "las mujeres de 'Mar de historias' están llenas de realidad" and that they do not always live a "fairy-tale, story-book" existence; rather, "estas mujeres no se transforman en heroínas capaces de solucionar todo problema, ni siempre salen victoriosas del embrollo, simplemente viven su situación."18 Charles goes on to note the apparent contradiction that while the humbler classes are the protagonists of Pacheco's texts, the typical reader of her column pertains to a different social class, thus creating a conflict of a marginalized objectification of the

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18 Charles 39.
protagonists. She suggests that a revival of the oral tradition of a “lectura colectiva” would simultaneously solve this problem and serve as a learning and self-actualization mechanism. In relation to Charles’ comments about the objectification of the protagonists, I would suggest that Pacheco’s narrative style, in which she steps back to let the narrating subject speak for her/himself, is a strategy to avoid objectifying the protagonists.

An additional Pacheco-related text is provided by one of Mexico’s leading cultural critics and urban chroniclers, Carlos Monsiváis, in his “Prologo” to Pacheco’s La luz de México: entrevistas con pintores y fotógrafos. Subtitled “Cristina Pacheco: el arte de la historia oral,” this Prologue serves ostensibly as a preview of the interviews with the artists, generally as an exploration of the interviewing process, and specifically as an examination of Pacheco’s particular style and technique. Central to Monsiváis’ writing is a portrayal of Pacheco’s trademark of honesty and objectivity:

Cristina desatiende los prejuicios, y se ocupa en lo que quiere y consigue: un panorama diversificado y elocuente donde los protagonistas se expresan sin trabas.

María de Valdés' two articles, "Feminist Testimonial Literature: Cristina Pacheco, Witness to Women" (1988) and "La obra de Cristina Pacheco: ficción testimonial de la mujer mexicana" (1991) also present some critical insight into Pacheco's works. Although these two texts seem to be translations of each other rather than two separate articles, they do provide some interesting viewpoints in regards to Pacheco's narrative technique as exemplified specifically by five stories from the collection Cuarto de azotea (1986).

This narrative technique, described by de Valdés as "consist[ing] of a highly disciplined use of the characters' narrating voices as well as third person narrative voice" is developed in relation to testimonial writing. De Valdés also develops her textual approach on the analysis of what she considers to be Pacheco's main "women's concerns:" poverty, machismo, and women's capacity for love.

Although certainly these are common reiterations throughout all of Pacheco's writings and, indeed, de Valdés' development of them is well-done, I would have to disagree with her point that these are Pacheco's only concerns. Such a statement is doubly limiting. First, what de Valdés terms

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as "women's concerns" I actually perceive as trans-gendered or pan-gendered concerns in that the concerns and issues raised by Pacheco are not limited to just one gender: preoccupations about poverty, male-female relationships, and love are endemic to both of the sexes. And, to reduce Pacheco's themes to the three de Valdés mentions is a disservice to Pacheco, her writings, and her protagonists.

Linda Egan offers two fairly different perspectives in regards to Pacheco. First, in "Entrevistas con periodistas mujeres sobre la prensa mexicana," Egan's interaction with Pacheco centers on how she perceives her role in journalism, particularly as a female in a traditionally male dominated profession, and the role of journalism at large.\(^{22}\)

In Egan's later essay, "The Sound of Silence" that appears in The Other Mirror: Women's Narrative in Mexico, 1980-1995, she concentrates on the feminist connotations of Pacheco's texts, however, from a perspective which delineates "a paradoxical 'anti-feminism' to her densely feminine discourse."\(^{23}\) Egan supports this position by pointing out that although Pacheco demonstrates a, "primordial interest in the marginalized woman of Mexico," her texts do not demonstrate any of the humoristic element.


that Egan understands as an essential element of the feminist text.\footnote{Egan, "The Sound of Silence: Voices of the Marginalized in Cristina Pacheco's Narrative," 137-138. Egan formulates this need for humor in feminist text through a brief and synthetic examination of several feminist theories which point to the use of humor, often self-directed, to criticize, especially those theories expounded by Bruce Jay Friedman, Gail Finney, Hélène Cixous, David McWhirter, and Mikhail Bakhtin.}

Egan seems to be focusing strictly on Pacheco's depictions of life in Mexico City, which she describes as "pornographic gestures" of "always interchangeable" characters.\footnote{Egan, "The Sound of Silence: Voices of the Marginalized in Cristina Pacheco's Narrative," 134, 133.} Although I certainly must agree that Pacheco's urban landscapes, on the surface, are usually gritty and grim, I believe that calling them pornographic diminishes them through sensationalism. As well, I refute Egan's statement that Pacheco's characters are interchangeable. Egan goes on to criticize Pacheco for what she perceives as the author's lack of critical agenda or "spirit of self-assertion" as displayed in her discourse:

Nonetheless, this reaction [shock] is limited by her choice of narrative mode, which offers the sole recourse of empathy or indifference. One can feel sorry for the victims of her world, turn a blind eye to their suffering, engage in a burst of sterile anger at "the way things are." In the end, though, the reader may feel as helpless as her characters.\footnote{Egan, "The Sound of Silence: Voices of the Marginalized in Cristina Pacheco's Narrative," 134, 135.} They do not change, and we cannot change them.
It would seem that Egan expects, or even demands, “change” to occur in Pacheco's characters or their situations and, since she does not find it in her reading of them, (although I would say that there is change within the texts), she assumes that it does not exist. However, I propose that, through presenting these non-interchangeable realities, it is Pacheco's purpose to change the reader(s), who then, together with these marginal individuals, can perhaps bring about change. I believe that Egan, through her concentration on Pacheco's “painful,” “ghastly,” and “grotesque” images, has indeed fallen into her own trap of interchangeability. Egan has not sensed change or criticism, which exist implicitly and explicitly in Pacheco's narrative, because she herself has limited the texts; therefore, she has not been changed or felt herself critiqued by Pacheco's texts.

Other critics, however, also focus on the connection between Pacheco's work and the position of women. This is the main focus of Amparo Espinosa Rugarcia, Marcela Ruiz de Velasco, and Gloria M. Prado Garduño in their book Palabras de mujer. This uniquely organized book focuses on three contemporary Mexican women authors: Angelina Muñiz, Beatriz Espejo, and Cristina Pacheco. These critics select and

27 Egan, “The Sound of Silence: Voices of the Marginalized in Cristina Pacheco's Narrative,” 133-146. Egan employs these descriptive adjectives, and others of a similar ilk, throughout her essay.
reprint one short story that they feel is most representative for each of the authors. Then, for each one of the authors, each of these critics includes her own analysis of the representative story and/or other texts. The story that was chosen as representative for Pacheco was "La vuelta de 'El Tigre'" from Sopita de fideo.\textsuperscript{28}

Ruiz de Velasco's critique is based on a comparison of Pacheco's portrayal of protagonists with the images propagated in the Mexican national films from her childhood. Although she does recognize the thematic importance and the dramatism of Pacheco's texts, she in fact criticizes Pacheco's descriptive technique as being "recursos folletinescos demasiado trabajados."\textsuperscript{29} Perceiving only the literary motifs of the anonymous wife-mother, conjugal abandonment, and deceit, she upbraids Pacheco:

\begin{quote}
Y aquí yo me pregunto, ¿por qué mejor no contar y hacer valer, por ejemplo, su soledad, su tristeza, su "yo puedo" y hasta si se quiere su "no puedo"? ¿Y, ¿por qué no contar mejor las otras realidades, las que separan y unen a estas familias, a estos hermanos, a estos amantes? Las
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{28} It is important to distinguish "La vuelta de 'El Tigre'," a text from the Sopita de fideo collection from "La última noche del 'Tigre'" which is a story from the La última noche del "Tigre" collection. Although the names of the texts are very similar, they refer to two different situations and two distinct characters.

true"

realidades que impulsan a estas mujeres y hombres a jugar el papel. . . .

I would respond to this point by stating that Pacheco does indeed explore these other "realities." However, she does it indirectly rather than directly via the guided conscientiousness of the reader. The reader must not just passively "view" Pacheco's texts as if they were movies; the reader must examine what is presented and analyze it in its context of motivating forces. In a sense, the fact that Ruiz de Velasco is forming the questions presented above signifies that she is fulfilling Pacheco's purpose: after reading the texts, Ruiz de Velasco did not just put down the book and walk away, she began to question the underlying meaning of what she had read. However, Pacheco does not necessarily present the answers to these questions; that responsibility is left to the reader.

Prado Garduño's analysis follows this line of thought in that she focuses on the accusatory nature of Pacheco's texts. She proposes that Pacheco's intention is: "La de encontrar una forma propia para expresar su inquietud y desacuerdo con respeto a situaciones que considera deben ser denunciadas." 31

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30 Ruiz de Velasco, "Para no pensar en ti..." 113.
In her opinion, though, Pacheco sacrifices descriptive variety and development of characters in order to sustain her accusatory stance. Prado Garduño equates the “parade” of characters to the beads on the rosary: each entity is vaguely different, but ultimately similar.\(^{32}\) Although I cannot deny that some of the protagonists are presented in pseudo-repetitive surroundings or situations, I would submit that each is imbued with subtle nuances of personality and personalization.

The third, and final, author of Palabras de mujer, Espinosa Rugarcia also recognizes Pacheco's desire for “denuncia politicosocial.” She goes on to describe Pacheco as:

La voz de una mujer que se hace eco del lamento silencioso de los que no tienen voz, de una mujer que se duele ante el sufrimiento de los más pobres y que se indigna frente al desamparo y la marginación de esos hombres y mujeres que se desenvuelven clandestina, secretamente, temerosamente a la sombra del Distrito Federal.\(^{33}\)

Nevertheless, Espinosa Rugarcia's analysis centers on some of the gender roles she sees perpetuated in Pacheco's texts: the “Don Juan,” the macho, the practical housewife. This is much the same argument as Ruiz de Velasco's. In the same manner, Espinosa Rugarcia's reading of Pacheco has brought

\(^{32}\) Prado Garduño, “Cuando la injusticia encuentra su voz”\(^{115}\).

questions to her mind: "¿Hasta cuándo se atreverán nuestras autoras a crear caracteres a su imagen y semejanza, dotados de una dimensión psicológica acorde a la época actual?"\(^\text{34}\) Again, I would answer that such characters exist.

Continuing with the review of critical response, Claudia Ferman also partially deals with Pacheco in her study Política y posmodernidad: hacia una lectura de la antimodernidad en Latinoamérica. The main focus of her discussion is Postmodernism and Postmodernity and their relation to the (re-)formation of Latin American culture, as exemplified by comparative and contrastive trends in Argentina and Mexico. She engages Pacheco's work, in dialogue with that of Angeles Mastretta, as an example of "una escritura contra-ideológica" particularly in terms of the context of women in relation with and in resistance to an oppressive state.\(^\text{35}\)

Claudia Schaefer-Rodríguez, in "Embedded Agendas," also examines a changing textual form, one expressed by "chronicles of crisis," or new journalism, especially as it relates to the "importance of identifying the agendas of both writer and media vehicle."\(^\text{36}\) Although Schaefer-

\(^\text{34}\) Espinosa Rugarcia, "Con el sexo a cuestas" 133.
\(^\text{35}\) Claudia Ferman, Política y posmodernidad: hacia una lectura de la antimodernidad en Latinoamérica (Buenos Aires: Editorial Almagesto, 1994) 16.
Rodríguez' focus is primarily on the development of literary journalism, she does briefly refer to Pacheco's writing in comparison with the narrations of Guadalupe Loaeza. She promotes the idea that the use of literary journalism as "women's cultural production" is reflected in Pacheco's and Loaeza's texts. She proposes that:

Literary journalism's lasting contribution appears to be the sifting out of two kinds of 'news' that must be kept in balance: that deserving of coverage on page one and the "less important" (citing Hollowell 46) variety integrated into the human 'interest' stories of the inside pages.

In keeping, then, with this distinction, Schaefer-Rodríguez seems definitely to be relegating both Pacheco's and Loaeza's texts to the realm of the "crónicas [that] appeal less to careful analysis and collective action than to an immediate individual emotional response." I cannot agree with this neat journalistic formula (front page equals important; non-front page equals frivolous). A brief consideration of this point was made in my previous discussion of Pacheco's "Mar de historia" column. I am also unsatisfied with Schaefer-Rodríguez' inability to consider Pacheco's texts in a larger social,
political and cultural context beyond mere personal reaction.

Turning, then, to the general reviews of Pacheco's work, it is interesting to notice that they seem to be primarily grouped around only three works. Sopita de fideo has five reviews, while La última noche del "Tigre" and La voz de la tierra have three and one respectively. Some of these reviews reappear later in subsequent editions. For example, in the tenth edition publication of Sopita de fideo, ten years after the first edition, mini-excerpts of some of the reviews have been included on the front and back inside jacket flaps.

Based on a sampling of reactions to Sopita de fideo, it can be construed that the overall impression of the reviews is positive. Rafael Solana points out that Pacheco's skill in depicting "sketches" is practically unrivaled: "Muy pocos de ellos podrá decirse que superan a Cristina Pacheco en la sobriedad del trazo, en la exactitud del lenguaje." Manuel Blanco also comments favorably on Pacheco's dexterity with language as well as her depiction of reality.

Multiple attempts to obtain the complete texts of these reviews have not been successful to date; therefore, I note that the above discussion of the reviews is based on the excerpts reprinted on the book jacket covers.


Manuel Blanco, excerpt of rev. of Sopita de fideo, by Cristina Pacheco, El Nacional [Mexico City], 27 July 1983;
Angel Flores points out the emotional mix of her texts, "en el humor y la ironía que aligeran la terrible carga dramática de las historias." Both Juan José Reyes' and Manuel Mejía Valera's reviews focus on the thematic of the marginal in Pacheco's texts, though Reyes mentions Pacheco's depiction of an underlying narrative force and Mejía Valera exalts Pacheco's technique as, "un estilo que vibra cálidamente con una belleza rara vez lograda: grande y escondido don que exhiben muy pocos."

Finally, of the three biographic references to Pacheco, two are typical entries in specific bio-bibliographic resources. One anonymous article, however, "El registro de lo cotidiano," is a combination of an interview with Pacheco and a summary of her perspectives on journalism as a career. In this article no specific mention is made of any of her works; rather, her life-long relationship with writing is stressed:

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Nunca tuve la aspiración de tener otra actividad que no fuera escribir la historia de la gente que vive conmigo, mi propia historia, los hechos de la calle. Desde muy chica me sentí impulsada a narrar la vida de la gente del barrio. 

Although she mentions throughout the interview that journalism is not an easy career, her dedication and vocation are clearly noted.

Notably missing from all of these critical responses (the reviews and the literary criticism) concerning Pacheco and her works are specific analyses of her television and her radio programs. More often than not, these multi-media manifestations garner nothing but a brief referential note in the bio-bibliographic listings on Pacheco.

Nevertheless, and regardless of differences of interpretation and/or analysis, all of these critical responses are valid in some way to this particular study, especially considering that narrative and descriptive technique, narration as resistance or accusation, and narrative category are certainly aspects that cannot be ignored in Pacheco's texts. However, in this study I propose to go further in identifying Pacheco's method, analyzing in her works a form of narrative discourse that slips between established literary and artistic genre and ultimately resists discursive categorization.

A further distinction is that while most all of the previous critical responses to Pacheco's work have focused specifically on just a small sampling of Pacheco's work, this study, while not pretending to be exhaustive, expands to include just under half of Pacheco's productions. Although it is encouraging that Cristina Pacheco has warranted enough attention to be included in bio-bibliographic reference sources, the overall critical reaction to the corpus of her works is conspicuous by its relative absence.

Noted for his examinations of urban phenomena, Mexican cultural critic Nestor García Canclini observes: "Lo primero que hay que cuestionar es el valor de aquello que la cultura hegemónica excluyó o subestimó para constituirse." García Canclini suggests that absences need to be investigated. It is my belief that my study responds to such a task in reference to Cristina Pacheco's work.

1.5 ORGANIZATION

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Cristina Pacheco's texts have the ability to transfix and transform the reader. On an intellectual, emotional, and spiritual level, I myself was, and am, captured by Pacheco's texts. This study, then, aims to understand why. What is

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it about the way she writes that so mesmerizes the reader? How does she portray cruelty and strength at the same time? How does she convey humanity in the most inhumane situations? How does this act as a denouncement and a call to action? These questions, and many more, about the works of Pacheco will be thoroughly explored.

In order to achieve this objective, this study will be divided into four central parts, organized chronologically based on publication date. Each of the parts highlights an examination of common thematics in the texts and then considers the narrative strategies used to configure them.

The first part will analyze Sopita de fideo (1984) in terms of housing concerns, employment circumstances, and family situations. These three topics are fundamental to all of Pacheco's works. The narrative style will also be analyzed, particularly as it relates to the use of vernacular language, dialogue, multiple narrators, personalization of narrators and situations, and immediacy and urgency as conveyed by the narrative structure.

The second part will focus on two related works: Zona de desastre and Imágenes: Renovación Habitacional Popular published in 1986 and 1987 respectfully. The effects of the 1985 earthquake are the central focus and the impetus for the dialogue between these two texts. The narrative style is essential in both as it is an amalgamation of textual narration and visual narration.
El corazón de la noche (1989) forms the third part of this study. This publication will be discussed in terms of the range of characters presented, the use of silence (as defense against loneliness, as non-existence, in contrast to noise/speaking, and writing as non-silence), and journalism (both as a negative representation and as an alternative to negativity). A final discussion of cohesion and dialogue between the first and the last chapters will also be included.

The fourth section, as the second, consists of the analysis of two "sister" texts: La rueda de la fortuna (1993) and Oficios de México (1993). These two texts are linked by the bond of economics. Yet, while La rueda de la fortuna traces the critical economic situation in Mexico and people's ability (or lack of ability) to deal with it, Oficios de México concentrates, textually and photographically, on crafts and craftspeople. In addition to the focus on international trading, trades in street markets, and trades as professions, narrative style will be discussed as a trade of information between interviewer and interviewee, author and narrator, writer and reader.

These four basic parts will be implicitly and explicitly cross-referential among themselves and with all of the other Pacheco works. For example, although an analysis of housing concerns may be developed specifically in relation to Sopita de fideo, it does not mean that this
particular topic is not present in other texts. Moreover, the chronological order of these core texts does relate to both the Mexican reality at the time of articulation and the reiteration of Pacheco's style. Therefore, all of these chapters should be read as an interconnecting dialogue in which each individual chapter provides a narrative which complements and completes the whole.
CHAPTER 2

PHYSICAL AND THEORETICAL LANDSCAPES

Coyolxauhqui salió de su tumba de cinco siglos. Enseguida notó que de la ciudad que fue como una telaraña de canales, no quedaba ni siquiera el recuerdo.

Cristina Pacheco

A study such as this one implicitly requires certain theoretical bases, especially as they relate to and are exemplified by Pacheco's subject construction and discursive strategies. The discussion of these issues will be developed first through a preliminary examination of the principal topics common to Pacheco's texts and then be broached via an exploration of Pacheco's narrative technique in order to view how they mesh to produce her singular discourse.

2.1 MEXICO CITY

The subject matter that permeates all of Pacheco's narratives is, in its widest terms, Mexico City. A constantly spreading urban megalopolis, Mexico City is by definition difficult to describe and difficult to
comprehend. One non-academic source scoffs at their own futile attempt to describe it: "'City' is not the word for it: the 1,480 square kilometers of urban settlement that line the Valley of Mexico constitute far more than one city."\(^1\)

Nevertheless, one of the most notable elements of Mexico City is its physical dimensions. Even though statistics are impossible to compute precisely, they do provide a beginning and shed some insight into the realities of the second-largest urban center in the world. Mexico City, alternately called the Distrito Federal, the D.F., or just México, currently boasts an estimated population of just under sixteen million, which represents one-quarter of the population of the entire country. Some 1998 figures indicate there are 8,235,744 inhabitants in the city center, while there are a total of 15,047,685 dwellers in the greater metropolitan area.\(^2\) The city itself can be subdivided into approximately two-hundred and twenty neighborhoods to which "two thousand new residents and seven hundred million gallons of water go in every day [and] twelve thousand tons of air pollution come out."\(^3\)

\(^3\) Rathod and Giraldo, 63.
These staggering numbers are made even more so if one considers the relative rapidity with which the city has grown:

La ciudad de México, que tenía en 1940 un millón y medio de pobladores, en 1960 había subido a cinco millones y en 1990 alcanzó los quince millones de personas. La mancha urbana se derramó sobre un enorme territorio, en el que ya casi no existen ejes organizadores.⁴

García Canclini also adds that of these inhabitants, approximately half are migrants to the city. And, he continues, an estimated two hundred and sixty-three million are native Indians pertaining to more than thirty indigenous groups, a majority of which do not speak Spanish as their native language.⁵

Contemporary Mexico, and Mexico City for that matter, has been plagued by severe economic crises, which in part explains the migration to urban centers. Monsiváis summarizes that Mexico:

Corresponde a la “década perdida” que la CEPAL le diagnosticó a Latinoamérica, con los oprobios de la deuda externa, la inflación, el fracaso de las medias para redistribuir el ingreso, la burocratización estatal, el desempleo. . . . ⁶

⁴ Néstor García Canclini, Consumidores y ciudadanos: conflictos multiculturales de la globalización, (Mexico City: Editorial Grijalbo, 1995) 96.
⁵ García Canclini, Consumidores y ciudadanos 60.
⁶ Monsiváis, Entrada libre 12.
Indeed, in 1982 Mexico nearly defaulted on its international loans. This crisis was averted by the intervention of the International Monetary Fund and immediate structural adjustment policies were instituted. These plans, including deflation, devaluation, decontrol, and privatization, were centered on “cuts in public expenditure, reductions in public sector employment, higher prices for food and other crops, and reduction in the role of government intervention in the economy.”

Specifically, this means that in 1982, the Mexican peso was devalued drastically “from 27 to the dollar in January to 95:1 at the preferential rate and 150:1 at the official free market rate in December” and by 1983 the open unemployment rate was 13% with an additional 45% of the population underemployed. The devaluation of the peso continued throughout the 1980's: from 23 Mexican pesos to the dollar in 1982 to 2,500 Mexican pesos to the dollar in 1989. Additionally, the average minimum wage in 1983 was 455 Mexican pesos per day, an equivalent at that time to “a

little over three U.S. dollars" during a period when the rate of inflation ranged from 60% to 100%.

These circumstances continued throughout the 1980's, and in many instances, into the 1990's. A study was conducted and published in late August 1988 which translated the percentages and ratios into real terms. Twenty-eight products, deemed “absolutely indispensable for survival” were collected and purchased. The cost of these products was estimated to be 12,924 Mexican pesos per person per day. This figures to be almost 5,000 Mexican pesos over the daily minimum wage. Absolutely indispensable for survival, perhaps; obtainable?, doubtful.

In spite of the difficulties, by the early 1990's it seemed that the drastic economic measures were stabilizing Mexico's financial standing. Mexico became the first Latin American member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) [1993], united with Canada and the United States in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) [January 1994], and joined the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECID) [April 1994].

Fueled by the January 1994 uprising by the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) and the March 1994

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assassination of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional's (PRI) presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, continued political and economic uncertainty caused a drastic drop in the value of the peso. On December 22, 1994, the "bottom fell out" (quite literally) of Mexico's economy: the peso suffered an 18% devaluation in comparison to the U.S. dollar and in the two-day time-span between December 22, 1994 and December 24, 1994 the total devaluation was 35%. This is obviously the Christmas holiday to which Nestor García Canclini refers to when he evokes:

Aguella navidad en que el Instituto Nacional del Consumidor repetía obsesivamente: "Regale afecto, no lo compre," en sus anuncios anticonsumeristas por radio y televisión."  

Despite emergency economic plans, and the drastic firing of Treasury Secretary Jaime Serra Puche, the peso continued its downward spiral into the next year and caused record lows in the Mexican stock market: in one hour, the stock market lost 3.3% of its total value.  

From 1995 to the present, the peso has, for all intents and purposes, stabilized and in mid-1996 Mexico reported that there was a 7.2% increase in growth. Nevertheless,

14 García Canclini, Culturas híbridas 30.
overall economic growth does not necessarily indicate that the effects of the growth are felt at all levels. In fact, in the last two years, Mexico has experienced an unprecedented rise in the number of street vendors, which in turn causes established businesses an estimated loss of 65 million dollars.\(^{17}\) The November 11, 1996 explosion at the San Juanico PeMex refinery (a chilling reminder of the November 19, 1984 disaster there) sparked a fear of a repeat of the 1994 devaluation. This lack of confidence instigated repeated rumors and innuendo that the price of fuel would go up, thus raising prices of public transportation. Indeed, one of the topics on Pacheco's "Aqué y ahora" radio show was the possibility of an increase in the cost of using the underground transit system.\(^{18}\) Additionally, Mexico's rate of violent crime, affecting both middle and upper-classes, both foreigners and nationals, has increased. Since December 1997, five tourists have been brutally killed and in the last eighteen months almost three thousand Mexicans have been kidnapped for ransom.\(^{19}\) As we will see in Pacheco's productions, economic hardship also reveals itself in its cultural manifestations.


\(^{18}\) Pacheco, "Aqué y ahora," 18 Nov. 1996.

Although always present, Pacheco does not list statistics, data, or studies such as these in her urban (land)scapes; rather, she illustrates them by concentrating on the everyday elements of life. De Certeau refers to these elements as those that are carried out by:

"The ordinary practitioners of the city [who] "live down below," below the thresholds at which visibility begins. . . . These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen."

Although the invisibility of these practitioners and practices is debatable, as will later be developed, the acknowledgment of their existence is vital. De Certeau draws an interesting parallel: "The act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered." Therefore, it can be surmised that the commonplace acts (walking, shopping, cleaning, etc.), as well as survival strategies (such as "making do" or kidnapping), of everyday life are valid as narrative discourses. And, it is these texts that Pacheco expresses.

A further distinction can also be made, however, for the tendency in Pacheco's texts is to narrate primarily the daily strategies and practices of seemingly marginal individuals.

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2.2 SUBALTERN AND POSTMODERN CONTEXTS

Marginality, liminality, subalternity, otherness; Antonio Gramsci, Ranajit Guha, Gayarti Chakravorty Spivak, Homi K. Bhabha. Discussions on these topics and by these individuals, as well as many related topics and many other analysts, have become lively theoretical jousting grounds. Although an in-depth exploration of all of the ramifications of these discussions is beyond the scope of my study, a preliminary synthesis is useful.

The spearhead for the study of the subaltern was Ranajit Guha, (although it is commonly accepted that he borrowed the term “subaltern” from Antonio Gramsci), who founded the Subaltern Studies Group in 1982. This group set about to theorize and rethink Indian history, which they viewed paradoxically:

Indian history had been written from a colonialist and elitist point of view, whereas a large part of Indian history had been made by the subaltern classes, and hence the need for a new historiography which these scholars were now going to write.22

Their political and intellectual conceptualization of the subaltern includes the binary oppositions of power/powerless, elite/non-elite, hegemonic/subaltern in which the subaltern elements, in terms of narrative, refer

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to the "hidden or suppressed accounts of numerous groups - women, minorities, disadvantages or dispossessed groups, refugees, exiles, etc."\(^{23}\) I would add that even the use of the term "etc." is indicative of the subaltern plight: it refers to the "gaps, absences, lapses, ellipses" that need to be addressed.\(^{24}\)

Spivak, nevertheless, is probably the most well-known subaltern theorist. Her practically "notorious" essay, in the words of Howard Winant, is "Can the Subaltern Speak?"\(^{25}\) Although she concluded in her essay that no, the subaltern cannot speak, she reiterates in her interview with Winant that the thrust of her comment was really not a pessimistic finality about the subjectivity of the subaltern, but rather a "challenge to articulate a discursive space in which we can meet finally the subaltern on her own terms."\(^{26}\) This is the challenge that Pacheco seems to be responding to in her narrations: she is creating a space for mutual articulation.

P. Peres follows up Spivak's question with an expression of the need to learn how the subaltern speaks and refers to Doris Sommer's perspective, as detailed in her

\(^{23}\) Said, "Forward," *Selected Subaltern Studies* v-vi.
\(^{26}\) Winant 83.
essay, "Resisting the Heat," that perhaps a way of listening to what the subaltern says is necessary. Both of these comments point to an active mode of listening and reading. For example, and returning again to Linda Egan's view that the scenarios that Pacheco presents are interchangeable and hopeless, I would propose that Egan forms these perspectives because she is not yet listening to (or reading) the subaltern articulation within the text.

As a companion to Guha's Subaltern Studies Group, a Latin American Subaltern Studies Group has also been organized. As the name implies this group is concerned with the relationship of subaltern manifestations as pertains to the political, historical, economic, and cultural definition of Latin America. Specifically, this group concentrates on: the international economic factors that increase regional instability, especially for the subaltern; the presence of subaltern agency in the face of a new "transnational hegemony"; the cultural articulation of the subaltern in public discourse; and, the formation of "an informed and potentially effective political strategy." This Latin American Subaltern Studies Group also points out the chameleonesque nature of the subaltern. They propose that:

[The subaltern] is present in unexpected structural dichotomies, fissures in the forms of hierarchy and hegemony, and, in turn, in the constitution of the heroes of the national drama, writing, literature, education, institutions, and the administration of law and authority. . . . It curves, alters, modifies our life strategies of learning, understanding, and research.  

This description implicitly implies a sort of simultaneous fragmentation or a hybridity and reflects the "imprecise and fluid" nature of subaltermity as developed by Ileana Rodríguez. Indeed, Homi K. Bhabha, in his examination of nations from the liminal or marginal perspectives, also includes this sense of combination. In reference to these liminal localities, he states that they are:

More hybrid in the articulation of cultural differences and identifications - gender, race, or class - than can be represented in any hierarchical or binary structuring of social antagonism.

Said, too, comments that even the Subaltern Study Group's desire to unite their conversations into written articulations has been a hybrid phenomenon: the contributors themselves are as diverse, varied, and difficult to define as is their subject matter.

32 Said, "Forward," Selected Subaltern Studies x.
These implications of hybridity or combination also lead to the issues of Postmodernism, particularly considering that it is typically defined by its fragmented nature. Indeed, Fredric Jameson, known as one of the leading theorists of Postmodernism, approaches it through "the sheer enumeration of changes and modifications" and through the "shifts and irrevocable changes in the representation of things and the way they change." He points to the relationship between a disjointed subject and its naturally fragmentary cultural product:

If, indeed, the subject has lost its capacity actively to extend its pro-tensions and re-tensions across the temporal manifold and to organize its past and future into cultural productions, it becomes difficult enough to see how the cultural productions of such a subject could not result in anything but "heaps of fragments" and in a practice of the randomly heterogeneous and fragmentary and the aleatory. Naturally, for Jameson, a Marxist critic, Postmodernism is a reflection of

Artistically, Jameson suggests that the collage (in terms of a contemporary juxtaposition of natural and artificial materials), particularly as evidenced in video art, is an appropriate postmodern manifestation. Naturally, for Jameson, a Marxist critic, Postmodernism is a reflection of

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34 Jameson 25.
35 Jameson 80.
capitalism and a study of it should include the examination of "consumption of sheer commodification as a process."\textsuperscript{36}

This concept of a manifestation of the market is also expounded by Nestor García Canclini. He explains that even modernity is characterized by this consumer emphasis:

A mediados de este siglo, era frecuente en algunos países latinoamericanos que una discusión entre padres e hijos sobre lo que la familia podrá comprar o sobre la competencia con los vecinos terminara con el dictamen paterno: "Nadie está contento con lo que tiene." Esa "conclusión" manifestaba muchas ideas a la vez: la satisfacción por lo que habían conseguido quienes pasaron del campo a las ciudades, por los avances de la industrialización y el adventimiento a la existencia cotidiana de nuevos recursos de confort. . . .Todo lo que los hacía sentir privilegiados habitantes de la modernidad.\textsuperscript{37}

I would propose that this description of the mid-century and Modernity is just as apt today and for Postmodernity. As García Canclini explains, upon purchasing an item, a consumer then appropriates and values that item, and, simultaneously, is defined by it. The item begins to dictate, "las maneras en que nos integramos y nos distinguimos en la sociedad, en que combinamos lo pragmático y lo disfrutable."\textsuperscript{38} But, now, in the age of global markets, identity is ever more defined by transnational elements, just as is Postmodernity:

\textsuperscript{36} Jameson x.  
\textsuperscript{37} García Canclini, \textit{Consumidores y ciudadanos} 14.  
\textsuperscript{38} García Canclini, \textit{Consumidores y ciudadanos} 19.
Las identidades posmodernas son transterritoriales y multilingüísticas. Se estructuran menos desde la lógica de los Estados que de los mercados. Operan mediante la producción industrial de cultura, su comunicación tecnológica y el consumo diferido y segmentado de los bienes.

Monsiváis provides an illustration of this consumerism in his description of the World Cup Soccer Championship hosted by Mexico City in 1986. As he points out, Mexico City may have been the physical location of the games, but the real "hosts," (and here I would like to emphasize the triple meaning of host as a marauding multitude, as one who entertains guests, and as one who is the passive site for a parasite), of the games: "Los patrocinadores oficiales del Mundial están de placemes. Bata, Canon, Coca-cola, Gillette, Philips, Camel, Cinzano, Fuji Film, JVC y Seiko sonríen." Furthermore, he describes technology as the thirst for the sale and buying as the hunger for social ascension.

This mass consumerism is, obviously, transnational in scope, and therefore, by definition it is multiple and hybrid. Jameson's concepts of Postmodern fragmentation can therefore also be applied. After having expounded upon the role of the transnationalization of culture, brought about as a by-product of communication technologies, in the blending of national frontiers, García Canclini asks, "¿Es preciso aclarar que esta mirada que se multiplica en tantos...

39 Garcia Canclini, Consumidores y ciudadanos 30.
40 Monsiváis, Entrada libre 214.
41 Monsiváis, Entrada libre 212.
fragmentos y cruces no persigue la trama de un orden único que las separaciones disciplinarias habrían encubierto?"\textsuperscript{42}

He answers his question by reflecting that the only way to understand this inherent multiplicity is through:

Un estudio de las bases culturales heterogéneas e híbridas. . . . Permite estudiar los diversos sentidos de la modernidad no sólo como simples divergencias entre corrientes; también como manifestación de conflictos irresueltos.\textsuperscript{43}

If this hybrid multiplicity is a given, especially as relates to the globalizing "reconstruction" of ethnic, regional, and national identities, then how are its cultural products produced and understood? As García Canclini posits:

La pregunta es qué tipos de literatura, de cine y de televisión pueden narrar la heterogeneidad y la coexistencia de varios códigos en un mismo grupo y hasta en un mismo sujeto.\textsuperscript{44}

I suggest that if now, "la identidad es políglota, multiétnica, migrante, hecha con elementos cruzados de varias culturas," then the cultural product, be it narrative discourse or media, that reflects it must, too, be migrant, hybrid, and multiple.\textsuperscript{45} This is what Cristina Pacheco exemplifies.

In the same manner that an exploration of subalterity flowed into a discussion of fragmentation and hybridity,

\textsuperscript{42} García Canclini, \textit{Culturas híbridas} 25.
\textsuperscript{43} García Canclini, \textit{Culturas híbridas} 25.
\textsuperscript{44} García Canclini, \textit{Culturas híbridas} 114.
\textsuperscript{45} García Canclini, \textit{Consumidores y ciudadanos} 109.
which in turn led to Pacheco's narrations, an examination of her works must now complete the cycle by re-examining liminality. De Certeau points out the complex nature of marginality:

Marginality is today no longer limited to minority groups, but is rather massive and pervasive; this cultural activity of the non-producers of culture, an activity that is unsigned, unreadable, and unsymbolized, remains the only one possible for all those who nevertheless buy and pay for the showy products through which a productivist economy articulates itself. Marginality is becoming universal. A marginal group has now become a silent majority.⁴⁶

Although this perspective is based on an economic and cultural model of production and activity, it is useful for pointing out the paradox that a majority can be a minority, which is, in and of itself, indicative of the nature of these discussions and the difficulty of their theoretical distinctions, definitions, and contradictions.

Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study, the terms margin, liminal, subaltern will in be used in consideration of the traditional binary oppositions, for example: hegemonic/subaltern; center/margin. From García Canclini, the oppositions modern/traditional and cultured/popular can also be considered as part of the working definition.⁴⁷

Naturally, this study recognizes that these binary juxtapositions are arbitrary and imprecise. Nevertheless,

⁴⁶ De Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life xvii. ⁴⁷ García Canclini, Culturas híbridas 192.
marginality or subalternity will be used in reference to those people, situations, or locations that are relegated to a supposed position of inferiority by hegemonic power (and socio-economic systems controlled by such power). De Certeau's anonymous ("unsigned, unreadable, unsymbolized, silent") characteristic is, nevertheless, fundamental to this study.

Pacheco consistently and constantly reiterates margins not only in her choice of subject matter, but also by her very manner of expression. She repeatedly opts to portray what hegemonic power dictates be ignored or silenced. For example, society's conventions prescribe looking the other way, crossing the street, walking faster, or just plain ignoring the huddled and filthy individuals that beg on Mexico City's (or any city's) streets.

Pacheco does not walk by, rather, she stops, talks, listens, learns, and repeats. Carlos Monsiváis' comments regarding Pacheco's television program are just as applicable to her written works:

Desde los infinitos barrios de la capital, Cristina recoge con alegría y respeto imágenes y voces de grupos y personas que por lo común la televisión sólo registra como "lejanía tumultuosa."

Pacheco's role as a "see(r)" of the unseen, a speaker of the unspeakable, a writer of the unwritten, is constantly reiterated, both in her texts and by others about her texts. The intentional play on words represented by the creation of the word "see(r)" is significant. I have represented it in this way so as to convey both the intuitive nature of a "seer" as well as the viewing element of "seeing," both of which are characteristics in Pacheco's narrations. Juan José Reyes comments that:

Los personajes son esos héros anónimos, los que no tienen voz, o mejor, los que no cuentan con medios para hacerse escuchar. Son las mujeres y los hombres pobres de la gran ciudad. Cristina Pacheco ha sabido ir hasta sus lugares y mirarlos con los ojos limpios.  

Pacheco herself, both in text as well as in her multimedia productions, reflects on her personal relationship with those who most would consider marginal or subaltern:

Allí he escuchado las historias del pueblo, he visto su lucha heroica e ignorada, he sido testigo de su opresión, de su marginación y de su eterna esperanza. Los relatos que aparecen aquí se basan precisamente en esas historias.

Having presented, then, a general description of Pacheco's narratives, as well as a contextualization of them

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in a broader contextual and theoretical sense, it is now necessary to explore further her narrative strategies. Therefore, Pacheco's texts will be discussed in relation to current feminist literature, the testimonio, and the crónica.

The order of these issues is intentional: it represents a reverse chronological order that remits to the historical foundations of today's critical approaches. No contemporary culture can exist without its precursors, so it follows that no cultural product can exist without its predecessors. In fact, García Canclini points out the artificiality of this false separation, as exemplified by the zealouslyness of the modernists: "Las ideologías modernizadoras acentuaron esta compartimentación maniquea al imaginar que la modernización terminaría con las formas de producción, las creencias y los bienes tradicionales." He adds:

Así como no funciona la oposición abrupta entre lo tradicional y lo moderno, tampoco lo culto, lo popular y lo masivo están donde nos habitamos a encontrarlos. Es necesario desconstruir esa división. . .y averiguar si su hibridación puede leerse con las herramientas de las disciplinas que los estudian por separado.  

I would suggest that all of the elements that he mentions exist simultaneously and that since they form a hybrid, then a different "tool" is necessary to read them. Therefore,

51 García Canclini, Culturas híbridas 17.
52 García Canclini, Culturas híbridas 14-15. The use of italics is García Canclini's.
since Pacheco's hybrid narratives are reflections, combinations, and adaptations of the literary and cultural expressions that preceded them, then, the tool (theory), used to read her texts must also be hybrid.

2.3 WOMEN'S PERSONAL NARRATIVES AND MULTIPLICITY

The difficult-to-categorize nature of Pacheco's writing is inferred both through the texts themselves as well as through the critical responses to them. The terms used to designate her texts are varied ("relatos," "cuentos," "crónicas," "testimonios," "historias") and seem to be used with a certain degree of interchangeability. Is her discourse pure literary fiction? Is it biography? Autobiography? Journalism? Testimony? Resistance Literature? New Journalism? Women's Narrative? Chronicle? My immediate answer to this series of questions is: Yes. However, current theoretical responses to these questions also abound, and, to an extent, they underscore the hybrid nature of Pacheco's narrations.

Although her narratives go far beyond the categorization of feminist literature, the discussion will begin there, particularly as many of the characteristics of feminist literature reflect multiplicity. In light of this, then, Françoise Lionnet's book Autobiographical Voices: Race, Gender, Self-Portraiture is of particular importance to my study. Although Pacheco's texts could be considered
more biographical than autobiographical (although in a few cases she includes her own actions, thoughts, and feelings both in her written discourse as well as her media productions), I believe that Lionnet's theory can be expanded to include various genre, and thus, it is pertinent to an examination of Pacheco's narratives.

In her text, Lionnet provides an examination of "métissage," which she defines as "a reading practice that allows [the reader] to bring out the interreferential nature of a particular set of texts." Lionnet continues to say that "it brings together biology and history, anthropology and philosophy, linguistics and literature."

It would seem that Lionnet is advocating a truly interdisciplinary concept. Métissage is a technique which allows for, and perhaps even demands, a new way of interpretation; a way which permits everything and denies nothing. Although Lionnet has developed this particularly useful concept specifically in relation to printed texts, I would expand the métissage theory to include visual as well as print disciplines. The case of both photographs included within a text as well as photographic cover art could then be included in an analysis. This extension of métissage would then be particularly applicable to Pacheco's collaboration with the printed and the photographic texts of

54 Lionnet, Autobiographical Voices 8.
Imágenes: Renovación Habitacional Popular and Oficios de México.

Additionally, although Lionnet seemingly limits the process of métissage to the process of reading (especially of autobiography), I propose an adaptation of this theory to include not only the writing process, but also the processes of listening and hearing so that both written and oral-based text can be included in these intertextual and interreferential approaches. The processes of listening and hearing are particularly essential when considering the highly oral nature of Pacheco's work: the interview format so often incorporated into Pacheco's printed works, the interviews included in her television and radio programs, and her own oral commentaries that she also provides in these same multi-media shows.

In this manner, I suggest that the particular set of texts to which Lionnet refers are expanded to include not only autobiography, but also testimony, journalism, biography, novelistic fiction, poetry, and even photographic text. Upon examining Zona de desastre and Imágenes: Renovación Habitacional Popular, for example, one can see not only the presence of autobiography (Pacheco recounting her own reactions to the earthquake and its aftermath), testimony (blocks of text in quotations), biography (the retelling of other's real-life experiences), journalism
(interview dialogue), fiction (stories), and photography, but also the sliding or meshing of these discourses.

The attempt to define or characterize this myriad of literary genre has resulted in a great deal of theoretical discussion, especially in terms of how these discourses relate to women's personal narratives; and, the connection between this multiplicity and hybridization previously examined is essential. It would seem that the only resolution is to consider multiple definitions, based on interreferentiality: a fragmented society must be expressed through fragmentation and combination.

This concept is further supported by Celeste Schenck's essay "All of a Piece: Women's Poetry and Autobiography." Schenck concludes that there is a "supplemental nature of all women's writing."55 In other words, in order to express an experience, the female writer must rely on a myriad of discursive techniques in order to communicate her message because the traditional, male-dominated, canonical forms cannot fully reflect the female experience. This is particularly pertinent to Pacheco's work when one considers both her reliance on journalism as an opening and an outlet for expression as well as the fragmentary nature of that

writing, thus reflecting the fragmentary nature of women's lives.

In reference to journalism, Linda Egan notes that the popularity of journalism as a career for women in Mexico, which did not begin in earnest until the late 1960's, came about in part because, “resulta más fácil incursionar en el periodismo que en otros campos de trabajo.” Despite the supposed facility of the career, Pacheco elaborates in her interview with Egan that, “sabía que me estaba metiendo en un terreno dominado completamente por los hombres.” Interestingly, Egan points out that currently in Mexico, approximately 50% of journalists are women and that their presence in the field has opened discursive spaces for what had previously been negated by hegemonic powers:

Las mujeres han cambiado el contenido y el lenguaje de los medios. De no ser por el reportaje de las mujeres sobre el aborto, las guardarías infantiles o la violación sexual, por ejemplo, esta temática no se trataría.

This change can be viewed in terms of Debra Castillo's theory of “appropriating the master's weapons.” Using the example of Bolivia's "Housewives Committee," Castillo elaborates that they, “take up both the tools and language

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56 Egan, "Entrevistas con periodistas mujeres sobre la prensa mexicana" 276.
57 Egan, "Entrevistas con periodistas mujeres sobre la prensa mexicana" 285.
58 Egan, "Entrevistas con periodistas mujeres sobre la prensa mexicana" 276-277.
and, in doing so, forge new instrumentalities."\(^{59}\)

Similarly, these contemporary Mexican women journalists "took up" the tool of journalism and by inserting their own language and topics, they have altered the field itself. It is both an act of resistance and an inverting of the structure of dominance: journalism has thusly been altered, supplemented, and fragmented.

Doris Sommer, in her essay "'Not Just a Personal Story': Women's Testimonios and the Plural Self," poignantly discusses her own struggle to reconcile this supplemental, interreferential nature of writing.\(^{60}\) She analyzes her initial impulse to unequivocally equate testimonial narration to autobiography. However, she relates, further analysis led her to the subsequent understanding that while the two genre may be interreferential, they are not interchangeable. In other words, Sommer realized that each genre has its own, separate validity; yet, at the same time, they do share certain characteristics and can therefore reflect this supplemental nature.

Adding to the development of hybridized expression, the Personal Narratives Group, in their book Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narrative,


\(^{60}\) Doris Sommer, "'Not Just a Personal Story': Women's Testimonios and the Plural Self," Life/Lines: Theorizing Women's Autobiography, Brodzki and Schenck, eds. 107-130.
signals the main problem with the existing literary categories and definitions:

In the study of literature for example, scholars began to ask why the canon was dominated by the writings of a small group of literary men, and why some forms of literary expression were valued above others.\(^61\)

These theorists support an expanded, multi-faceted perception of women's personal narratives wherein "women's personal narratives" are defined as "narratives [that] present and interpret women's life experiences."\(^62\) The Personal Narratives Group stresses that these broadly-defined narratives can take many forms including, but not limited to, autobiography, biography, diaries, journals, letters, and dictated life histories. Once again, this is apt in regards to Pacheco's work. Although, as stated earlier, Pacheco's narratives touch on subjects that exist beyond gender classification, a majority of the protagonists are female. Egan provides some statistics to support this claim: of the two-hundred-and-thirty-six stories she considered, one-hundred-and-ninety-three focused on women and women's experiences.\(^63\)


\(^{62}\) Personal Narratives Group 4.

\(^{63}\) Egan, "The Sound of Silence: Voices of the Marginalized in Cristina Pacheco's Narrative" 136.
My study agrees with the Personal Narratives Group's basic premise of broadly-defined narratives and suggests even further that not only can women's personal narratives take on any particular form, but they can also take on multiple forms simultaneously. An example can be found in Pacheco's works in that they cannot be limited by just one particular form; rather, they are a multi-structural, and at times collaborative three-dimensional representations, of a variety of forms: sometimes autobiography, sometimes biography, sometimes graphics (as meta-dialogue with the photographic texts).

This multiplicity exists in what Elaine Showalter would describe as a "wild zone," a place "outside the dominant culture's boundaries in a spatial, experiential, and metaphysical 'no-man's land.'" Sidonie Smith continues:

The contributions of women to the genre [autobiography] have traditionally been perceived as forms of contamination, illegitimacies, threats to the purity of the canon of autobiography itself; and their works, defined as anomalous, are set aside...they are silenced.  

And, if women's texts, conforming to the male-defined genre, are "silenced," then the answer lies in non-conformity to

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the limits of those genre, in the ability to “transcend genre” as Schenck would say.\textsuperscript{66}

For this study, I would exemplify this multiplicity using my concept of a “discursive or literary braid” to reflect the multifaceted and multi-discourse expression not just of women's personal narrative, but also of all hybrid narrative (see Figure 1 in the Appendix). If one were to examine the formation of a typical braid, one would note that, normally, the totality (hair, for example) is separated into three distinct sections. These three strands or sections each exist independently of each other, yet are still all connected to the base. In literary terms, the base would be the openly defined “hybrid narratives,” while the strands would be, for instance, different discourses or different narrative categories.

Then, as the braid is formed, two important processes take place. First, all strands come into contact with each other, which would represent textual and structural interreferentiality, supplementation, or fragmentation. Then, as the weaving of the strands takes place and a new entity is created, it would seem as if one of the strands disappears. Although its presence is still there, it cannot be viewed concretely. This process is equivalent to the shifting of discourse in that not all types of narrative

\textsuperscript{66} Schenck, “All of a Piece: Women's Poetry and Autobiography” 305.
structure are present or prevalent at the same time and indeed, more often than not, there is a gliding from one type to another.

Nevertheless, and regardless of the variety of narrative discourse, when the "braid," be it woven in hair or in text, is finished, it forms a unit that displays its fragmentation and yet exists as a whole. In this literary braid, one can see the acceptance of a poly-discourse, or rather, a discourse which reflects a multiplicity of texts. This literary and artistic alternative reiterates, but is not limited to, Smith's description of women's autobiography. She describes autobiography as "eccentric and alive, (...) characterized by dysphoria, by the restlessness and anxieties of self-authorship" which is ultimately a state that can "frustrate expectations and thoroughly enchant the reader because [it is] vital, unconventional." Such, too, is the allure and power of Pacheco's texts.

Another theoretical strand pertinent to this examination of Pacheco's work is the use of dialogue as a narrative technique. Susan Elizabeth Sweeney proposes that dialogic narrative is one of the characteristic traits of women's contemporary fiction. She states that this represents, "a peculiarly feminine ambivalence toward

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67 Sidonie Smith, 176.
narrative authority." Yet, she qualifies, spreading out the narrative authority to many narrators, may paradoxically emphasize the author’s true power. In terms of Pacheco’s texts this may be particularly apt because there are indeed a plethora of narrating subjects, each speaking with her or his own pseudo-authentic voice. However, Pacheco is undeniably wielding power as an author, albeit an author aware of the pitfalls of exploiting authentic voice.

Deborah J. Archer, in her essay in *Anxious Power*, offers the example of how Clarice Lispector steps back from her authorial position of power (language) and lets the protagonist narrate “so that she (Lispector) may accommodate Macabéa’s tiny voice.”

In much the same way, Pacheco steps down and Celia, Domitila, Loreto, Teresa, Alicia, Tomasa, Amalia, and many, many more speak and speak again. This action of stepping aside or moving back opens a space wherein the subaltern can speak; it is a sort of a voluntary and purposeful reverse “deterritorialization,” to use Jean Franco’s term. When these subaltern individuals enter this newly re-

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69 Deborah J. Archer, “Receiving the Other: The Feminine Economy of Clarice Lispector's The Hour of the Star,” *Anxious Power: Reading, Writing, and Ambivalence in Narrative by Women*, Singley and Sweeney, eds. 258.

territorialized space, their numbers and voices are staggering.

Another interesting feature is the personalization of these narrating subjects in that practically every one, both the female and the few male ones, have first names. Having a name indicates having an identity. Diane P. Freedman in “Discourse as Power: Renouncing Denial” states that people need “to recognize and acquire the power of naming rather than denial.” It can be construed, then, that denial would be silence, namelessness, an ignoring of these marginalized people and situations. In the case of Pacheco, she not only names the protagonists, but also their specific situations and specific places. For example, one marginal lower-class barrio is called Puente Blanco. Although the name may imply water (because of the bridge) and cleanliness (because of the whiteness), the neighborhood has neither: there are no water lines that reach this area yet and Gozos, the narrating subject, feels as if small clouds of dust form from her body as it moves. Therefore, by insisting on named narrators and named places, neither the agency nor the site can be ignored or relegated to the realm of silence or negation.

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Mary Louise Pratt, in her examination of colonial travel writing, has stated that in this type of hegemonic expression the subaltern is "taken for granted" and is often characterized as being "interchangeable," easily substituted and/or replaced by another just like them. In Pacheco's texts, however, the emphasis on the names, which is an act of personalization, solidifies the identity of these narrators and their urban positions, these protagonists who represent the liminal beings and situations of Mexico City. They cannot be taken for granted nor annihilated through interchangeability. Each one has its own particular identity and none of them is particularly defined by the marginality of their situation. Rather, they are defined by the topics that Selby et al. found common to urban Mexico: "work, jobs, wages, family preservation, education, home ownership, urban services"; topics which are indeed common world-wide.  

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73 Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transcultuation (London: Routledge, 1992) 52. The full quote reads: "Out of the corner of the landscanning eye, Khoikhoi servants move in and out on the edges of the story, fetching water, carrying baggage, driving oxen, stealing brandy, guiding, interpreting, looking for lost waggons. Referred to simple as 'a/the/my Hottentot(s)' (or not at all, as in the eternal 'our baggage arrived the next day'), all are interchangeable; none is distinguished from another by a name or any other feature; and their presence, their disponibilité, and subaltern status, are now taken for granted."

Certainly, Pacheco's texts reflect some of these concerns reiterated by feminist criticism, particularly as relates to a supplemental, hybrid nature of narrative discourse and an examination of the subaltern. However, as stated earlier, Pacheco's texts point to wider trends beyond those encompassed by feminist literature.

2.4 CRÓNICA, TESTIMONIO, AND RELATED PHENOMENA

In order to understand Pacheco's current texts, it is also necessary to understand them in relationship with two genre which are essential to the development of Latin American literature: the crónica and the testimonio. Kathy Taylor evocatively states that:

> From its beginnings in the time of the Conquest to the most contemporary works, Latin American narrative has been born of the inseparable embrace of literature and history.75

She submits that, "if the testimonial value of the relation and its interest in documentation are added to the aesthetic value of history, we get a model for the Latin American tradition of testimonial writing."76 Similarly, John Beverley states that "the roots of testimonio" go back to the colonial times of the crónicas.77

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76 Taylor 14.
Beverley, probably the critic most closely associated with the testimonio, defines it as, “a novel or novella-length narrative told in the first person by a narrator who is also the real-life protagonist or witness of the events he or she recounts.” He does, however, point to some of the difficulties in defining testimonio:

Testimonio may include, but is not subsumed under, any of the following textual categories, some of which are conventionally considered literature, others not: autobiography, autobiographical novel, oral history, memoir, confession, diary, interview, eyewitness report, life history, novela-testimonio, nonfiction novel, or “factographic literature.”

The task of differentiating these genre in relationship to testimonio is beyond the scope of my study, however, the oral quality of the testimonio certainly is essential. This orality reflects and represents an urgency of articulation.

René Jara contends that this urgent need is the defining quality: “El testimonio es una forma de lucha” and “Es un golpe a las conciencias.” The testimonio acts as a denouncing agent who expresses the need for politicization.
and the first person narrating subject requires an active commitment from the reader.

Beverley, several years after the publication of Jara's work, also recounted this characteristic of insistence: "Testimonio must above all be a story that needs to be told, that involves some pressing and immediate problem of communication."\textsuperscript{81} This urgency, related to Smith's sense of restlessness and anxieties, can clearly be heard in Pacheco's texts.\textsuperscript{82}

Other theorists add to the characteristics of testimonio. In their "Founding Statement," the Latin American Subaltern Studies Group note that the testimonial and documentary forms of expression, "shift dramatically the parameters of representation away from the writer" and that there is:

A new emphasis on the concrete, the personal, the "small history," writing (or video work) by women, political prisoners, lumpen, and gays, raising in the process, questions of who represents whom.

Julio Rodríguez-Luis develops this sense of expression further by describing the cyclical relationship between orality and testimonio:

La narrativa documental en su manifestación testimonial es un paradigma del vínculo entre

\textsuperscript{81} Beverley, "Through All Things Modern" 21. The emphasis is Beverley's.
\textsuperscript{82} Smith, \textit{A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation} 176.
\textsuperscript{83} Latin American Subaltern Studies Group 115.
oralidad y literatura al hacer de un discurso oral, texto; pero texto que conserva características orales de manera deliberada, como la señal del origen que justifica su existencia, como la garantía de su autenticidad en cuanto documento.

Through this element of authenticity, a base from which to question is formed. Thus, Barbara Harlow's conception of testimonio as part of resistance literature coincides in that, "the texts constitute a new social history as well as a new literary corpus and as such they reopen the question, both theoretical and practical, of the relationship between the status and the position of women in a given society."\(^\text{85}\)

Although this particular passage from Harlow deals with the status of women, other subaltern subjects, such as the under-employed in Pacheco's texts, can also raise these questions. As Rodríguez-Luis points out, "la realidad no es sólo la premisa, sino también, en última instancia, la justificación de la narración."\(^\text{86}\) The text is in and of itself a resistance.

Additionally, even though the concepts of orality and the importance of message are still present in the Latin American Subaltern Studies Group's definition, the element of individual histories is also raised. This characteristic


\(^{86}\) Rodríguez-Luis 86.
corresponds to what René Jara refers to as the blending of the public and private realms: "Desde el punto de vista del narrador la intimidad no es privada, le pertenece a todos." 87

A "relative" to the testimonio and the crónica, is the New Journalism narrative. Rodríguez-Luis shares Tom Wolfe's succinct definition of New Journalism as the "deseo de escribir reportajes que pudieran leer como cuentos o novelas" and summarizes the major characteristics of the New Journalism that developed in the early 1960's in the United States: creation of scenes by an organizing journalist/narrator, use of dialog, inclusion of details or facts from the protagonist's point of view, and focus on the ordinary elements of life. 88

This emphasis on the desire to write "life" also leads to the current discussions on the revision of ethnography, ostensibly defined as the science of the origin and characteristics of humans. 89 However, the field has changed dramatically and now reflects a less scientific approach as it has become increasingly subjective. The focus must now not just investigate the traditional "Who speaks?" element, but also include the elements of, "Who writes? when and

87 Jara 3.
88 Rodríguez-Luis 19.
89 The changing nature of ethnography has been elaborated by critical theorists such as James Clifford, George E. Marcus, Hayden White, Stephen A. Tyler, Catherine Lutz, Christopher Herbert, and Clifford Geertz.
where? with or to whom? under what institutional and historical constraints? A shift has taken place that questions and reviews, "the ground from which persons and groups securely represent others"; this shift has lead to the understanding that every construction of "other" is also a construction of "self." The ethnographer must now question her/his ability to ask and investigate the informants and must understand her/his own biases. In doing so, the informants become "co-authors" and express themselves through "dialogism and polyphony." Ethnography, through its dependence on multiple informants and a self-questioning ethnographer, is thoroughly hybrid yet always conscious that an act of writing is transpiring: ultimately, there are "hierarchical arrangements of discourses."  

The ethnographic focus on multiple informants, who often express themselves through polyphonic dialogs, and writers, who are not only conscious of their position but also question it, are certainly elements related to the characteristics of New Journalism, testimonio, crónica,  

92 Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths," Clifford and Marcus 17, 15.  
feminist literature, and subalterity. It would seem that Pacheco's narratives are embodiments of all of these elements.

Taylor mentions this multiplicity as a defining quality of what she considers to be the "new narrative" of Mexico: "The new narrative of Mexico is characterized by a variety of forms and themes, from testimonial literature and its rewriting of an old tradition, to the extremes of textual experimentation." 94 Taylor delineates that it is the writer's never-ending job, through this experimentation, to "unravel history and reweave it." 95 Indeed, in reference again to the idea of the narrative braid, I would add that it is the writer's, as well as the reader's, role to constantly braid, unbraided, brush out, and rebraid current realities.

2.5 THE NARRAGRAPH

This multiplicity of marginal narrators and realities within a supplemented and hybridized discourse can also be discussed in terms of de Certeau's earlier theory of the "creative art forms of the disempowered," which he describes in The Practice of Everyday Life as "the subtle, stubborn, resistant activity of groups which, since they lack their own space, have to get along in a network of

94 Taylor 23.
95 Taylor 139.
already established forces and representations." For example, the use of elements from testimonio would be considered quite an established format. However, when the use of these elements is expanded, altered, or adapted beyond the limits previously established, as Pacheco does, it then becomes a manifestation of an experimental creative art form, to combine the words of Taylor with those of de Certeau.

One of these realities, nevertheless, is that this "new narrative" or "creative art form" paradoxically resists classification while it glorifies in it. Taylor comments that these discourses are works that, "on the one hand carry on the traditions established by the chroniclers, and on the other hand require the definition of new contemporary categories."\(^\text{97}\)

Using Elena Poniatowska's La noche de Tlatlelolco as an example of this new Mexican narrative, Taylor wrestles several different combinations in search of a definition: ("documentary fiction," "testimonial literature," "oral history," "testimonial collage," "testimonial narrative," "documentary novel," "non-fiction novel," "testimonial fiction," "journalistic fiction," "meta-journalism"). Finally, she suggests the Bakhtin-esque term "polylogue" as a suitable representation for the "testimonial narrative

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96 De Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life 18.
97 Taylor 24.
[and] collective vision" represented in the text, a multiplicity of voices.\textsuperscript{98}

Although intriguing, I find Taylor's "polylogue" somewhat lacking though, in that I do not believe that it fully responds to "the new forms of historical documentation and artistic expression."\textsuperscript{99} And, although she mentions a "collective vision" (the use of italics is mine) her term is orally based in voices and does not remit to visual expression.

In fact, the need to include the visual element is vital. A multi-media hybridity is essential in response to contemporary cultural products. Jameson theorizes that videographic art is the ultimate expression of postmodernism:

\begin{quote}
We are left with that pure and random play of signifiers that we call postmodernism, which no longer produces monumental works of their modernist type but ceaselessly reshuffles the fragments of preexistent texts, the building blocks of older cultural and social production, in some new and heightened bricolage: metabooks which cannibalize other books, metatexts which collate bits of other texts - such is the logic of postmodernism in general, which finds one of its strongest and most original, authentic forms in the new art of experimental video.\textsuperscript{100}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{98} Taylor 51.
\textsuperscript{99} Taylor 24.
\textsuperscript{100} Jameson 96.
Similarly, García Canclini suggests that, "ahora la ciudad es como un videoclip: montaje efervescente de imágenes discontinuas."\textsuperscript{101}

As a response then, to "the requirement for definition" that Taylor indicates and the cultural/theoretical need to incorporate visual elements, I propose the category of the "narragraph." Although this term can be applied to other supplemented and fragmentary texts, I formulated the concept of the narragraph in conjunction with Pacheco's hybrid texts and, the term, in and of itself, is a hybrid. The term does not exist as a compound word or hyphenated word; rather, it embodies all the possible branches and roots of a tree which is constantly changing.

This image of a tree is central for various reasons. First, the roots of a tree are what centers it and gives it its history. In this way, no "new" narrative form can exist independent of its ancestors (Pacheco's texts display characteristics from other genres). Second, a tree is composed of multiple branches and leaves, each of which is vital to and contributes to the whole entity: there is no imposed subalternity due to interchangeability (Pacheco's texts are supplemental and depict a wide variety of named, personalized individuals and situations heretofore only defined by their marginality). Also, different branches may be grafted onto the tree (Once again following the

\textsuperscript{101} García Canclini, \textit{Consumidores y ciudadanos} 100.

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supplemental and hybrid nature of her texts). And, of course, the phonetic echo between the term "graft" and "graph" is intentional (Pacheco's texts are highly oral).

To continue, then, this term narragraph is, in and of itself, a hybrid combination of *narrar- and -graph*. Each of these two parts signifies and remits to a myriad of other concepts.

*Narra-* immediately connotes a series of related terms: narration, narrative, narrating subject, narratee, to narrate. All of these phases of *narrar-* are allowed, and indeed celebrated, in the term narragraph. By any (and all) definition, narration is a very broad and all-encompassing term for the oral and/or written expression of fiction or non-fiction. Therefore, both traditional print narrative as well as oral narrative are included within the term, as is reflective of Pacheco's texts. Narration, additionally, is not limited to print text, but also includes auditory text, visual text (and its subsequent interpretation), as well as the dialogue between print text, audio text, and visual text. I define visual text not only by actual photographs or media productions, but also by the relation between photographs and text, by photographic cover art, and by texts that are written in a visually vibrant manner (that is, reading a story as a visual image, a snap-shot text).

In relationship to the -*graph* element of narragraph, many possibilities are also included. The most immediate is
that of the process of something being written or recorded, be it in a tangible or intangible manner. -Graph also reflects the idea of the mechanism for making or transmitting records, be it through a paragraph or a visual graph. This can refer to both the process (Pacheco's narrative strategies) and the end product through which Pacheco manifests her urban landscapes and peoplescapes (Pacheco's texts). Additionally, -graph can relate to the act of being plotted on a matrix that is set up for showing and illustrating comparison and change; it represents an existence figured on a graph. Pacheco, by “plotting” these marginal situations is bringing them to the foreground where they can no longer be ignored or silenced.

The -graph element also remits to the idea of something being graphic in detail, that is, being vividly described. Certainly, this is obvious in Pacheco's texts in which detailed and often gritty images are relayed through what can be interpreted as visual narratives or almost textual photographs.

And, finally, -graph is a referral to the visual and audio-visual elements in Pacheco's articulations. Most immediately applicable is the connection between Pacheco's texts and the photographs in Imágenes: Renovación Habitacional Popular and Oficios de México.

Although it may not be as obvious, even Pacheco's radio program reflects this idea of the visual. Indeed, the
program subtitle ("Aquí y ahora: nuestras realidades vistas a través de los comentarios de una periodista de toda la vida, Cristina Pacheco") indicates that through the use of words, realities can be "seen." Therefore, the term audiograph is applicable.

Naturally, Pacheco also presents an audio-visual forum through her television program. As with the radio program, the -graph element, through the videograph, is reiterated further in the program's subtitle: "Testimonios de la vida en México con imágenes y palabras." Indeed, the entire concept of narragraph is contain therein. Imágenes y palabras: images and words: words and images: narratives and graphs: narragraphs.

In this way, and responding to de Certeau's emerging creative art form of the disempowered, these urban narragraphs break through the boundaries of print medium to include the aspects of artistic multi-media and visual text, thus creating hybrid and supplemented narrative cityscapes: narragraphs.
CHAPTER 3

SOPITA DE FIDEO: AN EXPLORATION OF URBAN LANDSCAPES

Hace años que no tengo casa. Yo y mis hijos dormimos en parques, estaciones, antecalles de hospitales, gasolineras, estacionamientos y en lugares así. En la mañana nos levantamos para buscar alguna basura, alguna cosa, algo trabajo con que ganar algún dinero para irnos pasando.

Citación no identificada en “Cristo no compra en Perisur,” La rueda de la fortuna: Cristina Pacheco

Sopita de fideo, first published as a collection in 1984 and now in its seventh edition, details everyday life in Mexico City: its peoplescapes and cityscapes. The title immediately centers this topic in that it refers to a traditional broth and noodle soup that is commonly prepared among the humbler classes. As Pacheco comments, “los mexicanos y las mexicanas que, cada vez más despojados y empobrecidos, ahora ya sólo pueden alimentarse con la tradicional sopita de fideo.”

Sopita de fideo consists of twenty-eight texts, each of which is relatively short (ranging in length from two to five pages). Ten of these texts have been divided into

1 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo Back Book Jacket.

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subsections which are designated by Roman numerals while two have subdivisions separated by chronological time (one in non-military time and one in military time) and one is divided by subtitles.

In a sense, Pacheco's texts will speak for themselves; the texts have dictated and guided my analyses. This concept is reinforced by Michel de Certeau: "A theory of narration is indissociable from a theory of practices." Therefore, Sopita de fideo's urban narratives will be explored through an examination of common thematics in the texts and then through an analysis of the narrative strategies used to express them.

3.1 CITYSCAPES

In The Mexican Urban Household: Organizing for Self-Defense, Selby et al. analyze the Mexican urban reality through a heterogeneous theoretical approach. Including "quantitative and qualitative research" from the fields of anthropology, sociology, architecture, and economics, their studies "encompass the [Mexican] urban experience and the [Mexican] urban 'reality'. . . through the ideological lens of the working class." In their sample of ten cities, Selby et al. found a common theme in the participants' response to the question of what constitutes a "desirable or

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2 De Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life 78.
3 Selby et al.1.
livable" city. The most important factors, in no particular order, were "work, jobs, wages, family preservation, education, home ownership, and the availability of urban services." By urban services, utilities such as running water, electricity, natural gas, garbage removal, and sewer systems as well as transportation issues such as paved streets and the availability of mass transit were considered.

Not surprisingly, these are some of the same themes that are reiterated in the stories in Sopita de fideo. I say "not surprisingly" because even though all of Pacheco's stories take place in and around Mexico City, the aforementioned researchers found that among the cities they studied, including both large metropoli like Mexico City and smaller ones, in comparison, like Oaxaca, there was a "grayness to Mexican urban life in its material aspects, a remarkable homogeneity." Therefore, just as the researchers' sample cities all indicated similar recurring issues, Sopita de fideo's collection of short narrations reiterates common urban concerns.

3.1.1 HOUSING

One of the most prevalent and recurring images in Sopita de fideo is housing, particularly in terms of types

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4 Selby et al. 39.
5 Selby et al. 7.
of housing, urban services (or, quite often, the unreliability or lack thereof), and displacement from housing.

In Pacheco's works as a whole, a variety of housing types are described. *Sopita de fideo* reflects this in that some larger multi-room, and obviously middle to upper-class, houses are detailed.

In "Las joyas de la familia," a dwelling described as "una mansión" is practically central enough to the narration to be called a protagonist. Although the unnamed family members are related to Luz and Fidencio, who live in the palatial house, not even their family ties are able to break the economic, social, and class boundaries that separate the two lines of the family. This is reiterated in the description of the luxurious house:

> Entonces comenzamos a internarnos en el paraíso. Si los muros exteriores, recubiertos de hiedra, eran como los de un castillo, el interior era magnífico: macetones con hojas elegantes y garras de león, azaleas, helechos, sillones de mimbre y bejuco. El silencio, que iba del patio a los salones, se rompió apenas con nuestras pisadas. Era evidente que allí no había sitio para el desorden, tampoco lo había para la enfermedad, la basura, el ruido, los colores chillantes que se veían en nuestra colonia.

The house and its decorations are a direct contrast to the family's situation. The father, who is cousin to the wife of the home owner, always associates himself verbally with

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6 Cristina Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 57.
the "joyas de la familia." The double connotation of the phrase is significant. Through the emphasis on the wealth of the cousin's family the reference to jewels as tangible manifestations of value is elaborated. And, considering the family relationship between the protagonist and the rich "branch" of the family, the genealogical connotation is also applicable. Therefore, through the father's hereditary relationship, he can associate himself with financial wealth thus augmenting his self-worth.

One day, while strolling with his family, he decided to visit his cousin. The richly appointed house even sets up physical and tangible barriers to parallel the separation: two different layers of iron fences. Ignoring those gates, however, the poor, unnamed, but distantly related family enters. These perpetually uninvited and preferably forgotten members of the family are met with met cold, unwelcoming, and unfeeling glares. The father never again speaks of "las joyas de la familia."

In "Las hojas muertas," Pacheco also begins the narrative with a description of a large home: "La casa era muy grande, tenía nueve habitaciones y dos patios de mosaico amarillo, tan brillante como el plumaje de los canarios." This particular structure seems grandiose and overpowering in relationship to the people that inhabit it: a widowed mother and her five adult daughters, "las únicas

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Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 95.
sobrevivientes en una familia que llegó a ser de doce miembros."\(^8\) At one time, the size of the house correlated to the number of inhabitants; now, however, it serves more as a memory to those who have died than a home to those who have lived.

"Las frutas prohibidas" presents one particular house: "Una casa de cantera, la única en el barrio," which has a patio that was "inmenso" and an all-white dining room that was a "habitación de techos altísimos."\(^9\) These descriptions focus on the differences that this house represents: stone, instead of brick or clay; clean white rooms with matching white accessories, instead of items dulled by use and time; high ceilings, instead of low roofs built for practicality.

Regardless of these exceptions, more often than not the homes, and areas, described seem simple, if not bleak. "Las frutas prohibidas" reflects this contrast in the initial paragraph of the story. The neighborhood is composed of:

Remedos de vivienda y entre ellos pedacitos de dignidad humana, sonrisas chimuelas, saludos con trufo alcohólico, rostros y cuerpos marcados por la señal de la miseria.\(^10\)

The stone house previously referred to is set apart from the others which reflect the ravages of misery and, during the

\(^8\) Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 95.
\(^9\) Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 15, 17.
\(^10\) Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 15.
time that it was uninhabited (prior to the time of the narrative), it was even the basis for neighborhood legend.

In "El don de la lluvia" Pacheco explores a home that is in direct contrast to the homes in "Las frutas prohibidas" and "Las hojas muertas." The reader is immediately presented with an entry into:

El cuarto con techos de lámina. Hasta ella desciende la maraña de cables y cordones que transportan la luz desde la calle. Sobre su cabeza hay un foco desnudo. La sombra duplica sus movimientos, va y viene como ella sobre manteles y camisas.

A sudden and strong downpour, normally not a concern for typical upper class structures, wreaks havoc and provokes safety and health concerns in this simple structure composed of plastic roofs and exposed wiring.

Virginia, the inhabitant of this home, immediately unplugs her iron from the jumble of improvised electric cables, for fear of electric shock, and covers the television with a sheet of plastic in order to protect it from the rain and/or leaks. "La lluvia, cada vez más fuerte, produce un ruido ensordecedor al caer sobre el techo de láminos" and, therefore, her instructions to her daughter are unheard. And, due to the still unfinished construction of the local sewer system, the rainstorm produces a drainage back-up: "Desde la puerta las invade una

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11 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 97.
12 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 98.
fetidez intolerable: un río de aguas negras sale del improvisado cuarto de baño."^{13} The story ends with the image of: "En silencio, Susana mira crecer el río de mierda."^{14} For the dwellers of this structure, an ordinary thunderstorm has altered, and threatened, their home and their lives.

In comparison to the previous example, the reality that Pacheco presents in “La cadena invisible” is worse. In this case, the main protagonist Amalia does not live in a house, but rather she dwells in a single room in a cheap hotel. She and her three young children occupy room 308, where, when she goes to work, she is forced to leave them unattended. The only area where the children can manage to play is in “los pasillos del hotel por donde constantemente pasa la sombra de parejas clandestinas.”^{15} The image is certainly not one that portrays a wholesome and safe playground area. Indeed, the desperation of the situation is reflected further by the comparison that Amalia makes when she hears the maids drop large knotted bundles of dirty linens from the upper floors, through the open stairwell patios, to the main floor: “El golpe siempre horroriza a Amalia, que inevitablemente piensa en un suicidio.”^{16}

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15 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 47.
16 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 47.
The image of cramped, filthy spaces is also constant, as represented by Daniel's situation in "El menor de la familia." In a two-room house that is "ya para siempre inconclusa," this five-year old lives with his extended family, including his brothers, sister, and uncle, as well as the "familiares recién llegados de la provincia o vecinas prófugas de la furia conyugal." There never seems to be enough space for Daniel:

No tiene un sitio fijo para comer, dormir, o jugar. . . . Es peregrino de la casa. . . . Daniel no tiene cama. Duerme "hecho bolita" entre las piernas de sus hermanos o en el colchón de su tío Bulmaro.

In fact, the short story ends with the indelible image of "el cuerpo pequeño que cabe en cualquier parte: entre los montones de trapo donde duerme, bajo los árboles de plomo o sobre el montón de basura que palpita al mínimo soplo de viento."

Don Jéronimo, the elderly protagonist of "Jéronimo, el viejo," faces a similar situation as Daniel in that "le gustaría hacerse pequeño para no ocupar espacio en la habitación de techos de lámina, para no hacer bulto en el catre." His particular circumstance does differ, however, because he is, in effect, being "evicted" from his son-in-

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17 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 39.
18 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 39.
19 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 41.
20 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 75.
law's home that he had been sharing with his daughter, her husband, and their children. Due to economic problems (the husband has no steady employment and the daughter cannot work for health reasons), space constraints (the two-bedroom home is not sufficiently large to accommodate three adults and two young children), and a demanding husband (whose commands to his wife indicate physical violence), the daughter has no recourse other than to relocate her elderly father to an extended care facility, or in the words of Jéronimo, "el asilo." Even though he begs his daughter to let him stay and proposes alternatives (he can spend the day in a chair out in front of the building, he can sleep on a mattress on the kitchen floor, he can forego eating in the evening), he nevertheless remains "Jeronimo, el viejo," someone who takes up too much space and therefore must be sent away by his daughter.

3.1.2 URBAN SERVICES

Urban services, such as utilities and transportation issues, are often included in Pacheco's text. Usually they will not be the main focus of the narrative, but rather these elements will be used as implied, background elements highlighting the description of general living conditions. As de Certeau develops:

21 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 76.
Even if it is drawn into the oceanic rumble of the ordinary, the task consists not in substituting a representation for the ordinary or covering it up with mere words, but in showing how it introduces itself into our techniques - in the way in which the sea flows back into pockets and crevices in beaches - and how it can reorganize the place from which discourse is produced.  

These details are, indeed, fundamental to representing the often difficult marginal circumstances.

Of these concerns, the lack of adequate water systems is notable. The previously explored example of "El don de la lluvia" reiterates the type of problems that can occur due to inadequate and/or improvised plumbing systems: a simple sudden storm can cause a house to become flooded with brackish sewage and overcome with a fetid stench.

The need for dependable running water is another constant. For example, in "El menor de la familia," the morning routine includes turning on several different faucets (the one at the sink, the one outside in patio) in order to see if there is any water pressure. When there is no water, young Daniel is sent to borrow some from a neighbor: "Llévate una cubeta con La Jarocha, a ver si te regala tantita." Although no direct cause for the lack of water is mentioned (it could be due to interruptions in the main line, problems with low pressure, or termination of services due to non-payment), it is implied that this is a

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22 De Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life 5.
23 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 40.
common occurrence. The members of the family have a back-up plan, an alternate means of procuring water, and it apparently functions as if it were a routine in which everyone knows what their role is and what implements will be needed.

The case of "Mi tumba, mi casa" is particularly indicative of the conditions of urban services for many Mexico City dwellers. The protagonist of this text, the aged Domitila, has worked for forty-nine years as the concierge of the Girasoles building. She was permitted to live in a room in the building's basement, wherein a casement window provided her with a view of nothing but "la banqueta, el hocico de un perro, los pies mal calzados de un niño que pasa a la carrera." Indeed, this is an image very far away from the sunflowers for which the building has been named.

Nevertheless, the basement room was her home even though for some time, since the day the pipes broke and flooded her room with backwater, she has had no access to running water:

Llevo harto tiempo sin una gota y esto de andar acarreándola de aquí y de allá se me hizo rete pesado. Será que estoy vieja, pero le cuento que para viga de cargar una cubeta me dolían todos los brazos."

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24 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 92.
25 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 91.
This circumstance is compounded by the fact that, for the last four days, she has also been living without electricity. Her situation is made even worse when she learns that she is being evicted from her home in order to make way for "los cimientos de un condominio ultramoderno." Her substandard existence in a basement room with no urban services contrasts sharply with the luxury and convenience of the new high-rise condominium.

She meets her fate with resigned irony. Since she now does not have a place to live, she has given her beloved pet parrots to another family in order to take care of them properly, in order to provide them with a home. She sadly asks herself: "Con todo y ser animales ya tienen casa pero tú ¿dónde vas a meterte?" She realizes that she will finally have her own space, her own "home" only when she dies:

¿Sabe qué me da risa? Que sólo cuando me muera voy a tener un hoyo dónde meterme. Entonces sí, a querer o no, van a hallarme un lugarcito en el mundo. Hasta me han dado ganas de ir por allá, a los panteones, y decirles a los camposanteros: "Oigan, déjenme vivir en el pedazo de tierra donde van a ponerme cuando esté muerta. Entonces no voy a necesitarlo, mientras que ahora sí..." Lo digo en serio: a mí no me importaría quedar soterrada. Siempre he vivido en este sótano, siempre estuve más abajo que todos y nunca me importó, ni siquiera cuando estaba muchacha. Ahora tengo 72 años, ¿usted creé que pudiera mortificarme vivir un poco más abajito?  

26 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 91.
27 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 92.
28 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 93. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
3.1.3 DISPLACEMENT

Although insufficient space and poor urban services are dramatic issues, the worse possible scenario regarding the housing situation is displacement from housing or homelessness. The case of Domitila, in the example previously analyzed, illustrates this point quite clearly: her priority is having a place to live, to call a home, regardless of what condition it is in.

Domitila's future home is uncertain. She has explained to her visitor, a representative of either the building's owners or the company that is remodeling the building, that she has looked for new places to live, but that with her severely reduced income and her advanced years, few options are available: she can find no rooms in an affordable price range and now no one will hire her as a building concierge due to her age. Although she concludes the story with her half-hearted talk of moving to the cemetery, to her tomb, her next action remains unspoken, her future, and her home, remain undiscovered.

The protagonist in “Ecos en el Río de Piedras” is very similar to Domitila in that both share the unusual perception of a cemetery as a home. This unnamed male protagonist had few means with which to support himself, aside from begging door to door in his neighborhood, and typically he slept in, “una banca del jardín, en las
escaleras de la iglesia o bajo los arcos del mercado. So that the townsfolk need not see him walk, "por las calles del pueblo, muy barriditas," he was given a job as a watchman at the local cemetery. In addition to his wages (3.50 pesos per day and two meals at a local home), he was permitted to live in the caretaker's shack which was in poor condition when he arrived:

Cuando llegué a este cuarto no había más que el pico, la pala y la cuchara. Por allá, un montón de botellas, periódicos viejos y tablas que dejó Hilario, el anterior camposantero. Con eso me hice una cama y pasé por primera noche entre los muertos.

Perhaps the surroundings were not elaborate, but they provided the narrator with a night of uninterrupted sleep, something which he had not had since he began to sleep in the streets.

A focus on displacement and homelessness is also developed in Pacheco's texts through descriptions of the aftermath of "el desalojo," a forced eviction. This type of eviction refers not just to the physical dislodging of an individual and that individual's belongings from a structure, but also, quite often, to the destruction of the physical structure itself.

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29 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 72.
30 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 71.
31 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 72.
This particular type of eviction depicts the precarious circumstances of a "colonia paracaidista," a "parachute" community. These types of developments are defined by social scientists as "those neighborhoods that are settled by an organized incursion of squatters ... who set up what are often called shantytowns ... on unoccupied areas in and near cities."  

In layman's terms, the descriptive use of the word "parachute" reiterates several characteristics of these developments. The speed of a free-fall parachutist echoes the rapidity with which these communities are formed sometimes overnight or in just a few hours. The imprecision of a parachutist's landing site reflects the precarious and often haphazard position of these neighborhoods, quite often on the sides of hills and gullies. The dare-devil nature of parachuting reiterates the uncertainty of the duration of the community.

Although recently Mexico has passed laws stating that if one of these parachute colonies has existed on a particular site for a certain number of years with fixed, permanent structures, then the buildings cannot be destroyed by the absentee landowner. Nevertheless, there are some unscrupulous practitioners that take advantage of individuals who wish to fulfill their dream of being a home owner. Some individuals will organize scams in which they

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Selby et al. 13.
supposedly represent the landowner and “sell” parcels of the land, when in fact they are just swindling the investors. And, some landowners will wait until very close to the end of the allotted time in order to dislodge the inhabitants because, by then, those inhabitants have created an infrastructure which the landowner can later use without having had to invest in it.

“La desesperanza cae antes que la noche” represents textually this type of circumstance. The neighbors, who had each invested fifteen thousand pesos in purchasing their land (and had their receipts), bought materials and toiled to construct their houses, thus building a home environment. They invested themselves both financially and emotionally:

 Seeing all of their hard work and dreams crumble into a pile of rubble is devastating:

Yo me acuerdo bien cómo trabajó la pobre. Venía a las cinco, seis de la tarde, con la espalda hecha pedazos de lavar, se echaba un taco y darle: puro acarrear cubetas de tierra, imagínese, desde Fuentes hasta acá, al pelo. Ella misma puso los cimientos y se dio abasto en todo, haga de cuenta un hombre. Todo por la ilusión de su casa. . .

33 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 44. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
les tiraran su casa, se me hace chiquito el corazón. . . 34

The only possible response is one of stunned disbelief. This is communicated through a series of questions asking where will they live and how will they live: “¿Ora qué hacemos? ¿Adónde nos vamos? . . . ¿Qué hacemos hijo? ¿Adónde jalo contigo? ¿Dónde nos metemos, pues? . . . ¿Qué hago? ¿Dónde te meto?”35 These constantly re-phrased and repeated concerns form a chain of intense questions that ultimately goes unanswered: neither the displaced families nor the reader knows what will happen next: where or how the families will live.

3.1.4 EMPLOYMENT

In addition to housing concerns, employment is a constant image in Pacheco's texts. For example, the majority of the jobs described in Sopita de fideo can be classified as “working class,” according to Selby et al.'s definition in “the sense that [household members] work for a living sometimes in the labor force and sometimes not.”36 Many of the employment positions can also be considered as “underemployment” or “disguised employment” wherein “full-

34 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 44. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
35 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 44-45.
36 Selby et al. 6.
time workers earn under the minimum wage or full-time workers do not have registered formal sector jobs.\(^{37}\)

For example, in many of the stories, the female protagonists are laundresses. They either trudge from house to house to wash the clothes on site or they haul the laundry to their homes to be washed, dried, and ironed. "El don de la lluvia" presents an example of this situation in that, after having spent most of the day hand-washing other people's linens (tablecloths, sheets, shirts), the mother and daughter frantically rush to bring in the items from the clothesline before they get soaked and muddy from the sudden thunderstorm. Indeed, upon seeing her daughter return with the last load of shirts, she is relieved as much by the fact that her daughter did not get washed away into the river when the embankment fell as she is by the fact that none of the stranger's garments were lost. This demonstrates the level of desperation within the family: the mother needs to keep her customers by providing a reliable service and she cannot afford to pay for the replacement cost of any lost items.

Furthermore, the contrast between the stranger's crisp, white tablecloths and the family's dirty, stained furniture and flooded floor is telling:

Madre e hija extienden los manteles blanquisimos sobre los muebles rotos, disparejos, de colores chillones oscurecidos por la mugre. . . .El ajuar

\(^{37}\) Selby et al. 41.
miserable queda bajo una ola blanca. . . .La suciedad se arremolina, amenaza la blancura de los manteles que poco a poco han ido sometiéndose a la forma de una silla, una mesa, el altero de periódicos sobre los que están extendidos.  

The reiteration of whiteness in contrast to non-whiteness cannot be ignored in this passage. Indeed, not only is the cleanliness in contrast with the filth a striking image, but what they represent is key: the spotless, white tablecloths connote a luxury item from the stranger's undoubtedly middle to upper-class lives, while the furniture in disrepair reflects the harsh utility which dictates and defines this working-class family's life.

Two other protagonists also demonstrate the necessity and the difficulty of being laundresses. The daughter in "Don Jerónimo, el viejo" states that she had been working as a laundress in order to supplement her husband's income; although, at times her income proved to be the only source of funds due to her husband's unstable employment history. The physical toll of washing clothes is indicated by the fact that her precarious health forces her to stop working: "Yo, como quedé herniada desde que nació Jovita, no puedo lavar ajeno, qu'es con lo que me ayudaba. Dígame ¿qué hago?" Drastic measures must be taken within the family structure, namely that her elderly father must be moved to a nursing home facility.

38 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 98-99.  
39 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 77.  

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As well, one of the women who built her own home in the parachute community depicted in "La desesperanza cae antes que la noche" reflects the intense physical labor required of laundresses in that she is described as having "broken her back" by washing clothes. Her physical sacrifice was worth it, however, for it brought her one step closer to her home.

Other women work in the manufacture of clothing, an international industry whose abuse of workers has been documented often, as is noted metaphorically in Women in the Global Factory: "It seems to me that no one knows our blood dissolves into the threads and seams, with sighs and sorrows." 40

This type of work is textually indicated in "La vuelta de 'El Tigre.'" Even though she has a regular job, Teresa must also work as a seamstress in her home: "Inclinada sobre la mesa, la mujer va separando los trozos de tela con que armará los fondos que maquila para la fábrica Abud." 41 This work causes her obvious physical distress: "Esta chamba es muy jodida: todo el cuello y los hombros me duelen como si tuviera agujas adentro. Es d'estar agachada sobre la maldita máquina." 42 Nevertheless, she cannot afford not to

41 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 51.
42 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 53.
do it for she must earn enough to support herself and her
daughter.

Although most all protagonists, male and female, work
out of necessity, some simultaneously portray employment as
being connected to identity. One protagonist who defines
herself through her employment is Loreto in "Un cabito de
lapiz." She works as a janitor in an elementary school. On
the last day of classes, after the farewell parties, she is
left to clean up the confetti and other sundry papers that
have been strewn about the school. Although she repeatedly
says "condenados escuincles," reflecting her exasperation
with the mess that the children left behind, the supposed
ire in her tone is short-lived because she realizes that she
depends on the students for interpersonal contact and
communication. She looks upon them not as students, but
practically as family members and what she does outside of
her job is accompanied by thoughts of them: "El lunes me
pinto el pelo, al fin que los chamacos no vienen. . ."43
This serves as a substitute for loneliness; she looks to the
students for confirmation of her being.

The students are also her defense against ignorance.
She finds a discarded, chewed-up end of a pencil in one of
the heaps of rubbish; yet, for her it is not a trash. It is
a valued item that she secures in her pocket. As she

43 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 10. The use of the ellipsis
is Pacheco's.
wanders through the abandoned building, she recalls a time when she was a young student and was upbraided by her teacher for being too slow to capture an idea. Later, as she sits in one of the student's desks, she removes the pencil and bites on what is left of the eraser. By doing so, she relives her experience as a student. However, this time, vicariously through the contact with the students, perhaps she can have a second chance.

Tomasa, in the text of the same name, provides another example of self-identity through employment. She is a non-native speaker of Spanish from Oaxaca who has lived with her husband in Mexico City for several years. She prepares home-made ice-cream and sells it outside a local school.

The paternalistic overtones in her relationship with her husband are unmistakeable: he treats her more like an orphan in need of care than a wife; he guided her block by block to the school where she could sell her product and made her memorize the trajectory; he taught her how to speak Spanish; he showed her how to prepare the ice-cream.44

Nevertheless, the process of selling the ice-cream is ultimately a source of independence, pride, and self-worth for Tomasa. Through her interactions in/with the city, which primarily must be in Spanish, she has surprised herself with the rapidity of her learning: "Una de las cosas que la fascina es ver cómo en su cabeza - que le parece un

44 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 35.
espacio tan pequeñito - han ido acumuándose nombres para
designar nuevas cosas, lugares, personas. She is
discovering her own capabilities and capacities. And, when
the schoolchildren eschew the carts selling tostadas and
taquitos in order to flock to her ice-cream cart, aptly
named “La lucha,” she is filled with a sense of pride and
worth in what she does and in who she is:

Conforme va diciendo estas palabras siente cómo
crece el apetito de los niños, su antojo de cosas
dulces en el mundo árido y difícil de la colonia
construida sobre basureros y charcos de aguas
negras.

She feels that she, as one person, as one woman, can and
does make a difference in the urban metropolis.

It is interesting that in both of these examples the
protagonists define themselves through their contact with
schoolchildren. The setting of a school is unmistakeable as
a metaphor for learning. Yet, the fact remains that both
women are somewhat marginalized in relation to the schools
and the opportunities that they represent.

Loreto, although she received some rudimentary
education, obviously was not encouraged to proceed in her
studies. As an adult she is separted from the knowledge the
students will gain and she has access to the site of
production of that knowledge only when the school is empty.

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45 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 35.
46 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 36.
Yet, she still can appreciate its symbols: the pencil.  

Tomasa's liminality is more physically visible. She waits outside of the school grounds, separated by the walls that surround the school. During the recreation breaks, it is the students who leave the school and approach her outside. She does not enter the school grounds, instead she gazes into the vacant rooms and reads to herself what the professors have left on the board. Unlike Loreto, Tomasa never had formal schooling: "En el rancho no había, y en la mera Oaxaca tuve que trabajar desde ansinita." Yet, the fascination with school is the same: "Va a la escuela como a un lugar mágico."

Regardless, most of the protagonists must work in order to survive, even if it kills them, literally or figuratively. A poignant example of this is described in "Desde las alturas." Agapito worked in construction:

"Salario mínimo y un trabajo muy pesado: subir y bajar costales de cemento y de arena, montones de ladrillos."

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I would like to share a personal anecdote that connects to the symbolic representation of "el cabito de lapiz." Several years ago I was vacationing in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. One day, I left a brand new pencil, with full eraser, in my book as a page-marker. When I returned later in the day, after the room had been cleaned, I noticed that my new pencil had been replaced by a pencil stub with a half-eaten eraser. Carefully enacted so as not to lose the correct place in the book, the exchange between the new, complete pencil (from the tourist on vacation) and the used stub (from the maid at work) is an image that I have not easily forgotten. Curiously enough, the book I was reading was Rosario Castellano's El eterno femenino.

Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 36.

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48 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 36.

49 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 36.
job began to affect him more than the usual aches and pains: he had nightmares of falling and could not sleep soundly. In spite of his ever increasing fear of falling, heightened by witnessing a co-worker fall to his death, Agapito could not quit:

Ahorita que no hay nada en ninguna parte y que todo está tan caro ¿quieres que deje la chamba? Estás loca, y menos me voy a salir no más porque no me gusta andar en la altura. . .

Due to economic constraints, as well as masculine pride or machismo, Agapito lost his life on: “Un edificiote, una enormidá. Con todos los fierros salidos, con hartas varillas levantadas. . . .”

Other jobs that are mentioned are grave-diggers, waitresses, gardeners, construction workers, maids, doormen, dancers, carpenters, janitors; in sum, jobs that entail a great deal of physical effort, thus exhausting the workers, who seem to earn barely enough to keep their households intact.

3.1.5 FAMILY

A third common element in Sopita de fideo, in addition to housing and employment, is the family. In fact, only

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50 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 25. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.  
51 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 25.
four of the twenty-eight texts relate situations in which the protagonist is completely without family.

In these four, the protagonists are depicted primarily as being lonely or outcasts. From "Un cabito de lapiz," Loreto can be seen as an example: she has no other family than the surrogate one she has created from the students at the school. This fact is made clear to her at the end of the school year when she becomes again, "una mujer que tiene miedo de no pasar la prueba de la soledad."52

"Las frutas prohibidas" also presents a protagonist, "la Mujer de Blanco," who, because she has no close family, fabricates a reason to have the children of the neighborhood visit her regularly. She begins giving religious classes in her home and promises a special treat, a lunch, for the winners of, "un concurso entre los fieles a su clase de catecismo."53 After promising the children a reward, after placing before the winners plates filled with delectable candied fruit, after tempting the children so much that their mouths watered, she demands that they, following the model of Jesus, sacrifice their wants and return the plates of fruit, uneaten, to her. Although her lesson may have been valid in theory, in practice her plan, to create a loving circle of children around her, backfires as the children leave her home “con el más vivo sentimiento de

52 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 10.
53 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 16.
In her zeal to combat her loneliness, she created false relationships, ultimately using and misusing the children, and ended up more alone than before.

The example of Domitila in “Mi tumba, mi casa” also serves to illustrate someone who is entirely without family. In fact, due to having to abandon her basement room, she even had to sever herself from her pet parrots, which symbolically represented the only family she had. She is utterly alone, both in the sense of not having family and in the sense of not having a home.

Finally, the protagonist of “Ecos en el Río de Piedras” presents an extreme of loneliness. Although he seemingly has improved his situation, (he now has a home, wages, and steady meals), he is completely alone. He has no family and, by accepting the cemetery caretaker position, he is isolated from most contact with the neighborhood. He reacts to this situation by talking to the dead people in the cemetery: he reads the tombstone markers and then pretends that he is a family member of the deceased, chatting amicably about the lives that have continued:

Como digo, nunca iban sus familiares a visitar a Marcela y pensé que esto debía entristecerla mucho. Por eso tuve la ocurrencia de hacer mis desfiguros. Un domingo, por ejemplo, me paraba frente a la tumba de Marcela y hacía como que yo era Franscisco, su padre.

54 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 18.
55 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 73.
When he becomes especially obsessed with this deceased Marcela, even going to the extreme of stealing a dress so that she would be fooled by his performances, the townsfolk decide that he is not mentally well and they talk of institutionalizing him. By the end of the text, the reader is not convinced of the protagonist's sanity either for he imagines that she responds to his shouts: “Quien quite y esta vez sea ella, y no el eco, quien me responda.” The message is clear however: extreme loneliness is not a desired state of being.

That is not to say, however, that the remaining twenty-four stories relate perfectly happy families; quite to the contrary, and more reflective of reality, many of the families mentioned report absentee parents and/or physical abuse, which is often exacerbated by alcoholism.

In “La cadena invisible,” the father of Amalia's children is entirely unsupportive of his responsibilities. Amalia sums up his role in her and their children's lives in a conversation with Virginia, one of the hotel maids:

VIRGINIA. Por qué no habla usté con el señor, pa'que l'ayude. Los hijos también son d'él ¿no?

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56 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 74.
57 Although the specific legal status between Amalia and the father of her children is unclear, considering that he is referred to by the term “señor” instead of “husband” seems to indicate that they do not have a legally binding marriage.
AMALIA. Ah qué usté: mi señor. .. -repite Amalia con amargura. ..

Her frustration with his absenteeism can only be expressed by a tone, which Pacheco represents with italics, and through the ellipses, indicating that the details of his relationship with her is a long and difficult story.

Amalia does continue to explain, however, that although he has never supported her or their children, he had the temerity to threaten her for working in a cabaret, where, by happenstance, he entered with his new girlfriend. When the maid asks Amalia if she is afraid that he will follow through with his threat to kill her, she points out the irony of her situation: "¿Usté cré que me va'matar? No le conviene, porque si no ¿quién va a mantenér a sus hijos?" Amalia understands quite well her position and she articulates it with a practical approach.

"La vuelta de 'El Tigre'" presents a similar situation. For four years Teresa has been taking care of her daughter Rina without her partner's assistance or presence. Suddenly, he visits Teresa. It is soon made clear, however, that he has not come to check on them or to visit his daughter. Indeed, he needs to be reminded to ask about her:

TERESA. ¿A qué veniste?
EL TIGRE. A verte. .. Me cai que t'extrañaba.
TERESA. ¿Tan de repente? Se me hace raro, porque

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58 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 49. The use of the ellipses and italics are Pacheco's.
59 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 49.
en todo este tiempo no fuiste para venir a verme ni a mí, ni a tu hija...
EL TIGRE. Pero las extrañé, me cai que sí...
TERESA. Por eso ni nos buscaste, verdá...
EL TIGRE. Oh, ¡tú qué sabes! - exclama él con fastidio.
TERESA. Sí, sé y mucho: tú no quieres a tu hija. Ya ves, ahorita ni me has preguntado por ella.
EL TIGRE. ¿Dónde está la piripnola? - pregunta "el Tigre" automáticamente.

He has stopped by Teresa's home, really a single room filled with one bed, a work table, bolts of fabric, and a sewing machine, for his own selfish, and sexual, reasons. His priorities are clear: he chooses to satiate his carnal desires at the expense of his daughter. He has locked the room, leaving her no recourse but to wait outside in the rain.

Spousal or partner abandonment is the most common type of absenteeism represented in Pacheco's texts, as shown in the previous examples. And, the main focus of these narratives is on how the remaining partner, typically the female, manages to care for the child/ren. There are some additional cases where the effects of absenteeism focuses on the child/ren's adjustment. For instance, from the very beginning of "EL menor de la familia," Daniel is defined by parental absenteeism: "Daniel no conoce a su padre y de su madre sabe únicamente que 'ya mero regresa.'" This double

60 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 53. The use of the ellipses is Pacheco's.
61 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 39.
abandonment leaves him in a precarious position, one which is reiterated by the fact that there is never enough space for him in his uncle's home. To compound his sense of abandonment, his older sister constantly threatens to institutionalize him: "Allá por Tlalpan hay una casa donde uno puede dejar a los hijos de las reclusas, pero cuesta mil quinientos pesos y ahorita ¿de dónde los saco?" These circumstances accentuate Daniel's sense of isolation and burden.

"La última Navidad" portrays a different type of abandonment. Whereas in the previously mentioned examples, the parents or partners have been absent for years, the husband in this story abandons his family temporarily, (for a few weeks, a few months), typically around the time of the end-of-the-year holidays. His absenteeism is also alcohol-related. The text begins with:

Para nosotros, los últimos eran los peores días del año. Sobraban motivos para temerle a diciembre: la Navidad significaba el horror de ver a mi padre hundirse en una embriaguez que principiaba en brindis amistoso y concluía en largas desapariciones.

The family is caught in a quandry: they want him to return and they do not want him to return.

Naturally, the family is concerned about his whereabouts and his safety, and indeed, they need him to

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62 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 41.
63 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 87.
return for financial reasons. But, they are equally concerned about the embarrassent that he may bring them should he return:

Todo estaba ensombrecido por el temor de que nuestro padre apareciera y atrajese las miradas de burla o desprecio de nuestros amigos... Que regrese de noche para que nadie lo vea.

Whether this man is away or at home, both his absence as well as his presence cast a shadow over the family.

This somber tone is set even in the title: “La última Navidad.” The first word, “last,” which indicates an end is used to describe Christmas, usually a holiday of joy, peace, and renewal. The chance for celebration has been relegated to a secondary position which is further juxtaposed with a connotation of finality.

Therefore, the connotation of Christmas has been redefined within the space of the title. This, then, is reiterated by the first lines of the text, in which Christmas-time is met with a trepidation that is maintained throughout the text. For example, the narrative is inundated with terms such as loneliness, anguish, silence, tragic, sadness. Also, the narrator cynically comments that for him and his five brothers, the example of Jesus who was born poor and rose to glory is unbelievable because, “la realidad nos había enseñado que la miseria es algo

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64 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 88.
enternamente distinto: padecer, anhelar sin esperanza, sentirse solo."\(^{65}\)

To these depictions of abandonment and alcoholism can be added a third, and often related, element: abuse. Quite often, these three concerns cannot be separated, either in real life or in Pacheco's texts. This tripartite misery is poignantly portrayed in "Padre, he aquí a tu hijo."

This particular case of abandonment is instigated by the mother. For reasons not detailed in the text, she left her partner when their child, Julián, was eight years old.\(^{66}\) From that time on, the father dealt with this abandonment through violence and drunkenness. Unfortunately, his young son was the focus of his disfunctional frustration:

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\text{Él me pegaba con todas sus fuerzas, con todo el coraje de verse abandonado. \ldots\ldots Siempre acababa golpeándome en la cara. En cuanto me veía sangrar me pedía perdón y dizque para que estuviéramos contentos m\textdoublespace} daba una cerveza, un carrujo, su lata de cemento.\]

During his father's funeral, the now adult son relives those years of abuse. Even though the father is dead, Julián is

\(^{65}\) Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 88.

\(^{66}\) Even though such extreme abusive behavior, particularly as relates to a physically and emotionally abusive alcoholic, is usually life-long and it may be inferred that the father was abusive prior to the mother's abandonment, there is no textual evidence to support the claim that these were the actual causes for it. Furthermore, in most cases similar to the one portrayed, the abused woman's tendency is not just to remove herself from the violent environment, but also to remove the offspring. Such was not the situation in this story.

\(^{67}\) Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 33.
still frightened of him: “Sabe que su padre está muerto y sin embargo tiembla en su presencia.” ⁶⁸

As a child all he wanted was to communicate with his father, to have contact with him; yet, his efforts were roundly rejected. For example, upon trying to show physical comfort to his father through a chaste kiss, the son is pushed away and called a homosexual. Furthermore, the father, through a cycle of violence, taught the young Julián that silence was preferable. However, during the funeral, Julián breaks his silence and confronts his dead father:

Aunque quieras, ya no puedes tallarme los vidrios en los brazos como aquella vez que te rompí tu jarrita de pulque. ¿No te acuerdas? Pues yo sí. Me decías: “Si chillas o te rajas con alguien, te mato.” ⁶⁹

The scars, physical and emotional, have still not healed.

This is emphasized further through the title of the text, “Padre, he aquí a tu hijo.” This is reminiscent of a phrase used often throughout the Bible in the context of God the Father referring to his son Jesus: “This is my beloved son, with whom I am very well pleased - listen to him.” ⁷⁰

The pride and love in the Biblical passage contrast sharply

⁶⁸ Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 33.
⁶⁹ Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 32.
⁷⁰ The Holy Bible: The New American Bible Family Edition (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988) 840. The citation included above is from Matthew: Chapter 17, Verse 5. However, this particular type of phrasing is employed often, for example in Matthew: Chapter 3 and Mark: Chapter 1, Verse 11.
with the pain and hate in Pacheco's text. Another juxtaposition exists in the representation of the father-son relationship. Julián is indeed the true son of his father: the physical and mental abuse inflicted by the father resulted in an emotionally unstable, physically volatile, and alcohol and drug-addicted son: "Él me enseñó, él me hizo así. . ." 71

A final poignant contrast is evident in the communicative and imperative context of the Biblical passage: God commands a group of people to pay attention to what his son Jesus has to say. Since God has spoken, it is assumed that the listeners will heed his commands and listen. Julián's situation is the opposite. Finally, after so many years of silence, he begins to express his anger and pain, but no one will listen to him. He is told to stop mentioning the abuse ("No te acuerdes de esas cosas."); he is prompted to change his subject matter ("Julián, ¿no dijiste que íbamos a rezar?"); and, he is told that his own personal experiences are lies ("Estás levantando falsos. Él nunca te obligó."). 72

The threat of violence is also reiterated in many of Pacheco's texts, particularly as a means of controlling children. Although often accompanied by physical actions as well, the implication in most of these threats is that the

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71 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 33. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
72 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 32, 33, 33.
accused will receive punishment at some later time, usually when the accuser returns from work. This commonly used technique for punishment is insidious in terms of mental anguish. When Daniel, in “EL menor de la familia,” is too slow in his task to borrow a bucket of water, his sister must leave for work without having bathed. Her fury and his anguish are palpable:

Contiene el llanto y oye los gritos de su hermana: “No, ya ni vayas; ya se me hizo tarde. Pero te advierto que cuando vuelva, me las vas a pagar...” A Daniel se le clava esa amenaza en el cuerpo pequeño que cabe en cualquier parte.73

His physical reaction would seem to imply that this is no idle threat, that his sister will punish him.

“Darío y los camellos” portrays a similar circumstance. Six year old Darío is sent on an errand to purchase tortillas for his father's breakfast. Having failed to complete this duty, Darío faces a triple punishment.

First, when he enters the house, he is immediately beaten by his father for having taken so long to return. Then, upon discovering that he had not even purchased the tortillas, the parents promise to punish him more when the father returns that evening. And, finally, when asked for an explanation, Darío responds with the truth: “Estaban tres

73 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 41. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
Although speaking truthfully is not generally punished, in this unfortunate case, it is a truth that is so inverosimil his parents do not believe him, and he receives a stinging slap across the face. Just before the father slams the door shut he shouts to Darío: “Camellos te voy a dar, cabrón, pero cuando regrese. Me cai que te vas a acordar de mí. . .”

Ironically, on his way to work, the father turns a corner and sees, right there in front of him, three camels “tomando el sol” and that “dan lengüetazos para alejar las moscas.” He wants to return home to apologize, but he is late for work. Like his son, he, mesmerized, had stopped to watch the camels; like his son, he will enter work late; like his son, he will be punished.

Fatal types of violence within families are depicted as well. Four particular cases of murder, each of which reflects distinct causes and consequences, are detailed in Sopita de fideo. Two of these murders were committed willfully while two were the result of errors.

As predicted in the title, in “La muerte de Don Juan,” a man is killed due to his amorous adventures. “El Jairo” is described as a man who, “vivió toda su vida para darse

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74 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 13. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
75 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 14. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
76 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 14.
And, he died for these same desires: he was caught “in the act” by a jealous husband. The narrator, a neighbor who knew “el Jairo” well and who witnessed his murder, forms contrasts between his jaunty and energetic past with his prone, still body: “Él, siempre tan animado, tan ganoso, ya no se movía. Qué cambio.” She sums up his murder with a series of nouns: “los gritos, los ladridos, los golpes y la maldita botella.”

A bottle was also the murder weapon chosen by Josefina in “Cosas de mujeres.” In an effort to save her partner Rubén, she killed Daniel: “Fugaz, rapidísima, la asalta una imagen: se ve a sí misma clavando una botella rota en la espalda de Daniel cuando éste intentaba herir a Rubén con un picahielo.” The injustice of the situation, however, is compounded by the fact that Josefina is ignored by Rubén who does not visit her, write her, or answer the phone when she calls: Josefina sits in jail, sad, disgraced, desperate, forgotten.

The next two cases demonstrate how miscommunication, misunderstanding, and chaos can have fatal results. The title of “El hombre que se murió de un rumor” is not exaggeration: Rómulo’s death is due to misconceptions and fabrications.

77 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 67.
78 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 68.
79 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 69.
80 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 80.
The story begins with an ordinary scene: two neighbors help each other in the spirit of, “hoy por ti, mañana por mí.”\textsuperscript{81} Consuelo, who cares for her seriously ill husband Rómulo, needs to take her offering to the altar of the local Patron Saint, the \textit{Señor de las Miserías}. Knowing that her husband is not well enough to be left alone, she asks Antonia to sit with him. Before leaving, the aptly named Consuelo provides Antonia with advice regarding her husband: he has had trouble sleeping at night, so most likely he will sleep all day; if by chance he is hungry, there is soup already prepared; his lesions may appear gruesome, but they are non-contagious. The most important rule, however, is to not let him have any knives or scissors: Consuelo fears that, due to his dire situation, he may harm himself: “Luego le entra la desesperación y me da miedo que haga una barbaridá.”\textsuperscript{82}

The morning passes uneventfully until suddenly he appears and startles Antonia who had been concentrating on her sewing project. Frightened and confused by Antonia’s shout of surprise, “el enfermo, asustado, regresa a su cama y permanece allí quieto, tembloroso, a la defensa.”\textsuperscript{83}

Antonia, however, remembering only part of Consuelo’s admonition about hiding sharp implements, frantically searches for her scissors. When she cannot find them, she

\textsuperscript{81} Pacheco, \textit{Sopita de fideo} 84.
\textsuperscript{82} Pacheco, \textit{Sopita de fideo} 84.
\textsuperscript{83} Pacheco, \textit{Sopita de fideo} 84.
assumes that he has them and she creates a deadly scenario:
"Quería matarme con mis propias tijeras."\textsuperscript{84}

As other neighbors gather in the street to hear Antonia's false tale of assault, the facts diminish and the fabrications increase: he is insane, he tried to stab Antonia, he never sleeps, he has leprosy, he was abandoned by his wife, he was naked and tried to rape Antonia. From amid the cacophony one voice and one action are clear:

"En mi tierra, a los leprosos los quemamos. Y no sufren porque ya ni sienten. . ." Silencio total, miradas, cabezas que se inclinan. De entre la multitud sale un hombre con la hoja en llamas de un periódico. La casa está hecha de láminas y tablas que brillan en la mañana nublada.\textsuperscript{85}

That night, when Consuelo returns from her pilgrimage, she is stunned and sinks to her knees. Not able to give an explanation ("No sé qué decirte ni cómo pasó. De milagro me salvé de una desgracia tan grande"), Antonia suggests that Consuelo pray in order to ease her grief.\textsuperscript{86} As Antonia fishes in her pocket for her rosary, she feels the cold, hard blades of her scissors. Fire. Mob action. Lies. Assumptions. Scissors. Rumors. All are implicated in Rómulo's death.

"Objetos personales" also describes a senseless death. Celia has had to overcome many obstacles in her life: a

\textsuperscript{84} Pacheco, \textit{Sopita de fideo} 85.
\textsuperscript{85} Pacheco, \textit{Sopita de fideo} 85. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
\textsuperscript{86} Pacheco, \textit{Sopita de fideo} 86.
solitary and persecuted youth due to a deformed leg; her family's displeasure when she married José, a man who, "le ofrecía como única seguridad la certeza de que 'no soy nadie, pero al menos no le saco al trabajo. Me sé fajar;'") raising five children for whom she had to, "engañarle el hambre y conservar la esperanza."87

Her strength fails her, however, when she must come to terms with the fact that her husband José was brutally tortured and murdered for no apparent reason, "por error."88 She cannot imagine that her husband, their thirty years, has been reduced to nothing more than a plastic bag filled with, "chamarra, camisa, pantalón, calzoncillos, calcetines, un par de zapatos, una llave con cinta roja, varias monedas y un peine azul."89 The objectification of his life, and hers by extension, is tragic.

Housing, municipal services, displacement, employment, family situations. Statistically, according to Selby et al., these topics are the main concerns of contemporary Mexican families. And, indeed, I would add that these are international concerns. Yet, Selby et al.'s statistics are relatively meaningless as they have been separated from their signifiers. These concerns must be approached, appreciated, and understood through their own reality, from the people who live them. García Canclini refers to Manuel

87 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 27.
88 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 28.
89 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 27.
Castells' analysis of urban growth and summarizes that large metropolises have created anonymity. In her narrations Pacheco combats that anonymity: every real life situation is given a name, a body, an emotion. Reality, not data.

3.2 NARRATIVE STRATEGIES

With just these few examples of problems with housing, employment, and family survival, it might seem that there is indeed a "grayness," to use Selby's term, to the urban existence expressed in Sopita de fideo. Although I will not deny that these serious topics are constant in Pacheco's urban landscapes and "peoplescapes," it must be asserted that there is nothing "gray" about their representations. The term "gray" has two main connotations: one, the blended, neutral middle ground between black and white; two, a dismal atmosphere of dullness, cheerlessness. In terms of a metaphor for narrative discourse, the former would reflect a sense of homogeneity or uniformity of technique while the latter would express depressing uniformity of tone.

This is certainly not the case with Pacheco. Each particular example is developed with great detail, vivid imagery, individuality, and even, in some cases a near three-dimensional quality. Practically all texts are imbued with a sense of positive strength. This is accomplished via the multiple narrative strategies wielded by Pacheco. There

García Canclini, Culturas híbridas 265.
are three particular yet interlocking techniques that stand out for the reader: the pseudo-authentic language (that is, the representation of spoken registers), the personalization of the situations, and the urgency of the texts, which is referential to Jara's definition of testimonial narrative.

3.2.1 LANGUAGE

Obviously, language is the most central tool in the narratives. Following this traditional technique often associated with costumbrismo and realism, the representations of spoken registers of language in particular is quite dramatic. Common, everyday vernacular registers, vulgar terminology, and representations of dialogic speech are all components of oral language that can be found throughout all of Pacheco's texts as exemplified by Sopita de fideo.

Vernacular vocabulary, defined as terms of informal language and/or language identified with a particular region, is peppered throughout Pacheco's texts. Loreto, the narrator in "Un cabito de lápiz" serves as an example in that she repeatedly refers to the children of the elementary school as "escuincles" or "chamacos." Both are informal terms of Mexican Spanish used to refer to children in a way that connotes a sense of endearment. Her use of vernacular registers is further highlighted when she remembers her failure as a student. She recalls the words of her
elementary school teacher: “Es la segunda vez que te hago la prueba de lenguaje y ya vez me sales con lo mismo. . .”

She has been excluded from the use of proper formal language and therefore must, by default, use vernacular language.

Additionally, in “Darío y los camellos” the mother often expresses herself through a linguistic register considered to be typical of Mexican Spanish: the enclitic “le” attached to the imperative form of the verb. For example, after Darío has received his instructions on how to get to the tortilla shop, she sends him off on his errand by saying, “Órale, picale.” This structure connotes a sense of permission and implies the need for speed. Adopting his parents' linguistic markers, young Darío himself uses the term “hijole” as a means of expressing his surprise that he has been delayed so long by the camels and his need to return quickly to his home. Other commonly used terms or phrases, “charros,” “chamba,” “pos ni modo,” to name just a few, are also reiterated constantly.

Vulgar or off-color language is also used with frequency, most often in emotionally charged or volatile situations. Some of the most typical examples are, “cabrón,” “carajo,” “jodidona,” and “chingados.” All of

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91 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 10. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
92 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 12.
93 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 13.
94 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 32, 102, 11.
95 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 49, 32, 32, 59.
these terms relate to people or situations that are extremely difficult. As an alternative to using foul language, many of the protagonists use linguistic euphemisms. For example, the father in “La Estrella del Norte” substitutes “caray” for “carajo.” And, in “El don de la lluvia,” the young boy Anselmo, upon seeing and smelling the foul water flooding his home, says, “Fuchi, mamá, caca. . . .” Ironically, these are the first words that the boy has ever spoken.

Phrasings that approximate oral speech are also represented in Pacheco’s texts. These linguistic markers can exist as singular words, such as “l’agua,” “m’hijo,” “t’estorbo.” Or, several can be linked together in sentences: “¿No t’he dicho qu’es peligroso?” Often in oral speech, certain phonetic combinations, particularly in the case of consecutive vowel sounds, will be fused or coalesced together. As these examples illustrate, punctuation and spelling changes are used to represent this oral phenomenon. For example, “m’hijo” is very common oral combination of the two words “mi” and “hijo.” When these two words are uttered in consecutive order, and considering that the “h” in Spanish is silent, the two /i/ phonemes

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96 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 105.
97 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 99. The use of the ellipsis
98 Pacheco's.
99 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 11, 45, 77.

merge. In this manner, oral registers can be inserted into a print medium.

Pacheco also uses linguistically deictic terms in her narratives. A few examples are: “allí en la puerta,” “mientras estemos aquí,” “ai nos vemos mañana.”\(^{100}\) This type of word emphasizes the reality of the situation by referring to the spatial and temporal loci of narrative enunciation. Although the reader may not necessarily understand where or when the “there,” “here,” and “tomorrow” are, these sites are concrete for the protagonists. In his exploration of “spatial stories,” de Certeau summarizes C. Linde and W. Labov's analysis of oral descriptions of places and adds his theory that the main characteristic of this type of narrative discourse is that it entails “an action [that] permits one to see something.”\(^{101}\) Therefore, this technique both defines and “fills out” the narrative environment by providing additional detail and direction.

Although the aforementioned approximations to oral speech are fundamental in Sopita de fideo, dialogue is one of the most effective narrative strategies that Pacheco uses. In “Darío y los camellos” dialogue is used to reflect in detail the family’s early morning routines. These conversations replicate natural dialogue and are “common

\(^{100}\) Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 91, 103, 37.

\(^{101}\) De Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life 120.
places," filled with everyday details that are generally recognizable by everyone:

TERESA. Ay Rafa, no te vaya a dar pulmonía...  
RAFAEL. Pos ni modo, si me da, me dio... Ándale échame l'agua, pero trata de que...  
(El hombre no termina la frase: el agua fría le corta la respiración):  
Con un carajo, pero si está helada...  
TERESA. Ni modo de calentárla Rafa. Ya me queda re'bién poquito gas. Órale, sécate corriendo, no te vayas a enfermar. ¿Dónde dejaste la camisa?  
RAFAEL. Oh, yo sabré. ¿Ya está el desayuno?  
TERESA. No más faltan las tortillas...  

Although this particular dialogue is short and concerned with seemingly unimportant details, it is actually quite descriptive in terms of its subtext. For example, a caring husband and wife relationship is indicated by the wife's concern for her husband's health and her willingness to help him bathe. The family's precarious economic situation can also be construed: their house does not have a shower, as indicated by the fact that the husband must bathe with a bucket over a sink, and they need to carefully budget the use of the gas. By presenting such serious details mixed in with typical domestic chit-chat, the situation is made more verosimil.

"Objetos personales" provides another example of the uses of dialogue when conversation is used to reflect inexpressable emotion. When Celia receives a plastic bag

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102 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 11. The use of the ellipses is Pacheco's.
filled with her late husband's belongings, the grief for her detained, tortured, and murdered husband is echoed by her speech patterns. This narrative of profound despair is expressed through a conversation with her brother, a dialogue composed of unfinished sentences and unutterable thoughts:

CELIA. ¿Viste? La camisa está toda rota y tiene quemaduras. . .
RAFAEL. Sí, ya lo vi; ya no digas nada. . .
CELIA. Y esas, son manchas de sangre. . .
RAFAEL. Espérate, no sabemos. . .

The only way to articulate the horror and pain of the situation is by not expressing it verbally, by using ellipses.

"Mi tumba, mi casa" also presents a rich example for the examination of dialogue. The narration is constructed in the form of a dialogue in which the auditor of Domitila's conversation never speaks. Yet, the reader can follow from Domitila's responses exactly what is being done and what is being said (or not said) in the narrative space. For example, as she accommodates this man's presence in her basement home, she invites him to sit: "A ver, aquí puede sentarse. No tenga miedo, no se caye: la silla está bien pegadita a la pared." From her immediate reassurance that it is safe to sit in the indicated chair, it can be

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103 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 28. The use of the ellipses is Pacheco's.
104 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 91.
construed that when he saw where he was to sit, he was hesitant to do so.

The fact that Domitila is the only one that speaks is also significant in terms of the hegemonic/subaltern relationship between her and this visitor. The basement, literally and symbolically located “below” or “under,” is her domain and therefore, she has the power to express it and herself. He does not and cannot: he remains silent the entire time he is down there with her. Additionally, although he clearly represents the interests of the building owners and/or remodelers, he shows some reluctance or discomfort to be in the awkward position of having to evict a poor, lonely, elderly lady:

La gentileza de la mujer lo presiona tanto como el aire viciado que respira en la habitación. . . . Tiene miedo de compartir la penumbra con esa anciana. . . .Se obstina en ver la mancha oscura que ha quedado en el piso para no enfrentarse a la mirada húmeda de la anciana, que sigue hablando.105

By entering into her subterranean domain, he temporarily loses some of his authority.

Regardless of these vacillations, however, he is, ultimately, in a position of hegemonic power and authority over Domitila. This can even be seen in his actions. He interrupts Domitila's woeful commentary by abruptly standing up and preparing to leave: “El hombre tira el cigarro a

105 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 91, 92.
consumir y lo frota con la punta del zapato." These brusque and impolite actions (standing up suddenly, throwing the cigarette onto the floor of her home, and putting it out with his foot) are all indications of his disrespect of Domitila, his disregard for her basement home, and his dismissal of her situation: she did not even warrant the time it takes to smoke an entire cigarette.

The technique of having a dialogue with a silent receptor is also significant in that it manipulates the reader in two seemingly contradictory ways. First, the reader can assume a marginal position right along side of Domitila; thus, the reader can understand her conflict with this man who has come to evict her and can empathize with her anxiety and desperation. Simultaneously, however, the reader can also be placed into the more uncomfortable position of "being" this hegemonic invading presence.

This narrating subject's use of specific questions directed to this man heightens this sensation. This repositioning and questioning of the reader starts with the very first line of the text: "¿Ya llegó?" Although Domitila answers many of her own questions ("¿Usted creé que me quedé por mi gusto? No." and "¿Sabe cuánto están pidiendo, licenciado? Dos y hasta tres mil pesos."), there are only two questions that she cannot answer.

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106 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 92.
107 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 91.
108 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 92.
One is the only question that she directs specifically to herself: "¿Dónde vas a meterte?" The second is the very last line of the text and is aimed directly at her auditor: "Usté cré pueda mortificarme vivir un poco más abajito?" Since she cannot answer because she does not know where or how she will survive and since her visitor does not answer because he does not care, then it is the reader who must answer and who must care.

3.2.2 PEOPLESCAPES

The use of dialogue naturally leads to a discussion of narrating subjects. In his book Discerning the Subject, Paul Smith elaborates the concept of the subject and agency, particularly as relates to political resistance. He recognizes the historical development of many contradictory definitions of the subject and points to the necessity for heterogeneous understanding wherein the subject manifests itself through a, "narrative [that] is clearly involved in the construction of a particular kind of reality." He also points to the, "multiplicity of demands for differing and various subject-positions" that are demanded by a, "clear and cerned subject." The emphasis on activity, reality, and multiplicity is essential.

109 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 92.
110 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 93.
111 Paul Smith, Discerning the Subject (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1988) 97.
112 Paul Smith 108.
Additionally, and as referred to in the second chapter of this study, Sweeney addresses the issues of the narrating subject. To reiterate, she proposes that dialogic narration is an essential quality of women's contemporary fiction. She points out the fundamental contradiction involved in this type of narration: representing dialogue, and thus multiple narrators, can be viewed as expressing an author's reluctance to assume full authorial power while at the same time it can be interpreted as emphasizing the author's true authority.

Pacheco's supposed reluctance can be inferred from the fact that she "shares" her position as articulator with a large number of narrating subjects. However, her presence as an author, one who has carefully represented dialogue situations, is also perceived through her depiction of real-life veracity and vivacity. This is achieved through the development of peoplescapes: the personalization of the protagonists and their situations.

An examination of this technique, then, centers on the individualization of the narrating subjects, which begins with gender distinctions. In Sopita de fiedo, for example, of the twenty-eight texts that form the collection, a majority of them (nineteen) are structured around a cross-gender dialogue situation or a combination of dialogue and an omniscient gender-less narrating subjects. The remaining texts are told in a first person voice, although dialogue
may also be included. Of these, seven of the narrators are female while just two are male. This overwhelmingly strong female presence in terms of first-person narrators is diluted a bit in terms of principal protagonists: the majority of the main characters are still female, but the numbers are fairly evenly distributed among females (approximately thirty-seven) and males (approximately twenty-nine). Regardless of the statistics, the female presence remains strong.

Through this tendency, Pacheco is focusing on individuals, mostly lower-income females, and their situations, typically domestic circumstances. It must be noted that these individuals, and by extension these loci, generally have not been considered agents and sites worthy of enunciation. Alice T. Casque would consider this to be similar to oral testimony in that it provides, "rare introspective qualities" and "an intimate view of the life of an ordinary woman who had no unusual educational experiences and who did not change history in a traditional sense." By privileging them, then, Pacheco is validating their presence, views, experiences, histories.

Additionally important is that no two narrators, or protagonists for that matter, are similar: each has her or

his own personality. This is developed through names, nicknames, and personal habits.

A majority of the protagonists are named. Most are called by their given names (Catalina, Ciro, Aurora, Rebeca, Luz, Fidencio, Genaro, Lorenzo, Marina, etc.) or, alternately, by abbreviations of their given names which connote a sense of caring or relationship (Rafa for Rafael, Chelito for Consuelo, Lupe for Guadalupe).

In some of these cases an additional layer of signification can be inferred from the symbolic representation of a name. For example, the name “Consuelo” connotes a sense of care-giving or comfort. This is apropos in the case of Consuelo in “El hombre que se murió de un rumor.” She is not just Rómulo's wife, she is his nurse. Ironically, Consuelo herself seeks consolation at the altar of El Señor de las Miserias (The Lord of the Miseries), the Patron Saint of the town. But, her pilgrimage will have been made in vain for nothing can relieve her or comfort her regarding the arson-murder of her husband and the destruction of her home. Ironically, Consuelo will receive no “consuelo.”

Additionally, the name “Jerónimo” in “Jerónimo, el viejo” is telling. This name has two immediate referents, both of which are vital to the narrative. First, Saint Jerome (b. 340/342-d. 420) was a scholar of the early Catholic church. Since he is best known for a translation
of the Bible into Latin, he also symbolizes a dedication to erudition. But, in the title, the name is not followed by a description of scholarly learning, it is followed by "el viejo." As is developed in the text, the protagonist Jerónimo is not respected as a learned elder of the family, he is disrespected as just an old, worthless man. And, Saint Jerome's longevity, particularly in a time period in which most men died relatively young, connotes a position of honor and authority. This is certainly not the case developed in the text.

The name "Jerónimo" also remits to the Chiricahua Apache Indian warrior Geronimo, thus connoting a dichotomous sense of strength and bravery versus imprisonment and despair. Therefore, a conflict is first created in the title which contrasts the idea of strength with the idea of being elderly. As the narration continues, the character Jerónimo seems to depict nothing of the bravery and wit his name would indicate:

"Es domingo, ¿qué prisa tengo?" - Jerónimo hace la pregunta con un temblor en la voz. "Tengo miedo." El ojo sigue supurando; se acentúa la resequedad de su boca y el dolor que le baja del vientre hacia las piernas amoratadas, lentas, inútiles.

115 The Indian Goyalle (1829-1909), signifying "smart one," was nick-named Jerónimo (Geronimo in English) by the Mexican settlers he often fought against. He died of natural causes in Ft. Sill (Oklahoma) after having escaped, been recaptured, and imprisoned several times. It is important to note that he actually surrendered himself to the soldiers at Ft. Sill.
The situation progressively worsens as he begs to be allowed to remain with his daughter and her family. He pathetically offers to sacrifice everything in order to stay: he will sleep on the floor, he will not eat, he will not need new clothes, he will stay outside all day. He even points out that he will not be alive for too much longer. His pitiful pleading is of no avail for the decision has been made and the institution's representative has arrived at the door.

In contrast to his pleading, however, his last encounter with his selfish and hostile son-in-law is one of strength and pride. It is one in which Jerónimo regains his dignity and disparages his son-in-law:

RAFAEL. Por eso ¿qué tanto hacen? Ya llegó la maestra ¿qué n'oyeron? (Mira rápidamente a su suegro). Újule, otra vez chillando...
JERÓNIMO. (En cuanto oye estas palabras don Jerónimo se incorpora, adoptando una actitud heroica y dice): Ya voy, nomás l'estaba contando a m'hija cómo fusilaron los federales a mi hermano Chuy delante de mí. Parece qu'estoy oyendo la voz del infeliz que dio la orden: "Disparen, apunten, fuego." Chuy cayó, enterito como un hombre. A ver Marina, búscame mi calcetín...

The parallel between the narrating subject/his assassinated brother/the imprisoned Geronimo and the son-in-law/the
firing squad/the U.S. soldiers at Ft. Sill is unmistakable. The Indian Geronimo's last act as a “free” man was a deliberate surrender to his enemies; so too is Jerónimo's. This comparison and his final command to his daughter allow Jerónimo to regain his (moral) strength and dignity: he commands his own actions.

Just four protagonists are referred to by their full names: Carlos Campos, who is a disk-jockey heard on a radio that is “narrated” as background description (“La vuelta de 'El Tigre'”); Mike Kostas, who is an American house-husband married to a Mexican cabaret dancer (“El hombre del sombrero negro”); Marcial Herrera, who died in a construction accident in pre-narrative time (“Desde las alturas”); and, the only female to be fully named, Marcela Trujano, whose engraved headstone must speak for her (“El eco en el Río de Piedras”).

Only five protagonists, however, are referred to by their nicknames: “El Tigre,” “El Jairo,” “La Mujer de Blanco,” “La Nena,” and “La Estrella del Norte.” These last two examples are particularly interesting.

In “Las hojas muertas,” “La Nena,” named for being the youngest of five daughters, is the only named protagonist, even if it is with a nickname, that is alive in the story. The other protagonists, her mother and sisters, that are still living are unnamed while the five dead husbands are named. “La Nena's” concern throughout the narration is that
since she is the youngest, no one will be alive to remember her and mourn for her when she dies. Her conflict is resolved by the fact that her mother and sisters decide to mourn for her now while she is still alive. Therefore, she is "named" just like the five deceased husbands: her pseudo-death is paralleled by her naming.

"La Estrella del Norte," in the story of the same name, is the stage name for teenage Luis Mario. In contrast to his volatile and unsupportive family situation, he dreams of becoming a famous singer. Physically, he retreats to a nearby trash dump where he can "protegerse contra la violencia y las desilusiones;" mentally, he creates a future for himself in which "todos lo vean en 'Siempre en Domingo' y se inclinen ante el éxito y la fama de 'La Estrella del Norte.'"\(^{118}\)

His self-appointed nickname is doubly significant. The term "star" obviously refers to the fame and fortune he will garner from his singing career. And, in the realm of astronomy, the "North Star," also called Polaris during certain lengthy astronomical cycles, is known as the brightest and most readily visible stars to rise in the evening sky of the Northern Hemisphere. It symbolically represents guidance (because it is typically used by navigators) and attention (because it appears to be the

\(^{118}\) Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 107. The television show Pacheco refers to, "Siempre en Domingo," is an actual talent and variety program.
center around which other celestial bodies rotate). The guidance and attention connotated by this young protagonist's nickname are lacking in his real life. He has created such a future for himself in his dreams, which, ironically, he can only think about when he goes to the trash dump.

In contrast to the plethora of named characters, there is but one instance in which all of the protagonists of a single text are completely unnamed: "La última Navidad." This narration explains why one family's attitude toward the Christmas season in not one of joy and celebration but one of anguish and isolation. Due to the father's alcoholism and absenteeism, "nosotros, los cinco hermanos, perdimos para siempre la dicha navideña." Interestingly, the only proper names to appear in the text are related to the religious and secular holiday: the Virgin, Baby Jesus, and Santa Claus. The contrast that is formed between the naming of these icons and the absence of names for the protagonists highlights the protagonists' experience of emptiness and loss of faith.

In addition to the use of names or nicknames, protagonists are also individualized in terms of personal habits. These often small, insignificant details "flesh out" a character. In "El menor de la familia," Daniel describes his sister Rebeca through the minutiae that define

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119 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 89.
her. For example, he can barely contain his amusement upon seeing her in the morning: her eye make-up has created circles around her eyes and to Daniel she looks like a panda. He continues by describing her hair: "En la mata de cabello rubio-verdoso se hacen visibles los mechones negros que ella nunca logra teñirse bien." Any person that has been too tired to wash off cosmetics before sleeping or has tried to evenly color their hair will immediately commiserate with this woman. Such details are exceedingly individual yet humanizingly global.

A different type of idiosyncrasy is portrayed in "El cabito de lapiz." Loreto eases her anxiety by biting the end of the pencil she had found. Chewing on pens or pencils, gnawing on fingernails, twirling one's hair: these are all common, simple, and practically unconscious gestures that reflect unease.

Another example of these personalizing habits can be examined in "La cadena invisible." Frustrated by the responsibilities of being a single mother, Amalia bitterly remembers the precedence set by her own parents: first her father left the family and then her mother, too, abandoned her and her siblings. She articulates her anger by talking out loud to herself. But, when she is caught doing this, she is embarrassed and quickly apologizes to the maid who surprised her. Technically speaking, since the maid was

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120 Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 39.
actually the person invading Amalia's space and interrupting her auto-discourse, she should be apologizing. However, custom and/or culture dictate that conversing out loud with oneself, even in one's own space, is a shameful act. Therefore, Amalia's dissimulation is a natural reaction to which most everyone can relate.

Although certainly there is a high degree of individualization in terms of the protagonists, as expressed through their names and habits, locations and situations are also personalized. This applies, for example, to most of the houses described in the texts. Regardless of the size or the material of the physical building, the protagonists refer to the structures both as their "houses" and "homes," wherein the former term specifies the tangible building and the latter term conveys the intangible connotations (such as stability, protection, family, love, etc.). Although these dwellings may not reflect a physical resemblance of what the hegemonic perspective defines as a house, these structures are inscribed with the social and cultural meaning of house and home as a place for shelter and family, and therefore, they cannot be ignored.

"Tú, yo, la casa," for example, begins with the immediate aftermath of the destruction of a parachute community:

Las mujeres trabajan en grupos. Temen que quienes
The leaders raise more questions than answers in their discussions. While some men decide to give up and leave the settlement, others decide to take their situation to the local government. Although many of those that want their complaint to be resolved by the authorities still have their land purchase receipts, there is an overall tone of defeat.

Micaela, however, decides to resolve the situation through action: she begins to gather the bits and pieces that were once her dwelling, once her life. After affecting some sense of order amid the ruins, and ignoring her husband's comments that she is "loca" (crazy), Micaela requests a pencil:

La mujer sonríe y comienza a escribir. Al fin pone el cartón encima de los escombros y se sienta junto a ellos, mirando hacia la montaña. Joaquín lo lee, sonríe y sin decir nada se sienta a lado de su compañera.

"¿Qué dice? ¿Qué escribió Mica?" - preguntan todos al mismo tiempo. La línea se repite de boca en boca: "Aquí viven Joaquín y Micaela, Casa 8, Manzana 77."

Por la noche el campo está plagado de fogatas. Sobre los tumultos de escombros hay letreros y junto a ellos las familias esperan, con el amanecer, la justicia.
Micaela has named her site: others may consider it to be just a pile of rubble among partially demolished walls, but for Micaela it is her house, it is her home.

Symbolically, this is a parallel to Pacheco's role as author: Pacheco names and personalizes the protagonists just as the protagonists name and personalize their loci of enunciation. This is the textual site of stubborn resistance to which de Certeau refers, the forging of one's own identity, one's own expression (oral or written), one's own space.

Also notable in this example are the contrasts between the men and the women. The introduction immediately sets up the difference. The women, although fearful of retaliation from the authorities, are working, together in groups, to reclaim the items that constituted their lives. Meanwhile, the neighborhood's leaders, all men, discuss the viability of re-establishment. Since no unanimous conclusion can be reached, the men separate, each to his own future. Curiously enough, it is a woman, Micaela, who supplants the leaders' power and initiates the action to rebuild.

Certainly, the use of personalization is an effective strategy for discourse. Be it through the use of gender, personal names and habits, or naming of sites, a strong defense is created to combat what Pratt theorizes as the interchangeable quality of the subaltern.123

123 Pratt 52.
3.2.3 URGENCY

In combination with the use of realistic language, multiple narrating subjects, and personalization, Pacheco's texts are also infused with an urgency and an immediacy. This is particularly noticeable in the overall structure of the texts and will be discussed in terms of the titles, the dedications, the initial lines of the text, and finally the overall layout.

The titles to Pacheco's texts contribute a sense of immediacy in that they are generally very concise. Many of them seem to list everyday items, for example, "Un cabito de lapiz" and "Yo, tú, la casa." Also, "El hombre del sombrero negro," "Las flores muertas," and "Flores amarillas" seem to be more descriptive. Other titles reiterate common set phrases such as in "Frutas prohibidas" and "Las joyas de la familia."

The use of these easily recognized items and idiomatic expressions is varied. First, these titles create an immediate familiarity. The reader easily recognizes the items or phrases and therefore can approach the text with a degree of confidence. Quite often, however, this familiarity is manipulated because the reader will soon realize that the title refers to something far more significant than the mere referent: a pencil stub is not just a pencil stub, it is a reality, a tool against loneliness, a dream. These items are not just objects; they
reflect a profoundness of being. "Objetos personales" illustrates this well. After her husband is tragically tortured to his death for no apparent reason, his widow must reconcile herself to the fact that he has been symbolically reduced to a bag full of ordinary items: a shirt, a pair of pants, a comb, a few coins. The widow's difficulty is that these items are not just objects that once served a purpose, (to clothe the body, to straighten hair, to pay for the local bus), they are symbolic representations of the man who used them, a man who was killed by mistake.

The sense of irony in many of the titles also reflects the manipulation of the reader's expectations. "El don de la lluvia," for example, seems to be in direct contradiction to the story. The rainfall is seemingly not a welcome gift: it means having to rewash all the muddied clothes and having to live with a flooded, filthy house. However, as the story develops, the true gift is revealed: the young son finally utters his first delayed words.

In the title, "Lorenzo, el magnífico," an association with the famed Medici family connotes power, wealth, erudition, and the arts. However, the "Lorenzo" in this text is not a statesman, he is an elderly gardener.

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124 The Medici family's reign of power and wealth (1400-1700) in Italy and France was founded on the banking business. The one exception, however, was Lorenzo Medici, who governed Florence from 1469 to 1492. Nicknamed "El Magnífico," he preferred the company of scholars and artists to that of financial advisors and bankers.
Regardless of his profession, he is able to witness and help create miracles every day: a new sapling here, a blooming flower there. Although not formally educated nor of the affluent classes, he possesses an intimate knowledge of gardening and enjoys enormous natural wealth. His final, and fatal, act is the resiliency he displays against the disease that finally claims him.

A manipulation of perception can also be seen in the title "Cosas de mujeres." This discounting phrase seems to connote an attitude of belittlement, devaluation, or marginality: it is "just" a woman's thing, a thing of little power, little force, little seriousness. In a literal sense, the connection between the title and the setting of the story is somewhat logical. The narrative develops within an all female correctional facility, and so, indeed, it is a woman's thing. However, the magnitude of the fact that these female protagonists are in jail for having committed some sort of crime belittles them and their actions. Although a jail is indeed a marginal place, it is hardly a location, or a situation, that should be belittled.

Refusing to recognize the seriousness of a woman's action is also reflected in the case of the protagonist. Her violently criminal behavior was not the result of some sort of isolated "woman's thing," it was an act of defense that grew out of a situation in which three people were involved. Simply put, she is in jail for trying to help her
partner. Yet, he not only denies partial responsibility for his participation in the scenario but also refuses to even recognize her difficult situation and her sacrifice. He does not visit her, write her, or answer the phone when she calls him. Consuelo and her actions have been relegated to meaninglessness, nonexistence.

"Ecos en el Río de Piedras" is also a significant title. Although it seems to be just a description, it is reflective of the contradictions of the narrative text. The tangible Río de Piedras is quite literally a river of rocks because it only has water during the brief rainy season. Indeed, due to this quality, the protagonist uses the riverbed as a road. His footfalls resonate: "El eco me copiaba. Eso me gustó pensando, sobre todo, en la de veces que nadie me había contestado." In this way the title presents an echo that is converted to a conversation and a dry river that becomes a road: the definition and meaning of both items has been altered.

Finally, by including elements of everyday life in the titles, Pacheco is placing them in a position of power. Although all titles function in this way, the example of "Sopita de fideo" is particularly illustrative because it is not only the title of a story but also the title of the entire collection. Therefore, this humble food staple, this simple soup, of broth with pasta, this traditional dish that

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\[125\] Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 72.
is increasingly more important as economic situations worsen, is placed in a position of authority (the titles) and it is privileged within the discourse: it identifies and represents those who must depend upon it in order to survive. Monsiváis comments:

Lo cotidiano, negado o ignorado por muchísimo tiempo, es ahora con frecuencia el marco de la disidencia o la configuración de la alternativa, el terreno propicio donde el sujeto individual y los pequeños grupos ven con más claridad las funciones de la democracia en la sociedad global.  

The insistence with which Pacheco validates everyday items in the titles implies a need, or, once again, an urgency, to reconsider and re-value these items.

After the titles, the dedications are the entry point into the text. Aside from the dedication of the entire collection (to Pacheco's sister), only two texts have particular dedications. Both of these dedications include the full name of the persons thus honored. Although an exact relationship between the individuals mentioned and the texts themselves is difficult to ascertain, the technique of linking the real individuals in the dedication with the fictitious characters in the texts lends an additional dimension of reality to the protagonists and situations portrayed. In this manner, then, the urgency of the narrative is heightened.

126 Monsiváis, Entrada libre 14.
In addition to the titles and the dedications, the first few lines of Pacheco's texts are usually very powerful. More often than not the name of the main protagonist will be included within the first line of text, which immediately sets up the personalization of the protagonist. The effects of this individualization were discussed in the previous section.

Moreover, the beginnings of Pacheco's texts tend to be sense or perception oriented, particularly in terms of auditory and visual images. Dialogues and direct questions, which are linguistically oral registers, will often be included within the first few lines. These strategies incorporate the reader into the narrative. The reader can follow the conversation as if s/he were right there with the speakers. And, when a text begins with a question, the typical inclination is to answer it: these textual questions, directed to the reader, then need to be addressed by the reader. Both of these techniques are imbued with a sense of urgency because the reader is placed on the spot. When a reader joins a conversation in mid-context or when a question is immediately directed at the reader, then s/he is put at a disadvantage. To resolve this the reader must rapidly construct the context of those communications. Therefore, these techniques create an active reader/participant.
Other introductory techniques, such as “geographic” guided tours, also include and transport the reader directly to and through the physical or verbal cityscapes. For example, the introduction to “Las frutas prohibidas” is a sort of travel log through an urban landscape:

Nuestra calle en Tacuba no era modelo de urbanismo. No había casas con los muros enteros, ni pared sin cuarteadura, ni puerta en su sitio, ni ventana con los vidrios completos o relucientes.  

This immediate entry into the narrative scene is essential because through the visualization of this marginal neighborhood, it is recognized as existing: it is made tangible. If the reader can follow on this guided tour, if the reader can “see” this liminal site, then the reader must also be able to “see” and “hear” those who dwell there.

Finally, in terms of overall structure, Pacheco's stories tend to be relatively short; indeed, most are no longer than just a few pages. This allows immediate access to the nuclei, a fundamental characteristic of a journalistic style in which the major elements of a text (the who, what, when, where, and how) must be delineated clearly and quickly.

In spite of their short length most all of Pacheco's stories are subdivided. As explained earlier, the divisions in Sopita de fideo are marked by Roman numerals, subtitles,

127 Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 15.
or chronological time. These subsections seem to replicate
the brief passage of time, which again hints at the urgency
in these discourses.

The technique of dividing the sections by subtitles and
time is especially significant. "Darío y los camellos" is
divided into three sections, each divided by a subtitle.
The first section is marked by the title of the story; the
next division sports the subtitle "Darío en el desierto;"
and the third is indicated by "Historia de una injusticia."
These subtitles have an air of a serialized adventure
program: there are exotic references to camels and to
deserts as well as moral concerns of injustice. The end of
each subsection connotes a type of "cliff-hanger" episodic
ending which creates suspense and foreshadows the
(mis)adventure to come. There is an urgency conveyed in the
progression that increases from section to section.

There are also two examples of how time is used as a
section divider. Although the time frame is less than an
hour in "Sopita de fideo," it is no less significant. In
this text, military time, commonly used by civilians in
Mexico, is used to separate the sections: 13:00, 13:25, and
13:58. This chronological trajectory follows Josefina
through the execution of her mission: the delivery of lunch
to her father.

The first section details the preparation of the
family's meal. The wife functions like a drill sergeant who
must control several operations at once: she washes the dishes, supervises the youngest child, prepares lunch for the troops (her seven children) who will eat at home, packs the lunch for the general (her husband) who is at work, and debriefs her daughter as to the strategic route for her delivery.

The second section describes Josefina's trip through "enemy" lands wherein she needs to protect herself:

A la altura de "Las Cotorras," el estanquillo donde beben los golfos del barrio, la niña tiene que seguir por el arroyo: así evita el roce de las manos que se alargan; en cambio, no puede ser ajena a ciertas frases que la hacen sonrojarse. ¹²⁸

Regardless of her counter-maneuvers, her precious cargo, the *sopita de fideo*, is spilled all over the floor of the subway car: her mission is a failure.

In the third section, Josefina contemplates the consequences of her actions. She is aware of the limited rations, the scarcity of food, in the family. She knows that she will be "court marshaled," but all she can do is think of her father's hunger: "Temerosa de saber que un castigo severo la aguarda, lo que más le duele es pensar en que hoy no comerá su padre." ¹²⁹

In "El hombre que se murió de un rumor," Pacheco employs civilian time to designate the three subdivisions:

¹²⁸ Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 114.
¹²⁹ Pacheco, *Sopita de fideo* 115.
7 A.M., 11 A.M., and 7 P.M. These three time periods reflect the tripartite scheme of the plot: introduction, conflict, resolution. Nevertheless, they provide much more. They represent the accumulation of innuendo and misinformation that ultimately leads to Rómulo's murder.

Within a twelve-hour time span, an entire existence was destroyed, erased so to speak. Due to his disease, Rómulo could only express himself with "un gemido desgarrador."\(^{130}\) His subaltern communicative utterance (a groan) could not (or would not) be understood by the temporary care-taker; his unfortunate liminal circumstance (his disease) was unintelligible to the townsfolk. They, acting from a hegemonic position of power over him (the other) preferred to listen to, and more importantly create, fabrications. The implication is clear: if such chaotic forces guided by misunderstanding can wreck so much damage within half of a day, what could happen in an entire day? A week? A month? A year?

To continue, in addition to the aforementioned external markers of brevity, one notes that within the textual passages, urgency is sometimes demonstrated by the use of short, almost terse, sentences. For example, "Un cabito de lapiz," begins with:

\[\text{Condenados escuincles. Ora sí se pulieron. En vez de que me dejaran todo esto limpio, hicieron más batidero. En su casa sus madres no les permiten}\]

\(^{130}\) Pacheco, \textit{Sopita de fideo} 84.
In this passage, an accumulation of verbs can also be noted. Brevity, be it in terms of external length, accentuated by section subdivisions, or in terms of internal structure, reiterated through short, verb-driven sentences, connotes a sense of urgency. In these narratives, there is no time to be wasted in superfluous details. These discourses are immediate; these situations are urgent.

To summarize, through a close reading of texts, this chapter has dealt with Sopita de fideo, particularly as relates to Pacheco's choice of subject matter and narrative strategy and scene. Her subject matter is unequivocally centered on the cityscapes and the peoplescapes of the margins: a principally lower class and domestically urban scenario. In order to articulate such a subject, Pacheco has had to employ various complex narrative techniques, such as vernacular language, oral registers, dialog, questions, personalization through naming, and urgency.

The essays in Anxious Power reflect that there is a sense of anxiety of authorship that relates to women's exclusion from masculine, hegemonic discourse. One of the outcomes of this anxiety is that when women do finally express themselves, "they do so with profuse apologies and 

\footnote{Pacheco, Sopita de fideo 9.}
complicated strategies of indirection, substitution, and negation."\textsuperscript{132}

Although \textit{Sopita de fideo} makes no apology for the reality it conveys, Pacheco certainly uses complicated narrative strategies that serve to misdirect, substitute, and negate. Misdirection can be seen in the adaptation of a journalistic style that, since it is so easily accessible, often has the connotation of presenting a simple subject. In this case, however, nothing could be further from the truth.

The ideas of substitution and negation can be seen in the multiplicity of narrators: Pacheco's presence as author, controller, is partially negated and replaced with a myriad of voices. This phenomena relates to what Freedman presents as an "alternative feminist literary tradition [in which there is] a blending of voices, rhetorical purposes, and genres" that reflect the "female writer's ambivalence - her sense of being both self and other, both writer and reader, both powerful and anxious" and result in a narrative style "in which voices and genres combine without canceling each other out."\textsuperscript{133} Although the concept of an "alternative tradition" is somewhat paradoxical, the allusion to a new polyphonic genre supports the concept of a narrative hybrid.

\textsuperscript{132} Singley and Sweeney xv.
\textsuperscript{133} Singley and Sweeney xxv.
En el horror absoluto, frente a los teléfonos públicos se formaban largas colas de hombres y mujeres que marcaban inútilmente números que no dieron respuesta o cuando mucho dejaron escapar un grito, un llanto, una súplica; una frase terrible.

Cristina Pacheco

September 19, 1985. This is an infamous date in recent Mexican history for it refers to the earthquake that forever scarred Mexico City and its inhabitants (and indeed all of Mexico and the world). Cristina Pacheco's *Zona de desastre*, published in 1986, and her textual collaboration with the *Imágenes: Renovación Habitacional Popular* project, published in 1987, attempt to understand the far-reaching effects of *el temblor*.

Although these two texts exhibit a united focus, the earthquake, they also demonstrate Pacheco's unique narrative style. This will be analyzed first in reference to Pacheco's own text, *Zona de desastre*, and then afterward in
4.1 ZONES OF THE DISASTER

Zona de desastre is a collection of twenty-five articles written by Pacheco, during the post-earthquake time period from September 1985 to January 1986, and published in Mexico City newspapers such as Siempre, El Día, and La Jornada. All but three of the texts have subsections, from as few as two to as many as nine. All but one of these sections are set off by asterisks; the one which is not separated by asterisks uses both numerical divisions and brief subtitles. There is also one section which combines both of the aforementioned format styles: it is subdivided by asterisks, yet also uses lines of dialogue as pseudo-subtitles.

Regardless of the section markers, the textual divisions do not always necessarily indicate a thematic separation within the sections. At times the narratives are continuations. The sections as well as the section markers, then, function as a spatial reiteration of the breaks and movements caused by the earthquake.

As well, this style which demonstrates a combined format can also be perceived in the types of narrative strategies employed by Pacheco. Some of the texts are all Pacheco's comments and perceptions of the tragedy; some are
Pacheco's comments in tandem with blocks of testimonial quotes, anonymous or identified; some are clearly reiterations of Pacheco's interviews with the protagonists and follow a question and answer dialogue format; and, some texts are purely fictional manifestations of all of the previous styles. The Chilean author Luis Enrique Delano sums up this blending of literary and journalistic styles quite effectively:

> Al terminar uno de ellos me digo: Cristina Pacheco debe estar escribiendo una novela y este es un fragmento. Otras veces pienso que lo leído es un cuento de un libro que prepara. Y no falta "El Cuadrante" que da la idea de ser un hecho de la vida cotidiana que la autora hubiera "reporteado" o "cubierto", sacándole periodísticamente todo el jugo.

The uniqueness of Pacheco's technique is that all of these different "Pachecos" are often within the one text of *Zona de desastre*.

4.2 "TESTIMONIO DE LOS HECHOS"

Regardless of the style used in any one text, or, for that matter, the overall collection, what marks all of the them is Pacheco's guiding principle for the narratives. She explains in her introductory "Nota" to the collection: "Me empeñé, como tantos otros amigos y compañeros de la prensa

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mexicana, en dejar testimonio de los hechos.”

She views her role not just as an author or a passive witness but as an active collaborator: “Sobre todo mi propósito fue colaborar en recoger la voz de quienes más sufrieron con el desastre y siguen padeciendo sus consecuencias.” Indeed, her involvement is quite personal as she describes “esta angustia” and “mi desconcierto” that enveloped her and her writing, which “hice con dolor y con amor.”

Throughout these evocative narratives, however, one particular element remains constant: Pacheco's presence within or parallel to the narrative.

The use of the inclusionary first person plural “nosotros” (“we”) and the witnessing first person singular “yo” (“I”) is very powerful and is established immediately. Quite often in the texts, and as well in the preliminary “Nota,” the use of the plural verb form is introduced within the first few words of the first sentence: “Durante años transitamos”; “No dormimos tranquilos”; “El desastre que nos enseñó a reconsiderar.”

In “La búsqueda,” she even describes her relationship with the protagonists as one of more than mere professional interest or concern: “De todas las personas que vienen, una me obsesiona.”

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2 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 11.
3 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 11.
4 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 11, 25, 11.
5 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 13, 23, 41.
6 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 23.
begins with her observations of him over a period of a few weeks: she notices his daily habits, his clothing, his bag of papers. Although Pacheco uses the first person singular to emphasize that she is the witness, the general observations of him are expressed with the impersonal third person. The first person singular is again reiterated when one day she accidentally bumps into him on the street:

"Esta mañana, a la vuelta de la esquina, me tropecé con el hombre." Pacheco no longer just observes him: she has physical contact with him and they share a conversation. The man explains that his daily ritual is the search for his son and he shows Pacheco a photograph:

HOMBRE. Es mi hijo. (Comentó orgulloso sin apartar la mirada).
PACHECO. Su hijo es pasante de medicina, ¿qué edad tiene? (Pregunté).
HOMBRE. Veinticinco años cumplidos.
PACHECO. Esta foto es la de un niño. . . y usted busca a un joven. . .
HOMBRE. Sí, pero es él, es Marcos. Esta foto se la tomamos cuando iba en segundo de secundaria. . .

The man goes on to explain that his son, who survived the earthquake, left their house so that he could volunteer his services at the medical center. He never returned.

After their conversation, Pacheco continues with the use of the first person singular: "Le prometí que si veía a

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8 Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 25. The use of the ellipses is Pacheco's.
algún muchacho parecido a su hijo iba a llamarle al número que me dio.\textsuperscript{9} By the end of this text, Pacheco is not just a first person witness, she is committed to the man's mission.

Although she has returned to the use of the first person singular, her promise maintains the connection to her conversation. Her contact, the joining of two individuals into a shared dialogue, deepens her relationship with him. Nevertheless, her incomprehension of his infinite capacity for hope is noteworthy: "Me pregunto: ¿cuántas veces lo hará?, ¿cuándo perderá la esperanza?"\textsuperscript{10} This alignment of the author within her text and in solidarity with her protagonists injects a sense of authority and veracity into the texts. It is a reflection of both professional and private dedication, one that goes beyond mere reporting to personal involvement.

This authenticity is further cemented by the more journalistic texts which replicate or transcribe Pacheco's dialogs and interviews. She often relates the pragmatics and circumstances of the interviews. For example, in "Los hilos de la vida: las costureras," Pacheco she contextualizes her interview:

\begin{quote}
Días antes de que se organizara el sindicato "19 de Septiembre" que agrupa a más de cuarenta
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[9] Pacheco, \textit{Zona de desastre} 25.
\item[10] Pacheco, \textit{Zona de desastre} 25.
\end{footnotes}
mil trabajadoras tuve oportunidad de entrevistarme con un grupo de costureras.  

She also guides the reader through the interviews, especially when there are multiple narrators as in "Los lamentos de San Camilito." The various protagonists are not identified by name. However, throughout the text, Pacheco, includes phrases that provide general introductions of narrators and/or reflect the nature of this conversational situation. In this manner, the reader can follow the flow of the interview as if s/he were there with Pacheco listening intently to one person's comments and then becoming overwhelmed when all voice their opinions at the same time. The following phrases serve as examples: "Un miembro del mariachi 'Los pasajeros' pide la palabra"; "Saltan voces que describen fugazmente escenas pavorosas"; and, "Las mujeres insisten."  

Additionally, when one of the interviewees tells Pacheco to look at one of the other men, as an example of God's miracles, the author continues: "Todos nos volvemos hacia el hombre que, apoyado en su bastón, me muestra las cicatrices en su frente y el yeso que le inmoviliza el torso." Not only do Pacheco and all of the people present in the narrative space look to man, but consequently, so too does the reader.

11 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 42.
12 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 90, 92.
13 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 95.
As the example mentioned above indicates, many of the interviewees also refer specifically to Pacheco's presence. A variety of narrative markers are used, such as: “Como ve”; “Le digo así”; “¿Se da cuenta?”; “¿Lo quiere oír?”\(^\text{14}\) These markers not only legitimize Pacheco's presence, but they also serve to move or guide the interview conversation.

The text “Doña María de Jesús: cien años de soledad” also provides some interesting narrative circumstances. After interviewing several people who used to live in the same building, nick-named El Palacio Negro, Pacheco is referred to Doña María de Jesús, a woman who had lived there the longest and therefore knew the most: “Puede contarme muchas cosas porque tiene buena memoria y ánimo.”\(^\text{15}\) This type of reference contains a double authority: it introduces the next interviewee as a knowledgeable and truthful source and it also places Pacheco within the action as a participant, thereby validating her veracity.

Indeed, this particular exchange between Pacheco and Doña María is especially interesting in terms of a transfer of authority and voice. In the third subsection of the text Pacheco writes: “Su gesto de dolor desaparece cuando la invito a que conversemos acerca de su experiencia en El Palacio Negro.”\(^\text{16}\) This passage expresses the impetus and the arrangement of the interview: Pacheco, using a first

\(^{14}\) Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 91, 91, 94, 96.

\(^{15}\) Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 69.

\(^{16}\) Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 70.
person singular verb ("invito"), asks Doña María to relate her life in the building. Pacheco is the one who is guiding the interview.

Yet, a few lines later, the next section begins with: "Doña María de Jesús me invita a que conversemos en el quicio de la vivienda número 74, que habitó desde 1950 y ahora permanece cerrada."\(^{17}\) The roles of interviewer and interviewee have been reversed. Doña María now converts Pacheco into a participant and directs her to the location of their dialogue. From "yo la invito" to "ella me invita" a tranference of power and authority has taken place. Doña María is now firmly established as the valid authority of her own voice and is directing Pacheco.

In fact, at times Pacheco is placed into an even more participatory position by her interviewees. Toward the end of this same interview, Doña María tells Pacheco:

> Otro día, si viene, platicamos de nuevo y si de casualidad oye por allí qué piensan hacer con nosotros, a dónde piensan mandarnos, venga y díganoslo... \(^{18}\)

The interviewee-protagonist is not only granting Pacheco the opportunity for another audience but, and more importantly, she is giving Pacheco a task to perform, which thereby includes her within this particular group of protagonists.

\(^{17}\) Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 70.  
\(^{18}\) Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 77. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
This implies that Pacheco's involvement does not end with the termination of the interview: it continues beyond the interview space and time until the task has been performed.

In "Entre Dios munca muere y Viva mi desgracia," Antonio López Vásquez, a hurdy-gurdy street musician in the city and a farmer in the country, functions in the same manner as Doña María de Jesús. After Pacheco includes a brief history of how she met him, she states how he designated the details of the interview:

Don Antonio López accedió a que conversáramos "muy tempranito, por favor, porque yo tengo que empezar mi trabajo desde en la mañana si no, ya no saco casi nada de ganancia."  

He is clearly in charge of the interview, as evidenced by his action of designating the dialogue space on the roof; and, he refuses to relinquish his power, as inferred by the fact that he declines offers to help him up the stairs to the roof, even though he is struggling to carry the forty-five pound musical cylinder up there. Not only do these examples show his priority (he is more concerned about his job than talking to a journalist), but it also initiates the long description of his dedication to his work and the honor and pride it provides him (as seen initially in the way that he is protective of his cylinder). Furthermore, just as he is the one who put limitations on the beginning of the

19 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 126.
interview, he is also the one to end the conversation: "Y ahora, si me permite, me voy detrás de los centavitos. . .".\(^{20}\)

It is interesting to note, as well, that within this particular text/interview, there are two distinct purposes in operation. Pacheco's impetus for speaking with Don Antonio is made clear through her emphasis on the street musician as a cultural icon: an artist who represents, reflects, and is life in Mexico City. Pacheco's questions reiterate this focus and guide the conversation.

Nevertheless, Don Antonio does not begin the interview until he states his own reasons for talking with Pacheco:

\[ Y \text{ si de casualidad alguna de las personas que me han favorecido lee esto que usted escribe, quisiera decirle una cosa: que se sientan satisfechos de haberme ayudado porque ni un solo centavo de cuantos me han obsequiado ha ido a parar la cantina o a cosas peores. . .} \] \(^{21}\)

It is clear that he has chosen to speak to Pacheco for his own purposes. He wants to establish his profession as one of honor and to thank and reassure his public of his motives. Pacheco's (and her text's) task is to spread this message, his message.

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\(^{20}\) Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 133. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.

\(^{21}\) Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 126. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
4.3 ARTICULATIONS

Although Pacheco's presence is clearly observed in the interview-style texts, her efforts as author can also be seen in the fictionalized stories. The most provocative and evocative literary strategies employed by Pacheco are the use of ellipses, the use of data, and the use of repetition and/or descriptive accumulations as narrative devices.

4.3.1 ELLIPSES

Pacheco uses ellipses quite prevalently throughout the entire collection, as can be seen in many of the textual examples already cited and analyzed within this chapter. Ellipses are used in Pacheco's narrations, in the interview texts, and in the fictionalized accounts. The effects of the ellipses are varied. In terms of definition, the use of their sign of "..." refers to the omission of further detail. This omission is particularly appropriate in relation to the horrendous effects of the earthquake. Frequently, many of the narrators, including Pacheco herself, cannot completely describe the effects of the earthquake because mere words cannot encompass the magnitude of the experience and the narrating subjects cannot entirely voice their reactions or emotions because these are too painful to verbalize. Verbalization means recognition; recognition means acceptance; acceptance is, as yet, still too painful.
Even if the narrator cannot utter the words that follow, the reader, through the use of the ellipsis, can make the logical transition to the inevitable, and its inevitably sorrowful, conclusion. For example, in the previously discussed “La búsqueda,” Pacheco describes her encounter with one man who repeatedly goes to the same site searching for his son. Even after countless days that turn too quickly into weeks, he continues his quest and his comments vacillate between unrelenting reality and unsubstantiated hope: “Me vine acá porque pensé que al mejor nunca salió del edificio este...; A lo mejor alguien lo ha visto...” The man shares with Pacheco the self-deluded reassurances that his wife surely repeats to him each evening when he still has not found his son:

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\text{Dios es justo y no paga mal por bien. Sabe que Marcos se ofreció de voluntario para salvar a otros, ¿por qué habría de llevarse? No, Marcos está vivo. Si no ha vuelto a casa será porque anda muy ocupado, con tantísimos heridos...} \]

All of these narrating subjects, and the reader as well, understand intellectually that most likely the missing son is dead, caught in the rubble of the building he entered trying to save people; yet, no one wants to understand this emotionally. Therefore, the truth is left unsaid; it is

\[\text{Pacheco, Zona de desastre 25. The use of the ellipses is Pacheco's.}\]

\[\text{Pacheco, Zona de desastre 24. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.}\]
only hinted at through the use of ellipsis. It is a suspicion, however, that is made all the more sorrowful because of its unutterable and inexpressible pain.

The use of ellipsis can also represent natural pauses in the narratives. Such pauses occur when the speaker stops momentarily to gather and to organize her/his thoughts before continuing with her/his comments. This can be observed in "Los lamentos de San Camilito" when one of the mariachi musicians recounts his experiences in the emergency shelter: "Pensarían que como somos pobres estamos impuestos a comer mal. . . Otro problema era el baño. . . Al fin acabaron por negarnos hasta las toallas." In this case, the ellipses have a multiple function. They allow him time to add to his list of complaints, they create a connection or relation between his points, and, by omission, they refer to all of the other details, probably graphic, that he is not mentioning. This multiple function creates an even more powerful impact.

Moreover, the ellipses invite the reader to imagine the innumerable other stories that are not being told in this collection. They remit to the other voices that desired to be heard, but never will be: "Hay miles de atrapados entre los escombros. . . ."  

24 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 91. The use of the ellipses is Pacheco's.  
25 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 14. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
Indeed, because of the prominent use of ellipses, one can observe how they function within the collection as a tool to connect one text to another. Ellipses are used within a chapter as well as at the ends of each chapter in order to link Zona de desastre's many subsections.

For instance, "Falta de asistencia," relates one family's struggle to understand the loss of one of their sons. The mother, in particular, cannot reconcile herself to his death. She attempts to continue with the typical morning routine of making sure that Luis washed behind his ears, of scolding Ricardo for having lost a compass, of preparing "brown-bag" lunches for her sons to eat at school. But, ultimately, each task that she performs mechanically reminds her of her dead son:

La mujer inclina la cabeza para que Luis y Ernesto no la vean llorar; se muerde los labios pero no logra impedir que toda su pena se exprese en una frase tonta: De ahora en adelante la maestra le pondrá a mi Pablito falta de asistencia... 

Ernesto, now her oldest son, comforts her: "Cuando pasen lista y digan Hernández Olvera Pablo yo voy a contestar: Presente, maestra..."27

These two fragments end each of the last two paragraphs of the last subsection of the text. The next text, "Los Pacheco, Zona de desastre 39. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's. 26 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 39. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's. 27
hilos de la vida: las costureras," begins with: "El desastre que nos enseñó a reconsiderar el valor de las cosas cotidianas - una manta, un vaso de agua limpia, el fuego en la estufa." The ellipsis at the end of the story leads into the thematic of the next. The connection between the two texts is clear: the loss of a son and the loss of the seamstresses are both disasters. These texts, as well as all of Pacheco's works, signal that life is the most valuable thing in existence. All too often, however, it is often unappreciated until it has been irrevocably changed.

Although not all the ellipsis connections between the subsections and the chapter texts may be as clear as this link, the sense of continuation and metareference between all texts is implicit. Therefore, the collection, too, is an example of unity and solidarity. And, through this solidarity, the ellipses echo the myriad of unheard voices, unspoken stories, and unknown lives that are present, although not directly articulated.

4.3.2 DATA

Aside from the prominent use of the ellipsis, Pacheco also uses empirical data to strengthen her texts. In part, this is a characteristic of journalism, to report the facts; yet, in Zona de desastre, communicative data is used to create a narrative ambiance.

Pacheco, Zona de desastre 41.
The use of calendar dates and exact times is essential. The first narrative text of the collection, “Jueves 19 de septiembre,” obviously starts with the date of the earthquake: ground zero for the disaster and its aftermath. This initial text, then, is organized by the use of chronological dates and times following the earthquake: “La mañana del jueves”; “Los minutos posteriores”; “A las pocas horas”; “Treinta y seis horas después - el viernes por la noche”; “Es ya la mañana del lunes 23.” With each advancing, and unstoppable, date and time, more information is given: it is an accumulation of detail that mirrors the accumulation of rubble.

This forward momentum screeches to halt, however. The final date mentioned in this text, Monday, September 23, is repeated several times in the last subsections and pages. This date carries with it horribly devastating statistics: “Hasta el momento son 2282 los muertos, 5282 los rescatados, 175 los edificios que cayeron y 57 los que hallan a punto de caer.”

After such disturbing information, dates and times in this text are distorted and repeated. The order of the chronological system within the texts has been lost, just as in Mexico City itself, order has succumbed to chaos. The landmark clock on the Torre Latinoamericana displaying the

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29 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 13, 14, 15, 16.  
30 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 18.
current time, 2:46:48, is in direct conflict with the other local clocks that stopped at 7:25, a short time after the catastrophe.

That day, and that time, is relived again in the next section: “El jueves 19 de septiembre a las 7:19 de la mañana”; “A las 7:23 cayó el Hotel Regis”; “A las 7:36 fuego era ya incontrolable en el Regis.” Then, another jump in time occurs, placing the date of writing of this chapter on Monday, September 23, 1985. Thus, through the distorted repetition of the dates and the times immediately following the earthquake, this initial chapter vividly represents the chaos of the quake.

However, if this initial text imitates the first confused responses to the disaster, other texts, replaced subsequently in the collection, use time and data to organize. This reiterates the situation that, in the initial moments of the disaster, all is chaos; yet, with passing time and retrospective analysis, that chaos and confusion can be organized.

For example, “La ceniza del Regis,” the twenty-second chapter in the collection, details the events of November 24, 1985. On this date, the remains of the Hotel Regis were demolished. The hotel was once a site of eminence:  

El prestigio de los años revolucionarios, cuando los generales tramaban aquí en Regis la toma del poder y llegaban a hospedarse Caruso y Valle Inclán, Ana Pavlova y Blasco Ibáñez; la

31 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 19.
magia de los treintas y cuarentas cuando se reunian aqui actores, pelotaris, estrellas, periodistas, mujeres de la vida galante.

Now it is a site for an army of workers from, "Teléfonos de México, la Compañía de Luz y Fuera del Centro, la SEDUE, la dirección de Operaciones Hidráulicas del DDF." Logistical and technical details abound in the first few sections of the text: the cordoning off of the area on November 23, 1985; the arrival of the emergency vehicles; the statistics of the estimated weight of the rubble; the exact amount and the precise placement of the explosives; the composition of the crowd that has gathered to watch the spectacle.

The clock of the Torre Latinoamericana is referred to for guidance as the final minutes to the explosion are counted down:

7:23:01; 7:23:02. . .La multitud convierte su impaciencia en gritos aislados, en aplausos, en silbidos. ( . . .)
10:23:28. Se escucha un claxon. . . .Los espectadores se miran entre sí, ansiosos de cifrar lo que parece una señal. ( . . .)
10:29:59; 10:30:00. Con intervalso de un segundo se escuchan cuatro golpes de claxon y una pregunta que ya no requiere de respuesta: "¿Qué pasará. . .?"

The sparks fly, the noise is deafening, the dust cloud spreads out and covers the crowd. Then:

32 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 19.
33 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 117.
34 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 120-121. With the exception of the ones in parentheses, the use of the ellipses is Pacheco's.
10:39:59; 10:39:60. . .La nube de polvo empieza a disolverse. (. . .)
11:11:23. A esas horas, sólo un reducido grupo de curiosos permanece junto a la zona acordonada para ver las maniobras de las tres máquinas Caterpillar que trituran la piedra. (. . .)
11:20:59. . .En los últimos minutos de la mañana todo es agitación en la Alameda. 35

In a little less than the four hours of the demolition, a building that represented a significant era in the history of Mexico has been eradicated; in a little more than the two minutes of the earthquake, a countless number of people that were in Mexico City were vaporized.

Regardless of how chaotic or evocative the way time is used in individual texts, it does indeed lend an organization to the entire collection. The first chapter of Zona de desastre begins recounting from the date and time of the earthquake: Thursday, September 19, 1985, 7:19, and ends five days later, Monday, September 23. Chapter thirteen positions itself several weeks later: “Cuatro semanas nos separan del horror que vivimos el 19 de septiembre.” 36

“Monte de piedad,” the twentieth chapter, is situated two months after the earthquake. Indeed, it has been two months since the father of the protagonist's child abandoned them, two months since he worked, two months since he

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35 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 122-123. With the exception of the ones in parentheses, the use of the ellipses is Pacheco's.
36 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 67.
brought them money, two months since the earthquake. This is a point that the narrator cannot utter, relinquishing power again to the ellipsis: “No nos has traído un solo centavo desde hace dos meses. . .”37 Continuing, the twenty-second text, “Las cenizas del Regis,” relates the activities of November 24, 1985.

And, finally, “El fin de la espera,” the twenty-fifth and last chapter, reports that it is now one-hundred days after the earthquake. One woman has continually insisted and persisted outside the rubble where her husband perished. She has remained there in spite of the often repeated rebuffs:

Estuvo allí día y noche, firme, indoblegable, asegurando que no si iba a mover hasta que no recuperara el cuerpo de su esposo. Le decían: “¿Ya para qué?” “Imposible que siga vivo.” “A estas horas estará completamente deshecho.”38

Finally, though, she recovers the body of her husband.

Using counting with a mathematical and calendrical emphasis anchors the text into historical time; thus, the text's veracity is augmented. As well, it demonstrates the processes of dealing with the disaster (from crisis to normalcy) and it points toward the future, both of which are points that will be developed later. Yet, it is also noteworthy in that, regardless of the amount of time that

37 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 111. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
38 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 140.
has passed, the disaster is still powerful. For example, in “Monte de piedad” the protagonist still cannot utter the word earthquake: her statements trail off into infinity with an ellipsis. It is an unspoken reference to the horror from which she has not yet recuperated.

The disaster's power is also shown in that the date of the earthquake is the date from which all is now referenced: this date has become an historical benchmark. Two time periods exist: before September 19, 1985 and after September 19, 1985. Indeed, in “Las cenizas del Regis,” the point is made that watching the demolition will become a part of family legend that will be passed from one generation to the next. A parent comforts a child:

Ahorita no te das cuenta, pero imagínate que cuando seas grande podrás platicarles a tus hijos o a tus nietos que estuviste aquí el día que desapareció el Hotel Regis. . . Contando la historia de esta mañana vas a entretener a los niños como tu abuelito contaba que vio la entrada del señor Madero. . .

The child's forward-thinking response is to ask what will be built in the vacant space left behind. However, the near-by elderly couple's reaction shows a different reaction:

Al oírlo una pareja de ancianos intercambia miradas, sonríe, se toma de las manos y se aleja al sitio más apartado. Desde allí mirarán la explosión que de algún modo marca el fin su pasado y ya no les ofrece un futuro.

Pacheco, Zona de desastre 119. The use of the ellipses is Pacheco's.
Pacheco, Zona de desastre 120.
The older generation looks to the Hotel Regis as a passing of a time period, of their time period, while the young child considers not what was lost, but what will come.

4.3.3 DETAILS

Regardless of the evocative dependence on and reiteration of empirical statistics and chronological time, these strategies cannot mask the human toll of the earthquake. Data may serve as a narrative technique to replicate chaos or to organize discourse; yet, it never supplants the human element. Indeed, this concept can be elaborated to include the idea that the insistence on the use of abundant detail heightens the human drama of this event paradoxically in comparison with the utter lack of detail of the human element. In “La ceniza del Regis” specific information is given about the logistics of the demolition of the hotel; yet, no mention is made of the human tragedy that took place in the hotel. This description, the reference to the people, is made obvious by its absence: it remains inexpressible.

This particular text serves as an additional example in that the precision and the specificity given to the technical aspects of the explosion are a transference or a substitution mechanism for the lack of precision and the lack of specificity, in other words the chaos, of the
earthquake. The empirical explanation in this text reflects power: the power to describe.

Yet, only the scientific and the inanimate elements can be described in this text. The demolition of the hotel is a planned and controlled action. The details of the text are quite clear about this: advanced notice was given in the area to advise local residents of the demolition, the area is secured and supervised, statistical data is supplied about the operation, emergency vehicles and medical specialists are on-call just in case. The demolition of the empty ruins is a planned explosion in which no human life will be lost; therefore, it can easily be described and understood.

A powerful contrast is formed between this supervised demolition and the uncontrollable "seismic demolition." The earthquake was an unpredictable and ungovernable force which resulted in incalculable human suffering and loss, which cannot easily be described or understood.

4.3.4 REITERATION

The repetition of certain phrases is another salient discursive feature. In contrast to the use of ellipses and data as narrative strategies to express the inexpressible, the use of repetition emphasizes its communicative message. For example, "La prisionera" relates how the inhuman
conditions of one young girl, Jesusa, were exposed because of the earthquake.

Originally from Oaxaca, she was brought to Mexico City and the home of Ana Luisa and Sixto so that she could go to school and learn to speak Spanish. However, that was not to be her fate because for three years these people over-worked her, abused her, beat her, and tied her with chains to a metal post in the outside patio. The summation of her situation is emphasized by the repetition of the word “yellow” in the following passage, in which the connotations of this normally warm, cheerful, and inviting color are altered:

Los ojos de Ana Luisa, llenos de amor a la vista del mundo, implacables y fiers en la soledad de su casa amarilla: amarilla como la flama con que daña la carne de Jesusa, que pide misericordia en su idioma; amarilla como el lazo con que marca su espalda, ya doblegada por el trabajo excesivo; amarilla como la fiebre que se incuba en las heridas de la cautiva; amarilla como la fiebre, como el vómito, como la flor que Jesusa mira y codicia desde su prisión.  

The progression of “yellow” is strong: from an outside view of a seemingly nice, brightly painted house to Ana Luisa’s inner madness which manifested itself through the physical assaults on Jesusa. Yet, Jesusa, regardless of the inhuman conditions in which she was forced to live, remained strong and focused her vision outward once more, to the beauty of

\[\text{Pacheco, } \textit{Zona de desastre} \text{ 98.}\]
nature's flower. This outward hope, together with the earthquake, saved her. Ironically, Ana Luisa and Sixto were killed by the falling yellow walls while Jesusa was safely chained outside in the patio, with her yellow flower.

"Pentagrama," another text with well-crafted repetition, presents the history of five young sisters whose family has been killed in the disaster. Throughout the seven subsections many different phrases are repeated.

First, the reference to five in the title is reiterated in the first subsection which begins: "Cinco vocales, cinco notas, cinco nombres, cinco nosotras, cinco sombras, cinco niñas tan distintas y tan parecidas como pueden serlo cinco hermanas." Later, when their history of surviving the earthquake is related, their actions are described as:

Calladitas, muy juntas una de otra, los miraban; calladitas, muy juntas una de otra, asistieron al entierro que fue rapidísimo; calladitas volvieron aquí y, muy juntas, esperan.

The youngest girl sits in a corner and draws lines in the dirt: "Cárcel de soledad, cárcel de miedo, cárcel de no poder decir lo que siente." And, again in the last subdivision, which partially repeats the first, the number five is the motif:

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44 Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 114.
Cinco vocales, cinco nombres, cinco rostros, cinco sombras, cinco notas para cantar la historia de esas niñas perdidas en la ciudad atestada y desierta para ellas; cinco pequeñas compañías que concentran toda la soledad; cinco silencios que son todas las voces que nadie quiso oír, que se ahogaron para siempre en la explosión que destrozó los restos de los restos de los restos: pero no a cinco niñas.

The constant reiteration heightens the sense of loss and confusion for these girls, which in turn echoes the loss and confusion for many others bereft of their families because of the earthquake. The progression of the five in this last excerpt does not imply a positive ending like in “La prisionera;” rather, it is a process of reduction, erasure, and death. The image of the girls starts with identity: voices, names, faces, shadows (and by inference the bodies to cast them). But then, they are overcome by loneliness, by being alone, by silence, by death: death, which cruelly has left them physically untouched, but has marked them nevertheless.

The repetition of “no” in the first text of the collection, “Jueves 19 de septiembre,” is also evocative. Pacheco includes a continuous series of negating sentences, presumably from a variety of different conversations. All of these sentences are marked by quotation marks and all beginning with negativity:

“No veo al velador”, “No está el muchacho del estacionamiento”, “No encuentro al vigilante”,

Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 115.
"No aparece el portero de noche", "La sirvienta no responde", "Todavía no sale la chamaquita que viene a ayudarme tres veces por semana."46

These six instances of missing people, through the accumulation of the word "no," refer to and include all of the people who have so suddenly and tragically disappeared.

These missing presences are also conveyed in this text through a poetic anaphora-like repetition: the reiteration of "ya no" ("never again") and of "ni" ("nor"): Ya no ocupan su escaso tiempo libre en ver la televisión, ni escuchar radio; ya no leen novelitas de amor, ya no miran los periódicos deportivos, ya no piensan en los pronósticos ni en la lotería, ya no quieren encontrar el número de la suerte. Tampoco vigilan, ni sirven, ni cosen, ni tallan, ni pulen: ya no existen.

These people will never be able to see again, they will never be seen again, they will never relax again, they will never work again; they are not.

Just as the build-up of these "no," "ya no," and "ni" structures conveys more than just the semantic meaning of the sentence, the use of an accumulation of verbs, as seen above, transmits more than sheer action. These verbs have lost their defining category: they are action-less because those that would use them have perished.

46 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 14.
47 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 14-15.
This is also exemplified in "El fin de la espera," where Amalia, the protagonist in this narrative, has diligently waited one-hundred days for the body of her husband to be recovered. The verbs employed to describe this scene connote the rescuers' poignant discovery. When the moment is near, the wife does not need to be told that the rescuers have finally found his body: their body movements and physical actions relay this sad message to her:

Lo sabe por la forma en que los hombres quedan pentinamente inmóviles sobre los montones de escombros, por la manera en que alargan el cuello y se inclinan hacia la profundidad donde trabajan los rescatistas voluntarios, por el abandono con que dejan caer los brazos, por el silencio que guardan, por la quietud de las manos.

Their body movements and their actions convey what mere words cannot: the loss, the suffering, the pain.

As this passage continues, the accumulation of verbs is even stronger because the use of other words that are nonverbs has been practically eliminated: "(Las manos) se agitaron, golpearon, movieron, escarbaron entre los nudos de piedra y varilla que apresaron, rompieron, asfixiaron, sepultaron el cuerpo de Manuel." The agent of these verbs, however, changes during the development of the sentence. The first few verbs respond to the actions of the

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48 Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 139.
49 Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 139.
rescuers and their desperate efforts; but, mid-list, the subject is transformed. The subject is now the rocks, the debris, the girders. Although inanimate objects, they, too, are now agents and they are fatally powerful.

Nevertheless, with every additional verb, the image of the buried Manuel is made clearer. The reader can imagine him as the agent and subject of every verb in the list. His last moments are inferred through the verbs: his efforts to dig himself out, clawing, pushing, grabbing with his hands to remove the rubble. And one can see, too, how Manuel, his hands, his body, his spirit, was finally squeezed, broken, smothered, until he no longer lived.

Therefore, through this insistence on the verbs, a much more forceful image can be portrayed. Pacheco, by imbuing the narrative with this listing of verbs, permits and provokes the reader to surmise and develop further the semantic connections. On its own, each verb, by definition, is an active one; collectively, and uninterrupted by other lexical items, they become even more powerful. This accumulation of verbs also replicates the accumulation of rubble. The verbs attack the reader, overwhelm the reader, and cover the reader, just as Manuel and countless others, were assaulted, asphyxiated, and buried.
4.4 THE DAYDREAM

Undeniably, Pacheco uses various discursive styles, voices, and techniques to convey her narrative representations. Yet, what is the essence that she so painstakingly portrays in Zona de desastre? Obviously, and based on the previous sections and the textual examples, it is the human aftershocks to the 1985 earthquake. This disaster, however, cannot be entirely blamed on capricious natural forces. There were many man-made factors that intensified the scope of the devastation.

Mexico City is undeniably an enormous, precariously situated metropolis, nay, megalopolis. According to journalist and author Elena Poniatowska, in 1985 the population was estimated to number between eighteen and twenty million inhabitants; the very center of the city measured approximately six-hundred square kilometers.50

The presence of a such a dense population concentrated in a relatively limited area is definitely an issue. To the large population size and the enormous metropolitan area, add the knowledge that the city was built over an unstable lake bed: the issue becomes a concern.

To the population size, the city size, and the unstable foundation, add the factor that, due to increased population, the remaining underground aquifers had been

50 Elena Poniatowska, Nada, nadie: las voces del temblor (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1988) 11, 80A.
drained (and are being so even today) at an alarming rate, thus increasing instability: the concern becomes a problem.

Once again, to the population and city size, the unsound foundation, and the loss of aquifer stability, add the fact that the central area of Mexico lies along some of the most active earthquake fault lines in the world: the problem becomes a reality.

Moreover, many other factors, of which the following are only a sampling, must be included in this formula for catastrophe: unusually dense pockets of urban occupation, especially by the lower classes; underdevelopment of urban infrastructure; neglect of secure and safe building maintenance; lack of enforced construction codes; emergency plans grossly inadequate for major catastrophe; etc. The reality becomes a disaster, a cruel disaster. This formula, unfortunately still applicable in many ways today, is precise in its calculation for mass destruction; however, the disaster's effects can never truly be conveyed or calculated.

4.5 THE NIGHTMARE

In order to understand the human dimensions of this earthquake, some description of the over-all disaster must be included. However, even Pacheco realizes that no words can ever truly capture the horror, the panic, the chaos. She refers to the earthquake as, "una tragedia inabarcable,"

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"el desastre," "la catástrofe," "el sufrimiento inexpresable," and "el horror absoluto." Although these phrases give a general impression of the earthquake, Pacheco comments that everyone was, "aplastados, inmovilizados por una realidad que nunca acabaremos de entender ni de apreciar en su inabarcable, aterradora magnitud." Yet, an attempt to convey this cataclysmic occurrence must be made because as Pacheco says, "La tragedia no ha terminado. La historia continúa." A crumbled, ruined building is overt in its destruction; a crumbled, ruined human being is covert.

Nevertheless, some information is known even though the data reported reflects some variances. The first earthquake began at 7:19 (or 7:18) in the morning on Thursday, September 19, 1985 and lasted between two minutes ("los dos minutos de oscilación y trepidación" and three minutes and two seconds. The first earthquake measured between 7.3 and 8.1 on the Richter Scale; 8 on the Mercalli Scale. The force of these blasts has been compared to the explosive power of one-thousand one-hundred and fourteen twenty-kiloton atomic bombs.

According to the Servicio Sismológico Nacional, after the initial earthquake, thirty-eight additional seismic movements, ranging from 3.5 to 5.5 on the Richter Scale,

51 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 11, 16.
52 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 16.
53 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 11.
54 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 13.
55 Poniatowska 58.
rocked Mexico City.\textsuperscript{56} They culminated on the evening of Friday, September 20, 1985, with a second substantial earthquake which intensified the city's misery. Carlos Monsiváis, noted urban chronicler of Mexico City, described the second earthquake in the following manner: "Viernes 20. 7:38 de la noche. Inevitablemente, el nuevo temblor afianza el pánico."\textsuperscript{57}

To reiterate, in only the first four days, Pacheco reports that 2,282 dead bodies were found; 5,282 injured people were rescued; 175 buildings were destroyed entirely and fell; 57 buildings were damaged beyond repair. Poniatowska also relates data from the often conflicting newspaper reports: \textit{Novedades} reported on September 23, 1985 that the Ministerio Público had received 1,700 dead bodies, while \textit{Excélsior} reported that the Secretaría de Protección y Vialidad, on the same day, listed the number of dead at 2,822; the number of missing at 4,180; the number of injured at 6,000.\textsuperscript{58}

And, although more difficult to substantiate, the calculations made by the people, and not just the governmental agencies, must also be considered. Poniatowska relates the commentaries of one narrator regarding the situation in one particular housing area, the Multifamiliar Juárez. The narrator relates that this building typically

\textsuperscript{56} Poniatowska 60.
\textsuperscript{57} Carlos Monsiváis, \textit{Entrada libre} 24.
\textsuperscript{58} Poniatowska 90-91.
housed five thousand people, yet only about one thousand are there after the earthquake. This witness logically queries: "¿Dónde están los cuatro mil damnificados? ¿Cuántos están muertos, cuántos desaparecidos?" The numbers, the lives, do not add up. Obviously, the statistics of the dead, missing, injured, homeless can never be precise and, indeed, the numbers changed rapidly as the search and rescue operation proceeded; yet, such disparity is questionable.

However important, these statistics do little to describe the psychological and emotional effects of the earthquake. Rather, these elements can best be appreciated if they are considered in relation to the typical stages of grief. The grieving process is generally agreed upon to reflect five progressive stages: shock, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally, acceptance. Although each stage is distinct, quite often elements from each stage may be experienced simultaneously during the grieving process. Regardless of their precision, these stages can clearly be seen in the narrative discourse of Zona de desastre for indeed, the inhabitants of Mexico City grieved for themselves, for their city.

4.6 THE CITY DIES

The correlation between the earthquake and this grief process can first be noticed in the manner that Mexico City

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59 Poniatowska 291.
is described not just as a conglomeration of cement and steel but as a person. Pacheco begins the first chapter with a description of a city which, if its inhabitants are perceptive, can be seen, heard, express need, be injured, be defended, and in absence of defense, be destroyed:

Durante años transitâmes por la ciudad sin verla, sin oírla, sin atender a sus advertencias, sin compadecernos cuando la cegaban y mutilaban, sin hablar en su nombre cuando la enmudecían a punta de perforadoras y taladros, la sobrecargaban con pesos que no podía resistir.  

Although these same types of descriptions can obviously and easily be attributed to an individual, the comparison of the city to a person is solidified by the description of the initial damage done to the city after the earthquake. Pacheco continues:

La ciudad, herida de muerte en muchos de sus puntos más vitales, cayó encima de sus habitantes, se paralizó en viaductos, avenidas, túneles del metro. Toda se oscureció. Las tuberías vomitaron o dejaron de fluir. Los conductos del gas se rompieron. El mal olor incensó nuestro pánico.

These are the same death throes of a person: the person is mortally wounded in the vital organs, falls, cannot move, perhaps blacks-out or loses consciousness, loses bodily fluid through the body's natural openings or through the

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site of the wound, and, due to these often odiforous body fluids, the person is finally enveloped by the stench of death. In these passages, Pacheco is not only describing the damage to the physical, tangible structure of the city, but also delineating the death throes of the emotional, intangible elements of Mexico City.

As a means of reinforcing the personification of Mexico City, even particular buildings are described as individuals, with their own personalities, histories, and voices. The detail with which the initial damage and the subsequent demolition of the Hotel Regis presents a valid case. In “Jueves el 19 de septiembre” the Hotel Regis' former acquaintances and status are fondly remembered: its glory days when the revolutionary generals plotted for power and when world famous artists and other popular figures would gather to pass the hours. These people did not just use a hotel; they gave life to the hotel and the hotel gave life to them in terms of, “los recuerdos, las historias, el prestigio.” When, in ”Las cenizas del Regis” the building is finally demolished, one protagonist comments that when he heard the explosion, he felt that the detonation was set off within him. His companion responds: “¿Te imaginas lo que será presenciar un fusilamiento?” They need not wonder: they have indeed just witnessed an execution.

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63 Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 122.
64 Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 122.
Although the previous descriptions recount fatality of part of Mexico City after the earthquake, other descriptions solidify its personification and its resiliently resurrected life. "Momento histórico" recounts that one particular house is as versatile and alive as its inhabitants:

La casa no sabe de quietud ni de silencio: si pierde una pared recobra un grito, si se hunde un piso hospeda a una familia en la azotea. Saturada de vidas, respira y llora por entre las junturas; las historias van de una habitación a otra.

The house and its experiences provoke its voice: "Lo ha visto y lo ha vivido todo." It is a voice that demands better conditions for itself and its inhabitants: "Por una vivienda digna" is written on a white cloth and draped over the building's facade in protest.

And, as portrayed in "Entre Dios nunca muere y Viva mi desgracia," the resiliency of the city's voice can also be heard in the music of the hurdy-gurdy cylinder: "Para jóvenes o viejos, la tonadita del cilindro es una especie de símbolo, una especie de voz que tiene ya la ciudad de México, una voz muy suya." It is a voice that survived the earthquake.

65 Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 63.
66 Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 64.
68 Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 131.
4.7 GRIEVING

In spite of these few promises of renewal, Mexico City and its people must grieve for their losses, both at personal and urban levels.

There are five commonly accepted stages of grief. They are: shock, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally, acceptance. Although all stages must be experienced in order to finally come to terms with loss, they are not necessarily linear in their progression. Quite often, there is a weaving among the various stages.

Nevertheless, the grief experienced by the inhabitants of Mexico City, as expressed through Pacheco's narratives, will be examined in accordance with the general forward progression of the stages. Naturally, some instances of cross-referentiality may be noted.

4.7.1 SHOCK

The first stage of grief, that which is manifested by denial or shock, is clearly reflected through the stunned reactions, unrelenting contrasts, and countless questions reiterated in Pacheco's texts.

In "Jueves 19 de septiembre" Pacheco reflects everyone's stunned reactions by describing the first post-quake reactions: "Al asombro y el miedo sucedió la necesidad de reconocer el espacio cotidiano, de restituir los
contactos con el mundo exterior." The shock of the earthquake, both literally and figuratively, is so severe that one must first check one's immediate surroundings in order to reconnect with reality. To do this, most people immediately want to find all their family members, investigate their house, and then commiserate with neighbors, colleagues, and even strangers. Pacheco expresses this:

La incredulidad, el optimismo inconsciente y cobardío, los argumentos desgastados que eran en los minutos posteriores al terremoto nuestras únicas defensas para ignorar o disminuir los hechos reales.

After the initial shock and in light of the reality of the disaster, a more subtle form of denial is then evidenced: unfounded optimism. Throughout the days following the first earthquake, and throughout Zona de desastre, there are many instances of this limitless capacity for hope: a hope, against all odds, that maybe someone somewhere survived. In "La búsqueda" Pacheco's observation of and conversation with the man who tirelessly looks among the wreckage for his son Marcos prompts her to ask herself: "¿Cuántas veces lo hará?, ¿cuándo perderá la esperanza?" The text ends with these questions and the answer is implied: he will not end his search nor will he

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69 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 13.
70 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 14.
71 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 25.
give up hope, regardless of all contrary evidence, until he is presented with the cold reality of his son's dead body.

"Horas de oficina" presents a similar circumstance. In the several weeks after the earthquake, the routine in the office has returned to some form of normalcy: the phones ring, the papers pile up, the orders are filled; yet, Elvira's desk remains empty. In spite of the fact that she lived in one of the multi-family dwellings hard hit by the disaster, everyone deludes themselves: "Además Elvira no tarda en aparecer" and "Sí, aparecerá el día menos pensado." In order to protect himself from the unspoken truth, co-worker Rafael Bermúdez, "Se aísla en su trabajo. El tecleo de máquina lo protege de conversaciones y rumores." And so it remained until one day Elvira's sister appeared and related that Elvira died under the rubble of a building. While some workers comfort each other and others cry, Rafael returns to his type-writer. The return to mindless routine allows him to continue to deny the loss of his companion of twenty years.

However, at times, this optimism is one that vacillates rapidly with realism:

Todos los espectadores permanecen allí, primero inmovilizados por la esperanza, después por el desencanto y la angustia de saber que "no queda ni una sola persona con vida en el edificio."
This represents the struggle between denying and accepting the inevitable.

The use of contrasts also relates to this first passage of grief. Due to the sudden and catastrophic destruction wrought by the earthquake it is hard for people to accept the new urban landscape. The bustling and confusing temporary rescue center cannot feasibly be the once lively and gay Alameda. The enormous pile of rubble and twisted metal cannot possibly be the building in which a family grew up. The dead, bloated, dirt-covered body pulled from the wreckage cannot conceivably be someone's beloved son/daughter/mother/father/friend/husband/wife/lover/co-worker/... 

Pacheco expresses this type of denial in “Los sobrevivientes” by stating that not even the life-long inhabitants of a neighborhood can recognize its new post-apocalyptic manifestation: “Caminan por las calles como si nunca antes las hubiera visto. A cada paso se detienen para mirar los cambios y reconstruir, tras ellos, el mundo original.” A “before and after” litany follows: the tortilla shop is a pile of debris; the theater entrance is an impromptu shelter for a family; the seven-story building where clothing was manufactured is one single block of foul odor; a yellow truck has become part of apartment twenty-four; only the altar marking the former entrance to

75 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 21.
apartment twenty-eight remains; the tire shop is gone; the garage has disappeared; and so the list continues. This strong contrast reflects the deep level of shock and unrecognition, the grappling with a new conception of reality.

This same feature can also be observed by the multiple questions that are asked within the texts. In the face of total destruction, it is natural to desire an explanation, a logical reason, for the disastrous occurrences. This is done through the use of unanswered, and ultimately unanswerable, questions.

Returning again to “La búsqueda,” the anguished father in search of his son Marcos rhetorically questions God's motives for taking the life of someone who just wanted to help others. But, there is no logic or justice in Marcos' death. To continue to request it is to remain within the grieving stage of denial.

In “Los sobrevivientes” Doña Eustolia, who is taking care of young Claudio because his mother was killed, does the same thing. She cannot answer Claudio's questions: “Me pregunta por qué no ha vuelto, por qué no lo llevo a su casa. . . . ¿Cómo le digo que Rosa no volverá, que está enterrada bajo los escombros de 'Las Dos Conchitas'?"^77

^76 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 21.
^77 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 22.
The protagonist in "Zona de desastre," too, is stuck in this cycle of denial and shock. She expresses her desire for answers:

No puedo más, no puedo más... Primero una cosa, después otra. ¿Qué vida es esta? ¿Qué hicimos nosotros para que siempre nos vaya tan mal? ¿Por qué nadie nos ayuda? Porque nadie nos quiere, nadie piensa en nosotros: ni Dios.

This series of questions, as well as answers, reflect her resistance to her circumstances of overwhelming grief. She seeks someone to blame for this unmitigated disaster. Asking such unanswerable questions postpones or denies the reconciliation with reality in that quite often there is no good reason, no righteous justification, for such tragedy; it just is.

4.7.2 ANGER

Anger, the second stage of grief, is also expressed textually in this collection through the use of contrasts and questions. However, these contrasts and questions, equally unanswerable in many instances, are pointedly more critical.

"Los hilos de la vida: las costureras" presents a strong case for critical contrasts. Pacheco describes the seamstresses' difficult circumstances:

78 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 30.
En exhaustivas jornadas de trabajo - muchas veces sin descanso, sin seguridad, sin higiene - a cambio de salarios de hambre han contribuido a confeccionar "la camisa del hombre actual," "la bata de la seducción," "los pantalones que son como una segunda piel," "el vestido que te hará sentir más dinámica y libre."

The difference is sharp: the harsh reality of the seamstresses' labor versus the exciting and glamorous products they produce and yet will never wear. Pacheco even adds to this criticism, furthering the contrast, by stating that yes, indeed, the new dress will make you (a "you" clearly not of the working class) feel much more "dynamic and free" particularly when compared to the:

Mujeres nacidas en el abandono, maniatadas por la ignorancia, urgidas por la necesidad, desangradas por la expoliación y al fin asfixiadas entre las ruinas de talleres que aún antes del terremoto fueron tumbas.

This criticism, then, is the manifestation of outrage, anger, and frustration. One must first recognize the situation in order to become outraged about it. And, the outrage in these examples is unmistakable.

An additional angry contrast comes in the prevalent images that the priority for these clothing manufacturers was not rescuing the possible survivors or recovering their bodies, but rather saving their machinery, bolts of cloth, and strong boxes. As Pacheco relates:

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Pacheco, Zona de desastre 41.

Pacheco, Zona de desastre 42.
Aquel grupo de mujeres que, desde el sótano de un edificio derrumbado, estuvieron pidiendo auxilio hasta la hora de su muerte. Su hora final sobrevino mucho antes de que rescatistas a sueldo terminaran de sacar rollos de tela, cajas fuertes, máquinas - más valiosas para algunos patrones que la vida de quienes con su trabajo los enriquecieron.

Pacheco's denunciation, and anger, is clear in this example of contrast wherein business and money is valued over human life.

This sense of indignation of the second stage of grief is also evidenced in the pointed questions that most all protagonists ask. The type of questions discussed previously sought logic and justification and relate more to the shock and the denial stage. These questions, however, imbued with a sense of outrage, look for pragmatic solutions and point out inconsistencies and corruption.

In “Doña María de Jesús: cien años de soledad” this type of practical question is notable:

¿Cuánto tiempo estaremos aquí?, si tenemos que cambiarnos, ¿podremos pagar las rentas altísimas que están cobrando en todas partes?, ¿dónde reconstruiremos nuestras habitaciones?, ¿cuándo volveremos a trabajar?, ¿cómo viviremos?

Although many of these questions are not immediately answerable, they do revolve around the practical daily

81 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 42.
82 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 68.
necessities of life: work, housing, rent. Doña María is not denying her circumstances, rather she is trying to organize them. And, her frustration and anger in doing so can be inferred through the accumulation of questions: she asks not one question, but fires off a sequence of five essential concerns.

"Zona de desastre" also illustrates frustration and anger in the reactions to the rumor that seven (or ten) thousand tents have been sent to Mexico from Europe. While this sketchy information provides momentary enthusiasm, it is soon dissipated by the questions: "¿Y dónde están? ¿Por qué, si está lloviendo, no nos las han traído?" Logical questions indeed, and ones which are only answered by, "las gotas de lluvia golpeando sobre los techos de plástico, de tablas, de cartón, de periódico." 83

One of the mariachi musicians in "Los lamentos de San Camilito" also pointedly criticizes the policies of the emergency shelter. He complains that the food consists of little more than potatoes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Yet, he also mentions that this situation is made worse by his having observed, in one room of the shelter, that there are piles of cans of food that have been sent by international aide organizations. He states that these cans are just gathering dust and not being dispersed and he

83 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 31.
84 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 31.
wonders: “¿Por qué no nos dieron eso?”85 Another equally frustrated woman asks:

¿Qué no nos ven? ¿Qué no saben que estamos aquí? . . . ¿Se imagina lo que es para todos nosotros vivir rodeados de esto? ¿Se imagina lo que sienten los familiares de los desaparecidos cuando piensan que a lo mejor allí, bajo las piedras, están el padre o la madre, o algún hijo, decomponiéndose, hechos pedazos?86

Her accumulation of questions, unanswerable, are strong and angry critiques.

There are also criticisms, usually of administrative or governmental agencies, that are not in the form of questions. Pacheco sets the tone of these condemnations in the first text: the city, even before the earthquake, had been debilitated by, “pesos que no podía resistir, la destruían la avidez, el lucro y la irresponsabilidad sin medida.”87 She later reiterates that Mexico City is, “un paisaje urbano destruido sucesivamente por el hacinamiento, la corrupción, el sismo.”88

Returning again to the specific example of the mariachi musicians, several of them point out that they have received little or no help from their local Delegación, or municipal government. Ironically, it is the Delegación that should be most supportive of the neighborhood, but, “nadie nos hace
caso”; “no nos mandaba ayuda de ninguna especie, ni lonas, ni casas de campaña.” Monsiváis caustically comments, “Triunfar en política es no ver jamás, directamente, a los damnificados de la vida.”

Similar reactions are repeated elsewhere throughout Zona de desastre, particularly as relates to the housing or employment situations. Many protagonists angrily report the abuses of building owners, capitalizing on the earthquake chaos, who enlist unscrupulous inspectors to either unjustifiably condemn or approve a site. In the case of the former, the owner would then be able to sell the land for profit and no longer have to deal with low income housing; in the case of the latter, the owner can continue to run a business or receive rental income from a poorly maintained and dangerous structure.

However, the business/building owners are not the only opportunists criticized in the collection. There are many instances reported of looting and stealing after the earthquake. The mariachi musicians report that they were forced to evacuate their buildings, or more accurately, the remains of their buildings, and were not allowed in even to save the few items they possessed. When they were finally permitted to return, “ya era tarde: no encontramos nada: nos habían saqueado lo poquisimo que nos quedaba.” Who has

89 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 89, 91.
90 Monsiváis, Entrada libre 244.
91 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 90.
stolen their items is not necessarily mentioned; thus, it serves as a blanket accusation of corrupt military agents (who supposedly guarded the buildings against looting) or thieves from the general populace. "La condena" also ironically portrays this situation. Juan survived the earthquake, only to die of a heart-attack provoked by the three men who assaulted and robbed him. The incomprehension of how some one could take advantage of such a tragedy is doubly provoking.

There are also angry criticisms of journalists, particularly those who act more like tourists of the tragedy than professional reporters. "Ruinas sobre ruinas" presents an implicit criticism. When Antonio sees his building, he can think of nothing other than the fact that the body of his wife of forty years is still buried beneath the rubble. When the "docenas de fotógrafos" come every day see the building, they can only think of the next shot. The protagonists in "Pentagrama" even feel the need to protect themselves, and the dead, from the photographers' prying lenses. When the neighbors found the bodies of one family, "ya los teníamos cubiertos porque nos pareció de humanidad protegerlos contra los fotógrafos." The photographers can be likened to, "los curiosos [que] no quieren saber la

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92 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 33-35.
93 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 55.
94 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 113.
historia, sólo mirar el cuerpo rescatado."  

Indeed this image is reiterated by one of the men in "Los lamentos de San Camilito:"  "A cada rato vienen periodistas. Toman fotos, nos hacen preguntas, se van y no vuelven ni nos ayudan a nada."  

The most telling criticism of journalists is in "Luz de las tinieblas," which is formatted in an interview-esque manner in which Pacheco is implicitly a first person plural participant: "Nos guía," "pasen ustedes," "oímos pasos," "salimos."  

The interviewees live in a small, decrepit house made of tezontle that has, ironically, survived the earthquake while the surrounding modern cement buildings have crumbled. The rooms are dark and reek of decay, there is no electricity or water, yet the inhabitants are pleased and proud to show their home. But, the husband also comments that other visitors have come too and, most likely, these current visitors, "Tienen prisa. Querrán ver otras casas, pienso yo. . ." From previous experience, he is aware of the hurried nature of most journalists. More importantly, though, is that the group of journalists realize that they are not necessary or vital to this family's life: before they came in there was music and

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95 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 140.  
96 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 92.  
98 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 28. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
laughter emanating from the house and when the door closed behind them, it resumed.

Pacheco, by including such pointed comments, must surely be aware of her position as journalist. It would seem that she too is criticizing unscrupulous practices, be they in the field of construction or media; yet, is she not also criticizing herself? Perhaps. She makes no overt effort to counter-balance these critiques with a specific defense. However, the careful presentation her dual role as participant and reporter and the differentiation of this collection implicitly set her apart. Her purpose is not to use these circumstances, rather to, "colaborar en recoger la voz de quienes sufrieron." In doing so, she must also accept their angry comments; for she, too, both as a journalist and as an inhabitant of Mexico City, must grieve.

4.7.3 BARGAINING

After denial and anger, bargaining is the next stage in the grieving process. In Zona de desastre this stage is best understood in terms of compromise: a combination of what was before and what is now, particularly in terms of irony, memory, and fragmentation.

Part of this bargaining can be seen in the irony of certain images. The irony in these cases is not necessarily a bitter or critical irony, rather it is one of recognition

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99 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 11.
of the combined nature of life. For example, "El salario del miedo" presents the case of Leonor, a seamstress. Even though she is constantly reminded of the earthquake and scared that she will die in the shop as so many of her companions did, she must continue to work. Once the shop owner's son, an architect, declared the building habitable, the owner presented the workers with an ultimatum disguised as an invitation:

La que quiera presentarse, bienvenida; la que no lógicamente no recibirá sueldo y después de una semana perderá su lugar. . .
En estos momentos de tanto desempleo ustedes comprenderán que el problema no sería para mí sino para ustedes. 100

Understanding that she is, in fact, as replaceable as any machine, she reluctantly returns to her tedious, back-breaking labor. Later, Leonor comments that she has made all types of clothing: gloves, intimate apparel, even, "trajes de novia: yo nunca tuve uno." 101 The ironic fact that she makes items she will never have is listed as just one more element of her life.

Also significant about "El salario del miedo" is that an element of bargaining or compromise can be evidenced in the meta-relationship between it and the text that immediately precedes it, "Los hilos de la vida: las

100 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 51. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
101 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 53.
costureras." As its title implies, "Los hilos de la vida: las costureras" deals with, in an interview format, the deplorable work situations of the seamstresses before and after the earthquake, culminating in the description of the foundation of the seamstress union, "19 de Septiembre." Its companion text, "El salario del miedo," presents a fictionalized account of the seamstress' life. However, it is one in which the protagonist, due to extreme economic need, must walk past the union's protest signs and picket headquarters: "Pasa rápido, como avergonzada de no hallarse en él." 102

Continuing, in "Entre Dios nunca muere y Viva mi desgracia," don Antonio López also demonstrates this combined nature of life in Mexico. To Pacheco's comment that very little is known about the true life of the farmer, he responds: "Sí, se sabe poco, aun cuando todo lo que comemos aquí viene de aquellas gentes, de nosotros..." 103 And, this sense of bargaining, of dealing with what is reality, is clear in the comments of one of the mariachi musicians. He mentions that while the earthquake for him and his family has been nothing but loss and hardship, for other people it has not. For the pepenadores, the people who support themselves by rummaging through trash, the

102 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 51.
103 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 129. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
The use of memory also reflects this bargaining stage of grief. While immediately after the earthquake memory was used to deny reality, it later becomes a tool that can reconcile pre-quake with post-quake circumstances.

Although many aspects of life in Mexico City prior to September 19, 1985 have been irrevocably erased, they remain intact in the memory, intangible or tangible, of the people: “De ellas [las multifamiliares] no queda más constancia que algunos edificios, películas, fotos, cuentos, novelas que hablan de una vida y una atmósfera que no volverán.”

Naturally, memory itself is a compromise: “La cosa es que con eso uno recuerda igual lo bonito que lo feo, lo triste y lo alegre.”

And, even though memory may simultaneously be positive and negative, it is nevertheless a necessary and vital part of the bargaining process of grief. In fact, not having any memory is counter-productive to the healing process. The five sisters in “Pentagrama” illustrate this in that memory could be a tool against the anguish they feel, but since they do not have even a single memory, they remain, “clavad[a]s en la muerte inexplicable.”

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104 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 89. The use of the final ellipsis is Pacheco's.
105 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 16.
106 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 74.
107 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 114.
Memory can also be fragmentary, which echoes the compositional nature of bargaining. Logically, fragmentation is a prevalent image in *Zona de desastre* because, if nothing else, an earthquake leaves behind a jumble of fragments.

Nevertheless, these fragments are not just of cement and steel. They are also a collage of the elements which marks one's life. They are a compromise between the buildings that sheltered people and the other common items which defined those very same people: “Piedras, varillas, tablas, un directorio telefónico, servilletas de papel, cuadernos de contabilidad, un recadito ilegible.”

In “Doña María de Jesús: cien años de soledad,” the passage of a dump truck filled with supposed detritus is now cause for contemplation:

> Con asombro, reviviendo tal vez alguna historia trágica, nos detenemos a contemplar el paso de la carga formada por varillas retorcidas, bloques de cemento y montones de tierra a los que invariablemente se mezclan el resto de algún mueble, un pedazo de alfombra, un zapato o un papel que al agitarse nos envía señas indescifrables.

> “Las cortinas desgarradas, un calendario, una bicicleta desecha, el lavadero partido en dos, trastos y ropas esparcidas por todas partes” that mix in with the ruins remit to the human occupants, to the human destruction.

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Someone once hung the curtains; someone once marked off days on the calendar; someone once rode the bicycle; someone once washed clothes in the bin; someone once wore the clothing.\textsuperscript{110} The tangible debris is easier to remove, physically and spiritually, than the intangible human connections that were once so closely dependent and related to these items. And so, the validity of both must be bargained with and accepted in an act of mutual compromise.

An additional way in which memory illustrates the bargaining stage is through the presence of flashbacks. A flashback or panic attack, triggered by some outside stimuli, is the subconscious mind's natural way to bargain with the cruel and frightening realities of the earthquake. The previously discussed Leonor, in "Salario del miedo," exemplifies these flashbacks: "A causa del pánico Leonor se siente mareada."\textsuperscript{111} In order not to hear the silence, the silence of her missing companions, she turns on all of the machines. But still, she jumps at the slightest tremble of the window panes, although she knows intellectually that the movement is caused by the heavy earth-moving machinery working on the destroyed buildings next door. She repeatedly checks the light bulb as an indicator of stability. Leonor "tiene miedo, como la primera vez que asistió a un taller de costurera. Como entonces, llora sin

\textsuperscript{110} Pacheco, \textit{Zona de desastre} 97.  
\textsuperscript{111} Pacheco, \textit{Zona de desastre} 54.
conciencia del llanto."\textsuperscript{112} Finally, in order to waylay the panic, she talks out loud to herself and takes consolation in that she will ask her daughter to write her name on a large card so that, "por si me muero aquí, que sepan que era yo."\textsuperscript{113}

The sense of flashback is also heightened for Cecilia in "El milagro de Santa Cecilia." For eleven days after the earthquake Cecilia did not enter the ruins of her building, not even to salvage items. Finally, though, she does and through the process she re-lives the earthquake:

Una [varilla agresiva] la hace tropezar y caer. Cierra los ojos. La inmoviliza el mismo pánico que sintió la mañana del terremoto. Como entonces reza "La Magnífica", pero esta vez no escucha el estruendo del derrumbe sino los latidos de su corazón.\textsuperscript{114}

This flashback is significant in that by conquering her fear of entering the building and by reliving the horror of the earthquake, Cecilia's own strength has superseded the power of the disaster: she can now put it past her and heal.

This same process is evident in the previously elaborated descriptions of the demolition of the Hotel Regis. The crowds ostensibly gather for an entertaining spectacle, very similar to, "un programa gringo dedicado a mostrar cómo se hacen los efectos especiales."\textsuperscript{115} But,
really, it is a way to relive, in a protected and controlled manner, the earthquake. It is a cathartic experience after which the spectators can joke, laugh, and plan a quick snack at Sanborn's.

4.7.4 DEPRESSION

Depression is the fourth stage of grief which can also be perceived within the texts of this collection. Depression is often expressed as the anguish associated with major adjustments. This can be evidenced in the texts principally through the highly interreferential or cross-referential images of absence, silence, and solitude.

Absence, or emptiness, is a prevalent motif, particularly if one considers the physical and emotional voids left by the earthquake: the spaces where buildings once stood tall, the people that once completed a family.

In "Entre Dios nunca muere y Viva mi desgracia," Don Antonio López Vázquez echoes this sentiment in that:

A fuerza de pasar y pasar por ciertas calles uno se acostumbra a ver sus casas, sus edificios; a mirarlas y extrañarlas como si fueran personas. Les toma uno cariño porque los relaciona con alguna amistad, con experiencias personales y recuerdos. Parece mentira, pero hay lugares y jardines que acaban por formar parte de nuestra vida y si algo les sucede a ellos es como si nos pasara a nosotros. . .116

116 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 125. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
Indeed, something has happened to him: he has lost the physical sites that were a reference for human contact and as such he must grieve for them.

Cecilia, in “El milagro de Santa Cecilia,” makes the same connection, but in reference to her dead husband. In the evening when the other wives are preparing their mariachi husbands for the evening's work, Cecilia can palpably feel the void left by her husband's absence: “La angustia de no tener a quién atender ni esperar.” As well, in “Tela de araña,” Catalina, in her imagination, continues to visualize her companions in the clothing factory, the seamstresses that will never sew again except for in her memory: “Las ve sonreír, humedecer entre los labios la punta del hilo, inclinarse sobre las máquinas, fortarse la espalda.” As she sits on the steps of the near vacant building to eat her lunch:

Allí se siente más vivo el recuerdo de sus compañeras. Los lugares que ocupaban Zoila, Margarita, Elena, Luisa, Carmen, Reynalda, están vacíos. El miserable pan de Catalina se vuelve amargo con la ausencia.

The fact that her name is included shortly after the list of the dead is also significant: it practically includes her among the dead.

117 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 83.
118 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 79.
119 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 80.
In this time of adjustment, along with depression, there is survivor's guilt. For every moment that Catalina faces the emptiness left by her companions, she also must confront the fact that she survived. As Pacheco queries in reference to the injured and/or dead still within the tombs of rubble: “¿Cómo vivir, cómo respirar, mientras ellos siguen prisioneros de la catástrofe?” Later in “La búsqueda” she adds:

No dormimos tranquilos. Nos acostamos con las ventanas y las cortinas bien cerradas, pero no conseguimos olvidar que eso está allí, al otro lado de la calle. Me refiero al edificio que es una pura ruina. Dentro hay cadáveres. Lo sabemos. No podemos dormir, ¿quién puede?

As with so many other questions, only silence responds.

Silence, indeed, goes hand in hand with absence. The images of the momentary silence right after the earthquake, before, “las sirenas, los gritos, las historias terribles, el estrépito de la piedra al caer” to the eternal silence of the grave are striking. It is this finite type of silence that perturbs Leonor so much she must turn on the other machines and talk to herself so as to imitate the noise and conversations that surrounded at work before the earthquake. It is a silence that is deafening.

120 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 17.
121 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 23.
122 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 15.
The sounds that accompany and define daily life are not missed until they are silenced: "Desde el terremoto, en la vecindad se acabaron los pleitós por los lavaderos, las acusaciones de robo, los gritos de las madres que a cada rato salían en defensa de sus hijos."\textsuperscript{123} Before the silence can once again be filled with life, it must be grieved and the elements that have been momentarily replaced by silence must be respected.

Solitude, or being alone, is also another indicator of this depression stage of grief. The greatest fear of many of the protagonists is dying alone and the phrase is often repeated: "Tengo miedo de morir sola."\textsuperscript{124} In "Horas de oficina" when Rafael hears that his missing co-worker Elvira lived alone, his reaction is strong: "Se estremece al imaginar a su amiga confundida en el horror de la fosa común."\textsuperscript{125} Her solitary life ended in an anonymous tomb.

Being alone, dying alone both indicate being anonymous. This is why Leonor in "El salario del miedo" promises herself that she will ask her daughter to write her name on a card: so that she will not be alone, so that she will not die alone. In reference to the fate of many of the seamstresses: "De la vida miserable y anónima pasaron a la muerte espantosa y anónima que se inscribe, si acaso, en una lista de desaparecidos y termina asfixiada en la fosa

\textsuperscript{123} Pacheco, Zona de desastre 59.
\textsuperscript{124} Pacheco, Zona de desastre 16.
\textsuperscript{125} Pacheco, Zona de desastre 102.
común." As an ending to "Las cenizas del Regis" Pacheco quotes from, "las últimas palabras de María Sabina, la mujer serpiente, la mujer de piedra, la mujer colibrí:"

No veo mi rostro. No lo veo. Miro la paz en el mundo; pero me siento triste. Miro gente que vi de niña: a mi abuelo, a mi bisabuelo, a mi padre. Pero no veo mi rostro, no lo veo.

Not seeing one's own face is the culmination of being anonymous, of being thoroughly alone.

Yet, for those that were survivors, being alive and alone is just as horrible a fate. In "Ruinas sobre las ruinas" Antonio lost his only companion, his wife. To the other neighbors, to look at this lone and lost man is to see utter depression and dejection: "Verlo siempre es triste, pero su presencia resulta intolerable a las horas de comida." He meanders off to eat on his own where, "únicamente lo acompañan su soledad y ciertos recuerdos." Sober since the earthquake, the neighbors ironically wish that he would begin to drink again so that he would not present such a desolate figure.

The case of Cecilia in "El milagro de Santa Cecilia" is also indicative of this aloneness. Her sense of being alone is what propelled her to face her fear of entering the ruined building. By doing so she not only broke the

126 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 15.
127 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 124.
128 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 55.
129 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 55.
fearsome control of the earthquake, she also ended her solitude. While she is inside the ruins, another man enters looking for signs of his uncle, who had promised him work as a musician. Cecilia must report the sad news to this stranger that his uncle and all of his family perished in the quake. They both share the loss of loved ones and it is their mutual loneliness that brought them into the building. Nevertheless, it is the same sentiment that later allows her to offer him the use of her dead husband's trumpet. Now, neither one of them will be alone: "Espérese, no baje solita. Mejor ya la acompaño."

4.7.5 ACCEPTANCE

This last citation hints at the fifth and final stage of grieving: acceptance. The protagonists have passed through the previous stages and begin to see a way of getting on with life: being together.

Naturally after such an all-encompassing disaster, accepting the enormity of the situation and starting over is a difficult task. But, acceptance is done through small accomplishments, a reorganization of priorities, a return to routines, and changes in perspective.

Readjustment to a such a chaotic situation as a major earthquake would seem insurmountable, yet it is done through the accomplishment of normally simple, everyday tasks. This

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130 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 85.
can be seen in “Tela de araña” which follows Catalina through her morning routine. Every individual aspect is difficult for her. Waking up means remembering: “Las seis overistas y el velador [que] quedaron sepultados bajo los escombros”; noticing how the bed sheets cover her is reminiscent of how perhaps “ellas se quedaron así, con los rostros cubiertos por las telas”; the water with which she washes her face mixes with her tears; getting dressed reminds her of the clothes that they all made. The daily pressure to survive, and to support herself and her mother, is the impetus. And so, regardless of how difficult, she pushes herself through these activities.

Similarly, others too must begin anew, with the most basic of daily needs: “Va construyéndose la nueva vida cotidiana de quienes fueron arrojados de sus casas.” Some people await vigilantly outside the ruins of their buildings, hoping to go in and salvage what they can. Many, frantically searching the lists of missing, injured, and dead, try to regroup family and friends. Others go in search of water, food, and materials with which to build shelters. Each task is monumental in its execution; each task is essential in its need.

Just as these seemingly common, daily accomplishments, like waking up in the morning, take on a new importance

131 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 79-81.
132 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 29.
during the grieving process, acceptance usually indicates a fundamental reorganization of priorities. In “La condena” Juan illustrates this shifting of value by admitting to himself that after the earthquake: “Aprecia más las cosas simples de la vida: encontrarse con gente conocida en la calle, en el trabajo.” Doña Chuchita, in “Ruinas sobre las ruinas,” demonstrates this as well when a young boy gives her a piece of candy. She is brought to tears because of this simple act of kindness:

Lloré de puro gusto. Imagínense lo que fue para mí que ahora, a los ochenta y siete años cumplidos, viniera este niño a regalármelo. Sentí muy bonito. . .

She adds later that in all of her years, this was the first gift she had ever received.

A simple gesture is really not that simple after all: it is an example of a “milagro cotidiano.” As Pacheco notes: “El desastre nos enseñó a reconsiderar el valor de las cosas cotidianas - una manta, un vaso de agua limpia, el fuego en la estufa.” A shift in priority indeed.

The accomplishment of basic needs and the reorganization of values and priorities also correlate to

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133 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 34.
134 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 56. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
135 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 64.
136 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 41.
the desire to return to normalcy and routines, in spite of the chaotic circumstances.

For example, in “Los lamentos de San Camilito,” the mariachi musicians, after they built their own make-shift shelters near their previous homes, concentrate on resuming their professions: “Dos semanas después del temblor me dio que empezamos a trabajar.” Although business has been slow, they have faith that it will improve, “para bien de nuestras familias y para mantener una tradición musical, de la que formamos parte.” They even plan to have their annual celebration honoring their patron saint, Saint Cecilia, on the twenty-third of November: the celebration may not be as fancy as in years past, but it will have more meaning because of the lives that were spared. Their return to routine has not been easy, but it is necessary:

Nosotros le estamos echando ganas, porque con todo y que estamos tristes, procuramos tocar con alegría, con gusto, de manera que la gente se contagié y vuelva a sentirse a gusto aquí, en Garibaldi.

“El héroe Nicolás” also illustrates the return to normalcy under extreme conditions. Dionisia has taken up residence in a partially ruined building with no electricity or water. She is visited by a Delegación social worker who

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137 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 94.  
138 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 94.  
139 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 96. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
is trying to convince her to move to one of the emergency shelters. As she invites the visitor into her "home," Dionisia, still guided by the rules of proper etiquette, states: "Entre, pero no se fije en el tiradero."\(^{140}\) This is an idiomatic expression that is typically uttered as a natural introductory greeting. However, considering the ruinous condition of Dionisia's home, it would seem rather an understatement. Nevertheless, Dionisia continues to function as if she were living under normal circumstances and therefore, her statement is appropriate.

Later, the visitor can barely breathe the close and foul odor in the house and tries to hide the fact that she is gagging by feigning a cough and blaming it on the weather. Dionisia, though, is aware that her visitor is uncomfortable. And so, Dionisia tries to show that she is not offended or insulted by such behavior and she responds frankly: "No es el clima. Es que todo está muy húmedo y como que entre el polvo y el olor a muertitos le hace a uno cosquillas en la garganta."\(^{141}\) Dionisia has recognized her situation and is quite open about it. Her concern is not the deplorable circumstances under which she lives, it is being a proper host to a guest in her home. By adhering to social protocol and etiquette, she attempts to return to normalcy. As Don Antonio López Vásquez sums up in "Entre

\(^{140}\) Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 106.

\(^{141}\) Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 106.
Dios nunca muere y Viva mi desgracia: “Hay que seguir adelante mientras estemos en el mundo por la voluntad de Dios.”

4.8 CHANGE

After all the stages of the grieving process have been experienced, (shock, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance), then a final change of perspective has been achieved. This element, perhaps one of the most difficult to accomplish, is represented by the transformation of denial and anger into self-organization, of silence and anonymity into voice and identity, of daily life into heroism.

Examples of denial and anger have been discussed previously, but they resurface here in the form of self-organization. Throughout Zona de desastre, there are many examples of how passive frustration became active organization. One of the clearest examples is that of the mariachi musicians as detailed in “Los lamentos de San Camilito.”

After the earthquake, the survivors did what they were told by the authorities: they abandoned their belongings in the ruined buildings and they went to the emergency shelters. The result was theft and insult: items of recognizable value were missing from the structures and they

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142 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 125.
were treated with disdain in the shelters. And, to culminate their frustration, when they sought assistance from their local authorities, they were ignored and rebuffed.

In spite of the accumulated frustration and regardless of how tempting it may have been, they did not give up. They organized:

Hicimos de tripas corazón y entramos a los que habían sido nuestros departamentos en los edificios que están en pie. Con mucho miedo — porque, como usted ha visto, las paredes, los techos y los pisos están todos rotos — subimos a nuestras viviendas. Con las manos arrancamos cuanto madera había en puertas, closets, pisos, marcos de ventana.¹⁴³

After building the main shelters, they also constructed cooking and laundry areas. They even named their new neighborhood: “Sección Lomas de Garibaldi.”

Just as anger transforms into organization, silence turns into voice in the example of the foundation of the seamstress’ union “19 de Septiembre.” The conditions of the clothing industry in Mexico City were one of the most horrendous truths to be revealed because of the earthquake. As Pacheco relates:

Hasta antes del 19 de septiembre nadie imaginó que hubiera tantas costureras...Antes de ese jueves pocos pensaron en las condiciones en que trabajaban esas mujeres explotadas bajo focos desnudos, envejecidas junto a ventanas cegadas por el polvo y el humo, sujetas a un

¹⁴³ Pacheco, Zona de desastre 91.
horario que les prohibía conversar, ir dos veces al baño, demorarse en el teléfono o la fonda, faltar al turno doble. Pocos las vieron y nadie las volverá a ver nunca.

However, the complaints and desires of these workers who died anonymously resurfaced in the voices and the names of the women, their colleagues, who organized the union. A union that would finally fight for them and defend them because, ultimately, it was a union and a fight for themselves. María de la Luz comments: “Nos quedamos aquí desde las diez de la mañana hasta las tres o cuatro de la tarde, todas asoleadas, a veces llovidas, muchas veces hasta sin comer. No nos vamos porque queremos estar presentes para defendernos en cualquier momento.”

Pacheco states:

Su voz - que evolucionó de la queja y la oración, al relato y a la protesta - se enriqueció al transitar del “yo” al “nosotras” y de la súplica al reclamo: “No te dejes engañar por los patrones. Únete a la lucha de las costureras del centro.”

The transformation from silence to begging to demanding is a process of power. Once achieved, it is not soon forgotten.

In direct contrast to this achievement of voice is the example of Catalina in “Tela de araña.” In this fictionalized text, the protagonist is doubly silenced: her individual “yo” is stifled and the chance to belong to the

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144 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 15.
145 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 48.
146 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 41.
plural "nosotras" of the union is denied due to extreme need.

She is the only means of support for the family. Her mother's constant nagging, as displayed through the dialogic subtitles that begin each division, enforces this idea:

Cata, ya es hora. . .
Cata, van a dar las seis. Se te hace tarde.
Voy al patio a traer una jarra para hacerte el café. . .
Se te está haciendo tarde.
Si no te apures, te van a descontarte el día. . .  

In order to explain her languid behavior and her reluctance to go to work, she wants to express her feelings: "El sentimiento crece, llena su boca de palabras. Va a confesar que tiene pánico, que no soporta el tallercito cuarteado, que no quiere morirse como sus compañeras, sepultada entre escombros." But, she does not. She cannot because her mother's constant torrent of recrimination and guilt overshadows her own words: "Pero no se escucha, sino la voz de su madre." And, indeed, because her own voice cannot break through, cannot be heard, Catalina is in essence dead:

Catalina siente que su madre pone en torno a su cuello un hilito invisible; el de la vida diaria que es para ella también el de la muerte.  

147 Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 79-82. The use of the ellipses is Pacheco's.
148 Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 81.
149 Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 81.
150 Pacheco, *Zona de desastre* 81.
Through this contrast the accomplishment of the "19 de Septiembre" union, whose members' lives are undoubtedly similar to Catalina's, is even more remarkable.

The importance of the evolution of voice is also closely related to the transformation of daily life into heroism. In Zona de desastre there are many specific examples of individuals who performed heroic acts.

"La Pulga," whose real name no one knows, is a rescuer famous for working fast and getting into small spaces where others could not go: "Muchos de los cuerpos han sido rescatados gracias a él, pero no le gusta hablar de eso ni hacerse publicidad. . ."\(^{151}\) And, when other rescuers were sure that Dionisia's baby was dead and they wanted to give up the search, Nicolás insisted until the child was found: "Nico no dejó de ladrar hasta que no sacaron a mi muchachito."\(^{152}\) The fact that Nicolás is a dog does not diminish his heroism, as Dionisia points out to the social worker in their conversation:

VISITA. Entonces, ¿se queda aquí nada más por un perro?
DIONISIA. No es un perro, señorita, es "Nicolás." (Aclara la mujer con tono digno).\(^{153}\)

\(^{151}\) Pacheco, Zona de desastre 17. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
\(^{152}\) Pacheco, Zona de desastre 107.
\(^{153}\) Pacheco, Zona de desastre 107.

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In fact, Dionisia is appalled by the suggestion that she abandon Nicolás: to leave him alone is a thought she cannot even finish.

Regardless of these two specific instances of heroes, true change comes from understanding that everyone who managed to start a new day, everyone who reorganized their life, everyone who resumed work, everyone who survived the earthquake was, and is, a hero. Pacheco points out that, "nace espontánea una acción civil solidaria que es luz entre tanta tinieblas y esperanza en medio de la catástrofe."^^^

In summation, then, Zona de desastre presents, through the use of blended texts and voices, ellipses, data, and repetition, an exploration of the 1985 earthquake that shook, literally and figuratively, Mexico City to its core and that forced its people to grieve and, ultimately, understand themselves.

4.9 IMAGES AND/IN TEXT

Imágenes: Renovación Habitacional Popular (hereafter referred to as Imágenes), was published in 1987, a year after the publication of Zona de desastre. This collaborative work between Pacheco and photographer Guillermo Soto Curiel reiterates many of the concerns elaborated in Zona de desastre, particularly as relates to the 1985 earthquake.

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Pacheco, Zona de desastre 16.
Unlike _Zona de desastre_ however, _Imágenes_ combines text narrative with photographic narrative. The format of the book is very important.

After a brief introductory note by the Director of _Renovación Habitacional Popular_, Manuel Aguilera Gómez, Pacheco provides a "Prólogo" consisting of six sections. These divisions do not have titles, rather they are designated with Roman Numerals. These six texts show Pacheco's characteristic blending of narrative style, from blocks of testimonial quotes to pseudo-testimonial and/or fictionalized excerpts to Pacheco's comments. Once again, the establishment of a first person plural is primary, as noted in the fact that the first section begins with, "nuestra herencia."\(^{155}\) Within this section there are also two small black and white photographs, each of which has a subtitle and a quote. The textual excerpt that accompanies the photographs is assumed to be testimonial narrative. No clear connection, aside from general thematics, can be made between the narrating subject of the textual excerpt and the visual protagonist in the photographic images.

The second section, titled "La vecindad," is a mix of texts and photographs: on every page there is text and from one to three photographs. These ten subtitled texts, in contrast to the texts in the "Prólogo" section, are all testimonial narratives. The photographs, twenty-four in

\(^{155}\) Pacheco and Soto Curiel, _Imágenes_ 3.
total, are all black and white, but vary in size and presence of subtitle and textual excerpt. At times a clear correlation between the speaker and the photograph can be made, but this is not always the case.

"¿Y ahora qué?" is the title of the third section. With the exception of the title, this is an entirely photographic section. There are ten black and white photographs of varying size.

The last section, "La reconstrucción," thirty-five pages long, also consists of all photographs of varying size that are all in color.

4.10 NARRATIVE

The progression and inter-play of these sections is essential to the narrative of the entire collection. To reiterate in a more schematic manner:

1) "Prólogo": Six blended texts with two black and white photographs.
2) "La vecindad": Twenty-four black and white photographs with ten mostly testimonial texts.
3) "¿Y ahora qué?": Ten black and white photographs with no print text.
4) "La reconstrucción": Fifty-seven color photographs with no print text.

In terms of narrative strategy there is a passage of voice and authority through these four sections.

In the beginning, Pacheco is both the first-person plural and the third-person omniscient speaker who
intersperses her comments with snippets of testimonial type narrative and fully blocked quotations of testimonial narrative. The photographic narrative in this first section is secondary, consisting of just two small black and white photographs that reiterate the general theme of Pacheco's texts.

This emphasis changes, however, in the second section. The photographs, based on a photograph-to-text ratio of 24:10, are certainly the main focal point. This would represent a shift of narrative authority from the print text to the visual text. Interestingly, of these twenty-four images, an overwhelming majority (fifteen) of them feature people as the main focus or in the foreground. The remaining nine either are entirely without humans (five) or represent images wherein the individuals are represented as an additional part of the scene (four).

A change of narrating subject has also occurred from the first print section to the second print section. This second print section is almost entirely testimonial discourse, evenly divided among male and female protagonists. Pacheco's presence is at a minimum, noted principally through markers that refer to her, such as, “Como usted sabe”; “No me pregunte”; and, “Así le voy a contar.”

156 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 14, 7, 11.
The change from the second to the third and fourth sections is even more noticeable in that these last two sections, with the exception of the chapter titles, are entirely visual texts. These photographs, first only in black and white and then later in color, carry full narrative authority and voice.\textsuperscript{157}

In addition to this overall narrative strategy of shifting emphasis, additional narrative technique can be traced within the textual sections themselves. As already mentioned, the first person singular and plural are established in all the print text sections. But this is even more forcible in the ten testimonial sections of “La vecindad.” Every one of these texts establishes the speaker within at least the first nine words of the first sentence: “De Puebla nos vinimos”; “Allá vivíamos”; “Cuando oí”; “Tuve ocho hermanos.”\textsuperscript{158}

Also prevalent in all the print texts of Imágenes are the use of ellipsis. The use of ellipsis, as analyzed previously, emphasized those elements which are too difficult to articulate. For instance, in one of the texts of the “La vecindad” chapter, one of the testimonial narrators comments: “Yo no tengo vecinos, ni familia, ni

\textsuperscript{157} This point refers to the fact that in these two sections, the photographs stand on their own. I do not imply, however, that the photographic images present a more accurate reality without the use of a mediator. Obviously, these visual images are as carefully crafted and presented by the photographer as text discourse is by the writer.

\textsuperscript{158} Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 7, 10, 12, 15.
nadia que se interese por mí. . .”

Series of multiple questions are also evident:

¿Cómo íbamos a salvarnos de la necesidad tan grande que se nos venía? Sin mi tallercito, sin herramientas para trabajar, ¿dónde iba a conseguir dinero para rentarle a mi familia aunque fuera un cuarto de azotea?, ¿cómo iba a darle de comer?

Two narrative tendencies unique to Imágenes, however, are the interviewees' questioning of their own narrative purpose and their ability to express themselves freely to Pacheco.

Quite often, in the testimonial blocks, the narrating subject will reiterate his or her desire to know the impetus of their narrative. For example, in “La chatita: ¡¡¡Un cuarto propio!!!,” the narrator relates the difficulties of living in the emergency shelter. After providing a few general details, she cuts her narration short by stating: “Y todo lo demás, ¿para qué se lo cuento?” The text “Eulogia, la muchacha de las trenzas” presents a similar case in that the narrating subject queries: “Para qué voy a contarme lo que padecimos todos desde ese momento.”

These types of comments relate unusual conflictive narrative situations. First, these comments are markers

159 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 11. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco’s.
160 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 5.
161 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 16.
162 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 7.
that indicate the difficulty of narrating these circumstances. They are difficult to narrate both due to an inability to express such profound experiences and emotion, which words truly cannot describe, and due to a reluctance to relive these stressful situations through narrative.

Additionally, these discursive markers imply a desire to know the reason for such a narration, particularly since it is a narration that is difficult to utter. There seems to be a desire for reaffirmation of their position of authority, particularly in light of the fact that the narrators are aware of Pacheco's presence. For them, Pacheco represents a double source of information: she herself lived through the earthquake and therefore knows about it first-hand; and, she has also interviewed many people and so has gathered vast amounts of second-hand experience. These narrators, therefore, are reaffirming their position of equality with Pacheco: they are all equally valid witnesses. At the same time, and paradoxically, they are in a sense excusing themselves should they repeat information that Pacheco has already gathered.

Despite this tendency to question their narrative voice, quite often these narrative subjects reveal to Pacheco information that they cannot reveal to others. For example, in "La mañana del adios" the narrator discusses his reasons for initially being against the demolition of the
building where he lived. His main reason was the sentimental attachment he felt toward the place where he grew up and where he learned everything: "Lo bueno y lo malo de la vida." He then immediately adds: "Esas cosas no podía decírselas a mis vecinos que estaban a favor de la demolición." Expressing such a reason to his neighbors would be akin to admitting to a sentimentality and a vulnerability that is not necessarily culturally acceptable.

"Julia: 'Estamos en Tierra Firma'" presents another example in that the narrator carefully explains the security she feels in her new home. She elaborates about the proximity of the house to where she works, about how her children will have a patio in which to play, about how the security doors make her feel safe. But there is one more fundamental reason: the importance of having her new house officially listed in her name and not in her husband's name.

Although she defends her husband and defines him as a good man, she nevertheless feels that her children's future was more secure with the house in her name: "Mi señor no es así, pero es hombre y ¿quién me dice que un día no se vuela con alguna muchachona y decide que ya no vivamos juntos?" However, she does admit that she cannot reveal the real reason for her new sense of security to him: "Es cierto, a

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163 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 10.
164 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 10.
165 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 14.
Even though she understands that protecting herself in this manner has absolutely nothing to do with her love of him or her faith in him, his interpretation would most likely be dramatically different. He would probably interpret it as a direct insult to his trustworthiness or his faithfulness. Therefore, she is better off not relaying this information to him.

Interestingly, in these cases, the narrating subjects felt a sense of ease and comfort with Pacheco that allowed them to express their innermost thoughts. It can even be seen as a sense of relief and catharsis in that they were able to expose their vulnerability and express openly and without fear of reprisal these intimate details. Perhaps this apparent security is related to the equality felt among them as valid narrators. Ironically, of course, since these testimonies were eventually published, the neighbors as well as the husband could theoretically have access to the information.

4.11 HOMES

Turning again to thematic aspects, it can be noted that many of the same concerns described in Zona de desastre are reiterated in Imágenes. Present in both the written as well

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166 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 14.
as the visual texts are the complete horror and illogical capriciousness of the earthquake, shock and denial in the face of chaos, anger and frustration at corruption and ineptitude, compromise and bargaining as a means of adjustment, sadness and depression for the loss of family and neighborhoods, solidarity and voice as a means of defense.

The most prevalent image, however, is that of housing. Practically all protagonists reiterate the importance of their home, regardless of its conditions: "Y es que uno de pobre no tiene nada más que la casa que, por destatralada y vieja que esté, es un tesoro. . .". The physical building, as well as the emotional links it remits to, is a vital part of the people's lives. "La mañana del adiós" reflects this in that the evening prior to the demolition date, the inhabitants have a sort of a wake for their building: "La noche del miércoles la pasamos reunidos en el patio, recordando, tomando, despidiéndonos de lo que había sido nuestro." They even hired a mariachi group to play the morning of the demolition, "para hacer menos triste el momento." The building is as real to them as a person.

Given the overall organization and impetus for this collection, as planted immediately in the title, other

167 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 4. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
168 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 10.
169 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 10.
housing images respond to two major divisions: pre- and post-Renovación Habitacional Popular (hereafter R.H.P.). Obviously, the pre-R.H.P. descriptions depict scenes of dedication to one's home, even if it was a cramped, dark room before the earthquake and is nothing but a pile of rubble afterwards. The narrating subject of "Eulogia, la muchacha de las trenzas" comments that:

No pude distinguir nada más que un agujero negro, lleno de polvo. En ese momento me agarró el miedo y comencé a llorar por mi casa. Oscura y pequeña, húmeda como siempre, ya la quería. 170

In "El hombre que miraba el cielo," the narrator explains that even before the earthquake he developed the habit of looking at the ceiling of his home because he always needed to be vigilant for leaks and cracks. 171 His old roof may not have been well-sealed, but he adapted to it and, in fact, developed a habit that he would continue for the rest of his life, regardless of where he lived.

Another housing concern, overcrowding, is presented in "La chatita: ¡¡¡Un cuarto propio!!" The narrator confesses that she has never had enough space in her homes. As a child, she grew up in a family of eleven: "No teníamos nada, ni espacio para dormir: compartíamos las camas, siempre bien apretados." 172 Her married life did little to alleviate the

170 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 7.
171 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 9.
172 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 15.
problem. She and her husband shared a one-room apartment: "Nos apretamos en un solo cuarto."\(^{173}\)

Regardless of their circumstances, most all protagonists report that when they heard of the R.H.P. project they were skeptical. "Santiago: La Fe Perdida" illustrates this well: "Cuando oí que dijeron 'habrá casas para todos' me reí y le pregunté al que llegó con la nueva: '¿De cuál fumaron?'"\(^{174}\) Still not entirely believing, some barely dare to wish: "Un agujero, una cueva, lo que sea que me den pero la cosa es tener dónde meterme. . ."\(^{175}\)

Then as they realize that the project is serious, they begin to have hope and faith. The seventy-nine year old lady in "Pueblito Michaus: Amor con amor se paga" plans her first actions in her new home: she will arrange a warm area where her two dogs can sleep comfortably:

\begin{quote}
Me salvaron el día del terremoto porque como empezaron a ladrar y hacer escándalo, pues las gentes de por aquí vinieron corriendo.
\end{quote}

Once her beloved dogs are situated, she will hang the pictures of her saints and she will have lots of lights so that she never again has to live in obscurity:

\begin{quote}
Antes que nada voy a ponerle muchos focos porque estoy cansada de vivir en tinieblas, pues en estos cuartos no entra jamás el sol y
\end{quote}

\(^{173}\) Pacheco and Soto Curiel, \textit{Imáenes} 15.
\(^{174}\) Pacheco and Soto Curiel, \textit{Imáenes} 12.
\(^{175}\) Pacheco and Soto Curiel, \textit{Imáenes} 8. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
\(^{176}\) Pacheco and Soto Curiel, \textit{Imáenes} 11.
como quien dice, durante cuarenta años he vivido en una noche perpetua.177

The emphasis on light is significant: light means hope for a bright, new life.

This hope and faith is also demonstrated by the wife in “Santiago: La Fe Perdida.” She comments that during the year she carefully watched the R.H.P. construction. And, as the buildings rose, so too did her hope:

Recuperé la ilusión, la esperanza. Los que salimos beneficiados con eso de la Renovación ganamos algo más que un techo: la fe en que lo oyen a uno, aunque esté muy abajo o muy arriba: en un cuarto de azotea.178

As represented by these examples, there is a movement from stunned disbelief to hope to reality to renewed faith.

4.12 VISION

This general thematic progression can also be traced through the photographic sections in Imágenes. The visual texts mirror images from the first few instances of the earthquake (“Prólogo”) to the immediate aftermath (“La vecindad”) to the realization of the magnitude of the disaster (“¿Y ahora qué?”) to the completed and whole results of the reconstructive efforts (“La reconstrucción”).

177 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 11.
178 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 12.
The two black and white photographs in the first section, "Prólogo," serve as brief illuminations of the specific thematic of the subtitles and excerpts which accompany the photographs and of the general thematic of the six written texts. One photograph, subtitled "El fin del camino," shows a young lady sitting among some boxes and bags. Her attitude is one of stunned hopelessness, which is reflected by the position of her body: her head is resting heavily on her hand and her gaze is off into the distance. Subtitled "Los hijos muertos," the second photograph depicts the general wreckage within a building: clotheslines hang haphazardly, while bits of toys, furniture, clothing, and walls lie helter-skelter across the floor. This visual image correlates to the textual excerpt which emphasizes, "las ruinas de la casa." Clearly, though, the visual stress in this first section is on the total devastation wrecked by the earthquake and the feeling of not knowing what to do next.

The photographic images in the "La vecindad" section are close representations of the accompanying print text. However, as was mentioned previously, an exact correlation between print narrator and image subject cannot be completely ascertained. It appears that the images depicted in the photographs are the protagonists or the environs of

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179 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 5.
Nevertheless, the photograph of a woman standing at the base of a stairwell niche where she has placed religious icons does seem to parallel the narrative gist of “Eulogia, la muchacha de las trenzas” just as the image of the abandoned patio and the crumbling wall on which “Adios Vesindad [sic]” has been written echoes the discourse of “La mañana del adios.” Regardless of the verification of the photograph-text correlation, the photographs do indeed reflect the general idea of the print narration: subjects in or near their homes or images of abandoned structures, most all of which are in poor condition due to the earthquake.

The photographs in “¿Y ahora qué?” also reflect post-earthquake chaos and despair. The image of the injured person grimacing and covered in blood while rescue workers try to assist him or her is juxtaposed on the same page with the photograph of the back of a man carrying a mannequin whose arm is grotesquely out-of-joint. The insupportable pain and anguish of the person is mirrored in that the mannequin is losing an arm: both the human and the inanimate elements of Mexico City have been pushed to the limits of endurance.

Other photographs depict the city's devastated landscape. On the same page there is a photograph of heaps of rubble that surround a statue that for some capricious
reason did not fall together with an image of a street that has turned into dark gaping maw, minimizing the puny humans that stand nearby. As well, naked dolls and other toys are incongruously lined up on the sidewalk; a sign ironically demands “Vivienda Digna/Reconstrucción” while being hung from a partially destroyed building; a cramped room within an emergency shelter depicts the over-crowding. Understandably the images are stark. This is emphasized as well by the fact that they, as well as the photographs in the first and second sections, are in black and white. Black and white best relays the horror of the earthquake and it best relegates these images to the past.

The next and final section, however, reflects the hope and the future of the Renovación Habitacional Popular project. All photographs are in color and many depict the brightly painted buildings:

A mucha gente le pareció mal que nos pintaran las nuevas casas con colores chillones: verde, azul, amarillo, morado, rosa... Dicen que de esta manera quisieran señalar las casas de los pobres, de los pelados. Yo no lo veo así. Esos colores me alegran y hasta pienso que nos salvarán en caso de que suceda otro terremoto. Ese día, que ojalá nunca llegue, Dios nos estará viendo desde el cielo y distinguirá primero nuestras casas, precisamente por los colores chillones. 180

While most of the images contain people interacting in these new spaces, some only focus on the structures. One such

180 Pacheco and Soto Curiel, Imágenes 5
photograph is a close-up of an open-air staircase that joins a lower patio with an upper level. The photograph was taken from a position in the lower patio, therefore the focus of the photograph is angled upward, toward the sky and toward uplifting hope.

Whether there are people present in the photographs or not, these structures depicted in the photographs have narrative authority because they remit to the people that built them and they remit to the people that inhabit them. This is the voice, then, that is heard throughout Imágenes: first in the print text and later in the visual text. It is a voice of hardship overcome, of silence broken, of hope renewed.

4.13 UNITED?

To summarize, Pacheco points out, in the first text of Zona de desastre, that even the earthquake was not enough to truly unify Mexico City:

Los pobres murieron o lo perdieron todo; los ricos quedaron ilesos y a salvo. Los dos minutos de oscilación y trepidación bastaron para que el gigante exhibiera su debilidad, su vulnerabilidad, la magnitud de sus miserias y grandezas; sin embargo, no fueron suficientes para unir los mundos que forman este Distrito Federal. En ese corto tiempo se abrió una herida que nunca cerrará en nuestra memoria, una brecha insalvable que nos separa de otro tiempo en que los desastres frenaban ante lo no visto.  

181 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 13.
Although this may seem pessimistic, it actually hints to a solution and provides the formula for healing the wound, for bringing together the two Mexico Cities. The two divisions can no longer be denied, their anger must be vented, bargaining for compromise between them must be reached, adjustments must be made, and finally, acceptance and closure will be achieved.

In Pacheco's description of the city as a living, breathing entity, the dependence of the city on the humbler classes for life is unavoidable. In "Los lamentos de San Camilito" this is made clear:

El aspecto más vivo de la calle está en los comercios que se sostienen contra viento y marea; en la insistencia con que los vendedores ambulantes ofrecen sus pobres mercancías; en la agitación con que los traseúntes corren de una esquina a otra.\(^\text{182}\)

Without these individuals, without their presence and their work, the city is quiet: it is dead. It is their insistence on survival, their pride, that provides the pulse for the nation.

This is also evidenced in "Entre Dios nunca muere y Viva mi desgracia." Throughout this nine-page chapter, the third to the last in the collection, very little mention is made of the earthquake or its effects. The majority of the

\(^{182}\) Pacheco, Zona de desastre 87.
focus is on Don Antonio López Vásquez: the pride he has in his professions as a hurdy-gurdy musician and a farmer, the pride he feels being a Mexican. The chapter ends with him returning to work: "Una de las pocas voces que no acalló el terremoto." His voice, Mexico City's voice, continues to sing. Similarly, the last chapter of Imágenes makes no direct reference to the earthquake: it is a text of acceptance, of healing, of building anew.

Although it transfers to all situations (past, present, and future), this healing process, this particular show of unity and solidarity, started with the earthquake and brought many concrete outcomes:

El desastre...hizo algo mucho más importante: obligarnos a ver desde una perspectiva más amplia que la de nuestra experiencia personal, a escuchar con atención y a descubrir en medio del estruendo citadino las voces antes perdidas, dispersas, sofocadas tanto por nuestro miedo e indiferencia como por los mecanismos de la marginación y de la explotación.

It may well be Pacheco's hope that it continue, even if the results are not seen in this generation.

183 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 87.
184 Pacheco, Zona de desastre 41.
Yo, fánatico de los diccionarios, nunca pensé que la mejor definición de la palabra dignidad me la enseñaría una mujer de la que apenas supe el nombre, el oficio y un instante de su vida. El resto ni siquiera puedo imaginarlo. “El profesor” de “El corazón de la noche” en El corazón de la noche: Cristina Pacheco

Cristina Pacheco's El corazón de la noche collects thirty-one short narratives. These texts were selected from the many stories originally published in Pacheco's "Mar de historias" newspaper column in La Jornada between 1986 and 1988 and then re-published as a collection in 1989. Their myriad voices and situations reflect daily life in Mexico City and relate, “los acontecimientos [que] son vividos por personajes que tienen los rostros y los nombres

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1 Although Cristina Pacheco writes in the “Preliminary Note” to El corazón de la noche that there are thirty texts in the collection, the “Index” and the body of the collection contain only twenty-nine title divisions. One of these titled texts, however, is composed of three separate and distinct sub-titled stories (although, each of these subtitles is actually the first few words of every text). If the actual number of texts were to be based on narrative completeness, then these would need to be included. With this in mind, then, this study considers that there are thirty-one texts.
de los seres que deambulan por la ciudad más grande del mundo." Two very key ideas stand out: first, the personalization of life in one of the world's largest cities, as reflected by the emphasis on "faces and names of human beings" and, second, the fact that these beings and these are genuine situations that have been lived and are historically real, not just total artistic fiction. These characteristics will be developed through a trajectory that is increasingly interior and personal in its scope: from the city as an entity to the innermost dimensions of an individual. Through this examination, the questions raised in the title of this chapter will be explored, if not answered.

5.1 CITY

Naturally, narrating an enormity such as Mexico City is a daunting task. García Canclini answers his own question: "¿Cómo abarcar los sentidos dispersos de una gran urbe en los estudios culturales? Es, en parte, una dificultad narrativa." One approach that Pacheco uses to capture the D.F's essence is pan-sensory description.

Probably the easiest aspects to discern about the city depicted throughout Pacheco's texts are the visual ones. A lack of space, paradoxically, serves as an apt description

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3 García Canclini, Consumidores y ciudadanos 95.
of this urban center. In "La osa y el gitano," Vladimiro notes the changes that have taken place in the neighborhood of La Rosa, where he had once performed with a traveling circus:

Vladimiro conocía bien el barrio de La Rosa y desde el principio percibió los cambios: pocos terrenos, calles más estrechas – quizá debido a tantos automóviles estacionados –, y en los antiguos llanos ahora se levantaban idénticos edificios de ladrillo. Notó que al caminar entre ellos sentía asfixia.

This sense of encroachment caused by constant new construction is even more noteworthy if one considers the timeframe in which it took place. Within the scope of one man's life, homogeneous buildings and innumerable cars have overtaken empty areas and nearly "squeezed out" space for individual.

The city is also depicted in contrast to what it is not. For example, the protagonists in "Ronda nocturna" escape from a rainy evening by enjoying the ambiance of a restaurant:

La neblina se levantaba en bocanadas intermitentes, haciendo más intensa la noche que nos envolvía a todos, aislándonos en la placidez de la buena comida, la música y el espectáculo formidable del jardín: verde, rojo, fucsia, y el blanco de un cisne."

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4 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 9.
5 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 93.
The colorful vibrancy of the restaurant is contrasted with the gloom of the evening. When the waiters announce that soon the business will close, all of the customers inevitably recall, "las realidades de la ciudad tenebrosa." The urban metropolis, rather than being a place to be, is a place from which people need to seek refuge.

In spite of these realities, the city still casts a "siren's song." In search of a better life, vast numbers of people from the outlying parts of the country pour into Mexico City. Gabriel, the protagonist in "La canción de Gabriel," follows the example set by his brother Fermín. Despite the fact that Fermín returned to his rural home crippled, after a fall from scaffolding, his jaunt to the city is considered to be a triumph and the portable radio he brought back with him is a symbol of his victory.

With his own dreams of success, singing his way to stardom, Gabriel arrives, after an all-night bus ride, in Mexico City. His first sights are, "varios vehículos estacionados y un gran charco de aceite y agua." Although he is content to have arrived in the city, the bus driver sardonically comments to a near-by policeman, "¿No que no llegaba a las cuatro? Y con un montón de changos panzas pelonas." Gabriel's naive dreams contrast with the driver's sharp comments: the immigrant still hopes, the

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6 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 93.
7 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 133.
8 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 133.
urbanite, or "urbanoide" as García Canclini would say, sardonically despairs.

In addition to sight, the city is presented through the sense of sound. "El estruendo de los motores y los cláxones, que no bastan para ahogar los insultos que le grita el taxista," are the sounds that persecute Eglantine in "Apartado postal." Her only offense was to change her mind about hailing a taxi-cab. In this particular example, it would seem that each individual sound, (the engines, the horns, the shouts), are competing to be heard. Yet, they are roundly ignored by Eglantine: "No le importa nada." A contrastive example is the case of Librado in "El tamaño del silencio." The ironically named protagonist, who has been confined to a wheel-chair his whole life, only knows the city through the sounds that he hears from his basement room. A day begins for him:

Por la mañana, las mujeres bajaron a la plaza. Las calles se llenaron de ladridos, voces, gritos, cohetes, insultos, carcajadas, querellas. Sopló el viento, tañeron las campanas. Todos los rumores propios del último día de la semana se escucharon.

He is so precise in his ability to discern sound that, as this example implies, he can tell what day it is by certain

9 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 109.
10 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 109.
11 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 60.
sounds of activity. In fact, he is described as being an expert on noise:

Así como otros hombres se entrenaron para ser buenos bebedores o amantes, él se adiestró en escuchar los pasos, en distinguirlos, en interpretarlos, como si fueran un lenguaje cifrado sólo para él.

Sounds, in particular the footfalls of Julia, have become his link to the world outside his room.

A tactile perception is also indicated in Pacheco's descriptions of the city. Occasionally, the touch is one of warmth and security. Such is the case for Eglantina in “Apartado postal.” Suddenly, she feels dizzy and, “se apoya en un muro. La piedra también arde.”\(^{13}\) The wall not only provides physical support for her, it reflects her feverish emotional state as well.

Brusqueness, on the other hand, characterizes the majority of the tactile city. In “La canción de Gabriel,” Gabriel's arrival to the city is not met with open arms. Rather, he is man-handled by the police, “El policía toma del brazo a Gabriel y lo arrastra hacia una patrulla estacionada al otro lado de la calle.”\(^{14}\) Instead of orienting him to the city, the police take advantage of him and steal from him. Similarly, the family in “Por siempre juntos” is physically pushed from their home: “Yo les dije

\(^{12}\) Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 58.
\(^{13}\) Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 108.
\(^{14}\) Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 135.
que no nos íbamos; pero enseguida, a empujones nos sacaron de la casa."\textsuperscript{15}

Conversely, the city can also be described through non-touch. In "La osa y el gitano," no-one in the neighborhood wants to get physically close to Vladimiro. Mothers admonish their children to stay far away from the filthy vagabond: "Ese viejo es un cochino, un degenerado. Se le nota en la cara. No te le acerques. Si quiere llevarte, grita o pégalé con lo que encuentres."\textsuperscript{16} In fact, by incorporating the threat of kidnapping, even more distance is assured.

The senses of smell and taste, although less frequent, are also present in Pacheco's urban landscapes. "Fosa común," describing the aftermath of the 1985 earthquake, offers one of the most disturbing images of smell.\textsuperscript{17} While contemplating a destroyed apartment building, one of the story's protagonists exemplifies a coldly practical post-earthquake logic, "Oigan, todas las personas que vivían allí seguramente murieron. Por el olor se ve que los difuntos se están descomponiendo."\textsuperscript{18} What makes this comparison even

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{15} Pacheco, \textit{El corazón de la noche} 186.
\textsuperscript{16} Pacheco, \textit{El corazón de la noche} 10.
\textsuperscript{17} Although a specific year reference is not included in "Fosa común," Pacheco does mention the date of September 24. Considering both the years in which Pacheco wrote these texts and the proximity in the dates (the earthquake occurred on September 19, 1985), it can be assumed that she is referring to this particular catastrophe.
\textsuperscript{18} Pacheco, \textit{El corazón de la noche} 63.
\end{footnotesize}
more tragic is the realization that people's existence has been reduced to nothing but a smell.

"Yo no sé de dónde. . .," one of the trilogy of stories under the title of "Memoria de sed," presents a combined case of smell and taste. An extended draught and financial difficulties have created severe water shortages. In one family, the eleven-year-old Armando suffers the effects.

Due to the lack of water, Armando dreams of the waves of the ocean and he can practically feel, "la humedad, la tibieza, la frescura de la brisa marina, cargada de lluvia." Unfortunately, his extreme thirst is manifested by incontinence. Since there is not enough water to regularly bathe or wash clothes, Armando emits an acrid smell. For this reason, the local children not only exclude him from their games, but also taunt him with vicious nicknames. This only causes more anxiety, which leads to continued incontinence. Even though he is not allowed to drink any liquid in the evening, it just makes him more conscious of his thirst, which then translates into more problems while he sleeps. Even his mother's nurturing instinct to give him a comforting hug is repulsed:

Siente el impulso de consolarlo abrazándolo, pero retrocede al sentir el olor ácido que lo rodea. Teme que el niño se haya dado cuenta de su repulsión y se apresura a disimular haciéndole cosquillas.

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19 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 175.
20 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 171.
He is not fooled, however, and feels that his mother, just as the neighborhood children, have abandoned him. The cycle of thirst-incontinence-anxiety continues.

Certainly, through these examples of the sensory perceptions, Mexico City seems like an inhospitable site. Although the examples presented here are only samples from Pacheco's narratives, the difficulties of city living have been documented often. Indeed, García Canclini found in his surveys that an overwhelming majority of Mexicans, both those that live permanently in Mexico City as well as those that are there only temporarily, report that it is "una ciudad hostil." To label Mexico City, or any city for that matter, entirely hostile is a misjudgment. The "city" exists on many different levels and should be approached from all of them.

5.2 PEOPLE

In an attempt to individualize the generalities of the city, then, this section focuses on the people that inhabit Mexico City, that dwell on/in Pacheco's pages. As mentioned previously, in "Chapter 2," Pacheco personalizes the human mass of Mexico City. García Canclini notes that in large metropoli, "ni las élites ni los sectores populares, como

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21 García Canclini, Consumidores y ciudadanos 62.
revela la fragmentación de sus comportamientos, constituyen una masa homogénea."\textsuperscript{22}

In El corazón de la noche, then, Pacheco includes elements from both extremes mentioned by García Canclini. For example, "La magia de la televisión" demonstrates a family that although not rich, is not destitute either. "Typical" family relationships among the parents and children are implied: they participate in light verbal banter, they spend time together watching sports on television, the husband and wife communicate well with each other.

It may seem that the wife is overly concerned about the conditions of their eleven-year-old television set because financial restrictions would impede purchasing a new one. However, her concern is not economically focused, rather, it is based on sentimentality:

Mientras tuve la tele en mi cuarto pensaba: "Aunque aquel ande con otras ha de volver aquí, para comprar mi parte o para que le pague la suya." No me importaba, sólo quería verte. Cuando te llevaste la tele tuve miedo de que no volvieras. No podía buscarte, pero sí reclamar el aparato. ¿Comprendes?\textsuperscript{23}

Due to cultural norms, she could not express her love for her future husband forwardly and verbally. So, in this

\textsuperscript{22} García Canclini, Consumidores y ciudadanos 89
\textsuperscript{23} Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 31-32.
manner, the television recalls the couple's courtship and symbolizes their love and longevity.

The scenario of the married couple in “Villa Romana” serves as an example of a more affluent situation in that the protagonists are depicted on vacation. In order to celebrate Mother's Day, the couple has gone to a beach resort for an extended week-end. It is a time for them to be alone, without their children and without the burden of everyday chores and work: “No hay que pensar en lo que haremos al volver a casa. Nos quedan dos días...”24 Such a vacation is certainly indicative of luxury and some degree of financial stability.

Indeed, they have even jokingly “forbidden” domestic themes as topics of conversations. Much to their satisfaction and delight, however, they find that they cannot stop referring to their non-vacation lives. However, in their case, thoughts of family are not anxiety or concern-based, rather, they provide comfort to the couple.

Pacheco further reflects the variety of life in Mexico City, as achieved in El corazón de la noche, not only by mentioning a wide range of jobs and the people who have them, but also by investigating in detail the social and personal ramifications of said employment.

24 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 138. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
The most notable element of this narrative strategy is that a number of work-related situations are presented throughout this collection: from bear-tamer to painter, from boxer to college professor, from beggar to maid, from hotel clerk to retiree. Indeed, the eclectic range of employment types tends to grant a degree of equality, or leveling, among them. Importance does not necessarily depend on the kind of employment, for example blue-collar versus white-collar, but rather the act of having employment is deemed significant. This is particularly reflective of the unfavorable economic situation in Mexico during the time in which Pacheco wrote these texts (as well as today, for that matter). Therefore, all of these professions warrant Pacheco's (and the reader's) narrative attention and no single type of employment is prioritized over another.

For instance, the importance of having steady employment is exemplified by “Temporada de lluvias.” Evaristo was suddenly fired from his job as a security guard in an office building. The job's main requirement was that the applicant be impeccably attired and in order to do this Evaristo instigated a long and complicated routine. Although exhaustingly time-consuming, it was necessary to disguise the fact that he lived in a poorer neighborhood where the streets were not even paved:

Vivimos en un barrio donde las calles son ríos de lodo; que para llegar a tiempo a tu trabajo todos
los días sales de la casa a las cinco de la mañana; que vestido con tu ropa vieja, caminas una hora, cayéndote y resbalándote entre la porquería, antes de llegar al módulo de vigilancia que siempre está destierto. Sí, le hubieras dicho que allí te cambias, te pones ropa limpia y guardas la sucia en la maleta. Que así te subes a la combi, luego al Metro y por último al minibús que te lleva a tu trabajo.

Ironically, he lost his job for this exact same reason. When his boss was informed that Evaristo kept a suitcase of dirty clothes in his locker, he was then considered to be a security risk. In the boss' opinion, the suitcase indicated such unusual behavior that Evaristo must only be pretending to be fastidiously attired in order to plan a robbery.

Rather than reveal the truth about the poverty in which he lives, he prefers to be fired. With this job he felt that he "belonged" and that he could temporarily forget his poverty: "Se sintió un hombre como aquellos que no necesitan cambiarse a medio camino para llegar limpios a su trabajo." For Evaristo, his job, "simbolizaba su triunfo sobre la miseria y el lodo." In the end, however, it is not Evaristo who has staved off the mud and misery; the mud and misery have vanquished him.

Nevertheless, Evaristo's situation, particularly in comparison to the wide spectrum that Pacheco presents, is but one example of a protagonist/situation that can be

25 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 73.
26 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 74.
27 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 71.
considered to be liminal in comparison to hegemonic society. He is marginalized geographically as well as economically and socially due to the location of his home.

This sense of liminality is further developed by Pacheco in that she presents some seemingly "carnivalesque" professions. In addition to these depictions, some of the characters also seem to have elements that might be considered unusual. Indeed, in some cases, the type of profession in which the protagonist engages is directly linked to her or his physical abnormality. These include the bear-tamer in "La osa y el gitano"; the dwarfs in "El combate de los reyes" and in "La dimensión de un hombre"; the girl who lived chained to a tree in "La sombra de un árbol"; the one-armed man in "Apartado postal"; the paralytic men in "El tamaño del silencio" and in "Memoria de la sed: Julia reacomoda el paliacate."

In all of these cases these seemingly liminal protagonists contribute through their "professions," which are listed below in the order mentioned above. Vladimiro, the bear-tamer, provided an outlet for exotic diversion in the traveling circuses. One dwarf acted in a traditional pastoral play while the other, Fermín, technically a circus-performer, had the ability to change people's thoughts and perceptions. Chelina, although years of abuse have reduced her to a near-animal existence, is able to provide comfort and security to an elderly lady. Similarly, Rubén, a one-
armed man, brightened one lonely woman's life, making her feel like an important person who can contribute to society. The ironically named Librado, confined to a wheel-chair since birth, helps support the family through the miniature landscapes that he paints and his siblings sell in the bus station.

Finally, Clemente, although paralytic after suffering disfiguring burns during the celebration of his wedding day, is the only person able to bring relief to his neighborhood, La Borrascosa, in fact he is the one who seems most able to contradict the very name of the neighborhood. With the use of his special fireworks, he is able to “seed” the clouds so that they produce the much needed rain. In keeping with characteristics of magical realism, his actions seem perfectly logical and part of the natural life in La Borrascosa.

Therefore, every one of these protagonists, either due to their physical situation or in spite of it, are able to perform important and specific duties. Perhaps their jobs are not the most well-known or well-respected, yet, nevertheless, they do provide a necessary service, either at the level of the family or the community.

An additional element that stands out about this range of characters is that every one is depicted with a respect and a humanity in which his/her deformity or disability occupies a secondary plane. The deformities or
abnormalities are not grotesque, but rather become an fundamental part of positive resolution. Indeed, the situation draws the reader's attention rather than the disability; thus, the character is made all the more realistic and believable, more approachable and accessible.

One such case is exemplified by “El combate de los reyes” in which the narrator recounts the fracas that broke out among an acting troupe that always performed an Epiphany reenactment for the Three King's Day celebration. The narrator avows from the beginning that this lively dispute ensued not due to lies, but rather because he told the truth: “Además no inventé nada ni mentí. Como siempre, dije la verdad.” Such a statement of authority by the speaking subject can be troublesome; yet, through the development of the story, the reader learns the details and confirms the narrator's veracity.

The narrator did speak the truth to the actor who plays “Melchor” when he informed him that there was a spot of make-up on his face, seemingly an innocuous comment about appearance. Yet, the reader also learns the deeper significance of the besmeared cheek and the impulse that motivated the narrator to mention it.

The woman playing “Gaspar” had been given precedence over the narrating subject for the role of this king, a role that he had been repeatedly promised and constantly denied.

28 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 15.
This woman was also participating in unseemly behavior and, "no parecía una dama, y mucho menos un rey:" she had been involved in an adulterous affair with the actor who played "Melchor." Understanding these details, it can be verified that the speaker spoke the truth, even if he was guided by jealousy in doing so. Certainly, this is a behavior natural and common to the human situation.

Later in the story, the reason the narrator has been denied a central role and has been offered only the role of a reindeer is revealed. The narrating subject states: "Este año no aguanté. Le reclamé que nunca me diera chance de ser rey mago." To this demand, his boss replies frankly: "¿Cuándo se ha visto un rey enano? Para ese papel se necesita alguien algo, fuerte, con presencia."

This is first mention in the entire text that the speaker is a dwarf. That it comes toward the very end of the narrative is significant. Organizing the story in this manner, then, focuses on the development of the character, rather than on the character's disability.

Prior to this revelation, the protagonist is behaving in a manner that can easily be recognized by any reader: the desire to improve one's role in life (figuratively and literally), the frustration of repeated negation, the jealousy over an improper relationship. When the speaker's

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29 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 19.
30 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 18.
31 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 18.
diminutive stature is made known, the validity of his behavior does not change. The focus does not shift to the limit or define the narrating subject's behavior from the reference point of being a dwarf. Rather, the central motivation still remains on the behavior of a jealous man. That he is a dwarf is secondary to the narrative, and indeed, secondary to his life.

"La dimensión de un hombre" is another example of this normalizing perception of extraordinary characters. This narrative begins with an uncomfortable and unusual scene in a funeral parlor:

Don Ramón se quedó mirando. Aunque eso disminuiría sus ganancias se le notaban las ganas de proponerme que comprara un ataúd para niño. Era más barato que uno para adulto y, de habérselo pedido, él hubiera cambiado el forro blanco por otro más a tono para sepultar a un hombre de 38 años, la edad de Fermín cuando murió. Con todo y eso pregunté el costo de una caja grande.32

The reader has only a hint that something is perhaps different. The funeral parlor director, contrary to his own financial gain, wants to suggest that the protagonist purchase the smaller, child's casket for Fermín. No reason is immediately given, however, to explain this behavior. It is not until a paragraph later that the narrating subject mentions that Fermín was a person of reduced stature. The focus of this story is not necessarily on the

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32 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 39.
fact that the recently departed Fermín was a dwarf, rather it is on the love he shared with the protagonist. Through this love, she is able to appreciate life from his point of view.

The changes he affects in the narrator begin before they even know each other well. After the narrator and her class have a chance meeting with Fermín on a field trip to the fair, the students start to ridicule him and the narrator finds herself changed:

Su tono burlón me molestó más que ciertos comentarios sucios que luego tomaron la forma de dibujos horribles. Mientras los borraba, pensé cuántas cosas iguales habría visto y oído el "hombrecito."33

Through the relationship that then ensues between the speaking subject and Fermín, she learns that, "en el mundo no hay un hombre tan pequeño y tan grande como él."34 Her entire perspective changes:

Nunca pensé que una persona pudiera sentirse feliz de saber la fecha aproximada de su muerte. Tampoco creí que alguien llegara a enamorarse tanto como yo de un hombre de 48 centímetros de alto - ésa era la estatura de Fermín."35

Even the wording of this passage is significant in that she first mentions her newly found outlook on life and death and then comments on her profound love. The fact that

33 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 40.
34 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 42.
35 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 39.
Fermin was a dwarf is mentioned last. And, even within the articulation of this information, his height is given low priority. He is not defined by his height, nor is his stature the only way to describe him: he was, first and foremost, a man. She has learned, then, to look beyond his deformity and to understand him as an individual, as a fellow human being.

These stories offer two options to the readers when faced with a situation wherein one individual may be “different.” One option is to behave like the boss of the Epiphany play and the children: to immediately eliminate the person's usefulness, and, also, the person, based solely on a visual impression without getting to know the individual and considering other options. The other option is to be like the narrating subject who could break with the traditional priority given to the visual and physical elements and instead concentrate on inner character.

Pacheco's narrative strategy in which the "abnormality" is not revealed as a primary characteristic provides and guides the reader through the second option. Since the deformities are not the focus, the reader has already begun to form an opinion based on the protagonists' actions, feelings, or commentaries and not on the physical difference. Therefore, more parallels, more connections can be made to be between the reader, the character, and the narrative situation.
5.3 BODY

Focusing ever more inwardly, the body as a narrative image/strategy will now be explored. Although certainly the previous discussions have indicated the presence of the body as well, in this section the body will specifically be examined in terms of the body as a site of articulation and the body as a commodity.

An individual's body can serve as a text for enunciation. The conceptualization of the body, particularly as it relates to gender, has been a critical hot-bed of theoretical discussion. As Kaminsky states:

The human body is not just a physical phenomenon in the natural world; it is one of the most heavily burdened bearers of meaning in culture, and one of its richest sources of meaning derives from its gendered character.

This duality, and frequently a multiplicity, is exhibited, both in theoretical applications and in narrative explorations. Kaminsky continues, "both sex and politics are going on, at the same time, neither subordinated to the

36 My choice of the term "hot-bed" is intentional, especially as it seems an appropriate reflection of the controversy. The issues of the body are certainly not a recent concern: theorists have been exploring it for some time, such as Simone de Beauvoir, Julia Kristeva, and Hélène Cixous, who planted some of the early contradictions. More recently these issues have been discussed by critics such as Luce Irigaray, Paul Julien Smith, Sylvia Molloy, Amy Kaminsky, and Judith Butler.

other, but rather in a reciprocal relationship."38 It is fundamentally a relationship of power in which all too often reciprocity is just an ideal. Judith Butler comments that the body "often appears to be a passive medium that is signified by an inscription from a cultural source figured as 'external' to that body."39 She continues to describe the body's permeable characteristic. Kaminsky, too, notes this quality:

The official and unofficial policies of the state are played out on the bodies of its citizens, thus becoming the intimate personal experience and shaping the unique vision of the individual that gets expressed in what we recognize as the writer's particular voice.

Pacheco expresses these "body texts" as authentic representations of those "policies." This expression is ultimately a political one and reiterates Butler's concept of marginality as defense:

The point is not to stay marginal, but to participate in whatever network of marginal zones is spawned from other disciplinary centers and which, together, constitute a multiple displacement of those authorities.41

However, before they can be used as a tool for dismantling hegemony, these "marginal" zones must be expressed. Debra

38 Kaminsky 136.
40 Kaminsky xv.
41 Butler, Gender Trouble xv.

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Castillo studied such zones, particularly as relates to Mexican prostitutes, and she found that expressing these zones caused, "the unsettling shift in authorial and readerly perspectives [that] forces a reevaluation of all parties involved in the production and reception of works of art." 42

In terms of Pacheco's texts, in "Villa Romana" a very positive body discourse is depicted, albeit one still dictated by gender. As mentioned previously, a couple is vacationing alone. The freedom of isolation has allowed them to express uninhibitedly their carnal desires. When Mario complements Olga on their previous night's activity, she is both embarrassed and delighted:

El restaurante está vacío. Olga sabe que nadie los escucha, sin embargo enrojece, pero esta vez porque la frase de Mario la remite a ciertas imágenes de su amor nocturno. Ayergonzada, nerviosa, se ordena el cabello. 43

She expresses her contradictory emotions through her physical reactions: she turns red in the face and she fixes her hair. Ironically, her body, which reflects her mixed emotions, is the source of her emotions. Although she continues to chide his use of intimate conversation, looks, and touches in a public place, she does finally admit that such communications make her feel desired and valued:

43 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 137.
Therefore, she express her thoughts and feelings both with her language and her body.

"La grieta" presents an opposite case in that the body is no longer a site of pleasure and communication, rather it is one of pain and silence. Domingo and Elena return from a disastrous rendezvous. Their intention to spend an intimate evening together concluded in ruin when Elena caressed a scar on Domingo's back. Her seemingly innocuous act of caring provoked a violent verbal reaction from Domingo, one that had enough force to drive Olga physically away from him: "Son las frases que la arrojaron del lecho desnuda, llorosa; que la persiguieron hasta ponerla contra la pared helada." In fact, his reaction was so strong, the hotel manager was concerned, "El administrador golpeó la puerta y preguntó: 'Oigan ustedes dos ¿qué jaleo es ese? Señora, ¿por qué grita? Abran, abran.' Afterwards, the two drive back to the city, but enveloped in silence: Olga feels reproached and scared by her lover's sudden rejection of her.

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44 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 139. The use of the ellipses is Pacheco's.
45 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 49.
46 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 45.
and her actions while Domingo is not yet able to explain his reactions to her, nor to himself.

The scar on his body is the locus for their difficulties. This physical mark is something that Domingo has tried all his life to repress, to ignore, to shut out: "Cuando se baña evita tocarla y jamás la mira. Durante veinticinco años hizo lo posible por olvidarla." Yet, this body text was read, in an equally tactile manner:

Basto la presencia de Elena, su tacto, el calor de sus labios, la humedad de su lengua, para que la cicatriz apareciera otra vez sangrante, inmensa, brutal, acusadora.

Therefore, once this bodily discourse was brought into the open (or read), Domingo could no longer ignore it or what it represents.

Finally, he explains the "text" to Olga by recounting the abuse he suffered as a child. His stepmother brutally beat him with a baseball bat and, in order to stay in the hospital, the only place where he felt cared for and safe, he mutilated himself by making the original injury worse. Later, as an adult, his action would be to hide these facts from others and from himself; a symbolic continuation of his self-mutilation.

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47 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 47.
48 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 46.
The initial cure for this self-mutilation, for this ignoring of the body, is offered through another body, that of Olga's:

Sólo quería besar tu cicatriz. ¿Por qué? No sé. Quise acariciarla porque es parte de ti, de tu cuerpo; quise besarla porque de ese modo creí que te quitaba todo recuerdo de dolor.  

As the narrative concludes, the two lovers embrace on a city street: in a public and open space, one body reads another body, comforts another body.

In addition to the use of the body as a site for communication, the body is also expressed in El corazón de la noche as a commodity to be traded for goods and information. The case of “Sala de tortura” is particularly vivid. The cold (almost institutional) brutality inherent in the title is reiterated throughout the narrative.

Ismael has been unjustly accused of trafficking in illegal narcotics and other contraband and was taken into police custody. The authorities do not accept his pleas of innocence and they bring in his wife Rebeca as a means of making him confess.

She becomes acutely aware of her body as she is driven to the, “edificio muy alto” that she cannot identify. Seated in the back of the patrol car, accompanied by one of

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49 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 48.
the officers, she notices that her physical presence in the patrol car is met with stares:

Entonces se dio cuenta de que varias personas la contemplaban con una mezcla de curiosidad y lástima. En los labios de un hombre alcanzó a leer una frase: Pobre mujer, quién sabe qué habrá hecho. ⁵⁰

Her unease steadily intensifies as she is guided through the building, subjected to a series of questions ascertaining her identity and habits, and, finally culminates when she is brought into the room where her husband had been, and is being, interrogated:

La habitación estaba casi a oscuras. El eco de las pisadas permitía adivinar que se trataba de un espacio amplio y vacío. Antes de que Rebeca pudiera ver a Ismael le oyó gritar: A ella no. Por su madrecita, a ella no. Entonces lo vio tendido en el suelo. Desnudo, con los brazos y las piernas abiertas, tenía levantada la cabeza. Rebeca vio las heridas en su cara, gritó, logró dar unos pasos hacia él pero el hombre de las gafas la detuvo. ⁵¹

Through the wounds on Ismael's body, it is already clear that the authorities have been using it as a means for a trade of information: the physical beatings will cease if he confesses. Rebeca's body has been brought in for similar reasons. The officer plans to rape her in front of Ismael unless he tells them what they want to hear, "Me gusta tu

⁵⁰ Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 126-7. The use of italics is Pacheco's.
⁵¹ Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 128-9. The use of italics is Pacheco's.
vieja y voy a ocuparla. . . No vas a impedirlo chillando y gritando. Ahora sí, hablas ¿no?"52 Just as it appears that the rape will proceed, regardless of Ismael’s confession, the violent act is interrupted with the announcement that the correct perpetrator has confessed. Never admitting that detaining and using Ismael’s and Olga’s bodies was a mistake, the officers release them.

Nevertheless, the memory of this crime perpetrated against the body will not be so easily resolved. Olga understands that Ismael, “vivirá para siempre con una herida muy honda: mi cuerpo.”53 Their home and their bed, the most intimate space for the body, have been converted into a jail wherein, “sus cuerpos están aislados por el mismo recuerdo.”54 Since the narration begins and ends with the bodily isolation, a closed and isolated discourse is implied and reflects the states of the protagonists’ bodies. It is difficult to reestablish the openness and intercommunication once the body has been converted into and used as commodity.

“Memoria de sed: el camión se detiene” is another example of using the body as commodity. During a particularly severe draught, Gozos is forced to sell her body in trade for water. Although this narrative may seem different from “Sala de tortura” in that the body is not

52 Pacheco, EL corazón de la noche 130. The use of italics and the ellipsis is Pacheco’s.
53 Pacheco, EL corazón de la noche 130.
54 Pacheco, EL corazón de la noche 125.
outwardly and physically forced into objectification for trade, I propose that it is forced, although it is done so through a situational process.

Gozos is pressured into finding a solution to the problem of the lack of water. Her husband, as noted in his conversation with her, is demanding and unsatisfied with her results thus far:

ARTEMIO. Si hay algo que me cargue la madre es volver del trabajo y que no haya ni una pinche gota de agua. ¿Qué tomo o qué?
GOZOS. Refresco, ¡pos qué más!
ARTEMIO. No ¡qué! Los pinches refrescos no me quitan la sed.
GOZOS. A mí tampoco pero ¿qué quieres que haga?
ARTEMIO. ¡Conseguir agua!
GOZOS. ¿Crees que no hago la lucha? Yo la necesito más que tú: para guisar, para todo lo de la casa.
ARTEMIO. ¡Ya cállate, pendeja!
GOZOS. Pero ¿por qué me gritas?
ARTEMIO. Porque no sirves para nada. ¿Qué te costaba haber ido a traer tan siquiera una cubeta con la Güera?
GOZOS. Tampoco ella tiene. Además, le dobo dos cubetas que no he podido pagarle.
ARTEMIO. ¡Por huevona! En vez de pasarte el día agarrándote las quijadas ¿por qué no sales a buscar a los piperos?
GOZOS. Ya nomás viene uno y no entra hasta acá. No le gusta porque se le atasa el camión. Hay que ir a zanquearlo hasta La Quebrada.
GOZOS. ¿Y con qué agua voy a lavarla? Cuando la consigo no puedo gastarla en eso. La guardo para tomar, para la cocina o para bañarme.
ARTEMIO. Por cierto: ¡ya te yíste? ¡Puras cascarrías! Das asco. 

55 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 161-162.
Based on his replies and complaints, and in spite of the fact that he uses the water too, the entire responsibility for procuring it falls to Gozos. When she attempts to explain the difficulty of this task, he rejects her reality by telling her to be quiet and by insulting her. She is not even able to articulate to him the real price that the water deliverers charge: the sexual use of her body.

This narrative situation of self-prostitution reiterates what Kaminsky calls the, "need to take into account that which is most repressed and most forbidden." The husband saddles Gozos with unrealistic demands and actively refuses to listen to or understand the situation. All he wants is water in the house by the time he returns from work: how Gozos accomplishes it is her problem. Through his silence (he does not offer her any alternative solutions to the water problem), he implicitly refers to those solutions most repressed and most forbidden. Ultimately she will pay for the water with her body: either with the, "infierno de gritos, golpes, reclamaciones, insultos, sed," in her home or with the sexual consumation with the delivery driver.

Faced with this situation, then, the ironically named Gozos had no choice than to finally succumb to the delivery

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56 Kaminsky xiv. Although she develops this argument in reference to Latin American materialist literary criticism, I find that it is just as applicable to Pacheco's narrative.  
57 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 161.
man's conditions. After having prostituted herself, she realizes that the conditions have changed: the "price" has gone up and now one encounter is only worth half of a container of water. The driver is pleased at his "economic" acumen and comments, "El estiaje va a estar muy duro para ustedes... Para mí, puede que no tanto." Business is booming.

As evidenced by these examples, articulations of the body do not discriminate in that both positive as well as negative discourses are stored and/or communicated simultaneously. And, although it is possible to re-write the future endings to some of these texts, as perhaps is implied in "La grieta," most often it is a very difficult, if impossible process, as illustrated in "Sala de tortura."

The attempt to re-articulate the body or its memory in order to erase or ignore one element over another is a futile activity. The case of "La grieta" expresses this in that although the protagonist tries to suppress the past reality of this body (the physical abuse), he is ultimately unable to do so. It is a part of him and cannot be ignored as such.

This process is similar to García Canclini's exploration of modernity in Latin America. He stresses that for the traditionalists as well as the modernizers the ideal

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58 Pacheco, *El corazón de la noche* 165. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
was the creation of a pure object, particularly in that, "la modernización terminaría con las formas de producción, las creencias y los bienes tradicionales." He later points out, in fact, that, "ni la modernización exige abolir las tradiciones, ni el destino fatal de los grupos tradicionales es quedar fuera de la modernidad." To paraphrase, he is highlighting that both supposedly traditional as well as modern elements must exist together to form modernity: one without the other is invalid. This is the same sort of blending that is occurring in these articulations of the body. The entity, be it an individual or a culture, must be understood as a totality: both the positive and the negative, the present and the past, must be examined and appreciated integrally.

5.4 EMOTION

Moving ever inward, and temporarily leaving behind the tangible quality of the body, the essential sense of expression will now be examined. The dual connotations of expression, referring both to emotion as well as to the verbal and non-verbal manifestation of emotion, must be considered. One of the most prevalent expression/emotion dyads reiterated in Pacheco's texts is that of silence and loneliness.

59 García Canclini, Culturas híbridas 17.
60 García Canclini, Culturas híbridas 221.
Indeed, some of the situations that point to a physical and aural void are quite evocative and compelling. Silence is not only portrayed as a pseudo-defense against both psychological and physical abuse, but it also reflects frustration at the lack of true communication. Both of these tendencies point to the central idea that silence used as a tool of oppression, one which results in isolation or loneliness, must be broken so that voices can be heard.

"Por siempre juntos" stresses the image of loneliness. The importance of maintaining a family together, even in times of great despair such as during the earthquake or after an eviction, is paramount: "Si algo nos sucede que sea juntos." In this case, maintaining unity means that a family of twelve must temporarily live on the city streets, beg for assistance, and explain their circumstances to anyone who will listen. Finally, they reoccupy the home from which they were evicted when someone breaks off the lock. This transformation, the return to the former home, took place, though, through the fact that all twelve members of the family told their story. Regardless of living in constant fear of re-eviction, they stay together permanently, a unified front of resistance:

Desde que volvimos nadie ha salido del edificio. Mis hijos no quieren dejarme; dicen que les da miedo que vuelvan los licenciados y me encuentren sola. Mis vecinos tampoco han salido; permanecen

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Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 187.
atentos, mirando a ver qué sucede.62

"La espuma de los días" presents a contrastive image in that it reflects a female protagonist who tried to use silence to negate herself and to negate her voice, but, in the end she could not achieve it. The story is narrated through the dialogue of family members and friends as they gather together to commemorate the completion of the protagonist's house. Central to this banter is the topic of drinking beer: the protagonist is concerned that her son is drinking too many bottles of beer. Her chastisement of him is verbally negated by her husband's insistence that everyone have another beer. Considering the pressure placed on her by her husband Vicente, the protagonist reluctantly acquiesces:

ESPOSA. Prefiero beberla de un jalón. Odio la cerveza.
INVITADO. Lo mejor porque la probaste ya grande.
ESPOSO. La probó conmigo. Yo le invité la primera, un domingo que salimos, ¿no es cierto, vieja?
ESPOSA. Hace 19 años.
ESPOSO. Pero nunca dijiste que odiaras la cerveza. Oye, ¿qué te pasa? ¿Adónde vas? Yo no le dije nada malo, ¿por qué va llorando?63

62 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 188.
63 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 151. Only three characters in this story are named: the priest Juan (who blessed the house and then left before the beginning of the narrative), the husband Vicente, and Chepina, who is not identified in terms of her relationship. In order to maintain parallelism in the above citation, I chose to list the protagonists by family relation.
Her silence of nineteen years has expressed its first utterance: a sob. Alone with her comadre, she relates "muchas cosas que nadie sabe," specifically the details of her first date with her future husband.  

She reveals that it was on her first unchaperoned date with Vicente that she drank beer. Although the beer made her ill, he did not heed her pleas to take her home: "Le supliqué que me llevara a la casa pero ni me oía." This is the first instance in which her emotion was met with silence: instead of taking her home, Vicente proceeded to consume more beer and the date dragged on much later than anticipated. Frightened that her family would punish her for arriving at home so late with him, and too scared to take a taxi by herself, she had no other option than to accompany him to his house, where his family received them both as if it were natural:

Nos dejaron un cuartito que estaba junto al de mis suegros. Imaginate, no tenía puerta. Nos acostamos casi vestidos y así me tomó. Cuando acabó sentí mucho dolor y vergüenza. Se lo dije pero no respondió: se había dormido. Yo no pude pegar los ojos. Me la pasé llorando. Temprano me levanté y lo único que se me ocurrió fue salirme a lavar su ropa al patio. . . Desde entonces he seguido lavándola y esperando oír algo que nunca me ha dicho: que me quiere. . .

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64 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 152.
65 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 153.
66 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 153-154. The use of the ellipses is Pacheco's.
Her silence has been kept for naught: not only has she never heard words of endearment from her husband, but also he has never realized the impact of their first night together. Instead of defending her from the memory of this situation, her silence has actually made the memory stronger and has condemned her to relive the memory.

During the party, her verbal protests were overpowered by her husband's insistence, just as they were on their first date nineteen years ago. The result, too, is the same: she drank the beer. Once again, she retreated to silence: she fled from her husband only to reveal, in strict confidence to her friend, her true feelings. Unfortunately, her habit of silence is even more insidious now because before, when she wanted to explain her pain and shame, he was unreceptive, passed-out; yet, this time, when he wants to know why she started to cry, she was unable to articulate to him her emotion and she hurriedly left the room. At first she was forced to be silent; now, she silences herself. Her self-imposed silence has isolated her.

The dual image of silence and loneliness in "Felicidades, abuelito" is also telling. The setting is the celebration of Don Rafael's seventy-ninth birthday and the ironic tone of loss in the narrative is established immediately: "Como siempre que es su cumpleaños hoy recupera dos privilegios perdidos: verse rodeado de su familia y
ocupar el sitio de honor."\textsuperscript{67} The imagery of pseudo-silence amid the cacophony is strong: "Impaciente cuando oye demasiadas conversaciones al mismo tiempo, tamborilea sobre el plato. Nadie lo escucha."\textsuperscript{68} As Don Rafael sits silently and observes critically his family, he feels that he has lost the power of the voice, the "autoridad de la familia;" he feels "rechazado, inútil, lleno de miedo al desamor y al abandono."\textsuperscript{69}

Silence is the one weapon that he has to combat these debilitating feelings. He pretends to be wrapped in a veil of silence, that is, to be deaf: "Su sordera es apenas un escudo contra la falta de tacto, la insolencia y el desamor que lo rodean."\textsuperscript{70} His silence also seemingly protects him from this true fear of feeling useless and powerless as he grows older. This fear is made tangible through the torrent of unasked, and thus unanswered, questions that plagues him:

Obtener respuesta a otras preguntas lo inquieta más: "¿Por qué nunca me incluyen en sus conversaciones? ¿Por qué cuando hablo parece que los sordos son ustedes? ¿Por qué no me dejaron invitar a mis viejos amigos? ¿Por qué tienen que poner la radio a todo volumen? ¿Por qué los sirve mi esposa, que está vieja y cansada?" Al fin formula una última pregunta: "¿Por qué ser viejo es tan triste?"\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{67} Pacheco, \textit{El corazón de la noche} 155.
\textsuperscript{68} Pacheco, \textit{El corazón de la noche} 155.
\textsuperscript{69} Pacheco, \textit{El corazón de la noche} 157.
\textsuperscript{70} Pacheco, \textit{El corazón de la noche} 158.
\textsuperscript{71} Pacheco, \textit{El corazón de la noche} 158.
Once again, Pacheco uses an accumulation of questions to echo the protagonist's situation. The urgency and futility, of asking these questions is reiterated by the anaphora's increasing tension. Even the graphic layout of this particular citation echoes this constant barrage of painful questions in that each "¿Por qué?" appears on the page in a way that resembles a profile of staircase in which the steps angle downward: an infinity of unuttered and unanswered "whys." 72

When, at the end of the story, a chorus of "que hable el abuelito" forces him to finally speak out loud, when they will finally listen to him, he eschews conformity and etiquette. He sets up and then rejects the formulaic and expected thank you to his wife: "Quiero brindar por quien hace posible su presencia junto a mí. . . . Brindo por el hada que los mantiene junto a mí: mi pensión de vejez." 73

Although his self-imposed silence and deafness have seemingly insulated him from his family's crude table-side banter, it has also let fester all of his unspoken questions, fears, and doubts. This behavior ultimately isolates him even more from his family. Illustrated in this

72 This downward angling can be seen in the graphic layout in the citation. The eye seems to follow the spaces between the questions in a descending direction, beginning in the upper left and ending in the lower right. The spacing evident in the citation listed above is very similar to that of the original.

73 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 160.
manner, the cycle of non-communication is a destructive practice.

For many of the characters in *El corazón de la noche* silence is not only loneliness, it is non-existence. While brief comments such as "como si no me oyera," "ni me veían siquiera," and "ni me oía" are prevalent throughout the collection of narratives, lengthier instances are even more evocative.\(^74\)

For example, the narrating subject in "La osa y el gitano" describes the transformation of Vladimiro from a rambling, confused, and sad old man into a silent invisibility, a negation:

> A fuerza de verlo merodeando por las calles, instalado en el atrio de la iglesia, en las proximidades de la zona comercial o en los tiñosos restos del jardín, Vladimiro se convirtió en un elemento más del paisaje. Su voz y el sonido de su pandero se ahogaron en el estruendo de la calle. Llegó el día en que nadie lo miró ni escuchó sus frases inútilmente repetidas.\(^75\)

His attempts at communication were misunderstood and rebuffed. He was converted into a mumbling non-being that became a static fixture of the local landscape. Some of the townsfolk would give him food and coins, but always "sin decirle nada," just as one would feed a wild animal. Such is the typical plight of the liminal beings that hegemonic society prefers not to recognize. Yet, here, through

\(^{74}\) Pacheco, *El corazón de la noche* 17, 19, 153.

\(^{75}\) Pacheco, *El corazón de la noche* 10-11.
Pacheco's narratives, these beings recuperate their spaces, their voices, and their humanity. She invites the reader to see and hear that which is normally not seen nor heard.

Although Vladimiro does not fight this negation, some characters do resist. One way to combat against the silence and the non-existence is to speak, even if it is speaking to one's self. When faced with the physical and emotional void created by her husband's death, the narrator in "La dimensión de un hombre" speaks to herself, sings to herself, or concentrates on the beating of her heart: "El ruido es mejor que el silencio: lo hace a uno olvidar."^\textsuperscript{76}

Similarly, in "Apartado postal" Eglantina mournes her late lover. In order to resist being swallowed up by loneliness, she creates any pretext just so that she may communicate with another human being:

\begin{quote}
La conciencia de su soledad asfixia y llena de pánico a Eglantina. Para desahogarse necesita hablar, no importa de qué, y se dirige a un hombre que viene en sentido contrario: "¿Me da su hora por favor?"^\textsuperscript{77}
\end{quote}

Her effort to make contact is vulgarly rebuffed and the desperation reflected in her attempt is particularly evocative when it is made clear that she asked the time while surrounded by time-pieces: "Esa es la hora, exactamente. Lo dicen el reloj de la Torre Latinoamericana,

^\textsuperscript{76} Pacheco, \textit{El corazón de la noche} 43.
^\textsuperscript{77} Pacheco, \textit{El corazón de la noche} 107.
el de Larín y aun el de pulsera que ella frota como si se tratara de un amuleto." Her need forced her to ask for information she already possessed.

Silence, loneliness, and the extremes to which one will go to create the impression of contact and communication are further expressed in “La sombra del árbol.” The narrator, an elderly female who lives in a partially destroyed building, awakens early one morning to a sound she has not heard since before the earthquake.

It was a sound she recognized well, a sound that reminded her of Chelina when she would thrash her chain against the tree that always, regardless of weather, held her in place, tethered outside like an animal. Prior to the earthquake, Chelina's father had kept her chained to the tree in the patio for many years, but when he was crushed by his falling house, the authorities unleashed Chelina and took her away. For many in the neighborhood, this was the first opportunity to actually see her:

Todos sabíamos de su existencia y mil veces nos dolimos de imaginar su condición. Sin embargo, nunca pensamos que una persona pudiera convertirse en un montón de cabellos sucios, piel acartonada y andrajos.

Aside from the neighborhood sense of guilt for knowing that this was going on, yet not interceding, the effects are

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78 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 107.
79 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 77.
personal. For the speaking subject, it was a time when she was forced to realize how truly alone she was:

Sí, era terrible saber que Chelina vivía atada a un árbol, era espantoso oírla gritar cuando su padre le golpeaba o se iba sin dejarle comida; pero de todas formas, ambos significaban una compañía para mí. Vine a saberlo cuando se los llevaron y yo me quedé en mi cuartito rodeado de escombros... En ese momento me di cuenta de que mi soledad era el tamaño del mundo.

Since the time when Chelina was taken into custody by the authorities, the narrating subject has lived in fear, silence, and loneliness, and has dreamed of the sounds of the chains.

Those dreams are converted into reality one morning when she awakens to hear the "beautiful music" of the chains clanging against each other. She finds Chelina leaning against the tree, "golpeando un trozo de cadena contra otro: la música tristísima de Chelina." The two look at each other, Chelina smiles, and the narrating subject ties her to the tree. Content to return to the only reality she knows, Chelina begins again her pacing, restless yet comforting, just like the caged animals in a zoo. The elderly lady, too, is content to have the silence and loneliness of her reality vanquished, and she begins again to sleep profoundly:

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80 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 76, 78.
81 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 79.
Sentí que en este momento caía sobre mis hombros la fatiga de muchos insomnios causados por la soledad y el miedo. Me acosté y por primera vez en mucho tiempo logré dormir hasta el mediodía.

The relationship between this protagonist and Chelina might not be perceived as entirely humane, yet, it does reiterate the importance of contact and communication.

In addition to the use of speaking or noise as a defense against silence, against this lonesome, non-existence, some characters write for themselves. In other words, they write when they cannot share their voice with another being. These writings, either in the form of notes to a deceased husband or personal diaries, are not written to actually be read, rather they are written as a defense against the silence, written as an expression of desires and feelings that cannot be vocalized.

"Fosa común" provides a poignant example. The protagonist is the only survivor after the earthquake destroyed everyone and everything in her building. For her, the days (as well as the years) after the disaster are filled with silence, a silence filled with the hopes of hearing any sign of life from within the pile of rubble: "No hablé. Me aguanté hasta las ganas de llorar y me quedé silencio [sic], atenta para oír una señal, un golpe, un grito que indicara que Manuel seguía con vida." Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 64. In a

82 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 79.
83 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 64.
state of shock, she sits near the ruins: "Las veía sin mirarlas, lo mismo que a la gente." What draws her attention in the aftermath of this urban disaster is that occasionally some people are finding each other, while others are leaving notes and messages to their lost or missing family members:

A veces dos que se encontraban en la calle nada más se abrazaban llorando. Muchas mujeres y niños escribían recados en las paredes o pegaban hojitas con números telefónicos a los que familiares y amigos dispersos debían reportarse. En esos momentos me di cuenta de lo sola que estaba: nadie me buscaba ni yo tenía a quién dejarle recados.

In fact, seeing these fortuitous reunions and messages of hope accentuates her solitude and she feels so terribly alone that she felt that she too must be dead.

Regardless of these feelings of utter isolation, she resists this black-hole "death" of non-existence. She crawls into the ruins in search for what was her apartment, in search for something that would verify that she had lived. All that she is able to identify as having been hers is "la puerta volando sobre el vacío." Yet, that "open" door, together with a pencil stub she finds amid the debris, are enough to show her the way back to existence.

84 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 66.
85 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 66.
86 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 67.
She begins to write messages to her dead husband Manuel everywhere within the ruins, messages that give her at least the illusion that her husband was alive and that someone was looking for her, that she was alive. Those written messages scrawled amid the ruins of what had been her life, her existence, gave her the force to reconcile with the disaster:

Las paredes donde escribí aquellos mensajes se cayeron o fueron demolidas, pero recuerdo cada uno con la misma claridad con que veo el ramo de flores amarillas que puse sobre la fosa común donde Manuel descansa en paz.\(^87\)

These messages to her dead husband serve as a type of memorial to his life: they prove that he existed and that he really was not just one more bloated and disfigured body among the tangle of corpses in the common grave. The paragraph cited above ends the story and, in so doing, creates forever a connection of individual identity that links Manuel to the narrating subject, the narrating subject to the author, the author to the text, and the text to the reader.

Another example of the importance of personal writings as an outlet for the self is evident in “Mermelada de fresas.” In this story, written in a discursive format that resembles a personal appointment book divided by times, the reader is thrown into the midst of an argument between Clara

\(^{87}\) Pacheco, *El corazón de la noche* 67.
and her husband Alberto. Alberto has found and read the hidden diary in which Clara has created for herself an imaginary love affair with Pedro, a local nineteen year-old who delivers groceries.

As more details are given, it becomes evident that Clara needed to write in her notebook so that she could have an outlet for the feelings that she was unable to voice to Alberto. Clara refers to this lack of true communication various times in the text: "No podía decírselo a nadie" and "¿Ves por qué nunca te dije nada? ¿Ves por qué tuve que escribir ese diario?" It is also reiterated in the dialogue between Clara and Alberto. They are not really speaking to each other or listening to each other, rather they are talking at each other from different planes. When Clara tries to explain why she needed to fantasize, Alberto, still convinced that she actually had an affair, interrupts her with a jealous, mocking tirade based on just one of Clara's words:

ALBERTO. No, no veo nada. Todo me parece una soberana estupidez.
CLARA. Alberto, oyeme. ¿Querías saber las cosas, no? Pues déjame decírtelas. Si no hubiera escrito lo que me pasaba creo que me habría asfixiado con la sensación tan... ¡maravillosa!
ALBERTO. Ahora resulta que ese chamaco pendejo es maravilloso, tanto que te vuelve loca y te hace cometer estupideces.

88 Pacheco, _El corazón de la noche_ 115, 116.
89 Pacheco, _El corazón de la noche_ 118.
Clara is trying to fulfill the indication of her name: she wants to explain in very certain and precise terms her complicated motivations. She tries to convey why a friendly chat with Pedro, a simple conversation of platitudes and niceties, was so essential and why she needed to continue, through her written fantasies, this wonderful feeling of human connection. However, her loss of communication is only further emphasized by Alberto's reactions.

Alberto, instead of listening to his wife's expressions of isolation, focuses only on a perceived threat to his masculinity: Pedro. In just this one sentence, Alberto castigates a boy who was only being friendly, denies his wife's feeling of loneliness, and relegates her and her writing to the category of ridiculousness. He has denied her humanity.

Since true conversation was denied Clara, she turned to private writing in order to feel connected and needed. Yet at the end, this outlet, too, has been taken from her when Alberto sardonically throws her written words back at her:

Tú lo escribiste: "Es peor no verlo. Cuando esto pasa, me siento sepultada: mi cuerpo es mi tumba." Mi vida, una mujer que escribe eso está al borde de la locura. Contrólate.

90 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 117.
She is being buried now not under lonely isolation, but by her own words and her husband's ridicule of her need for self-expression. Clara's only response continues:

CLARA. Así que lo leíste todo. (Clara se deja caer y se tapa la cara con las manos). ¡No tenías derecho!
ALBERTO. En cambio tú sí tienes derecho a todo.
CLARA. Pero ¿a qué? Dime ¿a qué? Todo me lo prohíbes.
ALBERTO. No es cierto: No te prohíbo que comas mermelada de fresa.  

According to the appointment book timetable of this story, Alberto only needed forty minutes to neatly relegate Clara to uselessness: fruit jam is not a necessity in life, only a sweet decoration; and, indeed, it is one that she tried to return to the supermarket. Her last, and only, means of expressing herself has been taken away from her. The hands that once wrote fantasies to express the void in her life now cover her face: she seals herself in her tomb of isolation.

In this narrative the technique of dividing the discourse into segments according to times (from 8:10 to 8:50 in the morning) replicates the speed with which Alberto silenced Clara to isolation. In much the same way, the physical format of "La guerra de los mundos" replicates the silence and the isolation of the narrative.

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91 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 117-118.
This particular story is presented as if it were a script for a drama or theater production. The scene as well as all actions are described through a format characteristic of stage directions and all dialog is indicated by each protagonist's name. In this text, a performance format is used to add force to the narrative.

The premise of the narrative is that a group of women are meeting in order to congratulate Mireya on the fact that she has been invited to present a paper at an upcoming, prestigious conference. As the "drama" unfolds, it is revealed that Mireya has not yet informed her lover of four years, fearing that he will leave her if she is absent for the eleven days of the conference. She cannot express to him her dual emotions: elation, for being invited to speak at the conference, and fear, for the possible abandonment.

A multiple irony is noted in the text. First, Mireya, who cannot even express herself to her long-term companion, was invited to address an important conference. Second, she had planned to present, "un tema provocativo: lo que nos cuesta a los países del Tercer Mundo el bienestar, la salud, el progreso de las naciones que forman el Primer Mundo."92 Certainly an interesting topic, it is one in which she denounces the hegemonic practice of acting upon the subaltern. This hegemonic/subaltern relationship is paralleled in the relationship between Mireya and her

92 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 102.
boyfriend. His priorities are given precedence while hers are subjugated. This point is made even clearer toward the end of the text. The boyfriend calls to tell Mireya that he has accepted a new job in Monterrey and that he plans to go there on his own, leaving her behind.

If these two important decisions are considered, one finds an imbalance. The boyfriend, whose decision includes a permanent and long-distance move, did not even consult his companion with his news. He made the decision independently and then, over the phone, coldly informed her of it: it was a self-centered decision in which she played no part. On the other hand, Mireya's decision involved just a short, temporary separation and yet she silently fretted about how her partner would accept the news: her decision was one in which she put his interests first and not her own. Even after receiving his news, she will not tell him about her conference. She prefers to remain silent and cancel her participation in order to help him move during these last few days they have together.

Mireya is painfully aware of the sad irony of her situation. As the “drama” draws to a close, she suddenly laughs out loud in a manner that surprises and upsets her friends. She explains:

Pensé en mi ponencia agresiva. ¿se acuerdan cómo iba a llamarse? “Los costos del progreso”. Ríanse, todo es divertidísimo. Según yo, iba a reclamarles a los gringos que tengan tan jodida a Latinoamérica, y ahora resulta que no me atrevo a
She had three opportunities to speak her mind. First, she had the invitation to speak at the conference. Second, she had the chance to inform her boyfriend of this honor and her desire to attend. And, third, after he unceremoniously "dumped" her, she could have decided to tell him to prepare for the move by himself as she would be at the conference. In all three instances, she isolated herself with silence and the "drama" ends with her responding to his arrival at the apartment:

Se escucha el timbre. Carmen, Jade y Enriqueta se miran. Sin hablar, se encaminan a la recámara. Mireya seca sus lágrimas y lentamente va hacia la puerta.

She responds with an air of defeat, her own self-defeat. Her situation was not caused by some external, foreign force, but rather by her own internal forces for which she must take responsibility.

This structure of a drama, then, functions on different levels. It represents the drama within Mireya: the conflict between Mireya and her own self-subjugation. It also represents the drama between Mireya and her boyfriend. And,

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93 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 104-105. The use of italics is Pacheco's.
94 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 105. The use of italics is Pacheco's.
it represents the larger drama between all those other individuals that are like Mireya and like her boyfriend.

Certainly, the images of silence and loneliness, and more importantly the relationships between them and their expression, are essential to the development of the individual. Both silence and loneliness can operate as weapons to be wielded for offensive tactics or as strategies to be employed for defensive maneuvers. By providing such varied examples, it would seem that Pacheco is exploring these myriad uses. She does not necessarily caution against their use, but rather suggests that they be understood.

5.5 CRITIC(ISM)

After having followed an inward path from the city, to the individual, to the body, to emotion (through silence and memory), the final trajectory faces outward once more. One must form an opinion based on the information so painstakingly portrayed. It is noticeable that quite often Pacheco manifests this opinion through criticism, quite often leveled at local bureaucracy and authority as well as institutions such as journalism. The political ramifications of this criticism cannot be ignored.

"Antecedentes penales" presents a perfect case for an anti-bureaucracy sentiment. Throughout the narrative, the narrating subject, an owner of a small, family-run hotel,
tries to understand the circumstances surrounding Carmelo's arrest and death.

Carmelo was a trusted employee who had worked at the hotel for many years. His dream was to migrate to Canada in order to improve his station in life. He had looked to the hotel owner for advice regarding the process of how to convert his dream into a reality, particularly regarding the bureaucratic logistics of the processes of legal international immigration. Although the owner was sad to see him leave, she was pleased to experience, vicariously, Carmelo's undying enthusiasm, an enthusiasm that even the endless paperwork and redtape could not damper. Carmelo exerts himself in his effort to migrate legally, even if it results in more work for him in terms of the bureaucracy:

Dice que si vamos a entrar derechos allá, tenemos que ponernos con lo que nos pida. Por cierto, ¿se acuerda que antier le llevé mi acta de nacimiento y diez copias? Bueno, hoy me salió conque aparte necesito el original de mi certificado de secundaria, una carta del banco donde se aclara que no he abierto ningún crédito y otra que certifique que no tengo antecedentes penales.95

He had finally organized everything he needed: airline tickets, passport, medical examinations, copies of necessary documents, even a heavy coat to protect him from the northern winters. There was one last requirement: the proof of no criminal record, the proof which costs twenty dollars

95 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 144.
in U.S. funds. Not having a cent left to his name and not willing to let all his preparations come to naught, he ends up robbing the money from the hotel till.

Caught in the act by the owner's nephew and detained by two policemen, Carmelo confesses his guilt and the reason for his actions. When the owner asks Carmelo why he did not just ask her for a loan, he honorably replies, "No quise que creyera que todas mis atenciones habían sido por interés. Además, se lo iba a devolver, se lo juro. Usté me conoce, usté sabe..." He takes a step forward to hug the crying hotel owner; his actions are interpreted by the police as hostile; and, he is shot dead.

For the sake of a certificate verifying his clean record, he not only committed a crime, he was killed for it. Ironically, the hotel owner orders a headstone marker for his tomb engraved with the words: "Sin antecedentes penales."96

This example also serves as a criticism of the police, who acted with unnecessary and excessive force. Such behavior by those in positions of authority is depicted quite often in Pacheco's texts. Some of the previously explored narratives serve as examples.

"La canción de Gabriel" illustrates the often self-serving attitude of the police. Although not indicative of

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96 Pacheco, EL corazón de la noche 147. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
97 Pacheco, EL corazón de la noche 148.
physical violence, the officers who rob the new arrival to the city illustrate a near sadistic joy in exercising their authority. Perhaps they did not harm him physically, yet, by taking advantage of his naiveté, they have robbed him of more than just his money and his brother's prize portable radio: they have robbed him of his dreams and of his faith: in many ways they can never be earned again.

Such profound psychological scars are also exhibited in "Sala de tortura," although in this case there are physical injuries as well. The officers acted with impunity in their detainment, interrogation, and physical abuse of this innocent couple. The manner in which the lead officer matter-of-factly stops his physical assault on the wife to go pursue the next interrogation is chilling:

De pronto se abrió la puerta. Desde allí un uniformado gritó: El Tuercas cantó pero le dio un telele bien gacho. Lo necesitan, jefe. Sin que cambiara su expresión, el hombre del bigote se puso otra vez los lentes y ordenó que nos dejaran libres.9

The authorities are depicted in a tripartite manner. First, they are inept, as exhibited by the mistake committed by detaining the wrong person. They are also cruel, as reinforced by the graphic physical violence perpetrated on both the husband and the wife. And they are uncaring and inhumane: while the chief was just doing his job, the lives

98 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 130. The use of italics is Pacheco's.
of two innocent people were altered forever. Such a depiction is certainly a condemnation.

Aside from the critiques of bureaucracy and police forces, several of the stories include references to the comings and goings of journalists. Pacheco levels pointed barbs toward those of her own profession, particularly as relates to disasters or scandals.

In “Fosa común” the narrating subject comments on how, even months after the earthquake, journalists still sought her for interviews:

[Vinieron] a preguntarme qué sentí cuando empezó a temblar, qué fue lo primero que se cayó, por dónde salí de la casa, qué pasó cuando supe que era la única sobreviviente en todo el edificio.

Her response is that:

No les contesto. Y no es porque no quiera. Lo que pasa es que todo lo que sucedió entonces se me borró, quedó enterrado en mi recuerdo como el cuerpo de Manuel en la fosa común.

At the time that the journalists came, she had not yet found a voice with which to articulate such a difficult occasion. Indeed, she would not be able to express herself until she found the remains of the open door and the pencil underneath the mounds of rubble. She needed to express herself in

99 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 65.
100 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 65.
writing to her deceased husband, not orally to the unknown journalists.

Notwithstanding, this passage is also interesting in that the journalists are portrayed by a series of uninterrupted questions. This series of inquiries seems to fly past the protagonist, leaving barely any space for response. And, although one of the questions refers to emotion and sensation, all of the others resemble only a list of facts. Moreover, the verbs are all in the preterite tense, which indicates a finality. Yet, the protagonist does not speak of facts nor of finality, she speaks of ongoing processes of loss, articulation, and recuperation.

Another interesting depiction of journalists comes in "La sombra del árbol." The narrator comments about how, after Chelina was untied from the tree and taken away, several reporters came to see the infamous tree and chain, to take photographs, and to interview her. The narrator mentions that they wanted to see "una niña salvaje" and "la esclava inocente." These names with which the journalists labeled the girl resemble headlines from the extravagant and sensational tabloids.

A clear contrast is drawn between the narrator's and the journalists' relationship with Chelina. Throughout the entire story, the narrator refers to the girl by her given name, Chelina, and speaks of her with a sense of poignant

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101 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 77.
tenderness. The journalists, however, refer to her only by her situation: she is not a person, she is a sensational object which can fill the front page, and more importantly, sell many papers.

Also notable is the action of the verbs used in the passage about the journalists: "corrieron"; "enseguida llegaron"; "llegaron curiosos"; "tomaron fotos"; "sacaron sus grabadoras."\(^{102}\) The speed implied in these verbs reflects the perception of how the journalists get wind of an idea or a story, swoop in, snag the details, snap a provocative photograph, and fly back out. Not once are they depicted as caring about Chelina as an individual.

This one paragraph, as well as the one in "Fosa común," undeniably examines the relationship between the journalist and the interviewee. And, as portrayed in both texts, it is a relationship in which the two parties are separated by a distance. This is even reflected graphically in the ratio between the space that the protagonists' comments occupies and the space the comments about journalism occupies: in each case, it is approximately five pages (for the protagonist) to one paragraph (for the journalist). This reflects each articulator's level of personal involvement.

These depictions are also representative of Pacheco's consciousness as an author, which remits to the ethnographic discussions on the writer as participant/mediator mentioned

\(^{102}\) Pacheco, *El corazón de la noche* 77.
in Chapter 2. They portray Pacheco's realization that quite often the journalist seems to enter the interviewee's life but for a second. The reader, through these examples, empathizes with the interviewee. Pacheco is aware of this possible perception. And as a contrast, and through her collection of narratives, Pacheco provides a model for an alternative, an alternative in which it is the journalist's responsibility to give way to the voice of the subject.

Although these brief references to journalism and its connection to the subject are reflective of Pacheco's style, it is in “El corazón de la noche,” the last narrative in the collection of the same name, that her concern for theory versus practice, and thus the play between author and authority/subject, is best illustrated.

The narrative begins with a student's comments on the sudden, but seemingly permanent, disappearance of his professor, who has stopped giving classes and ceased participating in scheduled oral practicums. When the student has a chance encounter with his former professor, he cannot help but ask: “¿Por qué lo dejó todo?” The response is not immediately forthcoming, but the professor does eventually begin to narrate his encounter, a year earlier, with a prostitute.

He had been working late one night when he was drawn to the window by the sounds of car horns, screeching tires, and

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103 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 190.
a shout. He observed several cars, including a police car, racing away from the body of a young woman, who was left lying on the ground. When he approached to help, she explained that she had been detained by the police because she was outside of her regular "territory" and that when they tried to abuse her sexually, her frantic escape caused her to run in front of the other car. The professor summarizes her actions: "Huyó y murió para defender su dignidad."

The professor is not only enraged by this situation, but also, and more importantly, he learns from it. This chance encounter has forced him to reconsider his priorities and his perspectives:

Cuando uno está demasiado metido en los libros se olvida de que las historias que narran las viven en la realidad personas comunes, quizá ignorantes de autores y fechas, pero llenas de sabiduría. Déjame decirte algo más: son seres capaces de morir por esas historias.

Just as the prostitute suffered the impact of the police cars, the professor was profoundly altered by his encounter with the prostitute. This profound change is reflected in that, although a year has passed since his

104 Debra Castillo, in Easy Women, explains that in Mexico City there are legal "red-light districts" where prostitution operates under the guise of bars. She adds that prostitution is perceived as more morally, than legally, reprehensible. 4-15.
105 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 193.
106 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 190-191. The use of italics is Pacheco's.
encounter with the prostitute changed his perceptions, he still cannot stop seeing her. Although, naturally, he cannot physically see her, he knows that what she represented is always there: not seeing does not mean non-existence. Therefore, throughout the telling of this encounter, his gaze is fixed on the spot where she lay dying, the space of her articulation and of his transformation.

The strength of this encounter is also foreshadowed early in the story by the professor's sudden change of habits and later by his inability to instantly reply to his student's questions:

Por la forma en que me miró comprendí que había sido inútil mi propósito de eliminar cualquier acento de reproche. No contestó de inmediato, no modificó su expresión, pero sentí que él también buscaba una respuesta.⁷

The parallel between the prostitute-professor-student relationship and the text-author-reader relationship is essential. The prostitute represents myriad individuals who struggle each day to live in a world that negates them; the professor represents the few people (writers, for example) who are changed by the subject and feel compelled to share its importance; the student represents the reader who, perhaps reluctant at first, listens and ultimately respects the text.

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⁷ Pacheco, *El corazón de la noche* 190.
Regardless of these connections or communications, the situation depicted in "El corazón de la noche" is not entirely perfect and Pacheco steps back to let her reader decide the next move. This is demonstrated through the actions of the protagonists. Although it is certain that the professor has been moved by the implications of his encounter, he has not converted this into practice. Quite the contrary, he has isolated himself completely. This is particularly ironic in that as a professor, he has the communicative means with which to share his understanding. Of course, he does finally share his experience with his ex-student, but this occurs through pure happenstance and at the student's insistence.

The alternative, a "call to arms," to the professor's isolation and silence is reflected through the student-reader relationship. This connection is established immediately by the first person subject who opens the story: "Mi maestro dejó de dar clases y también precindió de algo que le encantaba: conversar." It would seem as if the student, the narrating subject, were addressing her/his comments directly to the reader.

Then, through the progression of the story, the student's reactions reflect the processes that the reader goes through while reading these stories. At first, as they approach the topic, they are both concerned with their

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108 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 189.
personal agenda. For example, the student begins with his complaints about his missing professor: the student does not express concern for the professor's well-being, rather for the inconveniences it caused him. Then, as the professor begins his story by blurting out that he had met a prostitute, the student can think of nothing but a stereotypical image and dialogic platitudes:

Pensé que la escena correspondía a una vieja película. Me sentí tan avergonzado de mi pensamiento que me apresuré a preguntar: "¿Así que se llamaba Leticia?"}\109

When the professor is so moved by what he is about to tell that he pauses in order to get control of himself, the student begins to realize the seriousness of the situation and finds that he does not have the means or experience in order to deal with reality that his professor shares: "No tenía nada que decir."\110 The student can only respond with empty repetitions of what the professor has said: "¿Se refiere a Leticia? ¿Así se llamaba, verdad?"\111

A difference between the changed professor and the initially unenlightened student is also seen. When the student cannot immediately grasp the seriousness of the fact that Leticia was left to die in the street, the professor shouts at the student in order to provoke in him the

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109 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 190.
110 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 191.
111 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 191.
feelings of helplessness and frustration that he himself experiences.

The student is still not entirely as conscientized as the professor. And so, upon hearing the description of Leticia's disheveled and bloody body, the student, "ansioso de borrar la visión de aquella mujer," wants to negate the image (thus negating her and those like her). Later, when the student still maintains a superior and detached perspective regarding the situation, he is clearly rebuked by the professor:

ESTUDIATE. Son horribles los abusos que se cometen siempre con esas mujeres.
PROFESOR. No: ¡No me hables de esas mujeres! Ella tenía un nombre: Leticia.

In response to the student's questions about the police involvement in the accident, the professor states the brutal truth: "Nadie imagina nada. Si lo supieron, no creo que les importe. Pensarían que después de todo solo era una de esas mujeres." Regardless of the official reaction to her death, by asking about Leticia's condition, the student shows that he has finally begun to appreciate her as an individual.

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112 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 192.
113 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 193. The use of the italics is Pacheco's.
114 Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 193. The use of the italics is Pacheco's.
In summation, then, the student passes through a process of being concienticized. He begins with a self-centered perspective: he only cares about how the professor's absence affects him as a student. As he learns more detail, he adopts a position that echoes an hegemonic cliché: he conjures images of old films and groups Leticia with them. Next, he enters a phase of negation: he would prefer to not think about her bloody body. Finally, he reaches a position in which he can appreciate Leticia as an individual.

The emphasis on her name is significant in this last stage. Leticia is the only named protagonist in the narration: her identity is not just "one of those women," rather she is known by her name and her actions of dignity. Therefore, although the exchanges and changes experienced by the professor and the student are significant, it must not be forgotten that she is the impetus for such changes.

A reinforcement of this process of learning is expressed in the relationship between the first story of the collection and the last. As developed earlier, Vladimiro in the first story, "La osa y el gitano," has been ignored and negated by the people around him. One day, he just no longer occupies his "caja de cartón desdoblada."\(^{115}\) He has been converted into absolute invisibility and the same people that once fed him now lie to themselves in order to

\(^{115}\) Pacheco, El corazón de la noche 11.

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create a "happy ending" for him which also placates the
guilt they feel for not having truly communicated with him.
To a degree, this can be said of the professor, too. He,
like the people in "La osa y el gitano," had an encounter
with a "marginal" being. And, although he was profoundly
affected by it, he silenced himself, condemning himself to
invisibility. The negation imposed on Vladimiro and the
professor's self-negation can connote a closed, perpetual
cycle of silence and non-existence.

However, the student still remains, and his actions,
the re-articulation of "El corazón de la noche," imply that
there is a way to break the cycle of silence and non-
existence.

Cristina Pacheco has done this in her writing. In the
Autumn of 1996, I had the opportunity to listen to Pacheco
give the opening lecture to a "Performance Art" event in
which the prostitutes of Mexico City were honored and
remembered through a Day of the Dead altar and offering.

The Performance event took place in the early evening
in a plaza in front of a small church. The plaza and church
are a bit lower than street level, and so, the area is
surrounded by stairs (the overall impression is similar to a
small amphitheater). The altar was set up in the center of
the plaza. A central pathway down the stairs and into the
altar was designated with lit candles, bright orange
senpasuchi petals, and white chalk outlines of bodies drawn
onto the dark stones. The altar itself contained the typical Day of the Dead altar items: pan de muertos, salt, water, candles, food, sugar skulls with names written in fluorescent colors, photographs of the dead to be remembered, skeletons. The names on the skulls and the photographs were of prostitutes that had died due to their profession; the “skeletons” were real women positioned saggingly over metal bars and rails: the living dead. As part of the Performance approximately sixty women, prostitutes from the local area, stood shoulder to shoulder surrounding the plaza; they all wore black and white masks of death. As it got darker, all that could be discerned was the white of the masks.

During her speech, as these “dead” women took their position around the rim of the plaza, Pacheco mentioned again many details reminiscent of the “El corazón de la noche” narrative. It is my belief, then, that this story is based on actual events. Pacheco's example of dedication and action was reiterated by her presence at this event, which simultaneously remembered the prostitutes who had lost their lives on the streets and commemorated a recently established women's shelter. Aside from the artist who had organized the event, Pacheco was the only one who spoke. With words, that is, for the presence of the masked prostitutes was stronger and louder than any verbal articulation.
Therefore, just as the professor in “El corazón de la noche” witnesses a crash between the police and Leticia, Pacheco presents the reader with thirty-one reader-text collisions. She (author)izes thirty-one different spaces wherein multiple voices break the silence and isolation of their situations.

The end result of all of these changes and collisions is left open, however. One can assume that because the student has remembered in detail the discussion with his professor and has recounted it, he has not and will not isolate himself as his professor did. He will convert his theory into practice. Pacheco, in the same way, has left the decision in the hands of the reader: will the reader be changed? Will the reader be changed yet deny expressing it? Will the reader be changed and give a voice to it?

I claim that through her careful and caring personalization, through her precise and deliberate approximations through the city, the person, the body, and the emotion, the reader will become the critic who will lance criticism, the reader will be critic(ism). Moreover, the reader will be able to answer the questions posited in the title of this chapter. To the questions of “Who's heart?” and “Who's night?,” the reader can respond: “Our heart” and “Our night.”
CHAPTER 6

LA RUEDA DE LA FORTUNA AND OFICIOS DE MÉXICO:
COMMERCIALISM AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

El río de gente crece, forma oleadas desde Santo Domingo hasta Rodríguez Puebla. Las voces se confunden, los cuerpos chocan, las ofertas se atropellan. “Ahí viene el diablo,” “¿De qué va a querer su torta?," “Llévelas, llévelas sus tortugas Ninja," “Aquí tenemos la novedad, lo que le guste, lo que se acomode a su presupuesto.”
Cristina Pacheco

An unstable economic environment has plagued Mexico for at least approximately the last three decades. Although there have been intermittent periods of growth and stabilization, more often than not these are short-lived; they are but brief luxuries soon replaced by the harsh reality of emergency economic stabilization programs, hyperinflation, devaluation, and austerity measures. Statistics abound: In 1983 45% of the population of Mexico is underemployed.¹ A 1983 rate of inflation that fluctuated

from 60% to 100%.\(^2\) A two-day record of 35% peso devaluation in late 1994.\(^3\)

Nevertheless, statistics are mere cold facts: they are decontextualized and dehumanized. It is through personal stories of triumph and survival that the human magnitude of these macroeconomic forces must be examined.

These, then, are the subject matter of Cristina Pacheco's own collection of narratives, \textit{La rueda de la fortuna}, and her collaborative effort with photographer Ricardo Kirchner, \textit{Oficios de México}, both of which were published in 1993.

\subsection*{6.1 ECONOMIC EPISODES}

\textit{La rueda de fortuna} is a collection of twelve of Cristina Pacheco's previously published articles. These texts appeared between 1978 and 1990 in the Mexico City magazine \textit{Siempre!} And, also like many of her other works, each of these different articles is subdivided into smaller sections. This particular collection contains, in addition to an introductory note, the twelve articles, eleven of which have between five and fifteen titled subdivisions. The introductory "Nota" and the first article, "Tepito y Nuestra Señora de la Fayuca" are the only two texts that do not have any subdivisions.

\(^2\) Carr 102.  
\(^3\) Robberson A:1.
This particular collection is distinct from most of Pacheco's other collections partially because of the careful order in which the articles have been presented. Nevertheless, Pacheco's use of a blended, hybrid narrative technique is still exhibited.

First, with regard to the arrangement of the texts, whereas in other Pacheco collections, no precise dates are given for the original publications of each of the articles, in *La rueda de fortuna*, each article is dated by year and arranged in advancing chronological order. The first article dates from 1977 while the last three date from 1990. This progressive chronological order is essential in that it presents a time-line through which can be traced elements common to the daily lives of the protagonists, such as the cost of living and surviving under what appears to be a constant economic crisis.

An additional note regarding the number and the arrangement of these twelve articles (not including the "Nota") is that although the individual articles cover a range of thirteen years, the correlation between having twelve articles in the collection and twelve months in a year is unmistakable. Pacheco presents her texts in this collection almost as if they covered the life of one person throughout an entire year, and indeed, that one person would be the "pueblo mexicano." The significance of this comparison is even more apt when one considers that the last
few articles deal with topics which are definitely related to the last two months of the year. The penultimate chapter, "La dulce, hermosa muerte," relates to the celebration of the Days of the Dead, which traditionally occurs from the last two days of October through to the first two days of November. The last chapter, "Santa Clos llegó de Taiwán," obviously discusses elements relating to one of December's largest holidays, Christmas.

6.2 NARRATIVE HYBRID

In addition to the careful arrangement of the texts, the narrative strategies used by Pacheco are quite distinct in La rueda de la fortuna. In this collection, she presents the reader with an interesting narrative blend: some texts are direct question and answer dialogue, some are fictionalized narration, and some are a combination of both of these styles.

Some of the texts offer an obvious journalistic question and answer format, wherein the presence of the interviewer and the interviewee is unmistakable. In most of these cases, both Pacheco's questions and comments as well as the interviewees' responses are carefully attributed to each individual speaker. Naturally the interviewer is Pacheco: her presence is indicated not by the use of her name or her initials, as is the case of her interviewees and protagonists, but rather through the overall format of the
text (her questions and comments), via the interviewees' references to her presence, and the almost omnipresent use of the first person singular and/or plural.

The use of the format to indicate Pacheco's presence can be seen in two principal manifestations. The first, and most obvious, is her presence as interviewer. She often explains the reason for and introduces the logistics of the interview prior to beginning the question and answer format. For example, in "Dos obreros ante el naufragio," Pacheco states:

Para despejar toda inquietud, para justificarme por el tiempo que estaba robándoles a mis dos nuevos amigos, les expliqué que el objetivo de mi entrevista era mostrar a otros sectores de la población cómo viye, en 1985, y cómo enfrenta la crisis un obrero.4

The second indication of her presence, illustrated through numerous examples, is through the questions or comments attributed to her during the actual interview.

In addition to these methods, her presence is also confirmed by the interviewees' references to her. Quite often, the interviewee will address a personal question to her: "¿A poco usted tiene frío?"5 At other times, markers referring to Pacheco's presence are also used by the interviewees, such as, "Como usted verá."6 In several of

4 Cristina Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1993) 69.
5 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 68.
6 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 114.
the texts there is also a linking of mini-interviews or of interview excerpts in that one interviewee will call to another interviewee and/or suggest that Pacheco speak to another individual. "Santa Clos llegó de Taiwán" illustrates this in that practically all of its nine subdivisions display this linking. For example, the second section ends with: "Yo, por ejemplo, nomás estoy esperando a doña Rosa para que arme mi puesto y entonces sí, ¡a morir! ¡Verdá, doña Rosa? ¡Jálese para acá!" Doña Rosa, after some introductory description, then takes over the narration in the third section. Other section narrators guide Pacheco to her next encounter: "Pero mire, ¿por qué no les pregunta su parecer a don Evaristo y doña Carmen? Ellos también venden juguete." Comments such as these directed toward Pacheco fulfill what Roman Jakobson termed the "conative" function of language in that it serves as an imperitive form, commanding action from Pacheco. These types of commands shift the narrative focus and guide the development of the discourse. Therefore, such a linking not only unites these diverse voices, but also spreads the narrative authority to incorporate multiple perspectives, moves the narrative along its projected course, and, of course,

7 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 124.  
8 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 129.  
reaffirms Pacheco's participation in the narrative experience.

However, the most predominant reference to Pacheco's presence is through the use of the first person singular and plural ("yo" and "nosotros," respectively). Pacheco often situates herself at the location of the interview and shares her feelings regarding the situation: "Entro al Wings, ocupo un sitio en la barra y espero unos minutos, temerosa de que mis amigos se hayan arrepentido de darme su testimonio." This technique authenticates her involvement, validates her observations, and integrates her into the interview as a participant, which thereby sets up the pragmatics of the speech acts that construct the interview.

At other times, the first person plural form is used, which can be perceived as a stronger connection between her and the interviewee/the interviewee's circumstance. An additional example of Pacheco's presence within the text can be seen in "El drama de la realidad." In this text, she explains that, "la crisis inacabable nos ha puesto en contacto." 11

When she discusses the "cleaning up" of the image of Mexico, particularly in reference to the World Cup Soccer Championship held in Mexico City in 1986, she criticizes the mascot Pique (a personified jalapeño pepper wearing a

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10 Pacheco, *La rueda de la fortuna* 68.
11 Pacheco, *La rueda de la fortuna* 104.
sombrero): "El emblema que asume, interioriza y consagra la imagen escarnecedora que han forjado de nosotros quienes nos desprecian y nos invitan a despreciarnos."¹² Noted Mexico City cultural critic Carlos Monsiváis comments on the commercialism of this caricaturized emblem:

Promociones comerciales, abunden: balones Pique, matracas Pique, camisetas Pique, zapatos deportivos Pique, calcomanías Pique, juguetes Pique, de la saturación nació la convicción, en las reiteraciones se engendran las adicciones.

These examples, therefore, relate her involvement and include her in the group: she too, on a personal as well as professional level, combats an imposed stereotyping of being Mexican and she too suffers the effects of the crisis. Ultimately, these are the connections that confer authorization to her narrative.

Similarly, many of the identities of the interviewees are presented with a listing their full or partial names: José Manuel Ríos Ruvira in "Largo y sinuoso camino;" Pedro Ocampo Ramírez in "La tortilla: el alimento sagrado;" Doña Rosa in "Santa Clos llegó de Taiwán;" Susana in "Remember the Alamo." It is interesting to note that quite often when only a first name is given, it will usually be a woman's name. This tendency may relate to the theories proposed by Diane Freedman in her essay in Anxious Power. She explores

¹² Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 81.
¹³ Monsiváis, Entrada libre 203.
the long-held theory that naming is power. Therefore, in light of feminist articulations and appropriation, many of the women prefer to use only their given name, not their relationship name. Moreover, it may be possible that when Pacheco creates a narration, based on her experience but without a specific actual interview, she prefers to give only a first name. In this way, then, the protagonist can represent any person in that given situation.

Regardless, when using this narrative format, at times the initials of each individual are used to designate who is speaking. An example of this can be found in “Historia de la hamburguesía mexicana.” After Pacheco's introductory narration, the question/answer interview format begins. There are several interviewees, all of whom are related to or involved in the daily business of Heavenly Hamburger: Dea García de Ryan, Armando García, and Miguel Alemán. In the text each speaker is designated by his or her initials. Pacheco's comments are designated by a slash line. The dialog is facilitated for the reader by this designation of each speaker. This technique is an editorial practice added by Pacheco at a later date, as can be inferred by her comments about the difficulty of the interview: “No es fácil organizar la entrevista porque todos los presentes hablan al mismo tiempo.”

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14 Freedman 367.
It is also interesting to note that in many of the multiple interviewee texts, there are many examples of group authorization in that one interviewee will ask another to verify what he or she has said:

DEA GARCÍA DE RYAN. ¿Verdad, compadre, que vendíamos las dichosas donas en paquetes?
MIGUEL ALEMÁN. Sí, de dos y costaban veinticinco centavos.16

Sometimes the interviewees will give prompts for reaffirmation: “¿Te acuerdas?” or “¿No les parece, muchachos?”17 While, at other times, narrative subjects will defer and subsequently direct a response to a more qualified person to answer: “A ver, tú, Armando, ven a decir cómo era esto. Se me hace que tú te acuerdas mejor.”18 By employing this discursive technique, the narrative authority is spread out among multiple narrators thereby providing information that has been validated two, three, or four times.

At other times, and as a contrast, when the participants are not repeatedly named or designated, the reader must follow the text carefully in order to maintain the alternating interviewer and multiple interviewee dialog. This style is more similar to what Pacheco experiences in her interviews; therefore, Pacheco is practically placing

16 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 30.
17 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 32, 33.
18 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 31.
the reader in a position of concentration and participation in the interview. "Dos obreros ante el naufragio" presents an example of this style. Although the two interviewees, Manuel Martínez and Pedro Moreno, are initially named in the introduction to the text and the text does employ the slash lines as markers of speech, there are no specific designations as to who is speaking (i.e.: initials of the person before each slash line) and very few internal references to their names or Pacheco's presence are included. Therefore, the reader can slide into either the position of the interviewer or the interviewee, but s/he must also pay close attention to the direction of the dialogic situation in order to understand who is speaking at any given time.

Yet, other texts are crafted with a more fictionalized narrative wherein the interview format is eliminated entirely or is partially combined with more traditional narrative. Many of these seemingly more "literary" texts present narrators of unknown or imprecise identity. Some of the texts are blocks of what appear to be direct narrative set off by quotation marks; yet, since there is no introduction to the narrative, neither in terms of presenting the narrating subject's identity nor describing the narrative circumstance, the reader cannot be sure if the text is indeed a transcription of an interviewee's comments or simply Pacheco's narrative creation.
Other texts also exhibit clearly literary technique combined with "disembodied" quotations and Pacheco's third person omniscient observations. The first division of "Santa Clos llegó de Taiwán" exemplifies this in that throughout the short text certain phrases are reiterated: "Temperatura cero" and "Campanas silenciosas." These are very compact, yet powerful images and their planned reiteration cannot be missed. The reader is not sure of the source of the narrative: it may be solely the product of Pacheco's imagination; it may be Pacheco's stylized re-writing of her direct experiences and/or interviews; it may be, in part, the direct voice of one of her interviewees; it most likely is a combination of all of these possibilities.

The origin of these more fictional narratives nevertheless becomes a moot point in that, due to the combination of these narratives with the question/answer format, they are imbued with the authority and the veracity of the interview format and thereby accepted as fact based on an actual occurrence. The reader transfers the implied reality of the interview format, the first person narratives, and the identification of the individuals to these more fictionalized texts.

Naturally, one could argue that validity should not be awarded just because certain journalistic elements are used in a text. Indeed, the presence of protagonists with

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19 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 122-123.
complete names and the reference to real landmarks, businesses, and locations do not necessarily and automatically mean that all of the information presented is accurate testimony: Do those people named really exist? Did the conversations occur? Are they quoted and described accurately? The only fact that is known, and can be proved, is that Cristina Pacheco exists. However, if one begins to question Pacheco's fictionalized texts, then one must also question the validity of her interview texts. Since such a practice would generally be considered unproductive and ultimately unanswerable, thereby negating the existence and validity of both the interview and the non-interview text, the validity of both narratives must be upheld. Therefore, and as was originally proposed, the interview-format texts lend validity and veracity to the fictionalized texts.

6.3 AUTHORITY

Why employ such an eclectic blend of narrative format? Authority. Establishing the validity and reality of the narrating subjects, be they named interviewees or fictionalized amalgamations based on Pacheco's observations and imagination, establishes the validity and reality of the messages and descriptions conveyed.

Throughout the collection, La rueda de la fortuna reiterates the authority of these marginalized people, particularly given the theory that they are witnesses to the
larger forces that move Mexico. Both Pacheco and her interviewees state this quite plainly.

In the introductory "Nota" Pacheco explains her position and purpose:

Con las entrevistas que realizo, aspiro a individualizar a quienes otros llaman "las masas;" ver cuál es la realidad de las personas concretas a quienes generalmente sólo se representa mediante cifras y estadísticas; ceder la palabra a los mexicanos y mexicanas que, aun cuando son quienes con su trabajo crean la riqueza del país, pocas veces, en cambio, logran rebasar los límites de la pura supervivencia.

She echoes this humanization of the effects of the crisis later in "Dos obreros ante el naufragio." In this text, she recognizes the authority of those that live with and survive the crisis:

Ellos tienen una opinión más autorizada y, ahora sí, más realista que la de cualquier tecnócrata... Ser obrero en este país y en estos momentos significa, por una parte, llevar el peso de lo que la inhumanidad tecnocrática llama "el costo social" de la catástrofe económica."

And, again, in "La tortilla: el alimento sagrado," Pacheco criticizes the preparations for the World Cup Soccer Championship. She laments that these programs have had adverse effects for the majority of the urban dwellers, specifically as relates to the ambulatory street vendors who have been constantly harassed and relocated: "La medida que

20 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 9.
21 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 68-69.
hará la ciudad 'más atractiva para los turistas' resulta
gravosa para cientos de miles de mexicanos perjudicados;
para todos nosotros." Monsiváis' relays similar comments
about the contradictions this international event caused:

De las muchas ciudades erigidas en torno al
Mundial de Fútbol, las dos más extendidas, con
sus prosperidades respectivas, son la de Televisa
y la del subempleo. . . . Y la ciudad del subempleo
crece a 60 minutos por segundo, hace de cada
objeto en el universo una oferta, no consiente
milímetro desocupado en la explanada del Azteca.

Pacheco does inherently criticize governmental policy
that seems to operate at the expense of the people,
particularly the marginalized poor and working classes.
Just as Pacheco recognizes and attributes testimonial power
to the protagonists, they too are aware of their role as
witnesses. Indeed, their constantly reiterated complaints
seem to be given more weight, not just due to their sheer
number but also due to the issue of veracity and authority.
These interviewees and protagonists comment on and criticize
situations not as a rote "blame the government" defense
mechanism, but as a direct response to their personal
experience. The taxi driver in "El drama de la realidad"
points out the principal contradiction:

Por más que los periódicos y la televisión digan
que vamos muy bien, que ya la hicimos en el Banco
Mundial, que ahora sí nos está llegando dinero de
todas partes, para mí que andamos pero que nunca.

22 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 81.
23 Monsiváis, Entrada libre 212.
In spite of all the government's propaganda and publicity to the contrary, life among the humbler classes continues its difficult path: a path in which a corrupt and non-caring government operates. Pedro Moreno comments on the infamous local police who act with impunity, harassing the workers and stealing, through the "institution" of the mordida, or bribe that in this case is a large percentage of their pay: "Arriba le piden a uno que se identifique y aun así sólo lo sueltan cuando da mordida." Several protagonists also point out that the Conasupo cost-controlled stores, supposedly founded to help the poor, are often more costly or are not located where the need is the most dire. As one interviewee comments in "Largo y sinuoso camino: "Al gobierno no le importa nada de esto, no piensa en ayudarnos de ninguna manera." The same protagonist points out that the government has a circumstancial blindness in regard to the poor, who are always gathered around the Zócalo awaiting work:

Los políticos sólo nos miran cuando va a llegar alguna visita importante, un presidente de otro país. Entonces vienen y nos retiran de aquí para que no se mire feo el paisaje, para esconder nuestra pobreza.

24 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 109.
25 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 77.
26 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 93.
27 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 93.
This contradictory relationship between the poor and the government is curious in that although the government apparently does nothing concrete to help the underprivileged, many of those individuals feel a deep-rooted dedication to their country. Pacheco questions Delfino Juárez, one of the unemployed craftspeople who waits in the Zócalo for work, about the meaning of the Mexican national flag that flies over the area. His response is poignant, showing an inner strength and honor that defy his treatment and his situation:

PACHECO. ¿Qué significa para usted la bandera?
JUÁREZ. El símbolo de la patria, del territorio, del país al que quiero y al que defendería en caso de emergencia aun cuando a veces el país no me defienda a mí.  

His greatest desire is that the government be less corrupt and, "que por una vez, por una sola, el gobierno apoye al pueblo."  

Just as Delfino Juárez demonstrates this paradox, many of the other protagonists recognize their unique situation of being tangible examples of the larger economic plans that effect them. Dea García de Ryan clearly points out this perceptive observation: "Pues mire, sobre el pequeño comerciante siempre se proyectan las consecuencias de los cambios en la gran ciudad y de los eventos que en ella

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28 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 101-102.
29 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 103.
This interviewee continues to list all of the "big city" changes that have effected her business, from the building of the near-by metro (which cut her off from her clients) to rezoning (which cut space available for parking); yet, in spite of all of the difficulties, she, and her business, have persisted.

"El drama de la realidad" presents María Elena, a woman who runs an eatery in the Sonora Market and who has seen and felt, "el empobrecimiento progresivo 'sobre todo de los campesinos.'" The question and answer she poses are powerful reminders of the people's daily battle to survive the sanctions imposed by the faceless bureaucracy: "Los que le subieron el precio, ¿habrán tomado en cuenta a estas personas? Yo digo que no." Sadly, and ironically, even el Niño Ciego, the patron saint of the market, and his altar reflect the effects of the ongoing crisis:

Un indígena se acerca lentamente al Niño Ciego. Largo tiempo se le queda mirando, sin darse cuenta de que lo que se refleja en el cristal de la urna es su propio rostro adolorido, oscuro de cansancio. Se persigna y luego, con una expresión enteramente distinta, se queda observando los donativos. Rápido cuenta las monedas: apenas suman seiscientos pesos. Ríe con amargura y dice: "También el Niño está más pobrecito que antes."

The man is as blind and poor as the patron saint.

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30 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 38.
31 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 112.
32 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 113.
33 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 105.
These examples of authority, either through the transference of validity from the interview texts to the fictionalized texts or through the auto-recognition of one's own witnessing authority, clearly reiterate the importance of establishing valid and real sources. In "Santa Claus llegó de Taiwán" Pacheco asks herself how to begin to understand life as a sidewalk vendor in Mexico City. Her questions and answer are profound:

¿Qué elegir en esa arca abierta?, ¿por dónde empezar el recorrido de una especie de pequeña ciudad que tiene su propio ritmo, su lenguaje, su fisonomía dentro de la inmensa ciudad de México? Por las palabras.  

These words, then, reflect life not just among the vendors, but within the various professions, social classes, and situations depicted throughout La rueda de la fortuna. These words, regardless of who utters them, have meaning. They have authenticity. They have authority. They have power.

6.4 THE CRISIS

These articulations have more strength than statistics. These words, have the power to convey the effects of the economic crisis. It is a crisis not only in the financial realms, but also in the daily routines of the people. It manifests itself through the depictions of the division of

34 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 123.
the classes, the criticism of the government, the questioning of international finance policies, the illustration of urban migratory trends, the exploration of work situations, and the validation of pride and worth.

Naturally, the economic crisis that affected Mexico during the time of these texts (1977-1990) is a telling image throughout the collection. References abound to "la crisis," "los impuestos," "la devaluación," "los subsidios," "el plan 'tortibonos,'" and "el aumento." In "Largo y sinuoso camino" one protagonist ironically notes that the economic crisis, "es lo único que va en auge en el país." In fact the crisis seems to take on almost human characteristics: it is an enemy to be fought and it is an enemy that destroys.

6.4.1 CRITICAL CONTRASTS

Aside from the indomitable will to survive, some people fight back with the help of magical amulets and talismans for luck. However, even this traditional practice has changed. People no longer inquire about love potions when they request a reading of their future with Tarot cards. Rather, they ask for financial stability: "Como usted verá, en la crisis económica tan fuerte que estamos padeciendo, murió el as de corazones y resultó ganador el rey de

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35 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 16, 34, 81, 83, 89.
36 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 96.
Regardless of the valiant struggle, the pervasive power of the crisis has even destroyed traditional cultural practices. One such practice, for example, is the pride and responsibility associated with being the male bread-winner for the family. After finally accepting that his wife needed to work so that the family could survive, one protagonist laments:

En los tiempos de nuestros abuelitos, los hombres eran muy caballerosos. . . .A nosotros la necesidad nos quitó las ínfulas de caballeros y de machos. . . .La crisis nos ha quitado todo: la oportunidad de darnos gusto, uno que otro lujito - como las vacaciones por ejemplo -. Lo que más me duele es eso que le digo: que ya no es uno ni caballero, ni macho: es puritito jodido.

In addition to altering long-standing traditions, the crisis has also seemingly deepened the class divisions. The distinction between the classes is made very clear in La rueda de la fortuna, particularly through the use of contrastive structures. Many critically-charged contrasts, supported and validated by the protagonists, are drawn throughout the collection. For example, the gleaming riches of Perisur, a shopping mall representative of the affluent who buy and sell imported dreams, contrast sharply with the hustle and bustle of a street life wherein the humbler classes struggle to survive. As Pacheco sums up in “Cristo no compra en Perisur”: the area where the poor live and

37 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 114.
38 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 109-110.
work, "está manchado - como el agua, como la tierra, como la vida - por los desechos de las fábricas sombrías que hacen posible el esplendor de Perisur." Another example is the homeless mother who, together with her children, sleeps in parks, garages, hospitals, and bus stations and yet overhears other women that, "se quejan de que viven en casotas muy grandes, muy pesadas para tenerlas limpias." Ultimately, she is correct in commenting: "Yo pienso que no saben lo que dicen." Roberto Pantoja pointedly responds to Pacheco's question about how he will celebrate Christmas and the arrival of Santa Claus:

Por principio de cuentas déjeme decirle que Santa Clos no es más que un agente de ventas, el mejor aliado de las casas comerciales. Si algo voy a darles a mis hijos esta noche será alguna cosa de cenar. Que se conformen con que sean frijoles calientitos cuando mucho. Y fíjese lo que son las cosas, si uno se pone a pensar se da cuenta que aun un platillo tan pobre es ya un privilegio en estos tiempos.

He then proceeds to suggest that the government, if it really cared about the poor, would have set up soup kitchens and food pantries in, "las colonias más marginadas, en las cercanías de terminales y estaciones adonde llega tanta gente de provincia." Monsiváis writes provocatively about

39 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 66.
40 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 65.
41 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 65.
42 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 95.
43 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 95.
these migrants to the city. He calls them "la Pareja Legendaria" and their story is often repeated:

La "desesperación urbana" y su imagen arquetípica: la pareja desciende del camión, con bultos que incluyen 6 niños, y se lanza a conquistar el Edén subvertido. En el pueblo no hay trabajo ni agua, los latifundistas le imponen precios de hambre a sus productos, un hijo se les murió por falta de atención médica. . .La historia continúa tristemente, con las alegrías a cargo de la amnesia.  

Finally, this sentiment of critical contrasts in Pacheco's texts is echoed in "Largo y sinuoso camino," wherein a cheerfully and elaborately decorated Zócalo clashes with the need and desperation of the unemployed who gather there hoping to find work: "Yo pienso que, según como están las cosas, ese dinero debieron usarlo en comprar cobijas, zapatos, suéteres para los niños que viven en las colonias marginadas." These people recognize the contradictions of the governmental policies and their observations and suggestions are logical, accurate, and based in reality. Decorations only temporarily mask the hunger, the cold, the homelessness, and the unemployment: they do nothing to treat the cause, they are not an investment in the people.

In addition to these examples, another telling contrast deals with image: how the wealthier classes view the poorer

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44 Monsiváis, Entrada libre 237. The use of the ellipsis is Monsiváis'.
45 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 97.
classes and how the poorer classes view the wealthier classes. The characterization of these diverse classes begins, in "Tepito y Nuestra Señora de la Fayuca," with a scene of, "una mujer de edad indefinible (enagua, camisón epercal, trenzas, rebozo, arracadas)" who sits on the ground beside her dead son, waiting for the ambulance, which was called the night before, to arrive. All around her swirl the, "familias de 'bien' que desfilan con su disfraz de cómoda mezclilla; avanzan hipnotizadas, sonrientes, ante la visión de aquellas mercancías." The poor woman sees and calls out to the shoppers for aid; yet, they do not see her nor do they recognize any need beyond their own desire to possess the exotic international objects offered in the Tepito market.

When the affluent classes do actually see the poor, their reaction is depicted as one of disgust, fear, and loathing. In "Cristo no compra en Perisur" a conversation between two women trying to leave the Perisur parking garage depicts this attitude. Although the driver does not want to ask the 'lowly' attendant for directions, due to his, "aspecto naquisimo, siniestro" she finally does, only to be frustrated by her inability to understand him. The ensuing dialogue with her companion is telling:

Mujer A. ¿Qué te dijo?

46 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 13.
47 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 14.
48 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 64.
MUJER B. Yo qué sé. (Contesó la conductora, levantando otra vez el cristal). Esta gente no habla español, yo nunca les entiendo. Total, voy a seguir por allá, a ver dónde salimos. Está divino Perisur, ¿no te parece?
MUJER A. Sensacional, pero mira esas fachas. (Dice la acompañante, señalando a la vendedora y los peones). Recién inaugurado y también esto se está infestando de nacos, igual que el Pedregal. Yo digo que no deberían permitirles la entrada a estos lugares. Gente así, da muy mala impresión, ¿no te parece? Aquí uno paga bastante por todo como para ver cosas feas... 49

Furthermore, when some construction workers, caked with a, “máscara de cal y del sudor,” enter the Perisur delicatessen for lunch (because they arrived too late to eat the tacos and tamales offered outside, out of the trunk of a woman's car), they are greeted with “silencio y terror”: “El cajero, que ya tiene colocado el pie en la alarma y a quien le tiembla de pánico el labio inferior.” 50

These workers have crossed the invisible line that the upper classes have drawn in order to protect themselves. The affluent classes tend to cut themselves off from the poor, viewing them as foreign and as threatening as aliens. The actions of the women referred to above indicate this, especially through the imposed isolation, and protection, of their car. Before leaving Perisur, they practically barricade, or shut themselves apart, from outside

49 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 64. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
50 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 65.
influences: "Cerraron portezuelas, subieron los vidrios, encendieron el aire acondicionador, pusieron el estéreo."\(^{51}\)

6.4.2 TRANSNATIONAL CONSUMERISM

In fact, in these divisory depictions a distancing technique can be observed. In addition to the imposed isolation and the avoidance of having to deal with the poor within Mexico, the affluent prefer to escape the Mexican reality via frequent travel to the United States. Status and importance is garnered depending on the number of trips one makes to the United States. "Remember the Alamo" recounts several conversations in which protagonists brag about the frequency of their trips: "¿Cuántos viajes han hecho a los Estados Unidos?; -Miles, ya ni sé cuántos."\(^{52}\)

An almost blasé attitude about the trips increases one's value as well: "-Qué nos vamos a poner nerviosos, si a cada ratito venimos. A veces nomás me habla de la oficina y me dice: 'Ya tengo los boletos. Nos vamos mañana.'"\(^{53}\)

Yet, the impetus behind the travel is even more revealing. A trip to the United States means one thing and one thing only: the opportunity to shop and to surround themselves with imported products. The image that everything produced outside of Mexico is naturally better is

\(^{51}\) Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 63.
^{52}\) Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 56.
^{53}\) Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 55.
what guides these shopping frenzies. And, everything in or from the United States is especially better.

The myth of the gold-paved life in the U.S. is perpetuated. The list of examples is long: you can drink without getting drunk in the U.S.; smog and traffic jams never occur there; if the 'gringos' wear an item, it is fashionable and must be worn (even if it is a t-shirt stating "Remember the Alamo"); even the poor are different, because they are a better class of poor. García Canclini refers to this phenomena: "Buscar bienes y marcas extranjeros era un recurso de prestigio y a veces una elección de calidad. General Electric o Pierre Cardin: la internacionalización como símbolo de status."55

In "Remember the Alamo," one protagonist comments that she even takes home everything she finds during her trips to the U.S.:

Yo de aquí les llevo cuanto encuentro: los jabones, las gorritas de baño del hotel, sobres, tarjetas, menús de restoranes y hasta las cajitas esas donde ponen las hamburguesas de MacDonald's [sic].

Even items normally thrown in the trash, such as soft-drink containers are prettier: "Mira, una amiga mía se hizo una cortina para su antecomedor con puras latas apachurradas de

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54 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 51-58.
55 García Canclini, Consumidores y ciudadanos 15. The use of the italics is García Canclini's.
56 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 57.
This sort of consumerism is illustrated throughout all of the sections of *La rueda de la fortuna* as a type of religion. It is a religion, however, based on blind faith and illusion of buying and selling. The goddess that is adored is *Nuestra Señora de la Fayuca*, as introduced in the first text of the collection. The malls and shops are actually "básílicas," "templos," and "altares." The markets that specialize in imported products, such as Tepito, are practically Edens, described as, "el jardín de las Delicias" and as "este paraíso provisional." The objects of devotion are not saints, but rather imported products and luxury items that are, "las deidades [que] encarnan en forma y nombres extraños: Lovable Kids, Hypo Telephone, California Sun Club, Motor Cycle, Magic Fountain, etc." The consumers are not shoppers, they are devotees on a sacred pilgrimage, "peregrinos." And, naturally, these pilgrims must undertake their crusade to the 'Holy Land,' the United States, as an affirmation of their dedication and faith.

The gospel is no longer spread by faithful preaching to new members. This practice has been replaced by the

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57 Pacheco, *La rueda de la fortuna* 57-58.
58 Pacheco, *La rueda de la fortuna* 12, 59.
59 Pacheco, *La rueda de la fortuna* 42.
60 Pacheco, *La rueda de la fortuna* 122.
advertising sermons of mass media: television, radio, billboards, print ads: “Siempre quiere que le compro los juguetes que anuncian en la tele. . . . Cuando lo veo, pienso que los niños de antes éramos igual de pobres, pero mucho más felices porque no veíamos tantas tentaciones.” The ultimate punishment is not the threat of hellish fire and brimstone, but the revocation of the purchasing experience:

La madre ha hecho todos los intentos por mantener quietos y callados a sus hijos. . . . Al fin, fuera de sí, la madre grita: -Por última vez les digo que se estén quietos porque si no, ya verán cómo no les compre nada. En un segundo los tres niños se quedan inmóviles, silenciosos, aplastados por una frase que equivale a la más terrible de las condenaciones.

This blind, and highly international, consumerism is strongly criticized by Pacheco. She comments that in spite of all of the difficulties that travel entails (from obtaining a visa to the crowds in the airports and cities), the affluent are drawn by:

Las marcas y etiquetas extranjeras [que] ejercen una fascinación misteriosa. Nada importa cuando de consumir se trata y mucho menos si lo que se adquiere es la ilusión de que se vive como en el país más poderoso del mundo.

This type of conspicuous consumption relates to García Canclini's definition of purchasing: “Consumir es participar

62 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 113.
63 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 57.
64 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 52.
en un escenario de disputas por aquello que la sociedad produce y por las maneras de usarlo." Consumerism, based on the product purchased, is a way to differentiate oneself from others. In the examples examined here, the affluent are not buying a product, they are buying into a facade. Escapism is clearly indicated in this description of a shopping trip to Perisur:

Mientras camina, embriagado de aromas y presencias, se obstina en olvidar el barrio, la familia, sus diatribas juveniles contra la corrupción nacional, los sueños preparatorianos de pureza en un mundo degradado.

Alternately, a visit to Perisur replaces and imitates true communication: "Generalmente vengo nada más para no sentirme tan sola, tan angustiada. La plática con alguna dependienta, la conversación con otra compradora, hace menos pesada la carga de no hablar con nadie." A mall is, ultimately, an anonymous site.

These descriptions of the affluent, (their desire to separate themselves from the poor, their feelings of disgust toward the poor, their dependence on foreign consumerism), all heighten the sense of an imposed, artificial, misguided, unfulfilling cultural isolation. It is not necessarily an existence grounded in reality or authorized by veracity as

65 García Canclini, Consumidores y ciudadanos 44.
66 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 63.
67 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 60.
is the existence of the poor; it is an exclusionary image in that all other except for the affluent are excluded.

In contrast, the image the humbler classes have of themselves and of the affluent classes is one that is marked by a true interaction and blending: an inclusionary image.

This element can be observed particularly in the repeated insistence by a number of protagonists that their businesses serve both the poor and the rich. When speaking of his family's "torta" ("sandwich") shop, Don Armando states: "Pero aquí también viene gente rica, políticos, intelectuales; quiero decir: personas importantes. Aquí todo el mundo l'entra a las tortugas." \(^{68}\) Another interviewee, Armando García, is equally proud of the famous people who have visited his hamburger stand; he even lists some of these people by name. The owners of the Dulcería Celaya also note: "Pese a la crisis económica, personas de todas clases vienen a comprar desde el dulce más barato - que cuesta cuatrocientos pesos - hasta los más caros." \(^{69}\)

In all of these examples, it may be noted that the business owners are proud of their mixed clientele. Although it may seem that they reap more prestige and recognition from the famous patrons (who are inherently important because of their fame), the opposite is actually more accurate. The point is that these workers do not

\(^{68}\) Pacheco, *La rueda de la fortuna* 25.
\(^{69}\) Pacheco, *La rueda de la fortuna* 119.
necessarily separate, isolate, or cater to one social or economic class; rather, they treat all people equally, as clients. This is the source of their pride: providing a product to all consumers.

This point can be illustrated further if one considers again the previously mentioned situation of the construction workers who enter the Perisur delicatessen for lunch. They are not treated as clients; they are feared and detested based on their social and economic class. The discomfort that these workers experienced is palpable: "Al fin, el más alto, el más fuerte, pronuncia una frase cuyas dieciocho letras son como la ráfaga de una metralleta: ¿Tienen queso de puerco?" Although his question is not answered, the reader can safely assume that the response is a cool "No," a "No" that stops him in his tracks just as if it indeed had been a bullet from a machine gun.

A completely opposite ambiance, one that is presented as a model and an ideal, is created in those businesses which serve all classes equally. The only distinction that these businesses make is the decision to serve only a quality product: "Es satisfactorio ver cómo el consumidor siempre responde a la buena calidad de los productos." Quality, not the type of client, is their source of honor

\[\text{\textsuperscript{70}}\text{ Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 65.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{71}}\text{ Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 119.}\]
and pride. It is an attitude based on mutual respect; it is a model more realistic than those attitudes based on fear.

An additional intriguing contrast can be examined in the effects of an economy based on imports. The tendency of the affluent classes to eschew national products in favor of imports has already been discussed. The working classes, too, must deal with imported products. However, their interaction with an import economy is not based necessarily on a status choice, it is based on a survival strategy: they must supply the products that are desired in the market if they wish to make a living. The items they offer are a direct reflection or result of the status choices and larger economic trends evident in the country.

This is especially well-illustrated in “Santa Clos llegó de Taiwán.” This particular text, as the title indicates, centers around the activities of businesses, both stable and ambulatory, that sell principally imported items. Most of the vendors are quick to point out, however, that they must sell foreign products not because they want to but because there is no other choice. As Teresa relates:

Yo nunca había vendido artículos importados pero tuvimos que hacerlo porque las fabricantes de aquí cerraron, quebraron y entonces les fue imposible surtir nuestros pedidos. Así que a querer o no tuvimos que entrarle a la importación.

72 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 119.
Other protagonists, like Miguel Arredondo, support Teresa's comments by pointing out that the national products are less desired than the imported products.

Logically, if a vendor wishes to make a living, she or he must respond to the needs and desires of the consumer. When the purchasing public no longer bought Mexican-made electrical appliances, Evaristo and Carmen lost their business; at the time of their interview they were stationary street vendors of a variety of small foreign-made items. In order not to dwell on the fact that her business difficulties are the result of larger economic forces operating in the country, Carmen finds a positive element in her new situation: “Tampoco hay que ser tan pesimistas. Saldremos bien, si es que la gente se entera de que al venir encontrará desde un moñito para la cabeza hasta ropa traída de China y de Japón.”

Some of these vendors also trek to the United States, just like their affluent counterparts. However, they make the trip in order to purchase merchandise that they will later sell. José Luis comments to Pacheco:

Yo a veces hago mis compras personalmente. Me voy a Texas. Según como ande de lana tomo camión o avión. Llego allá, compro mis cosas y me regreso de volada para vender productos que, como dije antes, vienen de China, de lejísimos. . .

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73 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 130.  
74 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 131. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
The contrast of his trip to the U.S. and the travels analyzed earlier is strong. José Luis travels however he can, bus or plane; the affluent just hop on a plane. He travels to purchase items, but only so that he can make a living selling the items when he returns; the wealthy travel to purchase probably unnecessary objects to make themselves feel privileged. He does not tarry or vacation; the rich travel for pleasure.

Clearly, throughout these depictions, the wealthier classes are described none-too-complimentary as existing within a vacuum, one in which financial stability has cut them off from reality. The humbler working classes, by contrast, are shown to be in touch with reality, and indeed, controlled by its capriciousness. This situation does, however, grant them authority with which to illustrate how their lives are directly effected by the larger economic forces of the country, particularly as relates to the phenomena of urban migration, employment histories, and indefatigable pride.

6.4.3 URBAN MIGRATION

Many of the articles in *La rueda de la fortuna* contain at least some reference to the process of migration to Mexico City. The decision to leave the hometown and go to the metropolis is not necessarily an easy decision, especially due to the separation from family and the need,
in many cases, to learn a new language (Spanish). Nevertheless, due to economic crises, it is the only option. Many of the immigrants recall the "culture shock" they experienced upon arrival in the metropolis. In "Dos obreros ante el naufragio," Manuel Martínez recalls his arrival to the Distrito Federal:

En cuanto me paré afuera de la estación sentí que el mundo se me cerraba de ver todo esto tan grande, tan desconocido. . . . Me sentí como en una cárcel. . . . Durante una semana anduve asustado, sin salir, sin hacer nada. \(^75\)

And, in "La tortilla: el alimento sagrado," Vicente Flores Felipe answers Pacheco's question quite directly:

PACHECO. ¿Le gusta la ciudad?
FLORES FELIPE. Más bien no mucho. \(^76\) Siempre, uno extraña su gente, la piensa.

In spite of the initial difficulties, a common thread that unites all of these cases of urban migration is the desire to better one's life through steady work and better wages, as an unnamed interviewee states in "Largo y sinuoso camino": "Llega tanta gente de la provincia con la esperanza de ganar unos centavitos." \(^77\) In one of the other sections of this same article, Delfino Juárez Ramírez, a mason specializing in plaster, supports this claim in that

\(^{75}\) Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 72.  
\(^{76}\) Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 84.  
\(^{77}\) Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 95.
in his particular case, he left his home in Puebla to earn more money in Mexico City:

Yo me vine para acá con la esperanza de ganar un poquito más. Imagínese que allá por pintar un metro cuadrado me pagaban veinicinco centavos. En cambio acá, tres pesitos por lo menos. 78

Other protagonists “commute” to the Distrito Federal in the sense that they only travel to the city to earn extra money for a while, then they return to their pueblos. The aforementioned Vicente Flores Felipe, a farmer by trade and an ambulatory violinist by necessity, travels the arduous road from San Cristóbal de los Baños to Mexico City whenever he needs some money for his financial payments or to purchase fertilizers and other farm-related items. Although Mexico City has all the amenities that his hometown lacks, such as phones, markets, pharmacies, and doctors, he prefers to stay in the city for as little time as possible. Pacheco’s question and his reply are indicative of this attitude: C.P.: “¿Le agrada regresar a su casa?” V.F.F.: “Cómo no: aunque sea de tepetate.” 79

He continues, however, that since his farm is not large enough to support his whole family, his eight sons have had to move permanently to the city and must earn their own living as masons. Other protagonists relate similar situations. For example, the previously mentioned Manuel

78 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 91.
79 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 85.
Martínez, the oldest of nine children, reports that although his dream was to be a teacher in his village, he felt responsible to help his father support the family. After working several jobs in his town, beginning at the age of six, he could not earn enough and so sought work in Mexico City.

However, not every immigrant to the city earns enough to live based solely on his or her wages. For example in "El Jardín de las Delicias," Pacheco presents the reader with a woman from Jalapa who has come to Mexico City to sell her plants, but who also accepts the charity of a young girl: "La mujer... sonríe desconcertada cuando la niñita le pone un peso en la palma de la mano. Contempla la moneda, la revisa y luego la guarda en su seno."  

Still, others have used their migration to the city not as a means of financial support, but rather as a means of escaping abusive relationships. In "Santa Clos llegó de Taiwán," Doña Rosa reports to Pacheco that, after the death of her mother.

Mi quedé con mi abuelita. No era buena, como dicen que son otras. No, me golpeaba muchísimo, tanto que a los once años me vine de Guadalajara para acá. Estaba sola, sí, pero al menos sin padecer temores de golpes, ni de cosas...

80 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 49.  
81 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 125. The use of the ellipsis is Pacheco's.
Although Doña Rosa never had any intention of returning to her hometown due to her dysfunctional family situation, many other immigrants would like to return, but they cannot. They realize that there is no economic support for them in their pueblo. The fresh fruit vendor in “Santa Clos llegó de Taiwán” sums up the situation poignantly:

Recuerdo mi tierra porque es bonita, pero no tengo ganas de volver allá. ¿Para qué? No hay trabajo, tampoco amigos ni familia: todos se fueron, por lo mismo, porque allá no hay nada.

6.4.4 WORK HISTORIES

As can be seen by the fact that employment is the impetus for most of the urban migration, it must be noted that in La rueda de la fortuna discussions about jobs are central, particularly as relates to employment histories, the logistics of employment, and the overall pride garnered from employment.

Practically all of the employees in La rueda de la fortuna relate long and varied work histories. Many report that they began to work when they were children. Manuel Martínez recalls that, due to family need, he began working in the fields, detasseling corn or planting tomatoes and chiles, when he was just six years old. Vicente Flores Felipe reiterates this by relaying that he began to work,

82 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 132.
83 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 69.
"como a los ocho años. Cuidaba los animales, era pastor."®

In "El drama de la realidad," the unnamed young girl, who must sell lemons in order to eat, poignantly exemplifies both the need to work and the desperate conditions that cause such a need:

Apresurada, sudorosa, la madre arroja puños de limones en la servilleta que, atada al cuello de su hija, adquiere la función de una tilma. . . . "Avítate, avítate muchacha, y ponte a vender porque ya sabes que si no hay venta no hay comida. ¿Quieres quedarte otra vez sin comer?". . . . Temblorosa, frágil, la niña da media vuelta y avanza por el pasillo donde su voz se escucha con el timbre de la desesperación: "Limon es, limones, hay lim ones."®

Having a job, though, does not necessarily signify that all is well, especially considering that quite often the job itself brings with it another series of problems. The previously mentioned example serves to illustrate this point as well: just because the mother and child do technically work does not mean that they have established financial, nutritive, or housing stability.

Additionally, throughout their lives, many of the protagonists relate that they have had a series of jobs. This situation arises not due to an inability to dedicate oneself to a profession, but rather as a result of larger financial factors which influence economic and employment trends. As previously mentioned, Don Evaristo, in "Santa

84 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 85.
85 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 108.
Clos llegó de Taiwán,” relates that he and his wife once had a stable business, complete with a fixed-site store, but that due to the increase of imported products and the financial crisis, “no pudimos resistir y quebramos, así que no nos quedó más remedio que convertirnos en vendedores de la vía pública.”

Similarly demonstrative, Pacheco, in “Largo y sinuoso camino,” describes the Zócalo not as a proud and historical focal point for the Mexican people, but as an unofficial central employment agency filled with people offering their services and looking for work. The contrast is even more striking in that this particular narration refers to the morning of December 24th not as a time for celebrating a festive holiday, but as a time to look for work or to beg: “Señorito, señorito, algo para mi Navidad.” She narrates the tenuous situation dividing those who are employed and those who are not:

Los vendedores ambulantes se mezclan con los mendigos: hombres y mujeres que hasta hace poco eran obreros, trabajadoras domésticas, prestadores de servicios. Todos ellos son víctimas de los “reajustes” en el presupuesto del gobierno. . . . Del salario mínimo, la caja de ahorros, la despensa, la ayuda para la renta, pasaron abruptamente al préstamo, el empeño, la súplica.

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86 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 129.
87 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 89.
88 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 89.
In addition to the unstable economic and employment environment, unfair labor practices, long hours, and difficult commutes are also logistical problems related to employment. Obligatory work on Sundays, no sick leave, and strict adherence to arrival and departure schedules are common difficulties. Manuel Martínez points out:

El que no llegaba a tiempo no podía entrar al trabajo y, como le dije, no ganaba un centavo. En caso de enfermedad estábamos obligados a reportarnos el mismo día en que fuéramos a faltar porque si no, nos castigaban dejándonos fuera una semana en que no cobrábamos ni un centavo.  

As well, many of those that do have jobs, either agricultural labor in the country or industrial labor in the city, must work, minimally, from sun-up to sun-set. For example, in “El drama de la realidad,” Gloria, who sells medicinal herbs in Mexico City, begins her day at four o-clock in the morning. In other cases, only brief breaks are allowed during the long work day, which in turn controls the worker's options for meals. Since little time is provided for lunch, for example, there is not sufficient time to return home for a meal with the family. Although some workers bring their meal with them, most, following the tradition of the hot noon-time meal, must eat at the employer-run commissaries or at local restaurants. Naturally, this practice not only adds an additional

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89 Pacheco, *La rueda de la fortuna* 73.
financial burden to the worker but also interferes with the culturally important practice of dining with the family.

A related situation is that of the commute to work. The commute, be it on foot, bicycle, local bus, inter-city bus, metro, or taxi (or a combination thereof), is costly in a dual manner: the monetary price of the transportation and the time expense involved in the commute. Pedro Moreno, who lives in the outlying neighborhood of El Tenango but works in the city, relates his daily routine, which begins at six in the morning and involves walking as well as taking several busses. He recognizes that his commute, although tedious, is not as arduous as that of some of his colleagues:

Pero muchos compañeros hacen viajes larguísimos para venir al trabajo o regresar a su casa. Aquí tiene el caso de Manuel. Viene desde Iztapalapa y toma tres transportes: un camión de Carcél de Mujeres a la Alameda, otra de allí a San Cosme y otro que lo trae hasta la fábrica; le toma como hora y media en la mañana y dos en la tarde.

In fact, in “Santa Clos llegó de Taiwán,” Don Evaristo comments that, considering the cost of transportation, food, hired help, local services, and other incidental costs, it is practically cheaper for him to not open his merchandise stall.

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90 Pacheco, *La rueda de la fortuna* 76.
Although the many rigors of employment are depicted and reiterated throughout *La rueda de la fortuna*, the overwhelming sense of pride in employment, regardless of the specific type of job, is undeniable. To be the first, the oldest, the best, the most consistent is also a deep and fulfilling accomplishment. For example, many of the protagonists constantly reiterate the theme that they were the first to establish their particular type of business.

One way they express this is by frankly stating that they were the first: “Me acuerdo que eran dos, las primeritas que llegaron a México. . . .Todos nos compraban porque éramos los únicos fabricantes.” Others mention the exact date of the founding of the business: “En 1874, cuando se fundó este establecimiento, la cajeta de Celaya era uno de los postres más populares y apetecidos.” At times, even both elements are included: “Nosotros fuimos los primeros en hacer hamburguesas. Empezamos en 1943.” This continual reference to being the first is important as it reflects the innovative and creative nature of the founders of the business and because it indirectly refers to the longevity of the business, which is ultimately quite an accomplishment given the unstable and volatile nature of the Mexican national economy.

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91 Pacheco, *La rueda de la fortuna* 30.
92 Pacheco, *La rueda de la fortuna* 118.
93 Pacheco, *La rueda de la fortuna* 29.
Pride can also be perceived in the details of the job. Providing a quality product is a distinguishing characteristic, one which often is directly related to business longevity. In “Historia de la hamburguesa mexicana,” and in reply to Pacheco's question about how a small, family-run hamburger business competes against the large (and often international) restaurant chains, Dea García de Ryan points out: “Nos fuimos haciendo chiquitos y por poco cerramos; pero nos protegió la calidad.”

In “Largo y sinuoso camino,” even the unemployed construction workers waiting in the Zócalo to be hired define themselves through the quality of their work. There seems to be a code of honor in that anyone may come to the Zócalo and offer their services, “siempre y cuando demuestre que conoce el oficio y que es honrada.”

Even for those few businesses that have succeeded, the owners prefer to stay small and offer a quality product than to expand and sell an inferior product:

Hemos renunciado a esto porque consideramos que en el momento en que nos convirtiéramos en exportadores tendríamos que industrializar nuestros productos, cosa que significaría un cambio no sólo en la calidad y la presentación, sino también en el espíritu que los anima. Nosotros queremos que nuestros dulces sigan teniendo encanto, gracias al sentido de una pequeña obra artesanal.

94 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 37-38.
95 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 96.
96 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 120.
In fact, this last point, referring to artistry, is essential. Many of the protagonists refer to their particular employment craft as an art or a skill, not just as work. The result is, once again, a deep-felt pride in their accomplishments, accomplishments which ultimately differentiate them from common workers. In “Largo y sinuoso camino,” the conversation between Pacheco and Delfino Juárez Ramírez illustrates this point:

JUÁREZ RAMÍREZ. Allá fui lo mismo que acá: artesano. Yo digo que soy artesano porque eso de “soy albañil” se oye muy feo. En mis papeles, sean de lo que fueren, donde piden que especifique mi ocupación pongo siempre la palabra “artesano.”
PACHECO. ¿Pero usted es maestro albañil?
JUÁREZ RAMÍREZ. Sí, pero no me gusta ponerme albañil porque entonces la gente dice: “Ah, éste es un pinche macuarro cabrón.” Y es que sabemos que cuando la gente nos quiere criticar nos dice “macuarros.”

Nevertheless, even for those workers who do not make the linguistic distinction of calling themselves craftspeople, there is honor in their profession: “Pero con todas las dificultades y con la pena de que nunca le alcance a uno el dinero para nada, tenemos una compensación: el orgullo de ser obreros.” One protagonist in “Santa Clos llegó de Taiwán,” Miguel Arredondo, even equates this honor with being a superhero in that both the common worker and the superhero (with whom he identifies) combat almost impossible

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97 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 91.
98 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 79.
odds in order to survive: "Lo bonito de Ultraman es que hacía todo para salir ganando siempre. Así somos los comerciantes: tenemos que esforzarnos para ser los ganadores." In the same text, Rosa correlates this honor with self-sufficiency: "A la noche todos acabamos empapados pero contentos de irnos a la casa a sabiendas de que nos ganamos honradamente el pan nuestro del día."  

6.5 OFICIOS

It is this sense of honor and skill that forms a meta-dialogue between La rueda de la fortuna and Oficios de México. Oficios de México, published in the same year as La rueda de la fortuna (1993), is both dissimilar and similar to this "sister" text.

In one sense, Oficios de México serves as a primarily visual, though importantly textual, counterpart to the textual narratives in La rueda de la fortuna. Most obviously, Oficios de México is dissimilar in that it is principally a photographic book, containing at least seventy color photographs taken by professional photographer Ricardo Kirchner.

In terms of the graphic layout of the book, Pacheco's texts, (together with a "Presentación" by Oscar Espinosa Villarreal, General Director of the Nacional Financiera, who

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99 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 128.
100 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 125.
incidentally, published the book) serve as an introduction to the photographs. With the one exception of the photograph with a textual insert that follows Espinosa Villarreal's text and precedes Pacheco's narratives, her texts occupy the first fourteen pages of the book and are not interspersed among the photographs. The last one-hundred and two pages, then, are dedicated to Kirchner's photographic images.

This book is similar, nevertheless, in that Pacheco provides the textual accompaniment, titled "El diálogo entre el amor y la memoria," to the photographic images. And, following her characteristic narrative technique, the book's textual element consists of several short subdivided sections, each with its own subtitle. A combination of various styles can also be noted within these eleven divisions: some portions are Pacheco's narrative explanations and explorations; some are mainly Pacheco's narrations in which she has included a few small (one-line) quotations, both anonymous and referenced; some are mostly blocks of anonymous testimonial comments framed (either at the beginning or at the end) by Pacheco's observations; and, some are entire blocks of anonymous testimonial comments with no introductory discursive frame. The sections which contain large blocks of quotations are so designated by the use of quotation marks, indentations smaller than Pacheco's texts, and smaller font size.
An additional format element is that within the section of photographs, two photographic styles are used. The majority of the photographs are in color and are full-page images which depict both the object that is being worked on and a body-shot of the artisan. It must be noted, however, that the main focus of these shots is the object being worked on; therefore, the parts of the body dedicated to such work are just naturally included. Most often this is the upper body (head, torso, arms, hands); although, depending on the particular craft and the position of the artisan, the lower body may sometimes be viewed. The only textual addition, usually located on the accompanying page, to these items is the job title, the city, and the state.

In addition, ten smaller color reprints, measuring three inches by three inches, of these photographs are included throughout the book. One, already mentioned, is placed toward the beginning, between the introductory "Presentación" and Pacheco's textual section. The other nine are intermingled throughout the pages dedicated to photographs.

Perhaps, though, the term "reprint" is an inaccurate description of these images because these smaller photographs are not just a tinier version of the original full-sized image. Rather, they are a more focused detail of one of the elements of the larger photograph. Whereas the original full-size photographs capture both the craftsperson
and the craft, these isolated images focus specifically on the craft object and the hands of the artisan. Additionally, with these smaller detail photographs, the textual legend of job title, city, and state is no longer included. Instead, a one-sentence excerpt (lacking grammatical markers) from the textual elements of the book is reprinted just below the photograph. These excerpts evenly reflect both Pacheco's comments as well as the anonymous testimonial quotations (five quotations come from each source).

6.6 VISUAL NARRATIVES

In order to draw a clear connection between Oficios de México and La rueda de la fortuna, the narrative style manifested in Oficios de México must be explored. As previously mentioned in reference to La rueda de la fortuna, Pacheco's blending of narrative types (ranging from her own personal observations to straight blocks of testimonial narration) is key. There is a mutual affirmation of authority between Pacheco and the anonymous sources. Due to their veracity and connection to reality, the unnamed commentators operate as testimonial witnesses who validate the authenticity of Pacheco's narrations which in turn grants Pacheco added authority as author which then reciprocally validates the anonymous sources. It is a cyclical authority.
It might seem that the anonymity of these speakers would interfere with authenticity of the sections that represent testimonial transcription. Not a single one of these commentators is identified by given name, relationship name, or even nick-name. It must be noted as well that in the body of the text some references are made to named individuals; nevertheless, these named individuals are not paired with any of the testimonial quotations and/or are third-party references within them.

However, the point is again moot in that these people's names are not what grants them authenticity: their experiences, lives, and voices rebound with it. For example, a piñata maker states that his expertise is due to the master teacher he had, Don Fausti. And, although one can assume that this piñata maker spent several years as an apprentice under Don Fausti's tutelage, he never learned the last name of his teacher: "Nunca supe su apellido y dudo mucho que alguien lo conociera."101 The master craftsperson gains recognition not through his or her name but through his or her artistic craft.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that both of these types of narrators (Pacheco and the nameless speakers) use similar narrative strategies, particularly in reference to

101 Pacheco and Ricardo Kirchner, Photographer Oficios de México (Mexico City: Nacional Financiera, 1993) 22.
the use of the first person and the incorporation of outside references for narrative support.

In a majority of Pacheco's texts in Oficios de México, the first person plural form is reiterated. For example, even the first line of the first subsection begins: "Las palabras son instrumentos mágicos que nos permiten lo que sin ellas no sería posible: comunicarnos, ver plasmadas nuestras ideas." Other indications of this inclusionary first person plural are interspersed throughout the texts: "Comenzamos a familiarizarnos," "Sabemos," "Hemos constuido." In contrast, within the blocks of straight quotations, the speakers repeatedly use not the plural form, but the first person singular: "Nunca olvidaré la emoción que sentí." The testimonial speaker identifies oneself through one's life experience and in doing so is validated; Pacheco includes herself within a larger "we" and therefore also allies herself with the testimonies.

The use of outside references as narrative support is also clear, although the specific identity of the references may change. Pacheco uses two principal types of references in the texts she narrates. One method is to call in additional theoretical support by including references to other authors and texts (María Moliner and her Diccionario

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102 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 12.
103 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 12, 14, 19.
104 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 17.
and to artisans (Gustavo Pérez, a ceramicist). Pacheco's reference, within the same text, to each of these people as experts also conveys a parallel among them: both the university-educated academic and the life-educated craftsman have the same authority.

The other method she uses is to include one-line quotes, unattributed to a specific speaker, as additional illustration for the point she is elaborating. For example, in the subsection titled “Mundos paralelos,” she develops the connection between a craftsperson's two main physical spaces: the workshop and the home. She begins her comments using her own words, then she follows them with two unidentified quotations:

La casa que alberga a la familia y el taller donde labora el artesano son dos mundos semejantes y tan compatibles - tan a la mano - que se prestan espacios y hasta se confunden: "Le puse techo al patio de mi casa y lo convertí en mi tallercito," "Cuando se me hace tarde, extiendo unas pieles sobre la mesa. Así la convierto en cama y puedo quedarme a dormir en el obrador."\(^{105}\)

Within the blocks of quotation, this technique is used as well. However, in these cases the people referred to and cited are usually family members or master craftsmen. As well, these embedded quotations and voices generally reflect a time long past: when the current speaker was a young child or when the apprentice just began his craft-learning. For

\(^{105}\) Pacheco and Kirchner, *Oficios de México* 17-18. The use of italics is Pacheco's.
example, one speaker recalls how his mother joked with him when he saw the bricks that he had labored to form dissolve in a sudden storm: "Mi madre seguramente sintió la misma angustia que yo y, sin embargo, se puso a consolarme: 'No llores, ¡no le hagas! No ves que con tus lágrimas vamos a tener más agua.'" So, in both the texts that Pacheco narrates and the texts that she includes as direct quotation blocks, the narrative subjects use references as a narrative strategy to define, illustrate, and reaffirm their messages.

6.7 THE CRAFTSPEOPLE AS WELL AS THE CRAFTS

The textual narrations are not the only narrations that can be analyzed: the photographs, too, must be "read." Some of the photographic elements mentioned previously in relation to the format of Oficios de México can be examined further, especially in terms of the combination of print and visual mediums and the focus of the image.

Both types of photographs, the full-size as well as the small detail, are presented with some form of print text, either quantitative data (job title, location) or qualitative ideas (descriptive sentence fragments). This is not to imply that the photographs do not have value on their own without print text; rather, there is a mutual illustration, or collage-effect, that ultimately strengthens both parts. Indeed, this forms a further parallel:

Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 21.
Kirchner's photographs dialogue with the text which, within itself, is a collaborative narration between Pacheco's observations and testimonial quotations. As well, the detail photographs are reiterations of the larger images; the sentence fragments are echoes of the larger narrative text.

Additionally, anonymity, which is central in a majority of the print text, is also reflected in the photographic images. Among the male and female artisans that are photographed plying their trade, a remarkably small number of them acknowledge the camera by looking directly at it. This sort of image does not erase its subject, rather it actually expands its protagonist. The person photographed is but one representation of the artisan: his or her face, often shown only in indirect shadow, is not just one face, it is all the faces of all the craftspeople. Again, one must consider the contrast between the full-size photographs and the smaller details. In the larger images whole bodies are shown in harmony with the craft objects and in the small details disembodied hands unite with the materials. This specific image focus seems to support the idea that the specific name or the identity of the person is not necessarily important. What is key is the relationship between the person and the craft: one would not exist without the other and vice-versa. As Pacheco, and two unnamed speakers, verbally illustrate:
La identidad de los hacedores se confunde con la naturaleza de sus obras y desde allí son reconocidos: "No sé quién tejó este rebozo, pero debió tener unas manos maravillosas," "Nunca conoceremos el nombre de los lapidarios que tallaron esas canteras, pero podemos saber mucho de ellos con sólo mirar esa hermosa fachada."  

In addition to similarities in terms of narrative technique, Oficios de México is also thematically similar to La rueda de la fortuna. The title of this particular book implies that the subject matter is specifically the crafts typical to Mexico: the oficios. Yet, the craftspeople that ply such skills are naturally part of the focus as well. Without the artisan, the craft would not exist. And so, Oficios de México also depicts these individuals that still support themselves as their ancestors did: through manual dexterity, creativity, and skill. 

Indeed, Pacheco goes to great lengths to define, both subjectively and objectively, the term oficio:

De cuantos términos hay en el dicionario, uno me resulta particularmente bello. Me refiero a la palabra oficio. . . .Según lo define María Moliner . . . "oficio es cada una de las clases de trabajo. . . en que se empl ean principalmente el esfuerzo físico o la habilidad manual y no requieren de estudios teóricos especializados." . . . .Enriquecen esta definición las palabras de Gustavo Pérez: "Oficio es cada día. Manos y acumulación de experiencia. . . .Oficio es lo artesanal y la pasión que se puede sentir por lo artesanal. Más certeza que destreza, más naturalidad que control, oficio es lo que se sabe."  

107 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 18. The use of italics is Pacheco's.
Although Pérez' definition seems to contradict Moliner's in that she states that no theoretical background is necessary and he illustrates oficio through experience, certainty, and naturalness, all of which inherently imply theory, both definitions ultimately complement each other. By including these seemingly disparate definitions, Pacheco highlights the multiplicity inherent in the term.

More specifically, the textual narrations refer to the skills of the home-made confectioner, the cobbler, the weaver, the brick maker, and the piñata artist. The photographic images portray even more variety: from the potter to the cigar-maker, from the leather craftsperson to the embroiderer, from the wood sculptor to the ice carver, from the hammock maker to the basket weaver, and everything in between. Naturally, neither the print text nor the photographic images are inclusive of all crafts; nevertheless, together they present an eclectic sampling.

Certainly, both the photographic text and the print narrative reiterate the role of the craftsperson and the craft. The textual narrative also provides additional topics such as employment histories (including urban migration), the need to work in order to survive, and, of course, pride.

108 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 13-14. The use of bold type is Pacheco's.
While many of the narrations in *La rueda de la fortuna* directly relate the speakers' urban migration experiences, only one text in *Oficios de México* includes such as reference. In the text subtitled “El mapa del tesoro” one male speaker relates that upon the deaths of both his father and mother, he moved to Mexico City so as not to be “rodeado de recuerdos.” 109 Like many small-town arrivals to the metropolis, he arrived with relatively very little: a four-year primary school education, a few centavos, a photograph of his parents, and an image of the Virgin of the Perpetuo Socorro. He recalls that:

Esta ciudad, tan bonita, es dura para los que van llegando. Lo comprobé a lo largo de muchos meses de buscar empleo y conseguir sólo malos trabajos, peores alimentos y experiencias muy duras. 110

However, this cycle of negativity was broken one day when he was commiserating with a co-worker about their plights. The colleague lamented that he himself could not improve his position because he did not have the training for any craft. The mentioning of one word, *oficios*, changed this narrator's life: he unpacked his father's box of cobbler's materials and set up a stand on the sidewalk. Although he had never really worked professionally as a cobbler, he had grown up with his father's instruction. Therefore, due to this “rediscovered” trade skill (and some

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109 Pacheco and Kirchner, *Oficios de México* 16.
110 Pacheco and Kirchner, *Oficios de México* 17.
hard work), the narrator slowly built his own business. As he states at the end of his passage: “Cada mañana que levanto la cortina de metal bendigo a mi padre. Él, sin decírmelo, me dejó la mejor herencia: un oficio.”

As illustrated by this example, generational learning is of the utmost importance. Most all of these narrators comment that they began learning their families' craft as youngsters. The narrator of “La casa dulce” recalls that, “desde que tengo memoria, la cocina de la casa ha sido taller.” As he grew up, his jobs within the confectionery trade changed too: from a young child who's job it was to keep the bees away to the experienced adult who meticulously forms the facial details represented in the candy. A brick maker also suggests this natural development: “Primero cargué dos, luego cuatro; ahora puedo acarrear una docena o más de un solo viaje. Esto quiere decir que ya estoy grande.” Therefore, if in La rueda de la fortuna employment histories relate “job-hopping,” in Oficios de México they relate to the refinement of the skill involved in the craft.

Nevertheless, learning a craft is not chosen just to gain experience, it is a survival skill as well. The weaver in “Hilitos de luz” quite plainly states that “Nosotras, las mujeres...tenemos otras obligaciones: mantener vivo el

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111 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 17.
112 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 14.
113 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 20-21.
fuego, cuidar a los maridos y a los niños, tejer como lo hicieron nuestras madres." As well, weaving "con los rayitos de sol" is not just a skill, it is a tradition, a natural part of life. She continues:

Si hay algo que comer, comemos; si no, nos acostamos a esperar el milagro de un nuevo día. Tiene los colores de nuestros tejidos: azul, amarillo, arcebolado, rojo como los rayos del sol.

This conceptualization of craft and nature remits to John Collier, Jr.: "It is difficult to disassociate a people's means of livelihood from their symbiotic relationship with ecology and their social structure or their value system." Other protagonists also relate how their craft has allowed the family to stay together and survive hardships: "Según fueron creciendo mis hermanos, mi madre y yo los adiestramos en el trabajo. Creo que eso ha mantenido junta la familia. Confío en que así seguiré siendo." The workshop and the home become one: a stabilizing force.

Throughout these narratives the pride manifested in and through the craft is notable. Even Espinoza Villarreal, in the "Presentación," notes that although some of these crafts

114 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 19.
115 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 20.
117 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 15.
produce items used in daily life, they are no less necessary, they are no less worthy, they are no less artistic. Pride in their craft, in the details and in the quality, is a motivating force: “Quizá nadie aprecie esas singularidades que son importantes para nosotros. ¿Sabe por qué? Pues porque dondequiera que lleguen nuestros dules la gente que los vea, dirá: Son típicos de Zacatecas.”

The brickmaker in “Lluvia de lágrimas” also illustrates this poignantly:

Nunca he podido saber cuántas luces hay en la ciudad. A veces me fijo en una y pienso que señala una casa construida con fierros, piedras, vidrios, madera y muchísimos ladrillos. Cuando llego a esa conclusión me entusiasmó porque pienso que a lo mejor el arquitecto le ordenó al maestro de obras que viniera a comprarlos aquí. No es imposible, entonces, que un murito de esa casa o un techo tenga por lo menos un ladrillo hecho por mí. Ese pensamiento me enorgullece y una vez me hizo llorar.

Pacheco reiterates: “A quienes se encargan de las tareas domésticas o laboran en el obrador los inspira el mismo deseo de servir y los estimula el idéntico orgullo de hacer bien las cosas.”

As implied in the previous quote, Pacheco draws several parallels in the narration. She expands the concept of artisan not just to refer to more commonly recognized

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118 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 15. The use of italics is Pacheco's.
119 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 21–22.
120 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 19.
craftspeople, but also to include housewives. Both a craft and a family share similar characteristics: “Desde la organización que jerarquiza la autoridad - familia-gremio; padre-maestro - hasta la observancia de ciertos ritos y ritmos, la repetición de sonidos y lenguajes, una idéntica relación con la naturaleza.” She continues the comparison by pointing out more similarities. Both homes and workshops display photographs of those who inspire them: family and Patron Saints, respectively. Wives, mothers, and daughters as well as craftspeople and their apprentices use instruments in their work: utensils and tools, respectively (although quite often even the same exact item is used: spoons, bowls, knives, ovens). Both the home-maker and the artisan create from materials at hand a product of utility and beauty: a family, meals; and crafts, respectively. Although this particular parallel is well-developed specifically in relation to house-wives, it would seem that Pacheco's goal is to confer the honor and experience connoted by the term artisan to anyone who strives to complete a well-done job that is a source of pride.

Pacheco also distinguishes between art and craft. She proposes that the former is guided by a self-centered (first person singular), uni-directional creativity in a privileged, timeless space. The latter is motivated by an

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121 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 18.
122 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 18.
inclusive (first person plural), reciprocal utility in a common, finite space. Although neither art nor craft is inherently superior, she points out that the artisan's craft, "volverá a repetirse en la medida en que haya hombres y mujeres dispuestos a heredar sus conocimientos y la tradición que representa. . . . El arte es una voz, la artesanía un diálogo intenso entre el amor y la memoria."123

This last line simultaneously opens, closes, and re-opens the textual portion of Oficios de México. In terms of format, this line is physically both the introductory title to the textual narrations and the last line in the print text section. As the last line of text, it serves as an introduction into the photographic section of the book. Thus, an implied invitation is forwarded to the reader: an invitation to participate, by studying the photographs and by re-experiencing the textual excerpts attached to the small detail reprints, in this dialog between artisan and craft, between pride and utility, between artisan and reader.

Given this idea, Pacheco also develops the relationship between craftsperson and writer. The self-reference is unmistakable. Referring once again to the first section of the book's print text, words are imbued with magical powers:

Por la palabra realizamos además el sueño de la ubicuidad. Inmóviles, atrapados en nuestro espacio y rutina cotidianos, con sólo acercarnos a

123 Pacheco and Kirchner, Oficios de México 25.

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The writer, just as the craftsperson, learns to write through experience: from physically learning how to form letters, to forming words, then sentences, and then, once the rudimentary basics are learned, stylistic elements are incorporated. The writer uses raw materials and tools: paper and pencil; the writer is, too, an artisan.

Pacheco states that, “las palabras son bellas porque siempre nos remiten a otra presencia humana.” This is the same sentiment expressed by the brick maker who imagines the houses built with his bricks:

Ese día se me ocurrió una cosa: es cierto, nadie comenta “este ladrillo hizo Fulano de Tal” pero en cambio las gentes siguen vieniendo a comprar nuestros tabiques, lo que significa que hacemos bien el trabajo. Gracias a eso, creo que podemos sentirnos importantes; después de todo, no cualquiera sabe hacer ladrillos.

Through these carefully crafted parallels, it would seem that Pacheco, as writer/artisan, is indeed stressing the dialogic communication that exists between an object, be it a craft object or a narrative, and the craftsperson that created it. Through this dialogue, the experience, the knowledge, and veracity of the voice can be heard and appreciated.
6.8 THE INFINITE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

By way of conclusion, one must return, then, to the careful chronological order of the texts in La rueda de la fortuna. It must be noted that economic situations were as dire in 1977, the date of the first text, as in 1990, the date of the last few. Indeed, in terms of financial hardship it would appear that in this thirteen-year time span nothing had changed: people still had to fight tooth and nail in order to scrape together a living.

The wheel of fortune referred to in the title seemingly does not connote the traditional cyclical positive and negative periods of life. This can be construed because the wheel of fortune currently applicable to Mexico appears to be stuck; it has not yet, even in 1998, rotated into a positive cycle, an easier time, particularly as exemplified by the timespan of the texts which reflects constant hardship. Indeed, it would seem that the "wheels of fortune" applicable to the title refer to the wheels, or the mobility, of the ambulatory vendor's cart or the instant markets which appear, like mushrooms after a rain, on the streets of Mexico City. Or, perhaps the wheels of fortune are an oblique reference to the constant tradition of the craftsperson, an infinitely moving source of production.

Regardless, in a timespan filled with ever worsening economic woe one thing has remained constant: the resilience of the Mexican people to survive. Perhaps this is the
fortune. The source of this will to continue is the pride, honor, tradition, and creativity associated with their professions, their crafts.

Again, if the order of La rueda de la fortuna texts is considered, it is worth noting that the collection begins with a reference to Nuestra Señora de la Fayuca, the Goddess of Consumerism, and ends, in the very last lines of the last text, with a warning about the devilish imports from Taiwan: "Un grito nos advierte: 'Cuidado, ahí vienen los diablos.'" The goddess and the devil have become united and there is only one hero that can fight it.

García Canclini develops a theory about cultural productions in this contemporary time when international, multinational, transnational, global trends are increasingly more powerful. Although he does not advocate isolationism, especially considering that having international information is currently indispensable, he does suggest that, "necesitamos oscilar entre la integración y el desenchufe." He elaborates further that this vacillation is necessary in order to understand the cultural hybridization; yet, he also confirms that:

Pero además hay momentos en que necesitamos replegarnos en lo propio, sea la peculiaridad nacional o étnica, las interacciones personales en los espacios domésticos o la modesta búsqueda individual.

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127 Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 132.
128 García Canclini, Consumidores y ciudadanos 188.
129 García Canclini, Consumidores y ciudadanos 189.
It is from this space that the hero that can fight the diablo has arisen. It is the citizen of Mexico City, (or Mexico for that matter), that has been portrayed throughout Zona de desastre and Oficios de México as an honorable and resilient fighter. His/her weapons are illustrated further in Oficios de México. Suitably enough, they are thoroughly national creations: the words, the skills, and the traditions of the Mexican craftsperson. As Pacheco states in La rueda de la fortuna's introductory “Nota:”

Instantáneas de momentos que no volverán, espejos de la realidad y el deseo, lo indispensable y lo superfluo; si algún valor tienen estos textos es congelar un fragmento de la lucha del pueblo mexicano por su supervivencia en una etapa crítica de la historia. Con ellos he querido rendir también un mínimo homenaje solidario a los héroes anónimos, hombres y mujeres, que con su trabajo dan vida a nuestro país.\(^{130}\)

\(^{130}\) Pacheco, La rueda de la fortuna 9-10.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND CHALLENGES

Allí he escuchado las historias del pueblo, he visto su lucha heroica e ignorada, he sido testigo de su opresión, de su marginación y de su eterna esperanza. Los relatos que aparecen aquí se basan precisamente en esas historias. Mezcladas con mis propias experiencias e imaginaciones pretenden ser una manifestación de solidaridad al pueblo al que pertenezco.

Cristina Pacheco

Mexico. Mexico City. Parachute neighborhoods.

How can such an enormous and varied subject matter be articulated? García Canclini notes:

La actual ciudad de México es imposible de abarcar en una descripción. Si uno la mira desde el interior, desde las prácticas cotidianas, ve sólo fragmentos, inmediaciones, sitios fijados por una percepción miope del todo. Desde lejos, parece una masa confusa a la que es difícil aplicar los modelos, fabricados por las teorías del orden urbano.¹

¹ García Canclini, Consumidores y ciudadanos 100.
He seems to be setting up a relationship between an interior view of the city and an exterior view of the city in which neither option is completely satisfactory: neither fragmentation nor massification present accurate realities. Pacheco solves this situation by not attempting to provide just one view: she provides multiple views. A fragmented subject must be expressed through a fragmented narrative, a supplemented narrative, a hybrid narrative.

In Lone Visions, Crowded Frames: Essays on Photography, Max Kozloff develops a related concept:

Texts are forever pointing out that viewers should consider the content of the photographic frame to be larger, or at least more extensive than what is locally visible. By texts - just to define my term - I mean not only legend, caption, label, but also implied message or any appeal that can be or has been translated into discursive language.  

Although specifically conceived in relation to photographic theory, Kozloff's idea is just as applicable to Pacheco's narratives. First, her texts do remit to much larger forces than those immediately portrayed. For example, a rural farmer must send his sons to the city as the farm is not large enough to support everyone. This is not just a family scenario, it is a community/national/global concern. Additionally for every narrative that Pacheco writes, there are many more that still need to be articulated.

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Moreover, the sense of entreaty that Kozloff mentions is implicit in the transformative nature of her texts. In *Engendering the Subject: Gender and Self-Representation, in Contemporary Women's Fiction*, Sally Robinson contends that to speak is to disrupt and to defy. This also correlates to the immediacy and the urgency, as well as the critical and political denunciations, of Pacheco's narratives.

Returning to the title of Kozloff's study (*Lone Visions, Crowded Frames*), an examination of its components is also pertinent to Pacheco's narrative production. Lone visions: the solitary act of Pacheco writing as author. Crowded frames: the multiplicity of Pacheco's narrating subjects and sites. But, as she intimates in the epigraph to this chapter, Pacheco does not write entirely alone and, more importantly, she is aware of this. She directly hears, sees, and witnesses; then, she mixes these impressions with her own experiences (lived) and imagination (created). She is creating a hybrid cultural product that, since it is supplemental by nature, remits to an understanding of solidarity.

This distinction is fundamental. Regardless of the authenticity of the testimonies she includes in her written texts, the fact remains that she is ultimately crafting, (to

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continue with the artisan/writer parallel she develops in Oficios de México), the discourse. Rodríguez-Luis points out this underlying characteristic:

La narrativa documental, en cambio, trata de la realidad tal cual es; no intenta hacerla menos real o familiar, sino, por el contrario, revelar mejor su naturaleza. Sin embargo, llevar a cabo este propósito requiere que la narración organice los materiales para facilitar la asimilación del receptor. Incluso en los casos excepcionales en los que es el propio testigo - sin ayuda de un mediador, editor o gestor - quien narra los hechos, tal ordenamiento logra que esta narrativa sea también artística.4

The role of an intermediator or compiler is necessary.

Pacheco controls what she writes, just as she controls the subject matter of her television program (who and what gets cut out and left on the floor of the editing room?) and her radio show (who and what gets left on hold or screened out?).

This is a fundamental quandary. And, it is one that I have not yet been able to resolve completely. I do propose that Pacheco “steps aside” or “steps down” and shares her narrative space with the subaltern subjects, thereby not propagating the binary opposition and objectification between the writing subject and the written object. In this case, the subaltern subject is not necessarily fighting for her/his voice; rather, the individual who has access to the realms of hegemonic power and expression is stepping back

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4 Rodríguez-Luis 14.
from that realm and sharing a space for articulation in which the subaltern voice can be heard. It is not a matter of finding voice, but rather reinterpreting how (and where) one listens.

Through Pacheco's use of hybridized narrative practices then, the subjects are depicted (and, really, depict themselves) with dignity, respect, and strength. Additionally, Pacheco's choice of marginal subject matter, combined with the marginal manner in which she expresses her narrative subjects (her narragraphic discursive technique is not one genre, but rather all), heightens the urgency of her narratives. In this manner, a rejection of and resistance to elitist cultural concepts, a critical and political questioning of larger hegemonic forces, and a call for unity and mutual respect are emphasized.

Yet, ultimately, as author or talk-show host, she is in control. And the fact remains that she is truly not in a subaltern position. She is relatively wealthy. She has steady employment (perhaps she is even over-employed, which would fit well with the feminist's definition of a contemporary fragmented female identity). She has a nice house made out of stable materials. She has strong family relationships. She has running water, electricity, and food readily available. She has a car, several phones (cellular, too) and even different phone lines. She has facsimile machines, computers, and electronic communications. She has
access to the productive means of mass communication: television and radio. How could she possibly relate to the subaltern subjects that roam through her pages, video productions, and audio broadcasts?

I believe that, in part, her own personal family history is what grounds her. She is quite proud of her humble beginnings. The fact that she grew up in Guanajuato and San Luis de Potosí is reiterated often in her print and multi-media work. She knows what it feels like to have been uprooted from one's home due to poverty and to have been relocated to Mexico City as a young migrant. These experiences, together with her current commitment to el pueblo is what is expressed in her narratives: a profound respect, a deep love, an implicit understanding, a desire to broaden awareness and to denounce.

Nevertheless, Pacheco's connection with her subject is far more complex than just these initial personal experiences. Indeed, her relationship with her subject and, as well, her myriad strategies for articulation, have been the entire focus of my analysis. I concur with García Canclini's point that current society is an ever increasingly fragmented, supplemented, multiethnic, migrant existence. And, in response to his question about which types of literature, cinema, or television can possibly narrate such an existence, I answer that only an equally

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5 García Canclini, Culturas híbridas 114.
complex and multiple creative cultural product can articulate such a hybrid existence. I contend that Pacheco's narratives exemplify this hybrid discourse.

Furthermore, if a multiple and fragmented subject is articulated through a multiple and hybrid cultural product, then I suggest that it must then be examined with a theoretical framework and analytical approach that is also hybrid. Therefore, throughout my study, I have based my interpretation of Pacheco's narratives on a hybrid theoretical framework in which subaltern subjectivities, Postmodern hybridization, and feminist fragmentation meld with the urgency of testimonial witnessing, the blending of fact, documentary conversation, and literary technique present in New Journalism, as well as the presence of multiple, shared narrative authority, mediation, and self-conscious writers characteristic of recent trends in ethnographic studies.

In light of this hybrid theoretical framework and in terms of chapter specifics, six of Pacheco's works and collaborative efforts have been examined. My analysis of Sopita de fideo (1984) focuses on the narrative intersections of housing, employment, and interpersonal relationships and how they are articulated through Pacheco's use of language, dialogue, and multiple named narrating subjects and sites. Urgency and immediacy of narrative message is also highlighted. This blending of thematics and
narrative strategies results in what I term cityscapes and peoplescapes, that is, vivid depictions of urban situations and individual circumstances that resist objectification and negation.

Both the need and the difficulty of narrating a catastrophe, in this case the 1985 earthquake that devastated Mexico City, is expressed through my examination of Pacheco's *Zona de desastre* (1986) and her collaborative effort with photographer Guillermo Soto Curiel which resulted in *Imágenes: Renovación Habitacional Popular* (1987). The cathartic urgency for disaster articulation is expressed through the personification of the city and the subsequent need to pass through the stages of grieving while the discursive difficulty is manifested through the use of ellipses, the accumulation of data, and the strategy of reiteration. Pacheco's hybridized narratives are noted here particularly in the blending of genre (from autobiography to biography to testimonial documentation to a fictionalized accounting to a combination of all of these elements) and in the shared narrative dialogue formed between the Pacheco's print narratives and Soto Curiel's visual images.

*El corazón de la noche* (1989) provides the opportunity for a close analysis that follows an ever more inward and individual trajectory. I begin with a depiction of the city as an entity to be experienced through the senses. Then, a discussion of the individuals that inhabit the city is
developed, especially in terms of the wide range of narrating subjects presented. Following, the image of the body is analyzed as relates to the portrayal of the body as a site of articulation as well as the objectification of the body as a commodity. The next approach focuses on the expression of emotion, especially through Pacheco's contrastive use of silence and speech and the critical proposition of the use of articulation, be it verbal or written, as a mechanism for defense and/or resistance. This inward trajectory faces outward with my final analysis of the critical elements in the text, both in specific terms of Pacheco's criticism of journalism and journalists (and herself) as well as her challenge to the reader to become not just an active reader, but also a critical individual.

Two texts joined by financial concerns compose my final analysis. Pacheco's narratives in La rueda de la fortuna (1993) illustrate the effects of national and international macroeconomic forces at the level of the individual. In this text, practically all economic and social classes are represented with an emphasis on the interaction between consumerism and identity formation. Oficios de México (1993), Pacheco's joint project with photographer Ricardo Kirchner, reflects economic expression through the print and visual portrayal of traditional craftspeople and craft production. Once again, the interplay between the print
narratives and the photographic images further highlights the hybridized nature of Pacheco's discourses.

As reflected in this brief summary, Pacheco's narratives, her urban landscapes and peoplescapes, are a discursive hybrid. In response to Kathy Taylor's indication that this current Mexican narrative category be defined, I propose and develop the hybrid term "narragraph" which allows for a multi-media interpretation based on the print, audio, and audio-visual concepts of narrative and graphics.

Finally, I will conclude my study by suggesting a visual parallel to illustrate Pacheco's position in relation to her subject: the photograph of her on the back of the book jacket of Sopita de fideo (see Figure 2 in the Appendix).  

Western "reading" of visual text, when the main objects are of a similar size, favors the tendency to focus first on the center and then to the sides, proceeding in a left to right scan. In this photograph, there are three main subjects, all of which are located in the foreground. Therefore, first the eye is drawn to the colorful cage/stage/sunshade/table contraption that is situated in

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6 Taylor, 24.
7 Naturally, the interpretation of this photograph that I develop is just one of the multiple interpretations that are feasibly possible. I would also like to reiterate that throughout my analysis, it is understood that this is not a spontaneous image: it has been carefully crafted and mediated. Yet, I suggest that the mediation further reflects Pacheco's role as intermediary in her textual narratives as well as her audio and audio-visual discourses.
the center of the photograph. Since the definition of this object is not immediately discernible, the eye lingers so as to make sense of the image: the reader has been engaged with the text, captured by it. My reading of this central item suggests that it is a small shaded stage set up on a tall table where a bird-trainer can have his parakeets perform “circus” tricks like walking up a ladder while wearing clothes. This is significant in that it is an example of underemployment.

In an effort to gather more information, then, the image located to the left of the center is read next. There is a man, wearing ordinary, light-colored clothing, who concentrates on the inside of the cage/stage. His body is located to the left and just slightly behind the front or opening edge of the table. Both of his hands (and forearms) are within the stage area and his gaze is directed there as well. He is occupied: he has an occupation (employment) and his full attentions are engaged.

Scanning to the right, then, the reader/viewer sees Pacheco. Wearing principally dark clothing, she is positioned to the right and slightly behind the cage/stage apparatus. Her left hand is visible along side the back corner of the cage/stage and her body leans slightly forward and to the right. Her gaze is outward, directly toward the camera, and thus, directly toward the viewer. It is a gaze
which requires a commitment or a collaboration with the viewer.

A brief examination of the colors exhibited by these foreground objects is interesting. The man is wearing mainly light-colored clothes: a light blue or perhaps white. Bright and light images attract attention. Pacheco, conversely, is wearing dark clothes: black with small accents of red. Darker images deflect attention. The apparatus in the center between the man and Pacheco is a combination: the legs, table-top, and cage are all light blue with accents of pastel pink and yellow, while the awning is black with red trim and white ball fringe. It represents a compromise.

Widening the reading of the photograph, the secondary plane is examined. Two men, located approximately ten feet behind the cage/stage are engaged in conversation. Their gazes and bodies are directed toward each other and they do not seem to pay attention to the others around them. This would emphasize the natural effect of Pacheco's presence: it is not a disruption or an interruption: it is an authentic blending.

The third plane of the photograph opens the image to include its larger context. It reveals that behind and to the left of the man with the cage/stage, there is another table structure, or perhaps a tripod. There are other people walking down the sidewalk in the direction of the
camera: (from left to right, in an order of increasing proximity to the central objects) a woman holding the right hand of a young child, another woman carrying a young child in her arms, an older child in mid-stride, and a man looking in the direction of the camera and holding his left hand in front of his face.

Finally, taken as a whole, the overall image is situated in a plaza or in an esplanade-type locale. There are fenced off tracks of grass and trees and a fairly wide sidewalk on which vendors have set up their tables. It is an image typical of Mexico: the social, cultural, and economic life in the plaza. This location is central if the overall thematic of Pacheco's narrative discourse is considered.

Naturally, just as with her written texts and multimedia productions, this is not a spontaneous photograph. I would surmise that the objects in the foreground (the bird-trainer, the cage/stage, and Pacheco) were carefully selected and positioned, while the secondary and tertiary objects were natural. Nevertheless, the most interesting reading of this photograph is Pacheco's position within it. Even if her position was crafted, it was done so for a purpose.

She is essentially placed on the same plane as the bird-trainer and his accouterment: the foreground of the entire image. This positioning is significant in that it
highlights the equality of the subjects. However, within the foreground plane, she occupies the third of the three positions. The bird-trainer is obviously the expert: he concentrates, with his eyes and hands, on the birds within the cage/stage. Pacheco does not: her gaze is directed outward and her hand rests only on the outside back of the cage/stage. In that her gaze is toward the reader/viewer, she is acting as an intermediary. However, she is an intermediary with direct, eye-witness, and "hands-on" experience. This is her fundamental role as writer. Based on her contact with her subjects, she can then combine their testimonies with her own experience, which is then directed to the reader.

This photographic text does not try to intimate that Pacheco is the "same" as her subjects. Pacheco is undeniably aware of her position: she knows she has a home to go to after work. Yet, at least she is aware that others do not. These are the stories that usually go untold. However, Cristina Pacheco connects with these life histories and steps back so that they may be told by those who know them best. As Monsiváis points out: "Al no registrar [las manifestaciones subalternas] los medios masivos, da la impresión de que estas luchas no existan, así afecten muchas vidas y sostengan con radicalidad la discrepancia en el país." Jean Franco theorizes that, "the struggles for

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interpretive power [are] struggles waged not on the high plane of theory but very often at the margins of canonical genres - in letters and life stories.9

Pacheco registers these daily life battles fought along the margins. She expresses them through evocative narragraphs: written and visual peoplescapes and cityscapes which have been marked by their subjects and surroundings and which lie on/over/in between the margins. This is the space for articulation that Spivak mentions the need for: a space wherein the subaltern can be met with on her or his own terms.10

And, as always, Cristina Pacheco aligns herself with and commits herself to these narrating subjects. She asks for their opinions, she responds to their needs and desires, she steps back and shares a forum with them in which they may express themselves:

¿Listos para participar? ¿Listos para dialogar en su casa, taller, el espacio que habita?
¿Usted, qué opina?11

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9 Franco xi.
10 Spivak in Winant 83.
APPENDIX: FIGURE 1

These diagrams serve as a visual representation of concept of the discursive braid.

1. Each strand of the braid, representing different types of discourse, exists independently; yet, all are connected to the base, or the narrative.

2. As the braid is formed, all strands come into contact with each other, which represents thematic and structural intertextuality as well as supplementing.

3. As the braiding continues, one strand apparently disappears, although in reality its presence is just temporarily disguised. This process reflects how one type of narrative structure may not be as prevalent at a given time, will resurface later, and will ultimately maintain discursive cohesiveness.

4. The finished braid forms a coherent, valid whole which reflects the poly-discourse of the hybrid narrative.
APPENDIX: FIGURE 2

This is a schematic outline approximating the positions of the figures in the photograph on the back jacket cover of *Sopita de fideo*. The numbers listed in the figure correlate to the figures in the following manner. Primary Plane: 1: The bird cage and stand; 2: The vendor; 3: Cristina Pacheco; Secondary Plane: 4: Two men; Tertiary Plane: 5: Several other people as well as the background scenery.
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