

1990

Detecting the Fantastic in José Emilio Pacheco's *Tenga para que se entretenga*

Cynthia Duncan

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.providence.edu/inti>



Part of the [Fiction Commons](#), [Latin American Literature Commons](#), [Modern Literature Commons](#), and the [Poetry Commons](#)

Citas recomendadas

Duncan, Cynthia (Otoño 1990) "Detecting the Fantastic in José Emilio Pacheco's *Tenga para que se entretenga*," *Inti: Revista de literatura hispánica*: No. 32, Article 5.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.providence.edu/inti/vol1/iss32/5>

This Estudio is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Providence. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Inti: Revista de literatura hispánica* by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Providence. For more information, please contact dps@providence.edu.

DETECTING THE FANTASTIC IN JOSE EMILIO PACHECO'S *TENGA PARA QUE SE ENTRETENGA*

Cynthia K. Duncan
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Throughout the 1960s and '70s, José Emilio Pacheco was generally regarded as one of Mexico's more promising young short story writers. His three collections of *cuentos*, *La sangre de Medusa* (1958), *El viento distante* (1963 and 1969), and *El principio del placer* (1972), were met by considerable enthusiasm on the part of critics; yet, in the past decade, some of this initial interest in Pacheco as a *cuentista* has apparently begun to fade. Although Pacheco continues to be an active figure in Mexican letters, and is well known for his work in poetry and the novel, surprisingly few critical studies have been dedicated to his short fiction.¹ Those who have dealt with Pacheco's *cuentos* have tended to look primarily at his numerous stories of adolescence and initiation into the adult world. His fantastic stories, for the most part, have attracted very little attention, although at least one critic has noted in passing that these tales tend to be "sus cuentos más poderosos y mejor logrados" (Aponte, p. 15). Some of Pacheco's efforts in the genre of the fantastic have been dismissed as being too imitative of Carlos Fuentes' early short stories. *Tenga para que se entretenga*, for example, has been compared to Fuentes' "*Tlactocatzine, del jardín de Flandes*", due to a thematic similarity between the two works. Other than the fact that both stories portray historical characters like Maximilian and Carlotta and that both are set in the Mexican capital city, they are actually very different in terms of structure, style, and narrative technique. It is not my intention here to contrast and compare Pacheco's story with that of Fuentes but, rather, to show that the originality and artistic merit of Pacheco's work has been overlooked.

Tenga para que se entretenga is a text which plays with the reader's reaction to and expectations about two popular genres, that of detective fiction,

and that of the fantastic. In the initial pages of the story, Pacheco manipulates the reader through style, structure, character, and plot into a position of false security: everything in the story seems to indicate that we are reading a detective tale and, although we cannot predict with certainty just how the crime will be solved, we proceed calmly toward the end of the story with the firm belief that a solution will be found. What we do not anticipate is the fact that **two** solutions are found, one of a natural character and one of a supernatural character. The introduction of the supernatural or the uncanny in the text, and the narrator's refusal to choose between the two explanations pushes the text out of one mold and recasts it in another: it is no longer detective fiction but, instead, has become an example of the fantastic. The side-by-side presence of two readings of the text inscribes hesitation which, according to theoreticians of the fantastic, is the most important characteristic of the genre.

The mystery which provides the main narrative thread in *Tenga para que se entretenga* involves the disappearance of a young boy, Rafael Andrade, from Chapultepec Park in August of 1943, and the subsequent investigation of the case by a private detective named Ernesto Domínguez Puga. The police claim that Rafael was kidnapped by two working-class youths who were known to be in the vicinity of the park at the time of the boy's abduction. Rafael was supposedly murdered by them and his body was thrown into a river about twenty kilometers from Chapultepec. Domínguez observes that there is nothing to support this allegation, and that there are many blatant errors in the official police report. He feels that the youths were unjustly accused and punished for a crime they did not commit. The discovery of a corpse does not solve the mystery of Rafael's disappearance since, according to the detective-narrator, "los despojos eran de una criatura de once a doce años y no de seis como Rafael. Esto sí no es problema: en México siempre que hay una desaparición y se busca un cadáver se encuentran muchos otros en el curso de la pesquisa" (p. 144). Domínguez is interested in the socio-political implications of the case, and he uses it to make shrewd observations about contemporary Mexico. He speaks with a feigned innocence and tongue-in-cheek irony in order to criticize social injustice and to point out the absurdity of all efforts to solve this crime. He cites several ridiculous theories advanced by local newspapers regarding the mystery of Rafael's disappearance, theories based on invention, not fact, designed to appeal to the public's taste for scandal and to sell newspapers. These stories are no less absurd, however, than the official police report, which is built on obvious falsehoods. The detective traces the miscarriage of justice as he tells his tale: he notes the innocent behavior of the accused criminals in the park on the day of the crime, their courteous assistance to Rafael's mother when the boy is first discovered missing, their arrest when police officials are unable to corroborate the story told by Rafael's mother or to find the real kidnapper, their conviction after scurrilous rumors began to circulate about the Andrade family's connection to an important political figure and, finally, the prison sentence which puts

and end to further speculation about the case. The detective is not satisfied with this facile explanation of events but, on the other hand, he is hesitant to advance his own theory regarding the case because it points toward the seemingly impossible.

Most of the detective's information regarding the case comes from testimony given by the boy's mother, Olga Andrade, who was with young Rafael in the park at the time of his disappearance. Olga's testimony is given at the end of the story, after the police have supposedly solved the case. In terms of plot development, it stands in opposition to the official police report and, thus, re-opens the case for further investigation. In a traditional detective story, this would lead to a denouement in which the detective would brilliantly and correctly solve the case, replacing the "false" solution of the police force with a "true" version of events. In *Tenga para que se entretenga*, however, Olga's testimony does not only re-open the case; it also functions structurally to re-open the text, since it does not bring with it the expected closure. Instead, it introduces hesitation and doubt into the tale. Olga states that her son disappeared into an underground passageway with a tall, fairhaired, bearded stranger who spoke Spanish with a German accent and wore a faded uniform adorned with gold epaulets. The man was deathly pale, "como un caracol fuera de su concha" (p. 147), and a strong, musty odor clung to his person. But, despite his strange appearance, he behaved in a polite and courtly manner, which assuaged any fears that Rafael or Olga may have felt in his presence. Without further thought to the matter, Olga allowed her son to go off with the man, whom she assumed to be a caretaker or guard at the nearby Chapultepec Castle. The detective would be inclined to dismiss Olga's testimony as the product of her imagination, or as the result of shock and grief, if it were not for three concrete pieces of evidence that further point toward the stranger's identity. As a gesture of friendship, the uniformed man had given Olga a rose, a gold pin with which to attach to her coat, and a newspaper. As he handed her the paper, he said, "Tenga para que se entretenga" (p. 136), but Olga merely put the articles in her handbag without looking carefully at them. When, a few days later, she remembers them and looks inside her bag, she discovers a rose blackened and dried with age, a gold pin nearly worn through with use, and a newspaper bearing the date October 2, 1866 and the banner, *La Gaceta del Imperio*. Together with her description of the stranger, these objects clearly suggest that Rafael's abductor was none other than the Archduke Maximilian, returned from the grave in search of human companionship. The narrator relates the above information without expressing an opinion, except to mention in a parenthetical aside, "No hay en este mundo rosas negras"² (p. 148).

It is not only the presence of a detective and a crime which leads us to initially identify *Tenga para que se entretenga* as a detective story. Nor is it the suggestion of uncanny events alone which ultimately pushes the story into the realm of the fantastic. It is the way in which a story is told which signals its

relationship to a specific genre. The fact that both detective fiction and the fantastic have structural and stylistic similarities, up to a certain point, allows both to co-exist for a time in the narrative without the reader being aware of the overlapping of genres. For example, both detective fiction and the fantastic depend on mystery, surprise, suspense, and tension. The narrator, in each kind of story, is obliged to tell the tale in a manner which will keep the reader guessing about the significance of events and situations which are described to him. But, despite the many similarities between these two popular genres, they function as mirror images of one another, for they reflect diametrically opposed visions of the same world that they seek to portray.

According to Ernest Mandel,

“The detective story is the realm of the happy ending. The criminal is always caught. Justice is always done. Crime never pays. Bourgeois legality, bourgeois values, bourgeois society, always triumphs in the end. It is a soothing, socially integrating literature, despite its concern with crime, violence and murder” (p. 47-48).

The detective story demands closure, and it incorporates this need into its structure. In the final part of a detective story, the detective is given an opportunity to explain how he solved the mystery. No loose ends are left dangling, and no doubt is allowed in the mind of the reader. The classical detective is

“the perfect reasoner, the embodiment of logic, the champion of mind over matter... He demonstrates his superiority over ordinary men by scornfully beating them at their own game; by solving with ease the problems which seem to them so baffling” (Haycraft, p. 9)

The story ends only when the mystery has been satisfactorily and thoroughly explained. One of the most important conventions of the detective genre is that “regardless of what happens in the course of an investigation, at its end the detective does solve the case, and he solves it correctly”³ (Kittredge and Krauzer, p. xi).

The fantastic, on the other hand, depends on the reader’s doubt and hesitation for its existence in a text, according to Tvetzan Todorov, Rosemary Jackson, and others who have studied the genre. Todorov defines the fantastic by its inscription of hesitation; he states: “‘I nearly reached the point of believing’: that is the formula which sums up the spirit of the fantastic. Either total faith or total incredulity would lead us beyond the fantastic” (*Fantastic*, p. 31). Jackson adds: Anxiety... is not merely a thematic feature, but is incorporated into the structure of the work to become its defining element: (p. 28). The fantastic text refuses closure, thus leaving us to ponder the meaning of what we have read. Whereas detective fiction seeks to restore order and

reconfirm the power of rationality, the fantastic is, in the words of Jackson, “the literature of subversion”. Jackson believes that fantastic literature “opens up, for a brief moment, on to disorder, on to illegality, on to that which lies outside the law, that which is outside dominant value systems”⁴ (p. 4).

Because the two genres inscribe opposing ideologies, it is virtually impossible for a single text to have all of the characteristics of both kinds of stories. One genre must dominate in the end, and it will thereby erase the presence of the other. For example, a mystery which appears to have supernatural overtones will, after a thorough investigation by the detective, be explained in perfectly ordinary, natural, and rational terms. Otherwise, if the fantastic is allowed to dominate, the norms of detective fiction will be violated, and the text will cease to belong to that category. Most theoreticians who have studied detective fiction insist that the fantastic has no place in the unfolding of the plot; everything must have a rational explanation by the time the story ends. Louis Vax explains:

Las técnicas de ambos géneros difieren muy profundamente. Lo “sobrenatural”, en las narraciones policiales, sólo está puesto para ser suprimido. Aparece, con preferencia, al comienzo; se presenta como algo increíble, pasmoso. Es necesario que al principio la razón se escandalice, para tener después la última palabra. En el cuento fantástico, el planteamiento es inverso; lo sobrenatural, ausente al principio domina el proceso que lleva al desenlace; es necesario que se insinúe poco a poco, que adormezca a la razón en lugar de escandalizarla (p. 13).

Both detective fiction and the fantastic have a rigid set of invariants which give them identity as genres. Too much variations from the defining characteristics of the genre removes a work from that classification. As Todorov has noted, “The masterpiece of popular literature is precisely the book which best fits its genre” (*Poetics*, p. 43). He claims, for example, “The whodunit par excellence is not the one which transgresses the rules of the genre, but the one which conforms to them” (*Poetics*, p. 43). It is precisely at the point when *Tenga para que se entretenga* transgresses the rules of detective fiction that it enters into the realm of the fantastic; by subverting the ideology of the former, it inscribes the ideology of the latter. But, how is it possible that throughout most of the text, we do not suspect that we are misreading the situation?

Let us return to the matter of how the story is told to us. Pacheco uses a narrative device which is commonly associated with detective fiction. He presents *Tenga para que se entretenga* as a text written by someone else. In this case, it takes the form of an “informe confidencial” written by the detective, Domínguez, and commissioned by an unidentified client (addressed in the text as “señor” and “usted”). It is supposedly a factual account of a “real” incident witnessed by Domínguez, the “author” of the text. Because Domínguez is not a

professional writer, his style tends to be simple and straight-forward, not unlike that of a popular *photonovela*. He relates the facts in a clear, prosaic fashion that shows a lack of imagination and skill as a writer:

“El 9 de agosto de 1943 la señora Olga Martínez de Andrade salió de su domicilio en Tabasco 106, Colonia Roma, acompañada por su hijo de seis años, Rafael Andrade Martínez. La señora tenía una invitación para comer en casa de su madre, doña Caridad Acevedo de M., que habitaba en Gelati número 36 bis, Tacubaya. Aprovechando la hora temprana y la cercanía decidió llevar a su niño a Chapultepec” (p. 134).

He often resorts to clichés and stock phrases as an easy way of conveying information to the reader. For example, he explains how he became involved in the case by stating:

Don Maximino, que en paz descanse, envió a uno de sus ayudantes a mi oficina de las calles de Palma. (Yo le había hecho servicios confidenciales de la índole más delicada y tuve el honor de disfrutar de su confianza). Dejé todos mis quehaceres para salir rumbo a Chapultepec en un coche del ministerio (p. 139).

As Todorov has observed, “Theoreticians of detective fiction have always agreed that style, in this type of literature, must be perfectly transparent, imperceptible; the only requirement it obeys is to be simple, clear, direct” (*Poetics*, p. 46). Domínguez tries very hard to meet these requirements, yet he is not always as successful as he would like to be.

Where Domínguez differs slightly from most narrators of detective fiction is in his acute awareness of his role as writer of the text. He makes frequent observations about the writing of the narrative, about his style, and about his choice of words. He even explains why he is so interested in the way the story is told: “Redactarlo, dicho sea entre paréntesis, me permitió practicar mi *hobby*, que consiste en escribir — sin ningún ánimo de publicación, por supuesto” (p. 133). His status as an amateur writer explains why he is so self-conscious; it also explains why he feels insecure about the reader’s reaction to his work. When he finds himself repeating the same words and phrases, for example, he humbly apologized to the reader, “si usted perdona la pobreza de mi vocabulario” (p. 135); when he calls attention to certain details in the text, he feels compelled to add, “disculpe usted la insistencia”⁵ (p. 137). As he, himself, points out, the text he has written has proven to be almost beyond his abilities as a writer; he explains in his introduction, “Tuve que hacerlo dos veces para dejarlo claro” (p. 133). Ironically, he seems to feel that the text is not clear, since he must constantly comment on the failure of his choice of words to describe things properly. In these instances, Domínguez is speaking in the discourse of the fantastic. The fantastic involves an attempt “to make visible that which is culturally invisible” (Jackson, p. 69). According to Jackson, the fantastic tends

toward non-signification:

There can be no adequate linguistic representation of this 'other', for it has no place in life, and it is this contradiction which gives rise to the disjunction between signifier and signified which is at the centre of the fantastic (p. 69).

Domínguez' uncertainty about how to narrate his tale reflects his awareness that he is trying to give structure to something which has no concrete form in the real world. Todorov observes,

The supernatural is born of language, it is both its consequence and its proof; not only do the devil and vampires exist only in words, but language alone enables us to conceive that which is always absent: the supernatural (*Fantastic*, p. 82).

Because Domínguez perceives himself to be a writer, albeit an amateur one, he occasionally indulges in descriptions of things which seem, on a first reading of the text, to be unrelated to the crime he is investigating. This seemingly superfluous commentary detracts from the orderly progression of the plot surrounding the mystery, but it is understandable in light of Domínguez' literary pretensions. Describing the scene of the crime, for example, he cannot resist the temptation to add:

[Los] árboles que crecen allí tienen formas extrañas, sobrenaturales se diría. No pueden atribuirse al terreno caprichoso ya que parecen aplastados por un peso invisible. Tampoco la antigüedad, pues — nos informó la administración del Bosque — tales árboles no son vetustos como los ahuehetes de las cercanías: datan del siglo XIX. El archiduque Maximiliano ordenó sembrarlos en vista de que la zona fue devastada en 1847 a consecuencia de la batalla de Chapultepec y la toma del Castillo por el ejército norteamericano (pp. 134-135).

Commentary of this type may strike us as being out of place in a detective story, but it does not automatically signal us that the detective genre is being subverted, since Domínguez immediately afterwards resumes his straight-forward narration of the crime. It is only in retrospect, on a second reading of the text, that we become aware that Domínguez is actually inscribing the fantastic in the tale whenever he deviates from our expectations about what a detective story should be. He uses words like "formas extrañas, sobrenaturales" for a purpose, just as he mentions the name of Archduke Maximilian for a specific reason: these references function subliminally in the text to suggest the identity of Rafael's abductor without stating categorically one way or another who the abductor was. The narrative is fraught with similar examples of what Harry Belevan has called "deslices textuales", or momentary slips where the fantastic is allowed to

makes its presence felt, only to disappear again and lose itself beneath the surface of the text.

Despite the apparent simplicity of Domínguez' style, then, an intricate web of complicity and deception is being woven into the fabric of the narrative. For example, his difficulty in finding words with which to narrate the story can be explained in two ways: originally, we had attributed the occasional awkwardness of his prose to his lack of expertise as a writer; on a second reading, however, we can see that Domínguez' uncertainty about how to tell his tale is related to the fact that he is attempting to give form to something which has no concrete form in the real world. As the narrator of a fantastic tale, he is trying to explain something which has no explanation. This clarifies for us, in retrospect, some of Domínguez' philosophic musings which may have had little meaning for us on a first reading of the text. When he says, "Cada cabeza es un mundo, cada quien piensa distinto y nadie se pone de acuerdo en nada" (p. 142), he is inscribing hesitation which, according to Todorov, gives birth to the fantastic. Domínguez refuses to take a stance about the meaning of the events he outlines in the text. Instead, he states, "todo en este mundo es misterioso y no hay acontecimiento, por nimio que parezca, que pueda ser aclarado satisfactoriamente" (p. 144). We do not realize, at the time Domínguez makes this statement, that it will ultimately prove to be his only answer to the questions he raises in the text. We are still under the impression, at this point in the story, that we are reading a detective tale. Therefore, we have a series of expectations about how the story will be narrated. Primary among these expectations is the belief that the detective will solve the mystery for us. When, instead, the detective hesitates between a natural and supernatural explanation for the crime he is investigating, the text moves into the realm of the fantastic. Domínguez first leans in the direction of admitting the supernatural, but then draws back at the implications of this choice; his hesitation is automatically passed on to us, since in the words of Todorov, "The fantastic... implies an integration of the reader into the world of the characters; that world is defined by the reader's own ambiguous perception of the events narrated" (*Fantastic*, p. 31).

Writers who choose to work with a popular genre like that of detective fiction face a special challenge; as John T. Irwin puts it,

How does one write analytic detective fiction as high art when the genre's basic structure, its central narrative mechanism, seems to discourage the unlimited rereading associated with serious writing?... How does he write a work that can be reread by people other than those with poor memories?" (p. 1168).

The same question could well be asked of the fantastic. Its structure, too, often depends on surprise endings, tricks which catch the reader off guard, unexpected twists and turns in the plot, or some other clever narrative device. Once we have reached the end, there is little reason to reread the tale, since we already

know “what happens”. Todorov says, “if we know the end of a fantastic narrative before we begin it, its whole functioning is distorted” (*Fantastic*, p. 89). Irwin and Todorov reach similar conclusions about the way in which these popular genres are elevated to the status of “serious literary works”: both emphasize that a meta-reading of the text will “permit us to discover relationships where a first impression did not even suggest their existence” (*Fantastic*, p. 90). Irwin shows how some mysteries, which appear to be completely closed and resolved at the end of a first reading, remain structurally open because they present us with a “repeatable solution, a solution that conserves (because it endlessly refigures) the sense of the mysterious, [which] lies at the very origin of the analytic detective story” (p. 1170). A meta-reading of the text allows us to see not only what happens but **how** it happens. In a similar way, Todorov suggests that the meta-reading of a fantastic tale allows us to “note the methods of the fantastic instead of falling under its spell” (*Fantastic*, p. 90).

Desiderio Navarro has postulated that detective fiction has not always received the serious attention it deserves from critics because it is immediately identified as a popular genre, whose primary function is thought to be “divertir, distraer, recrear, entretener” (p. 138). Yet, as he and Mandel have shown, detective fiction has another, more serious role: it can function as a “literatura didáctico-instrumental o informativo-documental” through its inscription of a well-defined ideology. The fantastic also operates on two levels: its is a literature which is meant to entertain but, at the same time, to undermine the ideology that detective fiction upholds. A first reading of Pacheco’s story, *Tenga para que se entretenga*, call attention only to the first of its two functions, or its entertainment value. A meta-reading of the text, however, reveals its masterful construction and its more serious social message. No matter how we choose to interpret the events which take place in *Tenga para que se entretenga*, the story carries a disturbing message. The logical solution to the mystery is full of contradictions and lies, whereas the fantastic solution is based on eye-witness testimony and is substantiated by concrete proof. It may strike us as “impossible” that Maximilian could return from the grave to claim Rafael Andrade, but what other explanation is suggested by the facts surrounding the case? The official police report is pure invention and is no more acceptable than Olga’s extraordinary testimony. A solution based on invented or falsified information, although of a logical nature, is no more “real” than a fantastic one, for it brings us no closer to the truth. As Domínguez observes, official interpretations of reality are sometimes biased and fraudulently altered to suit the needs of a select and powerful few. In such cases, reality can become a totally relative entity.

María Elvira Bermúdez has put forth a very convincing argument which links the cultivation, popularity and esteem of detective fiction to the attitudes a society holds about its system of justice. She believes that the detective genre has found its greatest expression in England and in the United States because

el inglés y el estadounidense tienen para la ley un respeto y una confianza que, sean o no espontáneos y sinceros, marcan siempre su fisonomía colectiva. Cuando son víctimas de un atropello, acuden a la autoridad y dejan a su cargo la reparación del daño y el castigo del delincuente” (p. 14).

She also notes that in these English-speaking countries, citizens fear those who uphold the law: “palpita en ellos el temor a caer algún día en sus garras” (p. 14). In Latin American countries, especially in Mexico, Bermúdez believes that there is neither fear of nor respect for the law. She states:

El latino, el hispano-americano y sobre todos, el mexicano, se distinguen en cambio por un expticismo sin recato hacia el poder de la justicia abstracta y por un desdén amargo hacia la actuación de los depositarios de la justicia concreta. Para el mexicano, revancha es sinónimo de justicia; y la revancha sólo de sí mismo puede dimanar y convertirse en acto. Por ese motivo, es él en persona quien venga los agravios que le han sido inferidos; y también por esa causa, le tiene sin cuidado la persecución de la justicia. Si es pobre, huye de ella, pero no se molesta en fraguar coartadas ni se preocupa de borrar sus rastros; si es rico, trata de comprarla; en todo caso, se atiene a las consecuencias de sus actos, remedando el estoico fatalismo de sus antepasados (p. 15).

Given the Mexican’s attitude toward law and justice, it is not surprising that in Pacheco’s short story the detective genre is used only to introduce an ideology which will later be subverted by the appearance of the fantastic in the text. *Tenga para que se entretenga* is not, in the words of Mandel, “a soothing, socially integrating literature” (p. 46). It presents a highly disturbing view of Mexican society, and of Mexico’s legal system. Innocent men are tortured and jailed for a crime they did not commit, inconsistencies in the official police report are censored and concealed, rational explanations are blatant lies, and only the fantastic interpretation of events seems to point toward “the truth”. Although social criticism is apparent in the story even on a first reading, it is through a meta-reading of the text that we see how order transforms itself into disorder, rationality into irrationality, and fact into fiction. By disguising itself as a detective story, *Tenga para que se entretenga* accomplishes its goals as a fantastic narrative: it subverts our well-ordered vision of the world without us being immediately aware that it is being subverted. Only a meta-reading of the tale reveals that the fantastic and the detective genre have co-existed, side by side, in the text from the very beginning. As our sly narrator tells us, “la mejor manera de ocultar algo es ponerlo a la vista de todos” (p. 144).

NOTES

- 1 *La narrativa de José Emilio Pacheco* by Yvette Jiménez de Boise, Diana Morán, and Edith Negrín (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1979) presents critical studies on *Tarde de agosto*, *Parque de diversiones*, *El principio del placer*, *El viento distante*, *La luna decapitada*, *Civilización y barbarie*, *El castillo en la aguja*, *Jérico*, and *La fiesta brava*. Other critical studies on Pacheco's short fiction include: Nancy Gray Díaz, *Ed mexicano naufragado y la literatura 'pop'*: "La fiesta brava" de José Emilio Pacheco". *Hispanic Journal* 6.1 (Fall 1984): 131-139; Russell M. Cluff, 'Lo absurdo', en dos cuentos de José Emilio Pacheco. *Hispanófila* 28.3 (May 1955): pp. 103-116, and Russell M. Cluff, "Immutable Humanity Within The Hands of Time: Two Short Stories by José Emilio Pacheco". *Latin American Literary Review* 10 (Spring-Summer 1982): pp. 41-56. To my knowledge, the only article which deals with the fantastic in Pacheco's short fiction is my own. See Cynthia Duncan, "The Fantastic as a Vehicle of Social Criticism in José Emilio Pacheco's 'Lao fiesta brava'". *Chasqui* 14, pp. 2-3 (February-May 1985): pp. 3-13.
- 2 I have dealt with the historical implication of Maximilian's return from the dead elsewhere. See: Cynthia Duncan, "Ghosts of the Past: The Return of Maximilian and Carlotta in Two Contemporary Mexican Short Stories", in *Literature and the Historical Process*. Ed. David Hirshberg (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1988): pp. 97-106.
- 3 The list of books and articles which attempt to define the detective genre is endless. Some works (in addition to those I have quoted) which were helpful to me are: *Detective Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Robin W. Winks (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1980); *The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Howard Haycraft (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1946); *The Development of the Detective Novel*, A. E. Murch (London: Peter Owen, 1958); *Thrillers: Genesis and Structure of a Popular Genre*, Jerry Palmer (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979); and *The Pursuit of Crime: Art and Ideology in Detective Fiction*, Dennis Porter (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).
- 4 In addition to those I have cited, other theoreticians of the fantastic include: Ana María Barrenechea, "Ensayo de una tipología de la literatura fantástica", *Revista Iberoamericana* 80 (julio-sept. 1972): pp. 391-403; Irene Bessièrre, *Le Récit Fantastique: Lao Poétique de L'incertain* (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1974); Roger Caillois, *Imágenes, Imágenes* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1970); Emilio Carilla, *El cuento fantástico* (Buenos Aires, Ed. Nova, 1968); W. R. Irwin, *The Game of The Impossible. A Rhetoric of Fantasy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976); Witold Ostrowski, "The Fantastic and the Realistic in Literature", *Zagadnienia Radzagow Literackich* 9.1 (1966): pp. 54-71; Eric Rabkin, *The Fantastic in Literature* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1976) and Franz Rottensteiner, *The Fantasy Book* (N.Y.: MacMillan, 1978).
- 5 On a second reading, these same phrases serve as meta-linguistic signals that call attention to the presence of the supernatural or uncanny in the text.

WORKS CITED

Aponte, Barbara Bockus. "José Emilio Pacheco, Cuentista". *Journal of Spanish Studies, Twentieth Century* 71 (Spring, 1979): pp. 5-21.

Belevan, Harry. *Teoría de lo fantástico: apuntes para una dinámica de la literatura de expresión fantástica*. (Barcelona: Ed. Anagrama, 1976).

Bermúdez, María Elvira. *Los mejores cuentos policíacos mexicanos* (México: Libro-Mex Editores, 1955).

Haycraft, Howard. *Murder for Pleasure: The Life and Times of the Detective Story* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1943).

Irwin, John T. "Mysteries We Reread, Mysteries of Rereading: Poe, Borges, and the Analytic Detective Story; Also Lacan, Derrida, and Johnson". *MLN* 101.5 (December 1986): pp. 1168-1215.

Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy, The Literature of Subversion* (London: Methuen, 1981).

Kittredge, William and Steven M. Krauzer. *The Great American Detective* (New York: Mentor, 1978).

Mandel, Ernest. *Delightful Murder: A Social History of the Crime Story* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

Navarro, Desiderio. "La novela policial y la literatura artística". *Texto crítico* 16-17 (enero-junio de 1980): pp. 135-148.

Pacheco, José Emilio. "Tenga para que se entretenga", en *El principio del placer* (México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1972: pp. 133-149).

Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970).

_____. *The Poetics of Prose* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977).

Vax, Louis. *Arte y Literatura fantástica* (Buenos Aires: Edit. Universitaria de Buenos Aires, 1963.)