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FRAGMENTATION OF CHARACTERS IN THE FICTION OF JOSÉ DONOSO

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FRAGMENTATION OF CHARACTERS IN THE FICTION OF JOSE DONOSO

The twentieth century has been described as the century of man's discovery of himself. José Donoso's character portrayals illustrate some of the understanding of the personality advanced by Freud and Jung and their followers.

Donoso's character portrayals abandon the old, superficial notion of man in the traditional novel where the personality was seen as a discrete, whole unity. With the psychological orientation and innovations in technique of the stream-of-consciousness masters and changes of point of view theorized by Henry James, Donoso proceeds to break apart the personality: "Yo al describir un personaje lo desintegro."

Fragmentation in Donoso's fiction is the portrayal of the personality's multifarious and chaotic complexes which, when seen in totality give an impression of the whole unity. Working with free, uninhibited characters the Chilean novelist shows the result of the divestment of the ego of its normal role of harmonizing the anarchical contents of the unconscious with the demands of the superego. Fragments of the personality manifest themselves as temporary representations of the person who narrates from these different and shifting points of view.

Tapping the creative powers of the unconscious, Donoso's novels become a surrealistic combination of physical and psychic realities showing the character in oneiric union with other beings through montage, doppelgänger and nagualism.

Donoso's characters struggle against the rigid traditions and mores of established society. Through travesty Donoso shows that society's roles and behavior are masks intended to diminish the terror of the relativity of man's world and to give order to his existence. His upper-class characters strive to free themselves of the persona prescribed for them by society while others are painfully aware of the need for a mask to hide the chaotic inner personality.

The result of Donoso's character portrayal is the disintegration of the character showing that personality and reality are relative and mutable. Donoso's exploration of the personality constitutes a vital, complete portrayal of man.

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FRAGMENTATION OF CHARACTERS IN THE FICTION OF JOSE DONOSO

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Character portrayal in José Donoso's fiction is significant for its exploration of the human personality. It is rich in the eternal quality of art which is truthful insight into man. The twentieth century has been the century of man's discovery of himself; it is only natural, therefore, that there would be deeper portrayals of man's psychology in modern fiction. Whereas many world novels continue to portray man superficially as a psychologically whole entity and other, more experimental novels, reject psychology, the contemporary Latin American novel, of which Donoso is a leading exponent, has achieved a very powerful fiction with complex and very human characters.

This study is an investigation of the fragmented portrayal of characters in Donoso's fiction. His uninhibited characters are in perpetual conflict with societal control; their personalities reveal the relative nature of man's psychology. As his portrayals negate the old idea of man's psychological wholeness they result in a more truthful representation of man's chaotic inner nature.

Donoso's characters reflect his own struggles to retain his psychological freedom in the highly restrictive aristocracy into which he was born. Many, even reputable studies have erroneously set Donoso's date of birth as 25 September, 1925. In personal correspondence he explains that "la confusión de fechas se debe a que, hace muchos años, cuando aspiraba a obtener una beca, mi edad debía figurar con un año menos y en algunos textos ese error persistió."[1] In fact, José Donoso Yañez was born in Santiago de Chile, 5 October, 1924, the son of a medical doctor, José Donoso Donoso, and Alicia Yáñez. His upper-class birth linked him to prominent and wealthy Chilean families. Donoso was reared during a period which immediately preceded great social change in Chile, an era in which the societal canons of conservative upper-class society had degenerated into ritualisitc traditions, and social roles had become empty masks. Latin American society was becoming chaotic, it was disintegrating through social mobility, industrialization and urbanization. Though the erosion began long before Donoso's time, to be sure, he was reared in an upper-class family which, out of social inertia, attempted to conserve the outmoded mores of the Chilean upper-class.

> Nací en una familia de posición social ambigua, con un pie en la oligarquía y otro en la clase media, pero desterrada de ambas; y crecí en una época en que las clases sociales iban perdiendo importancia, los matices se confundían y quedaban sólo pintorescos residuos. Por razones psicológicas personales, neurosis juvenil o lo que se quiera llamarla ese mínimo matiz de destierro al que ya nadie daba importancia más que yo se fue hinchando en mí como un abceso, se hizo doloroso, cruel, obsesivo, y durante mucho tiempo este desface subjetivísimo--además de otros desfaces subjetivos que se

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[1]José Donoso in personal correspondence, 6 May, 1973.

> hicieron abceso y deformaron otras áreas de mi personalidad--me sirvió de lupa para mirar el mundo, magnificando algo insignificante.[1]

The influence of Donoso's own psychological reactions on his character portrayals is readily evident. His characters suffer from the guilt and repressed impulses, and manifest the rebellion against their social confinement which he so frankly reveals about himself. The guilt which many of his adolescent characters experience resembles the psychological conflicts of Donoso's own youth. His fascination for his mad cousin recalls the whole insane reality of El obsceno pájaro de la noche. His aristocratic family drew vitality from the persons of lower-classes who served it, a relationship which constitutes the thematic foundation of most of his works. Like his aristocratic characters, Donoso was reared in the midst of decay and inertia.

> Yo pasé la niñez en una inmensa casa de tres patios de Santiago de Chile, acompañado de tres tías ancianas que dejaban transcurrir los días y la vida encamadas; ... eran tres viejas ex-bellas físicamente arruinadas, las pobres. Y viví la adolescencia en casa de mis padres, con mi abuela, que es la misiá Elisa Grey de Abalos, figura central de Coronación. Viví completamente rodeado de decrepitud hasta los 21 años, hasta que yo ya no pude respirar más.[2]

In a burst of freedom from the stifling atmosphere of his youth, at the age of twenty-one, Donoso interrupted his studies and fled to Magallanes where he worked as a shepherd for a year.

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[1]José Donoso, "Entrevista a propósito de El obsceno pájaro de la noche," Libre, No. 1 (September, October, November, 1971), p. 74.

[2]Roberto Saladrigas, "Monólogo con José Donoso," Destino, No. 1742 (February 20, 1971), p. 26.

Donoso has undergone psychoanalysis over a substantial period of time which, he states, has helped him to perceive some of the perplexing contents of his psychology which have influenced his portrayal of characters.

> El psicoanálisis, más que aclararme nada en forma teórica, me ha hecho consciente de ciertas imágenes, de ciertos símbolos recurrentes que encarnaban mis obsesiones y mis miedos, y con el psicoanálisis se hicieron nítidos...por lo menos momentáneamente.[1]

Donoso feels that emotional problems related to his decadent surroundings have been exorcised by his very free, almost automatic, writings.

José Donoso's youth was set in the societal deterioration before World War II and his maturation, like the maturation of the Latin American novel, coincides with the post-War chaos. Because his early writing uses the decadent Chilean society of his youth as a backdrop, many critics have attempted to fit Donoso conveniently into the classification of a social writer. His writings, far from having social motives, are acts of exorcism, purgings of the memories of his stagnant childhood and the imprisoning effect of his upbringing. Rather than social concepts, Donoso is concerned with fictional characters who, like himself, seek to escape from their suffocating social milieu.

As a study of literary history can substantially document, great literature frequently grows out of societal disintegration. The vitality of the contemporary Latin American novel is related to the profound social changes which Latin America has experienced in the twentieth century. Speaking of this relationship Mario Vargas Llosa theorizes that

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[1]José Donoso in personal correspondence, 23 May, 1973.

> great novels never appear in . . . moments of optimistic exultation, of hope and faith in a country's destiny; rather they appear in the preceding period when the erosion of the old order permits the community to perceive only confusion and chaos in the reality that surrounds them. . . . The most propitious moment for the development of prose fiction is when reality ceases to have precise meaning for a historic community because the society's religious, moral, or political values . . . have entered upon a period of crisis and no longer enjoy the faithful support of the collectivity.[1]

In no contemporary Latin American novel is the rise of fiction out of societal decay more evident than in José Donoso's works, as seen in his thematic preoccupation with the deterioration of the Chilean aristocracy, and the perpetual trauma of the individual's conflict with the norms of the collectivity. Latin American society has been in a state of chaos and change since World War II. The three pillars of society, the aristocracy, Church and military, are crumbling in Latin America; Donoso and his contemporaries have seen social castes disintegrate and Latin America's feudalistic society collapse. In Donoso's once devout family religion had eroded to become nothing more than a colorful and hollow ritual; Donoso says, "Father was a non-believer and mother clearly responded to the pageantry and witchcraft of the Church rather than to its teachings."[2]

The roots of the great Latin American novel, the boom novel, as it is called, are in the cultural chaos which followed World War II. It was the War which precipitated the great social changes in Latin America and provided an environment for the growth of a healthy, vital, exciting era for fiction. It interrupted the flow of European literature to Latin

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[1]Mario Vargas Llosa, "The Latin American Novel Today," trans. by Nick Mills, Books Abroad, Vol. XLIV, No. 1 (Winter, 1970), p. 11.

[2]José Donoso, "Chronology," Review 73, (Fall, 1973), p. 13.

America and gave the local novelists an opportunity to gain the attention of a growing and serious reading public. Latin American social change was brought about by the industrialization and urbanization which followed the War; a change from an old, rural society to a new, urban reality. A new sophisticated, self-confident novel has emerged, breaking with the traditional novel in form, language and character portrayal and attempting to reinterpret Latin American reality in the twentieth century.

Since the War the Latin American novel has increased in vitality, innovation, artistic excellence, and in marketing. Its growth has been so prodigious that critics have, by concensus, called it the boom. What may have been used by critics as a nonce word, valuable only for its onomotopoeic quality, boom has come to characterize the mid-century Latin American novel. The novelists who compose the boom generation are José Donoso, (Chile: 1924), Juan Carlos Onetti (Uruguay: 1909), José Lezama Lima (Cuba: 1910), Julio Cortázar (Argentina: 1914), Juan Rulfo (Mexico: 1918), Carlos Fuentes (Mexico: 1928), Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia: 1928), Guillermo Cabrera Infante (Cuba: 1929), Manuel Puig (Argentina: 1932), Mario Vargas Llosa (Peru: 1936), Severo Sarduy (Cuba: 1937), and legion minor and marginal figures as well as Guimarães Rosa (Brazil: 1908), and other Latin Americans writing in Portuguese. The boom refers to those novels in Iberoamerican literature written since 1955 exhibiting a general reaction against the traditional novel in form and language, broad scope, and complexity of character portrayal.

> The center of gravity has shifted radically--from the landscape created by God to an urban landscape created by man and inhabited by men. . . . For (the) new writers the city is the axis. . . . Suddenly powerful complex fictional beings

> are emerging from the anonymous masses of the great cities. . . . They are complex and ambiguous characters who resemble real human beings.[1]

It is in the creation of complex personalities that the new Latin American novel differs most significantly from other very experimental novels; it constitutes a natural progression from the heritage which the stream-of-consciousness writers of the early twentieth century gave to fiction.

Individually and generically, man is most interested in himself. Early literature described man's relationship to his environment. Later literature described man not only physically but emotionally and mentally. Art has reached its greatest attainment when it has successfully treated man's relationship with himself. William Faulkner spoke of the importance of man as the subject for the novel when, upon receiving the Nobel Prize, he said: "The only thing worth writing about is the human heart in conflict with itself." The great heroes of world literature verify Faulkner's words. Oedipus, Alonso Quijano, Hamlet, Raskolnikov, and Stephen Dedalus are but a few of those whose interior conflicts have made them immortal characters.

Character portrayal in the novel, through 1900, was mimetic; characters were discrete, unified identities since this is how each man sees himself. Nineteenth century writers made advances into psychological portrayal by assigning a set of _donnés_ to characters and permitting them to react to circumstances, or plot, thus introducing a causality which lent the portrayal a greater sense of psychological verisimilitude. The apex of causality in the novel came in the nineteenth century with the

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[1]Emir Rodríguez Monegal, "The New Latin American Novel," _Books Abroad_, XLIV, No. 1 (Winter, 1970), p. 45.

works of Ivan Turgenev, Gustav Flaubert, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Honoré de Balzac, and Leo Tolstoy. Subsequent writers, recognizing the futility of attempting to equal the success of these masters in combining plot and character, turned to the area of technique wherein there was room for innovation in conjunction with psychological portrayal.

In the early twentieth century novelists sought to reproduce the atmosphere of the mind. Although earlier writers had made attempts to apply the techniques of stream-of-consciousness and interior monologue to fiction, it was not mastered until James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and William Faulkner. The techniques were only artificial dramatizations of human thought processes, nevertheless, one of the important fruits of these innovations was an inherent vagueness which contributed to fluidity in character portrayal and a move away from the psychological unity of characters which had been the hallmark of the traditional novel.

Even after the inroads of Joyce, Proust, Woolf and Faulkner, the mind remains the last frontier, about which man still knows very little. Octavio Paz writes that "allá donde terminan las fronteras, los caminos se borran."[1] New roads into the murky area of the personality are far from clear. Innovative writers of the mid twentieth century manifest a variety of trends in dealing with psychology in fiction, although many writers are still content to stay within the limits of the traditional novel. The avant-garde novelists of France and America have specifically reacted against the psychological penetration of the stream-of-consciousness writers by subduing the human element while other novelists, like

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[1]Octavio Paz, Libertad bajo palabra, (Barcelona: Barral, 1969), p. 9.

José Donoso and his contemporaries in Latin American fiction, have pursued new explorations of the personality of characters through the innovations in technique of their stream-of-consciousness mentors.

In La deshumanización de las artes, Ortega y Gasset has commented on the absence of the human element in modern art and its accompanying esotericism. One might say that its closest counterpart in modern fiction is the nouveau roman, which constitutes one of the more thriving forms of the evolving novel. The nouveau roman merely suggests the presence of humans through a complex phenomenological approach to fiction. Its obsessive reification relegates characters to the realm of objects. The new French novels, in general, describe impressions that do not penetrate beyond the ear and eyeball of the narrator, who registers, like a tape-recorder and a camera, the detailed physical descriptions of objects without giving an interpretation of their meaning in the mind.

Like the French novel, the contemporary American novel is in a very innovative period. It verges on autodestruction through absurdity. In many of these new novels there is no plot and there is no meaning. In scope they are insignificant. Characters are flat and faceless like paper dolls. For instance, in his novel, Snow White, Donald Barthelme makes his characters into an undifferentiated mass, and then includes a questionnaire for the reader to answer. Question eleven is: "Are the seven men, in your view, adequately characterized as individuals? Yes ( ) No ( )."[1]

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[1]Donald Barthelme, Snow White, (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), p. 83.

An anachronistic American novelist, Anaïs Nin, whose fiction is substantially different in character portrayal from that of her contemporaries, speaks of the phenomenon of personality fragmentation in her study, The Novel of the Future.

> The future novel has to learn to deal with the many new dimensions we have opened into the personality of man.
> .....
> Character is now being submitted to the same kind of forces that split the atom, the same decomposition for the purpose of creating a more dynamic whole.
> .....
> The fragmentation of the novel . . . stems from an outmoded concept of wholeness. Wholeness in the past, was a semblance of consistency created from a pattern, social and philosophical, to which human beings submitted. This artificial unity of man was dissolved by a new vision into the selves which were masked to achieve a semblance of unity, a new vision into the relativity of truth and character.[1]

The fragmented portrayal of characters makes possible the creation of complex personalities in fiction.

The novels of Henry James and Marcel Proust contain the antecedents of personality fragmentation in modern fiction. James' novels suggest complex and ambiguous reasons for a character's behavior, thus opening up an endless variety of interpretations of the personality. "It is virtually impossible to say where the characters are in the Jamesian kaleidoscope, or which of them is up at any moment."[2] Donoso was an undergraduate at Princeton University at the time of a great reappraisal of the fiction of Henry James and he readily acknowledges his debt to the technique of the American master.

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[1]Anaïs Nin, The Novel of the Future, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1968), pp. 192-195.

[2]Charles Child Walcutt, Man's Changing Mask: Modes and Methods of Characterization in Fiction, (Minneapolis: the University of Minnesota Press, 1966), p. 176.

Marcel Proust made one of the first attempts to reproduce the impressions of the mind in his very subjective novels. Proust's importance lies in his poetic recordings of fleeting impressions and memories, whereas the early twentieth century stream-of-consciousness writers made efforts to simulate the thought processes. Stated otherwise, "Proust sought to recapture and retain that which had seemed to be evanescent. Joyce sought to represent the process of evanescence."[1] In Proust's solipsistic narration, discrete aspects of personality suggest a variety of roles which the person assumes. Proust's fiction is a suspension of outer action in order to concentrate upon the intense activity of inner drama, the workings of the personality. Donoso says of Proust, without boasting of lineages, "Certainly the 'atomization' of his characters is the most subtle, . . . the starting-point to mine in a way."[2]

The trend in the Latin American novel, in general, and especially in Donoso, is toward the fragmented portrayal of characters. The terms "atomization" and "fragmentation" are commonly used interchangeably by critics. In spite of referring to the same phenomenon, they have divergent connotations. "Atomization" denotes a release of power, and the result of numerous, similar, discrete units or particles from the destruction of a whole. The release of power does not inhere in "fragmentation" but this term implies the reduction of a whole to its incomplete and different parts or components. Since the concept of incomplete, different

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[1]Leon Edel, The Modern Psychological Novel, (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), p. 177.

[2]José Donoso in personal correspondence, 23 May, 1973.

pieces most fully conveys the disunity of personality, it will be used in this study to mean the process, or the result of the process, of breaking the psychological unity into its unequal, autonomous fragments.

It is increasingly clear that the human personality is composed of many, often antithetical complexes or fragments, all of which seek expression. This dissertation will examine three major areas of relativity in Donoso's character portrayals. Working with psychologically weak characters Donoso divests the ego complex of its habitual supremacy and permits the resulting fragments of personality to narrate for the individual from their autonomous points of view. Working with psychologically free characters--marginal characters who exist on the perimeter of society because of their uninhibited behavior--Donoso shows the character's struggles to express their instincts and impulses in opposition to society's fixed mores in order to illustrate that society's structures and prescribed behaviors are mere façades intended to reduce the terror of the relativity of man's existence. Through very automatic writing Donoso shows that though rational man sees himself as a whole individual, the contents of the unconscious cause characters to see their personality in completely oneiric participation with other beings replacing an outmoded concept of absolute physical reality with a surrealistic reality. The result of Donoso's fragmented portrayals is the destruction of the whole, indivisible unity of human psychology as man has thought of himself for centuries. The significance of Donoso's portrayals is their penetration into the fluctuating, relative, mutable inner reality of the human personality illustrating knowledge of man's nature advanced by the great psychoanalysts of the twentieth century.

Despite strong anti-character trends in the modern novel there is very interesting and complex character portrayal occurring through the phenomenon of fragmentation, thus verifying the vatic words of Ortega y Gasset, that the last hope of the novel lies "más bien que en inventar tramas por si mismas interesantes ... idear personas atractivas."[1]

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[1]José Ortega y Gasset, "La deshumanización del arte e ideas sobre la novela," Obras completas, (11 vols.; Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1947), III, p. 398.

I contradict myself. (I am large.
I contain multitudes.)
--Walt Whitman

CHAPTER II

FRAGMENTATION

Fragmentation, as seen in the fiction of José Donoso, is the portrayal of the personality broken into its numerous identities; the portrayal of the multitudinous aspects of personality which, seen in totality, give an impression of psychological individuality. Speaking of the fragmented nature of the personality José Donoso says that he feels

> una duda muy fuerte, una no-creencia en la unidad de la personalidad humana. ... Me han pasado demasiados accidentes psicológicos para creer que yo soy un persona. Soy treinta personas o no soy nadie.[1]

This depth of introspection is necessary in order to portray the fragmentation of the personality. The more conscious the novelist is of the fragmentation of his own personality the more complex and human his characters will be. Through fragmentation Donoso explores the inner man revealing the complexity of his identity. If, indeed, great literature attempts to "reveal the still unknown part of the soul,"[2] then the

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[1]Emir Rodríguez Monegal, "La novela como happening," Revista Iberoamericana, Nos. 76-77 (July-December, 1971), p. 520.

[2]Harold March, The Two Worlds of Marcel Proust, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1948), p. 133.

exploration of characters through personality fragmentation will prove to be one of the most fruitful and important efforts of the modern novel.

Only since about mid-twentieth century have writers fully applied the innovations of the stream-of-consciousness masters and Henry James' theories on point of view and achieved a narrative technique capable of investigating the multifarious fragments which compose the human personality. The fragmented nature of the human personality is a universal phenomenon confirmed by modern psychological research.

> Personality has many facets which may gleam and fade, scintillate and darkle, in bewildering fashion, until all semblance of unity vanishes and every facet seems a separate gem. And yet it has a single plan of structure, one general configuration, which may embrace all the changing phases and interrelated aspects.[1]

Each aspect of one's personality seeks expression. However, as one goes through the socialization process the more socially acceptable fragments are permitted to exhibit themselves while the less acceptable fragments are repressed or find expression through displacement. Childhood is a time of little inhibition; it is a free, anarchical state in which expression of fantasized personalities and undesireable personality traits are tolerated by other persons. With increasing maturity a well integrated, unified façade reconciling the more dominant, acceptable traits characterizes the normal individual. Adulthood, therefore, is the time of least freedom of expression of personality fragmentation. As adulthood declines into senescence the personality controls weaken and a person is likely to exhibit fragments of personality which had been repressed, thus entering, as it were, a second childhood.

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[1]James Bridger, Personality, Many in One: An Essay in Individual Psychology, (Boston: the Stratford Do., 1932), p. i.

Neurasthenia, schizophrenia, arteriosclerosis and other such disorders, are like childhood and senility, anarchical states in which personality fragments are more freely expressed. The individual is not concerned with pleasing society and doing what is acceptable, rather, he is preoccupied with his own interior crises and personality conflicts.

Donoso says of these anarchical states:

> Lo que me interesa a mí son los estados marginales, los estados anárquicos. La niñez es una ararquía; la vejez es una anarquía; la adolescencia es una anarquía; la locura es una anarquía; la neurosis es una anarquía. Me interesa la anarquía no desde un punto de vista social.[1]

He explains on another occasion his interest in these marginal characters:

> Me resulta mucho más fácil existir en los personajes marginados que en personajes gemelos a mí; puedo hacerlo a través de personajes marginados por la infancia extraña, la ancianidad, la locura, la neurastenia. Personajes cuyos límites de juego, si los hay, ellos mismos me señalan, y lo único que yo hago es invitar al lector a que los còmparta.[2]

Donoso's marginal characters are those whose ego complex is too weak to harmonize the extremes of control and repression by the superego and the uninhibited freedom of the powerful forces of the unconscious. In the normal individual the ego complex manifests the fragments characteristic of the individual which other persons recognize. The ego complex is the most individualistic part of one's personality which is, otherwise, generic. "In its basic structure, the human psyche is as little personalistic as the body. It is far rather something inherited and universal."[3] One inherits from the human race a deep residual pool

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[1]G. I. Castillo, "Entrevista," Hispania, LIV, No. 4 (December, 1971), p. 958.

[2]Roberto Saladrigas, "Monólogo con José Donoso," p. 26.

[3]C. G. Jung, "On the Psychogenesis of Schizophrenia," The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung, Trans. by Violet Staub de Laszlo, (New York: Random House, the Modern Library, 1959), p. 390.

of drives, instincts, emotions and needs though these have a personalized way of expressing themselves as determined by one's particular physical and emotional inheritance as well as the molding influence of one's society. The ego is a delicate balance which results between two, often antithetical, forces: the superego, which attempts to exert control in a way trained by society, and the id, or the basic, libidinal drives of the unconscious. As long as the delicate balance between the demands of the superego and the id is maintained by the ego, the person remains in control of himself and is a normal member of his society. When the distance between these two forces becomes too great to harmonize the personality becomes chaotic. Whereas the normal personality has a consistent expression controlled by the ego the psychotic personality is characterized by discrete, nonintegrated personality fragments which gain autonomy and for a period of time exclusively characterize the individual. The result may be a realtively mild anarchical state, as childhood or senescence, or a more seriously chaotic state, as the emotional and mental disturbances.

> Under the stress of an extreme abaissement the psychic totality falls apart and splits up into complexes, and the ego-complex ceases to play the important role among these. It is just one among several or many complexes which are equally important, or perhaps even more important, than the ego,is. All these complexes assume a certain personal character, although they remain fragments. It is understandable that people get panicky or that they eventually become demoraalized under a chronic strain or that they despair of their hopes and expectations. It is also comprehensible when their will power weakens and their self-control becomes slack and begins to lose its grip upon circumstances, moods, and thoughts. It is quite consistent with such a state of mind when some particularly unruly parts of the patient's psyche assume a certain amount of autonomy. . . . The real trouble begins with the disintegration of the personality and the divestment of the ego-complex from its habitual supremacy. . . . It is just as

> if the very basis of the psyche were giving way, as if an explosion or an earthquake were tearing asunder the structure of a normally built house.[1]

Fragmentation is a literary transcription of this reduction of the unified psychological configuration into its discrete components or complexes.

Referring to the fragmentation of fictional characters in the conclusion of her book, The Novel of the Future, Nin summarizes the change in psychological portrayal from the traditional to the contemporary novel.

> The conventional novel depicted character as a unity, already formed, while psychoanalysis studying the unconscious revealed the opposite, that character was fluctuating, relative, mutable, and asymmetrically developed, unevenly matured, with areas of rationality and areas of irrationality. Just as the scientists discovered that matter could be disintegrated into energy, the psychologists discovered that the personality could be broken down into its multiple components with a corresponding release of energy.[2]

El obsceno pájaro de la noche is a tour de force in which José Donoso portrays his characters through personality fission. One highly fragmented personality, Humberto Peñaloza, literally annihilates himself psychologically. He is one of the most complex and interesting characters in Latin American fiction. Acknowledging the psychological freedom of his schizophrenia he says to Madre Benita, a normal, well-socialized person:

> A veces compadezco a la gente como usted, Madre Benita, esclava de un rostro y de un nombre y de una función y de una categoría, el rostro tenaz del que no podrá despojarse nunca, la unidad que la tiene encerrada dentro del calabozo de ser siempre la misma persona.[3]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 387-388.

[2] Anaïs Nin, The Novel of the Future, p. 192.

[3] José Donoso, El obseno pájaro de la noche, (Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, S.A., 1971), pp. 155-156. Henceforth page numbers for quotations from this novel will be given in the text with a shortened version of the title.

El obsceno pájaro de la noche is fragmented recordings of the mind of Humberto Peñaloza. He is the unreliable narrator of the novel which takes place solely in his mind. Numerous discrete complexes alternately manifest themselves through the shifting points of view of his narration. Personality fragments push each other aside and narrate parts of the novel in a confusing, revolving fashion as though they were spirits surging out of the poor man's unconscious and fighting for possession of his conscious mind. Anita Muller calls the novel "una odisea monstruosa en la oscura mente de Humberto Peñaloza: un ser que ha perdido el propósito de la vida y de su existencia, que ha perdido su propia identidad."[1]

The novel is an oneiric stream-of-consciousness and interior monologue narration of legendary events and a description of the narrator's interaction with distorted characters who are, for the most part, inventions of his wild imagination.

Donoso gives some insight into the genesis of Peñaloza. He says that at the invitation of some friends he visited a dilapidated, old convent in Santiago, Chile where, upon seeing the poor wretches who inhabited it, "en mí se formó un imagen de la destrucción de la personalidad."[2] The result of that vision is the fragmentation of Humberto Peñaloza's personality.

> No creo en la novela de personajes. ... Pero me interesaba mucho la experiencia de hacer un personaje que no pudiera ser personaje. Que fuera treinta personajes a la vez, cuya existencia se pusiera en duda, cuya existencia fuera múltiple y

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[1]Anita Muller, "La dialéctica de la realidad en El obsceno pájaro de la noche," La nueva narrativa hispanoamericana, VI (September, 1972), p. 93.

[2]Rodríguez Monegal, "La novela como happening," p. 520.

> que no fuera múltiple; y que sin embargo tú lo tuvieras que recordar como uno, como una identidad.[1]

Since the chaotic and ambiguous novel, El obsceno pájaro de la noche, is Peñaloza's fragmented psyche it is impossible to make a critical interpretation of Peñaloza without attempting to define what is real and exterior to Humberto and what is fantasized by his schizophrenic personality. It is an impossible task to restructure the novel lineally in such a way that it becomes completely clear and unambiguous. Nevertheless, the following interpretation of the novel is plausible and consistent with Peñaloza's personality.

Physically, Humberto sketches himself through the descriptions which are made of him by characters whom he, himself, creates. The deformed Emperatriz evaluates Humberto as "un ser normal, común y corriente, feíto y harto insignificante el pobre." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 237.) Raquel, a normal person, evaluates Humberto as half monster: "¿Te acuerdas de ese secretario que tuvo hace años, uno como medio enano pero no enano y con el labio leporino mal cosido, y como gibado...una calamidad?" (Obsceno pájaro, p. 395) In this novel, where everything is relative, Humberto is neither monstrously deformed nor completely normal yet he is both, depending on one's point of view. For the monsters in the novel he is normal and for those who are normal he is deformed. In the Museum of Anthropology Humberto peers through the showcase glass at the mummies and, seeing his reflection at the same time, he says that "en el reflejo del cristal de esa vitrina mi rostro claza perfectamente en el rostro de algunas momias." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 267)

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[1] Ibid.

Humberto Peñaloza is the son of a poor, obsequious primary school teacher. Unlike the aristocrats whose historical identity is defined by lengthy genealogies, Humberto's genealogy, like that of all insignificant and obscure men, ends with his grandfather, who was a railroad machinist on an insignificant line. In spite of Humberto's overwhelming inferiority complex his father imbues him with an obsession to become somebody. The difference between Humberto's social insignificance and his obsession to become famous and wealthy gives him his psychological motivation. His personality conflict derives from the conviction of his own inferiority and his obession to be what he is not.

Since Humberto's father "tenía la desgarradora certeza de no ser nadie. De carecer de rostro," (Obsceno pájaro, p. 100) he quixotically dreams of the Peñaloza name becoming famous through his son's achievements. Though Humberto energetically sets out in quest of the Peñaloza dream he comes to the despairing realization that the only way to be somebody, to be a gentleman, is to be born such--it must be by divine right. The lower classes may not even aspire to an identity.

Humberto has only his will to aid him in fulfilling his pretentious obsession for even among the faceless masses his is an inordinately anonymous face. Humberto says: "Estoy acostumbrado a ser una presencia sobre la que los ojos se resbalan sin que la atención encuentre nada en qué fijarse." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 76) His only remarkable feature is his expressive eyes. They are his only immutable identity throughout the novel; for him they are proof of his identity. This is understandable in view of the tradition that the eyes are the windows of the soul; Humberto

has no physical significance but he has deep, rich, inner beauty. When he goes insane he believes that he holds magical power over what he sees because of the power of his eyes.

Humberto's mind vividly and repeatedly recalls the feelings which he experienced when he first saw don Jerónimo de Azcoitía walking majestically through a downtown crowd. Humberto's father had taken him to buy an ostentatious suit of gentleman's clothing which he could not afford; it was to be his first "disfraz de caballero, ... para que desde chico sintiera la exigencia de vestir como caballero." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 103) As Jerónimo de Azcoitía passes him, his glove brushes Humberto. This is an important occurrence for later, in his mental derangement, Humberto believes himself capable of imposing his will upon Jerónimo through magic, since he cannot do so through real, legitimate means. Having touched Jerónimo he is able to direct magical powers against him since, by the rule of magic "things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed."[1]

Humberto's emotional conflict--a covetousness due to an inferiority complex which is irreconcilable with an obsession to transcend his birth--reaches a point of violence when he sees don Jerónimo downtown in front of the Club Hípico.

> Un boquete de hambre se abrió en mí y por él quise huir de mi propio cuerpo enclenque para incorporarme al cuerpo de ese hombre que iba pasando, ser parte suya aunque no fuera más que su sombra, incorporárme a él, o desgarrarlo entero,

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[1]Frazer, Sir James George, The Golden Bough: a Study in Magic and Religion, abridged edition, (New York: the Macmillan Co., 1972), p. 12.

> descuartizarlo para apropiarme de todo lo suyo. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 105)

This vision of Jerónimo, who is the epitome of what Humberto would like to be, stimulates him in his studies. He excells and is admitted to law school, the best avenue for meritocratic mobility. He discovers, however, that he has a gift for writing and he is able to publish a small literary work aided by don Jerónimo de Azcoitía. It is not entirely clear how he induces don Jerónimo to subsidize the book by buying the first one hundred copies. Their only contact occurs by chance when they meet in the Museo Antropológico.

The repetition of his name throughout his book gives Humberto a thrill of identity, a taste of success in his quest to become somebody. Humberto believes that one has no identity until he can be like the aristocrats who see their names in print and their pictures widely published in the newspapers; one's name is important in giving a person identity since one only exists as the minds of other people confer him existence.

> Y mi nombre arriba, sobre el texto de todas las páginas izquierdas, Humberto Peñaloza, Humberto Peñaloza, Humberto Peñaloza, esa reiteración de mi nombre destinada a conjurar su vergüenza, a consolar a mi padre, a burlar a mi madre, a asegurarme a mí mismo que, al fin y al cabo, con mi nombre impreso tantas veces, nadie podía dudar de mi existencia. ... Cada ejemplar tiene ciento ochenta páginas, son noventa Humberto Peñalozas por ejemplar, más una vez en cada portada, una vez en cada portadilla y una vez en cada lomo...saquemos la cuenta: mi nombre repetido nueve mil trescientas veces en la biblioteca de don Jerónimo de Azcoitía. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 151)

His sister and father eagerly clip out the reviews of his small book as though it were their triumph--they appropriate his accomplishment. His father sinks the scissors into the Sunday edition of the newspaper, "con crueldad," (Obsceno pájaro, 283) and cuts out a review of his

son's work. A feeling of being used and robbed overwhelms Humberto--a feeling which grows into a persecution psychosis. His emotional trauma manifests itself in a psychosomatic reaction.

> Le grité me estoy muriendo de dolor al estómago desde que usted me pinchó con las tijeras para robarme mi triunfo. Que mi hermana estúpida se deje de pegar en su álbum los recortes de los artículos que me nombran. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 284)

The newspaper review momentarily becomes Humberto's identity--an identity so real that it pains him physically to see the reviews cut out, as though he, himself, were being cut with the scissors.

The episode with the review causes Humberto to suffer an emotional derangement. He abandons his home, quits his studies and frequents a cheap bar and student boarding establishment with other disenchanted bohemians. When don Jerónimo comes to the bar looking for him, Humberto panics and imagines that he is being pursued by don Jerónimo. He relapses into another acute derangement, flees from everyone, wanders the city streets as a vagrant, warming himself at trash fires. Probably out of fear that the books which don Jerónimo has bearing his name give the gentleman a magical power over him, Humberto attempts to steal the books which he wrote. His attempt fails, guards pursue him and he arrives at the door of a huge, old convent converted into an asylum for the poor. Weak, sick, and delirious, he cries:

> Golpear, golpear para que me abran, estoy enfermo, está lloviendo, estoy transido, tengo fiebre, Madre Benita por favor abra, perdóneme por haber salido de la Casa, abra, abra, no sé quien habrá trancado el portón, ya no veo, ya no puedo gritar más, los carabineros me maltrataron, los perros me mordieron, tengo fiebre, nadie me reconoció, sólo me humillaron y me soltaron al parque donde llovía y llovía y yo corría y corría y grito y golpeo, y ya no

> tengo fuerzas para gritar y golpear, Madre Benita, sálveme, que por lo menos la Peta Ponce no me encuentre, déjeme entrar, ya no tengo puños, ya no tengo voz, soy nada más que esta manga exangüe a la puerta de un convento en una noche lluviosa, y no abren. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 148)

This paragraph records a temporal shift in which Humberto's mind superimposes two similar occasions: the night he first comes to the asylum and the night, years later, when he attempts to steal the books a second time and is released by the police after being interrogated by Jerónimo's deformed son, Boy. The paragraph makes references to names which Humberto comes to know only after he has been in the convent, implying that he is experiencing an abreaction, a traumatic remembrance of an event which he superimposes upon a present occurrence. On his first arrival at the convent he is found sick, voiceless and delirious at the convent door. He is nursed back to health by Madre Benita, the nun who alone oversees the asylum full of decrepit poor ladies and orphan girls. In his delusive state Humberto narrates a large portion of the novel to Madre Benita but she hears nothing; Humberto is silent though the many voices of his fragmented personality are shouting inside him. The inmates of the asylum give him the name "el Mudito," which he, himself adopts as a mask to keep from manifesting the chaotic identities of his personality which would otherwise express themselves. This epithet defines the most important narrative role which Humberto has in the novel and characterizes his self-effacing personality. The diminutive pronoun describes his insignificant smallness and the lack of regard with which other characters treat him.

After being restored to health el Mudito becomes the caretaker of the enormous, old house. It is owned by the Azcoitía family who built it in the seventeenth century as a retreat for spiritual exercises. It has since degenerated into an asylum for a few poor, old ladies and young girls. The extensive corridors and numerous rooms make the house seem like a maze. Some of its uninhabited rooms contain trunks and furniture stored there by the Azcoitía family. Going through the trunks of clothing, old newspapers, pictures and other paraphernalia el Mudito becomes familiar with the aristocratic family and they become part of his reality. In his deranged mind he incorporates himself into their history. Unable to impose his will on the world through legitimate means, el Mudito attempts to do so through the powers of magic. By using the principle of contact magic el Mudito controls the Azcoitía family. He imagines himself hired by don Jerónimo as a personal secretary and commissioned to write the history of the family. The history which he invents but does not write, other than a few jumbled sentences on a few scraps of paper hidden under his bed, is the book, El obsceno pájaro de la noche, a novel within a novel. As Humberto's schizophrenic mind narrates the Azcoitía family history it gradually becomes his own autobiography of insanity. El Mudito imagines two characters talking about the history which is never written. Emperatriz says to Jerónimo:

> --En realidad no escribió jamás nada, Jerónimo. Se lo llevaba pensando en lo que iba a escribir, y a veces, cuando en las tardes nos reuníamos aquí un grupo de lo más agradable, nos contaba sus proyectos.
>
> --En fin, quizá sea para mejor. Uno de los defectos de Humberto fue creer que mi biografía era material literario.
>
> --Sí, empezó hablando de eso, pero después todo se deformó mucho. Humberto no tenía la vocación de la sencillez.

> Sentía necesidad de retorcer lo normal, una especie de compulsión por vengarse y destruir y fue tanto lo que complicó y deformó su proyecto inicial que es como si él mismo se hubiera perdido para siempre en el laberinto que iba inventando lleno de oscuridad y terrores con más consistencia que él mismo y que sus demás personajes, siempre gaseosos, fluctuantes, jamás un ser humano, siempre disfraces, actores, maquillajes que se disolvían...sí, eran más importantes sus obsesiones y sus odios que la realidad que le era necesario negar... (Obsceno pájaro, p. 488)

The fragmented, shadow-like characters are figments of his own schizophrenic mind. For the most part the history of the Azcoitía family and all of the characters and legends are fantasy invented by his mind to fulfill his psychological obsessions.

El Mudito becomes acquaninted with a few facts about the prominent Azcoitía family through the yellowing newspapers stored in the Casa. Jerónimo marries a distant cousin, Inés de Santillana, bringing together the last remnants of the very distinguished Azcoitía line. Jerónimo is a senator, active in the imbroglios of politics in his country. Inés dedicates herself to persuading Rome to canonize her forebearer, the first Inés de Azcoitía, who the family legend claims was a saint and who popular legend claims was a witch. In this way Inés seeks to perpetuate the family fame through her ancestress since her deformed son, Boy, will end the line. Inés dies a short time after the birth of Boy and the failure of her canonization project. Jerónimo remains active in politics for a long time. Boy takes over the family inheritance since it is he who comes to the police station to interrogate el Mudito whom the carabineros have apprehended after he steals one of his old books from the Azcoitía mansion. Humberto tries to prove to Boy his authorship by writing from memory the prologue of Jerónimo's biography, El obsceno

pájaro de la noche. He has made a mistake, however, for the book which he stole has nothing to do with Jerónimo's life but is the first, small literary work which Jerónimo had subsidized. Boy is startled that this mad wretch would know so much about the Azcoitía family. Realizing that he is insane, however, the police permit el Mudito to go free and he returns to the Casa. When he knocks on the door to be admitted he suffers the abreaction noted, temporarily confusing his first and his present arrivals at the Casa. Beyond these facts it would appear that the rest of the novel is an extended hallucination in el Mudito's mind based on what he has read in the newspapers and what he hears from the old ladies in the Casa who tirelessly repeat the legends associated with the Azcoitía family.

Humberto imagines himself don Jerónimo's secretary living with the family at their country estate, la Rinconada, where he has an affair with Inés' old maid and confidante, Peta Ponce. While he is with the smelly, flabby, old Peta she beguiles him into thinking that he is making love to the beautiful Inés. He believes that it is through his relationship with Peta that Boy is born; because of the vague similarity in their physical ugliness he believes that he is the father of Boy. When Boy is born deformed, Humberto convinces Jerónimo not to kill him but to build a special world for Boy; Humberto becomes the architect of the monster world, a labyrinthine world of artificiality. In la Rinconada Boy is surrounded by grotesque monsters carefully selected by Jerónimo and Humberto. Jerónimo pays them well to live in the microcosm surrounding Boy with his own kind of reality. Humberto is installed in la Rinconada

as the symbol of don Jerónimo with complete power over the creation. Emotionally unable to withstand the subtle threats of the monsters, who he believes are turning him into a monster, ("me están monstruificando," Obsceno pájaro, p. 271) he leaves la Rinconada and takes refuge in la Casa.

Though Inés has died, el Mudito imagines her returning from Rome defeated in her attempt to canonize Inés de Azcoitía. She takes a vow of poverty and isolation in the Casa de Encarnación. Despairing of ever becoming like Jerónimo el Mudito tires of his tortured association with the Azcoitía family. He takes vengeance upon Jerónimo by having him killed at the hands of the monsters in la Rinconada, and sends Inés to an insane asylum in a strait-jacket. Humberto then tries to rid himself of his suffering by committing mental suicide.

El Mudito's psychotic mind imagines people, actions and dialogues which are ambiguous and at times contradictory. El obsceno pájaro de la noche is an atmosphere of confusion built through temporal, spatial and conversational transpositions and counterpoints. The oneiric reality of the novel reflects the close correlation between the reality of a schizophrenic and that of a dreamer.

> (Dreams) can show all stages of personal disintegration, so it is no exaggeration to say that the dreamer is normally insane, or that insanity is a dream which has replaced normal consciousness. To say that insanity is a dream which has become real is no metaphor. The phenomenology of the dream and of schizophrenia are almost identical, with a certain difference, of course; for the one occurs normally under the condition of sleep, while the other upsets the waking or conscious state.[1]

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[1]C.G. Jung, "On the Psychogenesis of Schizophrenia," p. 358.

Each event, each action, each dialogue in the novel is repeated and altered many times in el Mudito's mind.

> Alrededor de la mitad de la novela vi que el libro que escribía me iba encerrando, que estaba escribiendo un libro de encierro y limitación, obsesivo y por lo tanto reiterativo: ... una anécdota se ve desde otro foco y cambia permaneciendo la misma. En fin, es dar vuelta y vuelta como un animal enjaulado.[1]

The characters, places, events, and dialogues in the novel are fragmentary and always shifting. Characters imagined by el Mudito narrate from their point of view then are interrupted by other characters with contrapuntal dialogue.

> La última novela, El obsceno pájaro de la noche, es un ejercicio en punto de vista, es el módulo ya, una cosa ya completamente barroca. Es el punto de vista desarrollado, exacerbado, lúcido, complicado, jugado en todas las posibilidades.[2]

Humberto admits his unreliability as a narrator and thus frustrates and confuses the reader. Referring to one of the characters in his narration he says: "cuando él ya no existía si es que alguna vez existió y todo esto no es invención mía." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 102)

Humberto is also cognizant of his own personality fragmentation. His fractured personality is his novel and he implies that the entire cast of characters is autonomous fragments of his own personality.

> Mi obra entera va a estallar dentro de mi cuerpo, cada fragmento de mi anatomía cobrará vida propia, ajena a la mía, no existirá Humberto, no existirán más que estos monstruos, el tirano que me encerró en la Rinconada para que lo inventé, el color miel de Inés, la muerte de la Brígida, el embarazo

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[1]José Donoso, "Entrevista a propósito de El obsceno pájaro de la noche," p. 75.

[2]G. I. Castillo, "Entrevista," p. 959.

> histérico de la Iris Mateluna, la beata que jamás llegó a ser beata, el padre de Humberto Peñaloza señalando a don Jerónimo vestido para ir al Club Hípico, y su mano benigna, bondadosa, Madre Benita, que no suelta ni soltará la mía y su atención a mis palabras de mudo y sus rosarios, esta Casa es la Rinconada de antes, de ahora, de después, la evasión, el crimen, todo vivo en mi cabeza, el prisma de la Peta Ponce refractando y confundiéndolo todo y creando planos simultáneos y contradictorios, todo sin jamás alcanzar el papel porque siempre oigo las voces y las risas envolviéndome y amarrándome. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 263)

El Mudito's fears and obsessions make him psychotic; the ego complex is divested of its role as the representative of the personality and the self image begins to fluctuate. Unable to resolve the needs of his unconscious with the lack of identity which he has in society his ego loses its supremacy and his fragmented psychology manifests itself; he becomes numerous identities and his behavior assumes numerous different roles. Humberto's self-image fluctuates radically being dominated at different times by different fragments of his personality: "Yo, víctima temblorosa dotada de una identidad precaria." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 156) The narrator is alternately male and female; he is periodically Humberto, el Mudito, the seventh old lady, the father of Iris' fictitious child, Iris' guagua, Romualdo's giant mask, the miraculous child, Boy, the father of Boy, Iris' yellow dog, a fluctuating stain on a wall, a shadow, the redeemer of the world's monsters, the redeemer of the old women and orphan girls, Jerónimo, and all of the other characters which he invents in the novel. Each of his identities relates to his basic psychological conflicts and obsessions and must be examined in relationship to the characters and events which fill his psychotic imagination.

It is in the monster world, la Rinconada, that Humberto first acknowledges the fragmentation of his personality. His weak identity is incapable of withstanding the threatening environment and he begins to see himself as one of the monsters: "Ustedes, monstruos, tienen miedo de salir, tenemos miedo de salir, tenemos miedo que nos vean y por eso nos refugiamos aquí." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 270)

To the normal world Humberto is monstruously ugly; to the monsters he is grotesquely normal. He seeks refuge from the normal world in la Rinconada but he soon begins to feel that it is a prison. "Círculos y círculos concéntricos alrededor del primer círculo, un círculo prisionero de los sucesivos, él, Humberto, en el centro de todas esas risas de todos los monstruos de todos los círculos." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 260) He interprets every comment, every laugh, and Boy's terrified crying in his presence as acts of rejection; he is a privileged pariah. He drinks to quench his fears and develops an ulcer. Discovered unconscious during Emperatriz' mascarade party which has as a theme "the hospital," he interprets the party as a plot to frighten him. In a semidelirious state he awakens to find all of the monsters in white, their mouths masked with gauze, and cycloptic Dr. Azula operating on his ulcer. In his hallucination Humberto believes that the monsters in sterile dress are attempting to remove his identity by robbing him of his normal organs which are to be sold and transplanted into monsters: "Soy vivero de órganos y fábrica de miembros sanos." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 292) Humberto thinks that Dr. Azula has removed eighty percent of his body leaving him small, faceless, and without identity; "despojado de todo lo de Humberto salvo del principio activo de mi mirada, que el doctor Azula no pudo extirpar." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 83)

He shouts his name in an effort to confirm his identity but the monsters merely shake their heads compassionately. After this cruel trick Humberto flees from la Rinconada.

> Hui de la Rinconada al darme cuenta que todo estaba tramado no para centrarse en torno a Boy, sino para darme caza a mí, para pescarme, y hui, solo, al frío, sin facciones ya porque el doctor Azula sólo me dejó el veinte por ciento, disfrazado de mendigo por temor a que alguien reconociera mi mirada. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 297)

In the Casa de Ejercicios Espirituales de la Encarnación de la Chimba Humberto hides "disfrazado de Mudito," (Obsceno pájaro, p. 430) completely discarding his historical identity of Humberto Peñaloza.

> No pudieron hablar con Humberto Peñaloza porque al oír ese nombre huyó por los pasadizos hasta el fondo de la Casa, no existe Humberto Peñaloza, es una invención, no es una persona sino un personaje, nadie puede querer hablar con él porque tienen que saber que es mudo. (Obsceno pájaro, p.447)

Serving as a handyman under the disguise of el Mudito, Humberto continually alters the convent, sealing off rooms, and painting over doors and windows to make them resemble walls. The unused rooms and passages keep growing and encroaching upon the living quarters as the Casa becomes more labyrinthine. Fearful that the convent, his only refuge and the haven of other destitutes like himself, will be destroyed when the Azcoitía line comes to an end, el Mudito craftily sets about producing a son for Jerónimo in order to assure the continued existence of the Casa. El Mudito rents a disneyesque giant-mask from Romualdo, who attracts attention with the mask and earns his living distributing handbills in the streets. Knowing that Iris Mateluna, a retarded orphan girl living in the Casa, consents to furtive relations with the giant, el Mudito wears the mask and implants his seed in the ingenuous girl whom he

calls "ese continente inservible que rodea al útero." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 129) Romualdo then rents the giant-mask to others who take advantage of Iris in the backseat of a dilapidated Ford on the outskirts of town. El Mudito assumes another identity and becomes Iris' yellow dog accompanying her on her adventures outside the Casa. As her fame spreads the dog sees congressmen, ambassadors and priests come to rent the mask. Narrating from the point of view of the cur while referring to his other identities as the mask and el Mudito, el Mudito says: "Una vez, vi bajar de su Mercedes Benz a don Jerónimo de Azcoitía, hablar con Romualdo, pagarle y ponerse mi cabeza. No tuve miedo: el útero de la Iris ya pertenecía a mi hijo." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 96) Don Jerónimo rents the mask and tries to make love to Iris but he is unable to do so until the dog's eyes lend him sexual potency as they had done many times before when he made love to Inés. "Le tuve compasión, porque desde que lo dejé hace tantos años, lo intenta todo, ... para recuperar su potencia que yo conservo en mis ojos." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 96) Having seen Jerónimo with Iris, el Mudito plans to force the aristocrat to accept Iris' offspring which he, Humberto, has sired, thus giving Jerónimo a son who will keep the asylum for the poor. If he succeeds in getting Jerónimo to adopt the illegitimate son, Humberto will also fulfill his ultimate obsession: to see a Peñaloza transcend his poor birth and become an Azcoitía. Momentarily el Mudito's identity becomes the giant-mask.

> Me la pones por encima, ritualmente, como el obispo mitrado coronando al rey, anulando con la nueva investidura toda existencia previa, todas, el Mudito, el secretario de don Jerónimo, el perro de la Iris, Humberto Peñaloza el sensible prosista que nos entrega en estas

> tenues páginas una visión tan sentida y artística del mundo ... la séptima bruja, todos nos disolvimos en la oscuridad de adentro de la máscara. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 90)

At the time he puts on the giant-mask it becomes his new identity, nullifying all of his other roles and fragmentary identities.

A group of boys who did not get satisfaction in the rented mask take it away and destroy it when Romualdo refuses to return their money. Humberto narrates the action from the point of view of the mask and the yellow dog. The dog, one of Humberto's identities, participates in the destruction of the mask, Humberto's other identity.

> De un tirón Anselmo me arranca un pedazo de oreja y lo exhibe ante nuestros gritos y aplausos. La Iris se lo arrebata. Se arrodilla gimiendo para ponerme el pedazo de oreja de nuevo pero no puede, no se pega, y alguien le da una patada y después pisotean ese pedazo de mi oreja. La Iris queda hincada junto a mí, llorando porque sabe lo que va a pasar, lo que nosotros, calientes con la juerga, vamos a hacer conmigo y yo no tengo manos para defenderme ni piernas para huir, sólo ojos para mirar y esta fina piel de pintura para sentir los golpes.
> .....
> Ya no tengo rostro otra vez, mis facciones han comenzado a disolverse, van a desaparecer, apenas veo con mis ojos trizados, ... los demás nos retorcemos de la risa. ... Mira a Andrés cómo baila con la nariz puesta como pichula, es lo único que queda, a eso estoy reducido, mi enorme nariz transformada en falo, soy un falo lacio, hueco, de cartón-piedra, nada más, yo entero fláccido sin sangre ni nervios. (Obsceno pájaro, pp. 112-114)

This episode with the mask underscores two of Humberto's psychological conflicts: his persecution psychosis and his lack of identity. He is defenseless but he cannot flee. The paint falling off his mask reveals his featureless face: "Ya no tengo rostro otra vez."

The reduction of his identity to "soy un falo lacio," manifests his concern for another very basic part of his personality: his confusion

regarding his sexual identity. Having had his virile giant-mask destroyed, yet confident in his devious plan to produce a scion for don Jerónimo, el Mudito deliberately attempts to shrivel up and change sex. His changing personality finally masks even his most basic identity, his sexual identity, and he becomes an old woman. The following quotation again illustrates the complicated points of view el Mudito employs in his narration as different fragments of his personality are portrayed.

> El hecho de que nosotras, que somos tan púdicas y castas no nos avergoncemos de mostrarle al Mudito la parte del cuerpo más celosamente guardada significa que pertenecer al círculo de las siete viejas ha anulado mi sexo. Voy disminuyendo poco a poco. Puedo guardar mi sexo. Como he guardado mi voz. ... Porque yo a veces me olvido, no existo, no tengo voz, no tengo sexo, soy la séptima vieja. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 127)

Temporarily assuming the identity of an old lady he speaks to the Humberto and el Mudito fragments of his personality when Iris persuades him to open the front door of the house for her at night; there is also counterpoint in the narration as he speaks to Iris from the point of view of el Mudito:

> No Humberto, no permitas que la Iris siga tocándote porque va a romper tus disfraces, si no huyes tendrás que volver a ser un tú mismo que ya no recuerdas dónde está ni quien es, acercas tus labios gordos a mi boca y tus muslos hurgan entre mis pobres piernas flacas que tiemblan, no le permitas que te transforme en Humberto Peñaloza con su carga de nostalgia intolerable, huye para que tu sexo no despierte con la presión de esas palmas carnosas, ... Humberto no existe, el Mudito no existe, existe sólo la séptima vieja. Tu mano no encuentra nada. (Obsceno pájaro, pp. 145-146)

El Mudito is admitted to the secret coven of seven old witches since he can hide their clandestine activities in remote parts of the convent. He becomes one of the seven old women who do homage to Iris

Mateluna's miraculous embryo, and narrates a substantial portion of the novel from the point of view of an old woman, using the feminine forms of adjectives, articles and pronouns to refer to himself. The old women discover that Iris has no monthly period and, therefore, surmise that she has miraculously conceived a child. They decide that the child must be kept isolated and uncontaminated from the world until it performs the miracle they desire of carrying the inmates to heaven. In order to keep the compartment secret where the viejas lodge Iris, el Mudito keeps changing the labyrinthine design of the convent by boarding up passageways and rooms, doors and windows. El Mudito permits them to believe in the child, his own offspring, for he thinks that it will be accepted by don Jerónimo, thus perpetuating the line and saving the house. If successful his plan would be a new lease on their existence, thus being a type of heaven. Speaking to Iris of Jerónimo, who he tells her is the father of her child, el Mudito says:

> Te lo traigo para que se lleve a nuestro hijo, Iris, que ... será dueño y preservará todo el laberinto de esta manzana donde se cultiva un tiempo que no transcurre sino que se remansa entre paredes de adobe que jamás terminarán de caer. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 147)

Humberto gradually draws the old women into his power by exploiting their superstition and misdirected religious fervor. Silently he leads them into his grotesque plans intended to fulfill his own psychological needs. "Yo soy el padre del hijo de la Iris. No hay milagro." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 94)

However, el Mudito is also deceived for Iris is not pregnant. When her fictitious pregnancy fails to materialize el Mudito adopts

another identity incorporating himself into the old beatas' expectations; he induces them to accept him as the miraculous offspring. Iris has, indeed, grown larger but the term of her pregnancy leaves no doubt in el Mudito's mind that the pregnancy has not been real though the viejas cite the extended period of time as proof of a miraculous conception. "Está muy gorda porque yo ya voy a nacer," el Mudito says. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 436) He permits the old women to bind him tightly into the pre-natal position in Iris' bed so that he cannot escape. He lies beside Iris

> sin movimiento, sin hambre, sin voz, sin oído, sin vista casi... casi sin vista pero todavía conservan su poder mis ojos y porque lo conservan es que este pequeño bulto que soy no tolera más el terror sin salida que lo comprime y me doy cuenta que ha llegado el momento inaplazable. Tengo que nacer.
>
> Una mañana amanecí en la cama de la Iris, casi sofocado por el calor de su cuerpo y el abrigo de sus sábanas, miren, miren, viejas, anoche nació la guagua por fin, miren, ya no estoy gorda, miren cómo lloriquea y está meada, yo no sabía que era tan fácil tener guaguita, si no es fácil, Iris, en tu caso fue fácil porque es una guagua milagrosa. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 448)

Changing from his previous role as Iris' toy ("soy el muñeco de la Iris," Obsceno pájaro, p. 431), el Mudito becomes the incarnation of the viejas' grotesque expectations. The shrunken el Mudito is placed on Iris' lap and they are worshipped as the Virgin and Child.

El Mudito has picked a propitious time to be born, for Iris soon has her first menstruation. He takes advantage of this event to rid himself of Iris for she has fulfilled her usefulness; he has never considered her "más que un envoltorio." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 437) When she attempts to discredit the virgin birth the viejas turn her into the streets while Humberto conserves his position as Redeemer. The old women venerate and care for him in anticipation of the miracle he is to perform.

Through el Mudito's miraculous birth he confuses his identity with two infants born in the Azcoitía family. He sees his birth as the legendary births of Boy and the first Inés' illegitimate offspring; it is an attempt made by his fantasy to incorporate himself into the Azcoitía family.

As time passes and Inés fails to become pregnant, hope of family succession wants. The clothing which Peta and Inés knit for the future son, Boy, is made progressively smaller; baby clothing becomes doll clothing which, in turn, becomes clothing so small that it requires a magnifying glass to make it.

> A medida que el descontento mudo de la pareja fue creciendo y la posibilidad de que naciera Boy se alejaba en el fondo del pasadizo donde sólo se oía retumbar la palabra nada, nada, nada, no pienso en nada, el tamaño de esa ropa que para el niño las dos mujeres cosían fue disminuyendo y disminuyendo a lo largo de la perfección de esos cinco años, hasta que llegaron a coser y tejer ropa como para una muñeca minúscula. ... Todo haciéndose Patrona de Imposibles, y todos los demás poderes las desoían, hasta que llegaron a ser tan minúsculos esos objetos y esas ropas, Madre Benita, que hay que tomarlas con pinzas y mirarlas con lupa. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 210)

Similarly, as Iris' pregnancy protracts itself indefinitely el Mudito becomes smaller and in this way he convinces the old women that he is the newborn. El Mudito is dressed from the trunks of clothing store in the Casa which had been made for Boy.

> Estamos viviendo en ... esta capilla donde se me rinde culto con la primitiva liturgia de cuidarme y limpiarme y alimentarme y vestirme con la ropa de Boy, todo su ajuar entero porque les entregué las llaves, han abierto la celda de Inés y su mundo y lo han traído todo, me engalanan y me miman como siempre quise ser mimado. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 518)

Peta and Inés also make minuscule furniture for Boy which el Mudito uses for a miniature music box "donde vivirá Iris Mateluna después que nazca Boy," (Obsceno pájaro, p. 210) showing the confusion in his mind regarding Boy's birth and his own, second birth, Boy's identity and his own identity.

There is also a clear similarity in the physical appearance of Boy and el Mudito. Boy's features are an exaggeration of el Mudito's ugliness. El Mudito is so confused in his identity that he believes that he has a harelip, a hunched back and an enormous sexual organ like Boy's. El Mudito believes that he is Boy but he also thinks that he is the father of Inés' son, Boy, the same way he believes that he was Iris' son but also his father.

The eerie night when Inés' Boy is conceived is impressionistically described in the novel in such a way that nothing in el Mudito's hallucinative mind is clear. Nevertheless, he believes that he was mysteriously sacrificed in order to create the offspring which Jerónimo and Inés desire but are unable to conceive; el Mudito thinks that his and Peta's fertility was used to create Boy which, in his mind, accounts for the similarities between himself and Boy. "Quizá la niña santa, la niña bruja misma se hicieron carne bajo mi peso esa noche para recibir de mi lo que engendró al monstruo." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 222) Humberto's mind invents this interpretation of the birth of Boy as a fulfillment of the Peñaloza obsession.

> Increíble, increíble, Madre Benita, iba a suceder, mi nostalgia y la nostalgia de mi padre iban a aplacarse porque mi avidez iba a alcanzar el objeto único capaz de saciar a todos los Peñaloza porque por fin íbamos a dejar de ser sólo testigo de la belleza para participar en ella. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 223)

The birth of Boy, like the many other events in the novel is told and retold with different explanations each time. El Mudito continues to confuse his identity as Iris' miraculous child with Boy, and Iris with Inés.

> Qué inútiles los esfuerzos del doctor Azula para fabricarte ese remedo de párpados normales, esa frente sin límite preciso, para injertarte orejas donde deben ser, para dibujarte la mandíbula que la naturaleza no te dio. ... No sabe que tu madre se metió con todos los chiquillos del barrio, con todos los pijes y las autoridades de la capital, por eso naciste así. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 157)

El Mudito also sees himself as the legendary son of the first Inés, the illegitimate offspring of Inés' union with a peasant boy. Because of the similarities between the first Inés and Iris who are imprisoned in the Casa, whose alleged pregnancies occur out of wedlock, and whose infants are secretly hidden in the maze-like house, el Mudito believes that he is not only Iris' child but also the original infant.

> El Mudito es el hijo que estuvimos esperando tanto tiempo y nació hace tanto tiempo que ya no hay nadie aquí en la Casa que recuerde cuándo nació, para eso lo hemos ido criando promociones y promociones de viejas, ... estamos con nuestras bolsas y paquetes, listas, viviendo en la capilla todas juntas ... esperando el momento en que el niño nos lleve a todas las viejas de la Casa al cielo en sus carrozas blancas. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 512)

Thus, in his fragmented view of himself, Humberto believes that he is a number of different people. He perceives similarities between himself and other characters and in his schizophrenic mind he becomes all of them.

The viejas are engrossed with the idea of creating a completely sterile, hermitic environment for Iris' child by sealing it off completely from the world. They want to keep it from gaining any external awareness, any identity; they seek to turn it inward upon itself by sewing

all of its nine external orifices closed. Their term for this grotesque bundle is an imbunche.[1] According to Donoso's explanation, the imbunche is a "ser humano reducido a cosas por otros para su goce y explotación."[2] It is the product of Humberto's tremendous fear of being used and persecuted by others. In Humberto's view of himself as an imbunche he is the incarnation of the fears of the author, José Donoso:

> Uno de los grandes terrores míos, ... es el terror de la destitución, de la abyección, de la no existencia, de la reducción a la nada, del ser que se elimina, de la explotación del ser humano por el ser humano, en todos los planos, de la destrucción. El tema no me interesa en el sentido social; me interesa el ser humano explotado, destructor y destruído. ... Hay momentos en que me veo como un clochard, y es el momento de mayor terror. El hombre sin identidad.[3]

El Mudito begins to fill the role of the imbunche immediately upon entering the Casa for he is a deaf-mute. When he converts himself into one of the seven viejas who surround Iris, the sexual orifice is symbolically closed for his organ shrivels up, thus sealing off the fourth opening.

> Ven, ven, Mudito, Mudito porque se olvidaron de reemplazar tu garganta por otra y has quedado mudo, tus oídos por otros y has quedado sordo, ven te estamos esperando para acogerte, nosotras no te exigiremos nada, sólo queremos cuidarte, ser buenas contigo, envolverte, mira los sacos que hemos traído para llevarte sin que nadie se de cuenta que te llevamos. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 295)

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[1]Manuel Rodríguez-Navas y Carrasco, Diccionario general y técnico hispanoamericano (3 vols.; Barcelona: Editorial Selección, n.d.), II, defines imbunche as "hechicería, maleficio. En Chile, embrujar, engañar, hechizar, estafar o robar con habilidad y silencio."

[2]Rodríguez Monegal, "La novela como happening," p. 525.

[3]Ibid., p. 521.

Tired of existing with his tortured consciousness and his confused identity, el Mudito wants to be rid of his anxieties and become an imbunche.

> Déjame anularme, deja que las viejas bondadosas me fajen, quiero ser un imbunche metido dentro del saco de su propia piel, despojado de la capacidad de moverme y de desear y de oír y de leer y de escribir, o de recordar si es que encuentro en mí alguna cosa que recordar. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 433)

He becomes an imbunche as the old women sew layers of burlap sacks about him. In fact it is Humberto, himself, sewing layers of burlap around the bundle of papers on which he has sketched his turbulent existence; on the scraps of paper are recorded the fantastic hallucinations which are his reality.

> Amarran más sacos sobre mi cabeza y otras se acercan y siento levantarse alrededor mío otro envoltorio de oscuridad, otra capa de silencio que atenúa las voces que apenas distingo, sordo, ciego, mudo, paquetito sin sexo, todo cosido y atado con tiras y cordeles, sacos y más sacos, respiro apenas a través de la trama de las capas sucesivas del yute, aquí adentro se está caliente, no hay necesidad de moverse, no necesito nada, este paquete soy yo entero, reducido, sin depender de nada ni de nadie, oyéndolas dirigirme sus rogativas, posternadas, implorándome porque saben que ahora soy poderoso voy a hacer el milagro. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 525)

By becoming an imbunche Humberto separates himself from his whole reality. Inside the layers of burlap sacks are his numerous fragmented identities, his obsessions, fears, envy, and all of the people, places and events which he has known and imagined; he exorcises these by writing them in his novel, El obsceno pájaro de la noche, which is only scraps of paper.

> Ya no hay nadie. He recuperado entera mi claridad. Se ordena mi pensamiento otra vez y cae hasta el fondo de

> mi transparencia donde su luz desentraña los últimos
> miedos y ambigüedades enfundadas: soy este paquete.
> Estoy guarecido bajo los estratos de sacos en que las viejas
> me retobaron y por eso mismo no necesito hacer paquetes,
> no necesito hacer nada, no siento, no oigo, no veo nada
> porque no existe nada más que este hueco que ocupo. ...
> Sé que ésta es la única forma de existencia, ... porque
> si hubiera otra forma de existencia tendría que haber
> también pasado y futuro, y no recuerdo el pasado y no sé
> de futuro, alojado aquí en el descanso venturoso del ol-
> vido porque he olvidado todo y todo se ha olvidado de mí.
> (Obsceno pájaro, p. 538)

Having separated himself from his reality, physical and psychic, external and internal, he seeks to know exactly who he is in his absolute essence; he believes that beneath external artificiality and beyond illusory psychological reality he has an absolute identity, an essence which he may now discover. He feels the presence of a shadow through the layers of burlap. "Hay alguien afuera esperándome para decirme mi nombre y quiero oírlo y masco y muerdo y rajo: masco, muerdo, rajo la última corteza de saco para nacer o morir." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 539) The imbunche is a reduction of all of the fragments of Humberto's identity to a small, embryonic package which prepares for a new stage of existence entered through birth or death.

It is Humberto's convalesced being, an identity completely separate from the narrating voice of his fragmented personality inside the imbunche, which carries the package through the patios of the deserted Casa soon to be demolished. It is he, who having purged himself of his consciousness, goes out into the night and burns the imbunche on a fire surrounded by other shadow beings, who, like himself, have no identity. The imbunche is symbolically immolated upon the trash fire, then it rolls down a slope to be reborn in a pool of polluted water. The last sentence

of the novel implies the rebirth of his purified consciousness: "El viento lo vuelca, rueda por las piedras y cae al río." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 543) His consciousness begins a new existence as a tabula rasa, as he returns to his life in the streets.

By putting an end to his tortured reality el Mudito destroys all of those characters he had created and who possessed him like demons; he retaliates against those who felt compelled to exploit him in order to satisfy their own psychological needs. Before he becomes the imbunche Humberto attempts to free himself from his tortured consciousness by becoming a shadow. "Confundámonos con las sombras que se dispersan, estoy aprendiendo a ser uno de ellos y poco falta..." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 157)

Since his childhood Humberto Peñaloza has been dissatisfied with his identity. He deliberately attempts to become an unfeeling, invisible shadow with no name.

> Mudo, Mudito, no te vayas, no desaparezcas, te vas a morir de hambre, no, dónde estás, Mudo, Mudito, dónde estás, vamos a cansarnos de buscarte porque somos viejas y enclenques y les tenemos terror a las ventoleras, ... Mudito, mira, aunque no sabemos dónde te escondiste te dejamos platos de comida en los pasillos y corredores para que comas cuando quieras, como un perro, pero las sombras no comen hasta que se atreven a ser alguien y esa sombra carente de nombre quiere fundirse con las otras sombras de la habitación, reducirse a la dimensión de un papel de diario. La sombra sin nombre ni hambre va empequeñeciendo al ocultar su terror que le impide incorporarse a las otras sombras y adquirir la dimensión plana de una noticia. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 447)

Throughout the novel el Mudito acknowledges his insanity and the fragmentation of his personality. On one occasion he states that "soy otra vieja más, ... soy el perro de la Iris." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 84)

He contradicts himself on another occasion and states: "No soy vieja, soy Humberto Peñaloza, el padre de tu hijo, los embarazos milagrosos son cuentos de viejas." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 143) At times he thinks of himself as having several identities, simultaneously: "Que las viejas me amarren, me hagan una humita, que me transformen en imbunche. Soy el Mudito. A veces soy otra vieja más. Soy el muñeco de la Iris." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 431) The fragments of his personality are so numerous and contradictory that often he does not know how to define himself. "Me tienes que reconocer, Inés, ... tal como soy, sea quien sea, Humberto, Mudito, vieja, guagua, idiota, fluctuante mancha de humedad en la pared," (Obsceno pájaro, p. 465)

Other characters simply accept Humberto as a strange man known as el Mudito. Externally he sees himself merely as "esta corteza que es Humberto Peñaloza." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 217) Within he is more than just Humberto, he is legion, he is "un fenómeno fluctuante." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 273) He has not a single identity but many which, when viewed compositely, give the impression of a single very complex personality. He is

> treinta personajes a la vez, cuya existencia se pusiera en duda, cuya existencia fuera múltiple y que no fuera múltiple; y que sin embargo tú lo tuvieras que recordar como uno, como una identidad.[1]

The fragmented narrator gives the other characters of El obsceno pájaro de la noche fragmented portrayals; they are the voices and shadows inside of him, products of his psychotic mind. Many of them, therefore, are ambiguous and protean.

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[1] Ibid., p. 525.

Iris Mateluna, the mentally deficient orphan, is the daughter of a demented man who murdered his wife. She, like so many of Donoso's children and bored, lonely characters, spends her time watching life pass by on the streets. Though she has not yet reached puberty she is a sensual girl. Because she stands in the second floor window of the Casa and entertains the boys in the street by dancing to radio music imitating a night club dancer she is given the alias, "Gina, la pantera de Broadway." El Mudito describes her as dancing "como una Virgen que se hubiera vuelto loca en su hornacina." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 20)

Iris, like el Mudito, is an emotionally unstable person who is exploited by others. It is her sexuality and her uterus which others desire. El Mudito tells her: "Eres un ser inferior, Iris Mateluna, un trozo de existencia primaria que rodea a un útero reproductor tan central a tu persona que todo el resto de tu ser es cáscara superflua." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 76) In a grotesque miracle created by the seven witches Iris becomes a meretricious imitation of the Virgin Mary in the Christian myth. The viejas force her into the role in order to exploit her for their own superstitious purposes.

> Aprisionan a la Iris dentro del sueño que le hemos fabricado para cosechar lo que queremos: su hijo, nuestro hijo milagroso que nos llevará a todas al cielo sin pasar por el trance de la muerte que es preferible evitar. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 128)

Iris becomes the Virgin in a black nativity in the desecrated chapel of the convent with the shrunken Mudito seated on her lap as the Redeemer Child. The transmogrified Christian myth is central to this iconoclastic novel which does away with the underlying dignity and humanity of the old Christian ethic.

El Mudito is puzzled as to what to do with the fragmented Iris after he and the old women are through exploiting her.

> ¿Pero qué haré con la cáscara de la Iris, ese continente inservible que rodea al útero, una vez que haya cumplido con su función específica de dar a luz? No puedo permitir que sucesivas encarnaciones vayan borrando las previas hasta que la Iris se disuelva, desmenuzada y repartida, pedazos suyos encontrados en los envoltorios de viejas muertas, ... soy codiciosa, no quiero que otras viejas me roben trozos de la cáscara descartada de la Iris, la quiero entera para mí. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 129)

The association of Iris' miraculous child and the bastard offspring of the first Inés de Azcoitía is completed when Inés confers upon Iris the identity of her revered ancestress. A close association develops between Inés and Iris when the former takes a vow of poverty and retires to the Casa. "Misiá Inés ... es tan buena y tan devota de la Iris que ella dice que no se llama Iris Mateluna sino que es la beata Inés de Azcoitía."(Obsceno pájaro, pp. 449-450)

When Inés de Azcoitía takes her vow of self-renunciation and comes to live in the Casa she has entered the marginal state of senescence. In this psychologically free and uninhibited state of second childhood, as it were, she plays games with the orphan girls adopting different identities and manifesting different fragments of her ego-ideal as they play roles and imitate voices. Inés gives Iris her own role of Inés de Azcoitía while she plays the role of her husband, Jerónimo, as they carry on a telephone conversation. The facts and legends of the Azcoitía family are so well known to the inmates of the Casa that Iris has sufficient background to make the role playing high drama. But the two characters are only shadows in el Mudito's schizophrenic mind and he

manoeuvres them like puppets as he narrates the action while their voices speak the roles.

> Se te caen las manos, Todo lo que era duro en Jerónimo se disuelve: ruega, la ternura más desoladora ablanda su mirada, quebra su cuello, endulza su voz:
> --Inés ... si quieres te voy a buscar yo mismo.

Playing the role of Inés, who has come directly to the convent from Rome without seeing her husband, Iris' answer shows the misunderstanding and mistrust which have separated them since the fateful day of Boy's birth.

> --Me lo dices para engatusarme con tus mentiras, estás segura de que ésa no es la intención de tu marido, sabes que Jerónimo le tiene terror a la Casa. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 444)

From the point of view of his role as narrator of the novel el Mudito clarifies the meanings of the dialogue and interprets the actions of Inés and Iris in their dramatic roles.

Inés imitates the voices of the inmates, living and dead. In the voice of Rita, the old lady who acts as receptionist in the convent, Inés talks to her husband on the telephone; they carry on a trivial conversation without Jerónimo knowing that he is talking to his wife. Inés also mimics the voice of the dead Brígida which terrifies the superstitious inmates. The imaginative Inés leads a fragmented life of many identities through her imitations.

One must continually confront the problem of the unreliable narrator in El obsceno pájaro de la noche. El Mudito's personality is so highly fragmented that the multiple roles which other characters fill must also be attributed to his schizoid personality. "Hasta que el lector empieza a sospechar que todos estos distintos personajes que

conoció a lo largo de la larga novela sólo son proyecciones imaginarias del primero, el Mudito."[1]

Many of Donoso's characters appear to be well adjusted and normal in their behavior, exhibiting only a few idiosyncracies; though none of his other characters are as schizophrenic as Humberto Peñaloza, many have confused self-images and psychotically invest objects and persons with strange, personal symbolism.

Don Alvaro Vives, in Este domingo, is unaware of the epithet, "la Muñeca," which his imaginative grandchildren give him in their games. It is an accurate characterization for he leads an artificial existence of ritualistic order. As with other male characters in Donoso's fiction, the feminine epithet is used to denote a certain sterility, lack of aggressiveness and vitality. He is a psychosomatic person preoccupied with his health and with death.

Vives quietly goes about his self-centered, doddering life listening to opera music though he is partially deaf, playing "El herrero armonioso" over and over on the piano, examining himself carefully in the mirror, and playing "interminables partidas de ajedrez con un adversario fantasmal que era él mismo."[2]

Vives is small, thin and very pale. The grandchildren suspect that he may even powder himself. They incorporate la Muñeca into their games of fantasy as a farciacal being. "Pequeño y seco, con el traje

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[1]Ibid., p. 522.

[2]José Donoso, Este domingo, (México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1968), p. 18. Henceforth page numbers for quotations from this novel will be given in the text.

ridículamente entallado, era un personaje de farsa que en nuestros jeugos llamábamos "la Muñeca" porque era muy blanco, muy blanco, como de porcelana evejecida." (Este domingo, p. 17) He is incapable of sustaining a relationship with other people, especially with his young grandchildren. Each Saturday the children go to their grandparent's house they go into his study to greet him. They always exchange the same greetings, he always invites them in and offers them a piece of candy, then he drifts off into his own thoughts and forgets them.

> Todos los sábados, al llegar, pasábamos por esta estricta ceremonia: un estirado ritual, siempre idéntico, suplantaba la relación que mi abuelo era incapaz de tener con nosotros. (Este domingo, p. 18)

Don Alvaro is fastidious in his habits. His trousers are neatly hung with the creases pinned. In his two hour morning toilet he is as ritualistic as a child playing with a doll, observing the same order of Lux, Odorono, Colgate, Listerine, and Yardley. His meticulous grooming and the lack of vitality which he manifests in his reaction to life make other characters think of him as a gem, a pearl, or a piece of porcelain.

Always preoccupied with cancer and death he tries to obtain pity from Chepa by showing her his growing mole. She scoffs, "--No me hagas reír. Tú nos vas a enterrar a todos. Te cuidas como a una joyita." (Este domingo, p. 89) Alvaro continually bothers his doctor son-in-law with his worries of cancer. When a metastasis does, in fact, appear in a mole on his breast he examines it obsessively to see if it has grown.

> Pero acercándote mucho más al vidrio, hasta empañarlo con tu aliento fresco de Listerine, si sostienes tu aliento, podrás ver los detalles con más claridad en el vidrio de este anaquel que en el espejo de tu baño de luz--hasta que tengas que soltar el aliento otra vez y desapareces como en una nube. (Este domingo, p. 32)

As he talks to himself and examines himself closely in the mirror the vapor from his breath makes him disappear as though it were a foreshadowing of his death.

Alvaro's lack of vitality and insecure sexual identity are shown in the way Alvaro's mind invests objects and redolences with sexual symbolism. In his view the two cars in the garage, his large, gray car and Chepa's small, blue car, become the two people. "Un poco obscena esta coquetona intimidad del auto femenino acurrucado junto al auto macho en la misma cama..." (Este domingo, p. 35) This is an imaginative compensation for reality manifesting an ego ideal since Chepa has never been intimate with Alvaro. He uses the adjective macho as a symbol for himself in order to reinforce his own insecurity. Characteristic of the lack of contact between them in their many years of marriage, Alvaro backs his car out of the garage "con cuidado de no rozar el cuerpo de la Chepa con el suyo." (Este domingo, p. 36)

Much of Alvaro's time is spent remembering the past. Each Sunday he goes to Violeta's house to get the meat-pies which the former maid prepares for the Vives family; it is a family tradition and a ritual for Alvaro. Every time that he goes to get the empanadas he relives his relationship with la Violeta. The odor of the pies is sexually symbolic for Alvaro: when he smells them he remembers lying in bed on a Sunday morning in the summer of his sixteenth year and thinking of being alone in the large, empty house with la Violeta, the young maid, who is preparing empanadas. Going for the pies on Sundays, though he can no longer eat them, is a repetition of the only successful sexual adventure of his life.

> El olor a masa apenas dorándose vence a los demás olores calientes de mi cuarto y llega a mi nariz y desde allí manda comunicaciones hasta el fondo de mi sueño tibio de cosas apenas húmedas sudadas y pegajosas en sábanas que son como extensiones de mi piel donde trozos míos despiertan, de oscuridades húmedas allá abajo, de cosas táctiles y eréctiles bajo la sábana que también es yo pero húmedo de calor allá abajo entre las piernas, y el olor a masa dorándose despierta entre mis piernas como un puño, el olor escarbando en mi memoria. (Este domingo, p. 57)

As he lies in bed inhaling the odor of empanadas with their sexual association he sees that "las dos hojas de la cortina se agitan un poco, se buscan, se evitan, siluetas que se separan y se rozan y se acarician suspendidas en el calor." (Este domingo, p. 58) In his mind the curtains become Alvaro and la Violeta in their ingenuous efforts to reach each other sexually. The relationship which develops between Alvaro and la Violeta is devoid of love; it is a physical encounter fulfilling sexual impulses. In another metaphor for their relationship, Alvaro and la Violeta are, in the boy's mind, the two flies mating on the bathroom window as Alvaro lies in the bathwater smelling the empanadas baking downstairs.

> Dos moscas peleándose. No, no peleándose. Haciendo el amor. Sí, las ve, no lo temen como las que no hacen el amor y salen espantadas, éstas se quedan, no lo ven, una montada encima de la otra brevemente, sacudiéndose, las alas vibrando, ese zumbido brevísimo, y zas, la mosca de arriba se va y la de abajo queda sobándose las patas y las alas y el cuerpo verdoso y velludo de una manera tan especial. Ella quedará así. Sobándose las patas después que él la deje. (Este domingo, p. 64)

Alvaro and la Violeta's relationship is defined by the two images: the two curtains and the two flies. The curtains convey their ingenuous hesitancy to reach out to each other and the two flies convey their strictly physical relationship. Vacilating, Alvaro "iba a entrar al baño

pero no entró. La Violeta iba a entrar a su dormitorio pero no entró. Se quedó helado, desnudo en medio de la pieza, y los dos cuerpos sobándose, rozándose en la ventana." (Este domingo, p. 62)

Alvaro continues with la Violeta for about six years during which time he also becomes involved with the young people in his own upper-class society. He returns from parties to enjoy with la Violeta his only successful relationship. His mind transforms la Violeta into the girls of his acquaintance. He tries to

> conjurar de ese cuerpo caliente y rollizo y lleno de deseo, la finura de los brazos de la Pola, el cuello largo y la cabeza pequeña de la Alicia, los senos jóvenes apenas insinuados de la Sofía, eres la Sofía, sí, eres la Sofía, y mañana serás la Alicia y otro día la Pola, todas, poseo a todas esas muchachas imposibles en tu carne rolliza y caliente. (Este domingo, p. 74)

La Violeta plays the make-believe game with him, manifesting the ego ideals of a lower-class, country girl imagining herself as the girls at Alvaro's parties.

> Sí, sí, soy la Pola, su Pola, mijito, y la cintura delgada y ese balanceo elegante al caminar con las caderas apenas un poco adelante, como si estuviera un poco embarazada, pero desesperadamente flaca, y las encontraba por fin ... en las caderas eternas y gozosas de la Violeta. Ella era todas. La Pola, la Laura, la Alicia, sus primas ... todas.
>
> También era la Chepa. (Este domingo, p. 78)

The adjective embarazada leads la Violeta to an urgent topic, her pregnancy. When Alvaro becomes upset and begins to dress, la Violeta invents a character of her own class, Marín, saying that it is really he who is the father of her child. As Alvaro pursues details of her relationship with Marín she coyly describes an idealized and false love affair to hide the truth. It is an indirect accusation of Alvaro. She

states that she fulfills her relationship with Marín vicariously through Alvaro, the same way that he culminates his lust for his girl friends with her. "Y cuando usted me toca ... pienso en él. Usted es él, el huaso Marín." (Este domingo, p. 76)

Alvaro is so accustomed to his relationship with la Violeta and so insecure in his sexuality that on his wedding night he is only able to satisfy Chepa by transforming her into la Violeta.

> La Violeta. No es la Chepa la que se estremece en sus brazos, esperando, es la Violeta. Acaricia una axila, sí, sí, es la axila de la Violeta y si es la axila de la Violeta es la Violeta entera, Violeta, mijita, Violeta. ... Y cerrando los ojos ... sí, si puedo, si puedo, y duro ahora y seguro hizo el amor con la Violeta en la carne ignorante de la Chepa. (Este domingo, p. 88)

Throughout his life Alvaro transfers his own feelings to inanimate and non-human objects and substitutes in his mind relationships in which he is successful for relationships in which he feels inadequate or threatened. Through inertia Alvaro's habits become meaningless ritual. His façade is an expressionless mask which hides a psychological fluctuation in which he compensates and fantasizes, fragmenting his own image and that of other people.

Character fragmentation in Alvaro and el Mudito is a natural consequence of their unbalanced psychologies. In his recent novelette, Chatanooga choochoo, Donoso shows that in dreams the normal man sees identities fragment and reality become ambiguous.

The novelette describes a couple's adjustments when they move into a new environment, especially their uneasiness in interacting with people in their new social circle. The narrator, Anselmo, manifests

insecurity in his masculine role, feeling that all of the women about him are recalcitrant and aggressive--always attempting to dominate him. "¿Todas las mujeres, entonces, querían adueñarse de mí, cada una de su sección?"[1]

The largest portion of the novelette is a dream based upon a few antecedents from real life sketched in the first twenty five pages describing the different personalities in Anselmo's social milieu. The narrator's dream manifests a continual preoccupation with everyone's attempts to reduce other persons to fragments, to dismember completely and reassemble them at will, thus gaining complete control over them.

Anselmo and his wife, Magdalena, develop a certain rapport with a couple which is helping them find a house. Following a rather normal relationship with their friends, Ramón and Sylvia, Anselmo stays one night at his friends' house. Ramón unexpectedly departs leaving Sylvia and Anselmo alone in the house. Anselmo goes into his room, disrobes, gets into bed and falls into a heavy sleep. The rest of the novelette is a dream based upon numerous details about personalities and actions and dialogues from his conscious life and revealing a subconscious pleasure and guilt at being alone with Sylvia in the same house.

He dreams that he awakens as Sylvia comes into his room and tries to communicate with him. She has neither face nor arms but she makes him understand that she wants him to paint her face. He is an artist so he paints over her "rostro de feto" (Chatanooga choochoo, p.

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[1]José Donoso, Chatanooga choochoo, from Tres novelitas burguesas, (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1973), p. 59. Henceforth page numbers of quotations from this novelette will be given in the text.

41), a face resembling that on the latest cover of Vogue magazine. She is then able to regain the use of her facial components and communicate with him though she still lacks her arms: Ramón took them with him. His dream becomes a wet dream as he makes love to Sylvia.

> Entró de lleno en el amor, exitándose y exitándome sabiamente, hasta que la penetré y ell--más, oh, mucho más que la otra vez--gozó y gocé yo con ella de modo definitivo, como si hubiera dejado mi esencia en ese orgasmo. Nos dormimos. (Chatanooga choochoo, p. 53)

The orgasm introduces the narrator's overwhelming sense of guilt for his adultery. The dream leaves him numb and drenched and he believes that Sylvia has castrated him by lubricating him with "Vanishing Cream."

> Ella me había quitado lo que hacía gravitar mi unidad como persona, lo que me permitía unirme a Magdalena, y siendo esta unión misma lo que le daba forma a mi trabajo, a mi relación con los demás, con mis hijos, Sylvia había descoyuntado mi vida... Vanishing Cream... claro: una treta nomtada por Sylvia, esta muñeca sin alma y sin rostro. Mi furia contra ella, la sensación de que me había quitado mi más poderosa arma para someter, alzó mi furia. (Chatanooga choochoo, pp. 54-55)

Anselmo fears that Sylvia has removed his manhood. The result of his episode with Sylvia is a tremendous guilt for his infidelity and a traumatic insecurity due to his lost manhood which, upon returning home, he tries to hide from Magdalena. He puts on acts and offers alibis to keep from going to bed with his wife. He assiduously guards his now vulnerable location which his grandmother and García Lorca had called the "sitio del pecado." (Chatanooga choochoo, p. 63) Anselmo attempts to read Jung's works and he makes appointments with a psychiatrist. The maid, the nurse at his office, Magdalena, Sylvia, Raimunda--all women--become more aggressive, dominant, threatening and conspiratory

than before. His mind makes a montage of characters, a common phenomenon in dreams. His wife, Magdalena, assumes characteristics of the mysterious Sylvia. She begs her husband to paint her face and the result is another Vogue mask.

> Los dos miramos ... el nuevo rostro de Magdalena: sí, era como si hubiera conservado intactas todas sus facciones, y sobre ellas hubieran colocado la máscara de Sylvia, que se fundía con las suyas. Era un juego, mascarada, máscara... y recordé cuando nos disfrazábamos en los altillos de las casas de campo de mi niñez: metíamos toda la cabeza dentro de una media de seda transparente que conservaba byestras facciones individuales disimulándolas, pintábamos otras caras, la cara feroz del malo, la cara blanca y pudibunda de la princesa, la narizota feroz de la bruja, las arrugas de la anciana, los bigotes y las barbas del patriarca. ... Así con Magdalena ahora, que no era Magdalena, sino una mutación del rostro de Sylvia, y Sylvia, a su vez, era todas las variaciones posibles del rostro ovoide de Sylvia; que a su vez eran todas las variaciones posibles de los mitológicos rostros que aparecían en las revistas de moda y en los anuncios de los periódicos. (Chatanooga choochoo, p. 76)

In Anselmo's dream, reality becomes ambiguous as characters become fragmented and superimposed identities. Magdalena's face is a montage of many other features.

In spite of his efforts to regain his masculinity Anselmo becomes less and less agressive until he submits to being dismembered by his wife who has learned from Sylvia the techniques of dominance and complete control over the male. Magdalena packs him in a small valise where he loses total consciousness indefinitely. Magdalena takes over the narration of the novelette. Only upon being reassembled by Magdalena, while Sylvia reassembles Ramón, does Anselmo regain his ability to continue his narration. The two men are puppets manipulated by their wives. They sing and dance "Chatanooga choochoo" in unison like cabaret girls at a cocktail

party as their wives manipulate them from a dark corner. It is the same act which Anselmo had seen Sylvia and Magdalena perform at a previous party in conscious reality.

Only when Anselmo confesses his guilt of adultery to his understanding wife, Magdalena, whom Sylvia has already informed, does Magdalena reassemble him completely, including his manhood. He confesses to her like a child to its parent.

> Quería despachar mi pecado así, rápidamente y como bromeando con la promesa de un niño muy pequeño que promete observar de ahora en adelante una conducta que complazca y enorgullezca a su mamá. (Chatanooga choochoo, p. 103)

There is an inversion in Anselmo's concept of sexual roles. He sees the female as being aggressively disarming and the male as passive and acted upon. The novel is the reaction of an average man to the women's liberation movement. Anselmo suggests this inversion as he dreams of a bold dialogue between Magdalena and Sylvia.

> --Siempre he dicho que eres una mujer acojonante, con tanto estilo, tanta personalidad. Hay que tener cojones para venir a casa de los Roig con un vestidito negro y una hilera de perlas finas como si fueras mi tía rica. (Chatanooga choochoo, p. 94, italics mine)

Since women have the power to disintegrate and reconstruct their husbands they hold power to command obeisance from them.

> Claro, cuando le obedeciera e hiciera lo que tenía que hacer, entonces, claro, ella le devolvería lo suyo, esa pieza que le faltaba y que los hombres creían que era el centro mismo del universo... ese pequeño paquete que Sylvia le devolvió ... porque al fin y al cabo a ella le pertenecía, y si una iba a darse el trabajo de tener un hombre era absurdo tener un hombre incompleto. (Chatanooga choochoo, p. 94)

The women in the story begin to dismember the male by removing the sexual organ believing it to be central to his identity.

> Mientras me secaba, una gran ira de ser yo un muñeco en las manos de las mujeres me hizo restregarme la piel con tanta energía que mi carne quedó rojiza: usarnos, sí, eso es lo que quieren, y para eso el gran acto de la sumisión, y cuando uno se somete o es seducido lo primero que hacen es desmontarle la virilidad. (Chatanooga choo-choo, p. 86)

Anselmo, a normal individual, manifests frustration and fragmentation in his dream, results of the pressures of society against his instincts in his conscious life; even in the unconscious world of dreams his superego is able to distress him with guilt. He feels subconsciously excited being alone with Sylvia and guilty for being untrue to his wife in his dream, both of which are related to the perpetual struggle between societal control over behavior which is the manifestation of his impulses. His fragmented view of persons being dismembered by others is a reflection of his uneasiness in his adjustment to a new social group where he feels that people try to dominate, control, exploit, and tear apart other people in order to satisfy their own personality needs.

Every man must reconcile disparate demands: his unconscious drives with the sanctions of other individuals, especially society in general. Conflicts between the instincts of the individual's psychology and society's restraints lead to guilt complexes, tension, frustrated drives which seek expression through displacement or sublimation, and obsessions to gain society's approval and rewards through deviant behavior or fantasy if he is unable to do so through legitimate, society-approved means. If the ego is unable to maintain balance and control over the

personality as the pool of one's psychological instincts surges in conflict with societal restraints then the individual's personality components begin to manifest themselves. These may lead to a mild distortion of the individual's perspective of reality, as in the case of Alvaro Vives and other early characters in Donoso's fiction, or it may lead to the total fragmentation of the personality in which the numerous fragments take on autonomy and attempt to gain control of the personality.

In Donoso's early characters, such as Alvaro Vives, there is a suggestion of psychological latitude in spite of rigid external behavioral patterns. All of Donoso's characters manifest a measure of fluctuation in their personalities. Alvaro is different inside, in his psychology, from what he appears to be in his external, rigid manner. Indeed, his ritualistic behavior is an external compensation which belies basic insecurity and psychological weakness in his identity and in his ability to relate to other people. Humberto's schizophrenic fragmentation is more severe; his personality fragments vie for possession of him. Anselmo manifests his own and other people's personality fragmentation and obsessions in a dream which is, recalling the words of Jung, the normal person's period of insanity. "It is no exaggeration to say that the dreamer is normally insane or that insanity is a dream which has replaced normal consciousness."[1]

Humberto is, without doubt, the supreme example of personality fragmentation in José Donoso's fiction. Through insanity he finds complete

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[1]Jung, "On the Psychogenesis of Schizophrenia," p. 241.

freedom for his rebellious instincts. His ego complex loses control over his personality leading to a protean self-image as his multitudinous personality fragments vie for control.

> He perdido mi forma, no tengo límites definidos, soy fluctuante, cambiante, como visto a través de agua en movimiento que me deforma hasta que yo ya no soy yo, soy este vago crepúsculo de conciencia poblado de figuras. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 272)

Insanity, neurosis and dreams are free psychological states in which characters see their psychology fragment as a result of the stress between the warring id and superego. The fragmented portrayal of characters exhibits psychological problems which reach back to traumatic periods in the character's socialization processes. This portrayal gives them depth, complexity and resonance which is psychologically very real and human.

> There are times when I look over the various parts of my character with perplexity. I recognize that I am made up of several persons and that the person that at the moment has the upper hand will inevitably give place to another. But which is the real one? All of them or none?[1]

Sensitive people, especially artists, have recognized the fragmentary composition of their personalities. The study of conflicting self-images is a deep, perplexing area which, in fiction, is opening up to exploration. It is a deep, murky area where nothing is absolute and certain but is fluctuating and intangible; it is an "unsubdued forest where the wolf howls and the obscene bird of night chatters."[2] The

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[1]Somerset Maugham, A Writer's Notebook, (London: William Heinemann LTD, 1949), p. 21.

[2]Rodríguez Monegal, "La novela como happening," p. 518.

highly fragmented character, el Mudito, has his origins in Donoso's very sensitive perception of his own numerous psychological identities and anxieties.

> Es autobiográfico en un sentido no anecdótico sino subterráneo. Es la autobiografía de mis terrores, de mis fantasías, No creo que nadie me reconozca en el personaje; pero yo me entiendo en ese personaje que no es personaje.[1]

Donoso is one of the first of the new Latin American novelists to portray the relative nature of the human personality.

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[1] Ibid., p. 522.

Mis pasos en esta calle
Resuenan
En otra calle
Donde
Oigo mis pasos
Pasar en esta calle
Donde
Sólo es real la niebla.
--Octavio Paz

CHAPTER III

DOPPELGÄNGER, MONTAGE, AND NAGUALISM

José Donoso's writing is a spontaneous externalization of psychic reality. His commentary on his novel, El obsceno pájaro de la noche, is a significant statement which could be applied, in lesser degree, to all of his work.

> Ha sido algo así como un 'happening,' algo que me ha ido sucediendo, que me ha ido matando a mí y que yo he ido matando, que yo he ido desgajando a trozos de mí, ramas le han crecido por acá y ramas por allá, una cosa viva. Es algo que me ha sucedido más bien que he escrito.[1]

Donoso's impulsive writing, like that of many contemporary novelists, is an expression of the chaotic, mutable nature of man's inner reality. His work is exemplary of the contemporary novel which has disintegrated in form, language and characters. The twentieth century novel reflects the chaos of man's collective consciousness and the general dissolution of his cultural canons which have been forged over centuries out of the collective unconscious of the human race and which have given form and meaning to his existence.

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[1]Rodríguez Monegal, "La novela como happening," p. 518.

Man's response to the world, a very rational, conscious one constructed on external reality, has collapsed. External reality, for centuries the synonym of reality, indeed the underlying foundation of human consciousness since the Renaissance, has ceased to be a complete and reliable expression of human existence. Twentieth century man is turning inward in search of a meaningful expression for his modern reality. The result is a new reality which is a synthesis of external, objective reality and psychic reality--a dimension which man has only recently begun to understand. For centuries man felt that the universe was a system of absolute laws, moral and physical, under which he lived. He perceived a natural order which separated things and beings into individual, discrete unities. Man believed that powers and values were absolute and external to him rather than the products of the relativity of his psychology. Man has only recently come to believe that his own psyche contains the universe with all of its demons and gods, as well as their powers of good and evil, virtue and vice, light and darkness.

> If modern art is characterized by the disintegration of external reality and an activation of the transpersonal psychic world, it becomes understandable that the artist should feel a compulsion to depict the powers in their own realm--which is, of course, a psychic realm--and not as they appear, disguised, in nature. . . . Among primitive peoples the powers are projected into strange forms and symbols, and modern art has returned to this primordial phase of exorcism. . . . The breakdown of consciousness, carrying the artist backward to an all embracing participation with the world contains the constructive, creative elements of a new world vision.[1]

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[1]Erich Neumann, Art and the Creative Unconscious, trans. by Ralph Manheim (New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1959), pp. 124-125.

The new novel joins external and psychic realities into an ambiguous view of existence in which everything is mutable. Modern fiction surrenders conscious control becoming dream, infantilism and madness, all of which are manifestations of the unconscious. In this new reality man defines himself through union with the world, the forces of the universe, and with other beings, human as well as non-human. Human psychology conceives of man, the world and other beings as one rather than separate, as they appear in external reality. As the artist responds to the primordial, collective unconscious he discards the no longer functional, conscious assumptions which man adhered to in the past, including the notion that each man is a separate entity and a unified psychology. The new novel is no longer individualistic and personal but is peopled with beings in full union with the world and the transpersonal powers which move the world; it has returned to primitive man's way of viewing the world, characterized by a "one in the other" view of man with other beings, with the forces of the universe and with the phenomenal world. "Artistic creation has magic power; it is experience and perception, insight and differentiation in one."[1] Modern art especially resembles magic in that it is an attempt to transform external reality through the influence of the mystical powers of the psyche.

In Donoso's fiction, especially in El obsceno pájaro de la noche, many characters are depicted within other characters through doppelgänger and montage, and with animals through nagualism. These relationships are the products of distant, primeval similarities or

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[1] Ibid., p. 86.

differences, attractions or repulsions which the characters have inherited in their unconscious. The aspects which these characters have in common arise from experiences in the distant past preserved in the deep unconscious which the characters cannot, of course, remember or explain. The external reality in which the characters are separate entities, and the psychic reality in which primordial forces unite the characters are joined into a monistic view of the world. Especially in El obsceno pájaro de la noche

> Donoso rejects the notion of psychological unity and seems to suggest the dissolution of the self into a plurality of masks, with each mask developing its own possibility within the self that has been transformed. By denying the unequivocal identity of his characters, he makes all of them undergo a metamorphosis whereby things can become their opposites while at the same time preserving the ability to assume their original identity. The stability, therefore, between signifier and signified begins to lose its customary integrity, so that a mundo al revés emerges in which objects tend to be signs of their opposites. What ensues is a world in which master-servant, virgin-prostitute, priestess-witch, beauty-monster, God-Satan, male-female are no longer mutually exclusive categories but interrelated aspects of one another.[1]

DOPPELGÄNGER

Doppelgänger is "that double who menaces us in other dimensions of our lives."[2] It comes from the idea that a person has a counterpart in another dimension--that all things have their compliments in other realms of reality. The concept implies a union of the seemingly opposite dimensions: external reality, and psychic reality. The idea has been with man for a long time; the personality of each man contains a shadow

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[1]John J. Hassett, "The Obscure Bird of Night," Review, (Fall, 1973), p. 28.

[2]Rodríguez Monegal, "The New Latin American Novel," p. 47.

identity -- an archetype which extends back to primitive man and his ideas regarding his existence in the universe. It has remained a constant factor in folklore and tradition. Doppelgänger is

> the belief that every human being is accompanied through life by two extensions of his personality, the one good the other evil, the former luminous, the latter dark and menacing. This curious idea was probably based originally on a primitive rationalization into companion spirits of the reflected image in water and the ever accompanying shadow.[1]

The doppelgänger has been a constant archetype expressing itself in man's personality. "It cannot be argued out of existence or rationalized into harmlessness. This problem is exceedingly difficult, because it not only challenges the whole man, but reminds him at the same time of his helplessness and ineffectuality."[2]

One of Donoso's early short stories is a surrealistic attempt to unite physical and psychic reality into a dimension of magical realism through doppelgänger. It is an acknowledged attempt to imitate Borges. Donoso first became acquainted with Borges' work when he escaped from Chile and went to Buenos Aires.

> Asfixiado dentro de mi medio chileno, insatisfecho con las limitaciones que se me iban imponiendo, seis meses después que apareció Coronación decidí, sin un cobre en el bolsillo, emprender un periplo por América con el propósito de conocer lo que sucedía más allá de mi país. Reuní unos cuantos pesos para pagar mi pasaje en tren Transandino hasta Buenos Aires, y allí misiá Raquel Lyon de Maza ... consiguió que la Sociedad Argentina de Escritores me alojara gratis en un cuarto medio derruido en la parte de atrás de la vieja casona colonial de la SADE, ... Fue en

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[1]Man, Myth and Magic; an Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Supernatural, ed. by Richard Cavendish, (22 vols.; New York: M. Cavendish Corp., 1970), V, p. 672.

[2]C. G. Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (New York: Pantheon Books, 1959), p. 20.

> ese cuartito donde leí a Borges por primera vez y quedé deslumbrado: bajo su influencia inmediata escribí un cuento horroroso.[1]

The story to which he makes reference is "Footsteps in the Night," published in Américas for a few sorely needed pesos. Set in the room in Buenos Aires where Donoso suffered the same alienated situation which his first person narrator describes, the story is interesting for its use of doppelgänger in character portrayal. While reading Borges in the barren sordid room of an old apartment building the narrator hears footsteps that he recognizes on the city street outside. They are his own steps which "walked outside waiting for something."[2] He hears his own voice outside on the street accost a woman who is the same woman he felt watching him as he came into the apartment. He hears himself vaguely pleading with her in his solitude. Then he attempts to seize her.

> Then, much later, or perhaps only a few seconds later the wild shriek of a woman split the night, awakening me. I leaped from my bed. I heard my steps--and I recognized them beyond doubt-racing across from the opposite sidewalk. Someone opened the door of my house. I dashed to the window and flung it up. The night was very still. On the other side of the street a dishevelled woman, looking as if she had been hurt, appeared between the curtains of a lighted window, and when she saw me she began to scream pointing at me:
> "There he is! There he is! Police! That's the man!"[3]

Under the stress of alienation the protagonist's psychology undergoes a noticeable fragmentation in which his doppelgänger, acting on the need to fulfill his lonesome desire for companionship, separates

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[1]José Donoso, Historia personal del "Boom," (Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 1973), p. 38.

[2]José Donoso, "Footsteps in the Night," Américas, XI (February, 1959), p. 22.

[3]Ibid., p. 23.

itself from him and acts autonomously. When the protagonist hears his own footsteps walking outside, the story seems to be nothing more than fantastic wish-fulfillment. In the end, as his shadow rushes into the room and the narrator runs to the window, the reverse would seem to be true: that the protagonist has been on the street and has imagined his other self in the room reading Borges. In either case, psychic reality and external reality become fused into a surrealistic magical reality. The protagonist is responsible for his conscious self and for his shadow.

Donoso portrays a very confused boy in his novelette, Gaspard de la Nuit. Mauricio, an only child whose parents were divorced when he was ten, is reared by his father and his grandmother. The novel deals with a summer which he spends with his mother whom he has not seen in six years. It is a very traumatic period for Mauricio. But Mauricio is particularly introverted and confused. He is faced with resolving personality conflicts which will be crucial in determining his adult personality.

Sylvia is a very modern woman who patterns her life after the international women's magazines and hardly wishes to participate in the "odiosa comedia madre-hijo que se esperaba de ella."[1] She is mortified when she meets her son who is dressed in plain clothes and replies to her questions with apathetic monosyllables. For her he has no identity.

Mauricio's basic psychological problem is his lack of security. He is passive because other people have brutally driven him inside himself. They commit aggressions against him by trying to shape him and get him to participate in their world.

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[1]José Donoso, Gaspard de la nuit, Tres novelitas burguesas, (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1973), p. 198. Henceforth page numbers for quotations from this novelette will be given in the text.

> Violación. Eso era lo que su madre le hacía. La gente de la calle que no conocía ... no lo violaban. Como su madre. Como su padre. Como abuelis. Como sus compañeros de colegio y sus profesores, como todos los que tenían alguna relación con nombre, algún derecho sobre él, todos ésos los violaban. (Gaspard de la nuit, pp. 224-225)

He is without form, his personality is "materia borrosa." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 200) If others bestow an identity upon him he attempts to avoid them. Deep inside Mauricio, however, there is life which he manifests through the very mysterious, complicated music which he whistles. "El silbido surgía desde el fondo mismo de lo que Mauricio era." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 245)

A conflict ensues as mother and son come together. Sylvia is caught between continuing her own free, cosmopolitan life style and the maternal anxieties which she begins to feel. She attempts to give her son an artificial identity by buying him the things which other youngsters his age enjoy. When she introduces him to other people she describes him for them, giving him disguises which are not his.

> Está haciendo la comedia de la madre encantadora, se dijo Mauricio, y con ella lo cargaba de ropajes y carretas y máscaras y disfraces que él no quería. En fin, soportarlas: estas definiciones superficiales que venían desde afuera no tenían nada que ver con él y, si bien lo cargaban con disfraces, éstos también lo defendían. (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 226)

Sylvia's frustration increases as she is unable to understand Mauricio and as he rejects her attempts to shape him. "--Nada. No eres nada. Es como si fueras transparente, resbaladizo. No tienes personalidad, eso es lo que pasa." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 258)

Mauricio rejects everyone's efforts to give him an identity. He continues to dwell in his own exclusive inner world. He only externalizes

himself through the strange notes which he whistles, composed by the French musician, Maurice Ravel. The boy feels kinship with the composer because of their names and also because Ravel's music has become an obsession for him. Indeed, he believes that by mastering the difficult and mysterious notes he will come to know himself. As he penetrates within himself through Ravel's music, Mauricio also searches for himself on the city streets. His only interest is to walk along crowded sidewalks with his hands in his pockets whistling softly to himself, stealthily following strangers with thom he develops "semirrelaciones." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 214) He chooses individuals whomhe feels are somewhat weak and fragmented, psychologically, not "demasiado completos." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 214) Mauricio feels affinity with them and attempts to control them mentally through the scales and chords which he repeats to himself. If they attempt to go where he does not wish he whistles softly and more intensely as they continue to disregard his influence. He tries to control other people as a compensation for the world's aggressions against him, and also to find his own shadow, his other identity in the city streets. The music he whistles, he believes, has a hypnotic effect upon the strangers. The mysterious scales from Le gibet and Gaspard de la nuit cause them to surrender to him as he leads them to an imaginary gallows.

Mauricio attempts to play the same game with his mother. "El círculo que trazaba la música de Mauricio iba a dominarla y a tragársela." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 204) But other people are merely aware of the enclosure which the music builds around him, "esa música desconocida que

lo encerraba dentro de un círculo tan extraño, tan unitario, tan difícil de comprender, tan perplejo." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 208)

Though not consciously aware of it, Mauricio feels conflict between two personality fragments: one wants to conform to what other people want him to be--a "normal" adolescent; the other is what he is: withdrawn, strange, and individualistic. Searching for his other, "normal," identity, his doppelgänger, he walks the city streets. He believes that "el mundo del otro Mauricio era mejor," (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 238) but he cannot attain that world until he perfects Ravel's musical scales and penetrates to the very center of his music. He is involved in a labyrinth, an odyssey which will put him in contact with the very essence of his being. Though deliberately striving to change himself "era todavía este Mauricio." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 238) "A él le faltaba tanto para completar la sustitución, que a veces le costaba trabajo inventar lo que el otro Mauricio había inventado... los trémolos que ahora silbaba." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 238)

Mauricio begins to feel that his double is near him, surreptitiously following him. One day, in the Vallvidrera park, his whistle is answered. From a distance, and without seeing the person who answers, he teaches him to whistle Ravel. At first the sounds are an imperfect imitation. Then on one occasion Mauricio "tuvo la curiosa sensación de estar grabando sobre un disco virgen, ... iba absorbiendo todo lo suyo." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 255) The other identity has mastered the music and Mauricio is no longer able to repeat the sounds. The music has exorcized the anonymous shadow within him which had restrained his

other, "normal," identity. It repeated itself "hasta limpiar todo su interior." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 253) He finds the other Mauricio, a beggar, a boy with his own features, asleep in a secluded part of the park. "Por fin era él y ya no tendría que seguir inventando sombras para ahuyentar a los que lo violaban. Se acercó más aún." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 263) The separation of Mauricio's identities is not yet complete. The shadow still contains Mauricio's other being. "Mauricio se inclinó más aún sobre ese cuerpo misterioso que contenía el suyo." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 264)

The two boys exchange places through rebirth. Both undergo a similar ritual. Mauricio bathes in a muddy pond in the secluded park then lies down to sleep in the sun. The beggar comes down to the pool and bathes in a clean pond then lies down in the sun to sleep. When Mauricio awakens his body is covered by a film from the dirty water; he dresses in the beggar's rags and wanders off. When the beggar awakens he slips into Mauricio's clean clothes and goes to his mother's apartment, a changed boy. Mauricio finds no identification in the beggar's clothing. "Nada. Ni identificación, ni nombre, ni nada que delatara un hábito o una preferencia: era la hoja en blanco, el pentagrama vacío en que podía escribirse... no era nadie." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 263)

The result is that "ese muchacho era Mauricio y él era ese muchacho que no lo miró y cuyo rostro era radiante." (Gaspard de la nuit, p. 272) When the old Mauricio, now a beggar, a nameless shadow, sees the new Mauricio for the last time he notices "un miedo que no le gustó en la mirada de Mauricio. Sus propios ojos estaban limpios." (Gaspard

de la nuit, p. 273) A solution to his identity problems has come through an encounter with himself. The shadow disappears taking away the sullen, introverted identity. It has disappeared into the psychological past, into the unconscious. The fear in the new Mauricio's eyes is the terror of changing his whole personality, the terror of having to learn a new set of roles, as his society demands. The shadow part of his personality which had dominated him for so long has vanished and the bright, extroverted part of his personality has taken over. Mauricio's new identity has been born through metamorphosis. It has thrown off the previous, ugly identity, like an insect struggling out of a cocoon. This idea is harmonious with the change of life which the adolescent undergoes.

In his novel, El obsceno pájaro de la noche, Donoso interprets reality through his concept of the universe as a frieze composed of several fragments, or medallions. It is the external world carved in relief in stone and supported by a dark, hidden dimension behind it. The medallón de piedra at once polarizes and unites the opposing forces of good and evil, order and chaos, exterior world and interior world, as well as light and darkness. It is the aesthetic symbol of the two dimensions of reality which oppose and support each other and together form a complete picture of total reality.

Aristocratic existence is portrayed in El obsceno pájaro de la noche as a heraldic frieze in which different medallions portray the various states of man's life. The stone relief is the world of Jerónimo de Azcoitía, a highly structured world which exists for the purpose of repeating the inscribed pattern without variation for it is an order which his noble, beautiful ancestors have established over ages of

existence. He is a perfect example of his class and his goal is to adhere unerringly to the pattern of tradition in the frieze. One medallion contains his courtship with Inés de Santillana, an equally worthy representative of his society and a distant relative. With their marriage they officially cross from the courtship medallion into the next sequence where the frieze portrays perfect conjugal bliss. The following sequence is supposed to be a picture of a mature couple with their beautiful and happy children, whose purpose is to repeat the same plan forever, bringing immortality to the Azcoitía name. Undeviating order is the key to the frieze and the source of happiness for the aristocracy portrayed.

> Las reglas y la fórmulas, el ritual tan fijo y tan estilizado como los símbolos de la heráldica, que iban regulando el proceso del noviazgo, inscribían su propia figura y la de Inés, entrelazadas como iban debajo de los árboles cargados de fruta, como en un medallón de piedra: este medallón no era más que una etapa del friso eterno compuestos (sic) por muchos medallones, y ellos, los novios, encarnaciones momentáneas de designios mucho más vastos que los detalles de sus sicologías individuales. ... El sólo velaba para que se cumpliera en él y en su novia la magnífica leyenda de la pareja perfecta.
> .....
> Ese vientre que se agitaba pegado al suyo se abriría para procurarle inmortalidad: el friso de medallones, a través de sus hijos y sus nietos, se prolongaría para siempre.
> (Obsceno pájaro, pp. 179-180)

In the concept of the frieze human beings are temporary incarnations of transpersonal forces. Individual personalities are insignificant in the vast universe of order. Self-perpetuation in a pure line is the only purpose of living.

Running parallel behind the frieze is another dimension, a world of shadow, ambiguity and disorder. It is a dimension of grotesque counterparts of every detail in the stone frieze of external reality. It

supports the physical, aristocratic dimension by threatening it. It is the world of the lower classes which envy the aristocracy and plot to incorporate themselves into it. The poor, grotesque, faceless masses in this "revés de la fachada," (Obsceno pájaro, p. 181) give the aristocracy cause to reaffirm their life's purpose to perpetuate themselves through pure, noble lineages.

The dimension behind the frieze is "el mundo de abajo, de la siniestra, del revés, de las cosas destinadas a perecer escondidas sin jamás conocer la luz." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 183) Whereas the external façade of the frieze represents harmony, order, and the power of God's established religion, the world behind it represents "la leyenda enemiga ... la de los condenados y los sucios que se retuercen a la siniestra de Dios Padre Todopoderoso." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 182) It is the world of Peñalozas and Peta Ponces which haunts the harmonious, halcyon world of the Azcoitía.

The dimension which threatens the immortality of Jerónimo and Inés has exerted itself strongly in the recent history of the Azcoitía family beginning with the eighteenth century Inés de Azcoitía. Whether because of her submission to the evil power of her nana, her shadow, or because of her voluntary renunciation of her aristocratic position for saintly pursuits, or because of her alleged promiscuity, she cannot figure in the eternal friezes. The girl's sequence in the Azcoitía medallions was omitted and the perpetual order of the frieze broken when the girl was sent to the convent. She did not fulfill the purpose of her existence because of her nana's influence on her. Jerónimo fears

that the same dark influence will again exert itself through Inés' relationship with her mysterious old nurse, her shadow, Peta Ponce. Nevertheless, after an extended period of sterility which imprisons them in the medallion of conjugal bliss, Jerónimo is able to lead Inés into the next medallion after her long awaited pregnancy becomes a reality.

> Todo estaba dispuesto. Jerónimo había logrado por fin sacar a Inés del medallón estático de la dicha conyugal perfecta: ayudada por su mano galante la conduce para tomar las actitudes prescritas en el siguiente medallón, en que figurarían como padres. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 228)

Jerónimo does not know that the dark, opposite dimension has already begun to influence their lives. In some mysterious way a link was established when Inés recovered from a serious illness, no doubt related to her sexual development after her nana, Peta Ponce, magically cured her one night when she was in extreme pain by sucking on her adolescent belly. When Inés finally becomes pregnant it is through Peta's mysterious intercession. She temporarily returns to Inés the fertility which she had magically taken from her earlier. The Azcoitía family's link with the dark, primitive, chaotic world of Peta Ponce manifests itself in the birth of the monster, Boy. Confusion and disorder replace order and harmony.

> Cuando Jerónimo entreabrió por fin las cortinas de la cuna para contemplar al vástago tan esperado, quiso matarlo ahí mismo: ese repugnante cuerpo sarmentoso retorciéndose sobre su joroba, ese rostro abierto en un surco brutal donde labios, paladar y nariz desnudaban la obscenidad de huesos y tejidos en una incoherencia de rasgos rojizos... era la confusión, el desorden, una forma distinta pero peor de la muerte. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 229)

Humberto, Peta Ponce, the nana, the yellow dog, and the Casa are all part of the dark, ambiguous, mysterious dimension behind the frieze.

Their world is the doppelgänger of the world of Jerónimo, Inés, the first Inés, the four black dogs, la Rinconada estate when inhabited by Inés and Jerónimo. The primordial, opposite forces of life are also integrated into the two dimensions. Femininity, darkness, Satan, magic and chaos are aspects of the intangible, psychic dimension behind the frieze. Masculinity, light, God, legitimate religion and order are parts of the physical façade of the frieze.

Humberto is Jerónimo's shadow. Don Jerónimo is a handsome, perfect specimen of the aristocracy. Humberto is his grotesque, menacing counterpart. Together they form a unity since "the shadow is a living part of the personality and therefore wants to live with it in some form."[1] The men have a commensalistic relationship designed to fulfill their individual personality needs. The space separating them in social position, physical appearance and power is so vast that Jerónimo derives a sense of ego importance from Humberto's envy. "Fue a mi envidia," Humberto claims, "que don Jerónimo tuvo a sueldo durante tantos años." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 84) Humberto implies in his narration that Jerónimo could not function, sexually, at least, without the envy of his shadow. Humberto, on the other hand, derives a sense of importance and power from his union with Jerónimo, though he is never content to remain only a shadow and he plots continually against Jerónimo.

The basic conflict of Humberto's personality, his obsession to become Jerónimo while suffering from an acute inferiority complex, results in an unbounded envy of Jerónimo's harmonious features, power, wealth and

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[1]C. G. Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, p. 20.

identity. The first time he saw Jerónimo Humberto reacted as though he were an evil spirit who would either possess the genleman or tear him apart since he could not be he.

> Un boquete de hambre se abrió en mí y por él quise huir de mi propio cuerpo enclenque para incorporarme al cuerpo de ese hombre que iba pasando, ser parte suya aunque no fuera más que su sombra, incorporarme a él, o desgarrarlo entero, descuartizarlo para apropiarme de todo lo suyo. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 105)

The two men take from each other whatever they need. On one occasion, when Jerónimo is running for a political office and is threatened by an angry mob, Humberto exposes his silhouette to the mob impersonating Jerónimo. He senses a feeling of power and vicariously enjoys Jerónimo's position by receiving the attention of the crowd. Humberto receives a superficial bullet wound which Jerónimo assumes by putting on a false bandage in order to act the role of a martyr.

> ¿Cómo no va a quedarme la marca que me recuerda que mil ojos, anónimos como los míos, fueron testigos que yo soy Jerónimo de Azcoitía? Yo no me robé su identidad. Ellos me la confirieron. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 205)

Upon returning to la Rinconada Humberto is nursed by Inés. Boy is conceived on this night when Inés confers Jerónimo's identity upon Humberto and sends him to Peta Ponce who has convinced Inés that only by sending Jerónimo to her will she, Inés, conceive. "Inés, al despedirse de mí en la puerta de mi dormitorio, me lo dijo sin decírmelo: tú eres él." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 215)

Humberto has always coveted Inés. He believes that this night he makes love to her and becomes the father of Boy.

> Sí, sí soy Jerónimo de Azcoitía, tengo mi herida sangrando para demostrártelo: la tomé en mis brazos. La

> llevé a la cama de la Peta. Inés lloraba repitiendo y repitiendo el nombre de Jerónimo para anular lo que pudiera quedar de Humberto, y mientras más lo repetía más iba creciendo Jerónimo, sí, sí, has anulado a Humberto. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 217)

Humberto is never satisfied to be merely Jerónimo's shadow. He continually contrives ways to become Jerónimo only to suffer from his self-deception when he realizes that he can never be Jerónimo. "A pesar de todo yo no era Jerónimo. Sólo mi sexo enorme era Jerónimo." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 217)

In la Rinconada, an inside-out world which Humberto constructs for Jerónimo's monstrous son, like Daedalus, who constructed the labyrinth for king Mino's monstrous son, Humberto functions in the same role that his master does in the normal world. He has power over the creation; on a scale of normality he is the most beautiful and harmonious of all monsters. Jerónimo tells his distant relative, Emperatriz, who is one of the monsters that inhabit la Rinconada, what Humberto's role is in that world.

> --Ya te dije. Toda autoridad emanará de él. Tienes que concebirlo no tanto como mi representante en la Rinconada sino como yo encarnado en él viviendo entre ustedes y cuidando a Boy.
> .....
> Humberto mismo será tan yo entre ustedes que él sólo necesitará comunicarse conmigo una vez al año. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 236)

Humberto's weak self-image makes him insecure in his role as Jerónimo in the hermetic world constructed about Boy. The monsters disdain rather than envy him for his normal appearance. He feels as inferior and abnormal in the world of the deformed as he did in the normal world.

When Jerónimo visits la Rinconada after seventeen years to see how the artificial world is functioning, he is forced into the role of a

monster because of his perfect, harmonious features. In the world which he created as though he were God, the monsters reject, despise and ridicule him. Jerónimo finds that his identity has changed completely and with this reversal of roles he occupies the same position in la Rinconada which el Mudito has in the Casa. Jerónimo docilely serves the monsters.

> Emperatriz se negó a oírlo. ... Por las reglas fijadas por él y por Humberto hacía tantos años, ellos y a no eran libres. ... Estaba cansado, de pronto se cansó muchísimo de todo esto, no era cómodo que se rieran de sus años, que lo obligaran a andar a gatas, que lo mandaran a lavar vidrios, a barrer pasadizos y habitaciones vacías y galerías y patios interminables, a clausurar puertas, a enlucir muros, a quemar diarios viejos, a limpiarle el trasero carcomido a la Venus retozona, a hacer piruetas, a correr acosado por la jauría de perros rengos, ... tener que obedecer a cualquiera de esos monstruos. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 501)

A similar doppelgänger relationship exists between Peta and Inés. In the same way that el Mudito is the extreme opposite of don Jerónimo's physical beauty, psychological identity and social position, Peta Ponce is the opposite of Inés. Peta is

> Meica, alcahueta, bruja, comadrona, llorona, confidente, todos los oficios de las viejas, bordadora, tejadora, contadora de cuentos, preservadora de tradiciones y supersticiones, guardadora de cosas inservibles debajo de la cama, de desechos de sus patrones, dueña de las dolencias, de la oscuridad, del miedo, del dolor, de las confidencias inconfesables. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 213)

Humberto himself recognizes that "nuestras posiciones junto a Jerónimo y a Inés eran simétricas." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 213)

Just as Humberto attaches himself to Jerónimo and covets all that he is and has, most of all his wife, Peta Ponce is a parasite who envies all that Inés is and all that she has, most of all her husband. Despair of ever having a son leads Inés to trust Peta Ponce's magic.

Peta devises a substitutive remedy for Inés' sterility. In her desire to possess Jerónimo she convinces Inés to send him to her. Inés sends Humberto to her representing Jerónimo. Humberto and Peta fantasize that they are making love to the counterpart couple. On this night the yellow dog, symbolic of Peta's powers, and one of Humberto's identities, is killed. It is a blood sacrifice to the moon, the patron planet of witches. On this night Boy is conceived.

> Mi destino, como el de la Peta, es permanecer afuera del reconocimiento del amor aunque no del acto mecánico del amor: cuando Inés cayó en los brazos cansados de Jerónimo, fueron revitalizados por nosotros, ... cumpliendo desde las sábanas sucias nuestra misión. ... Ella y yo, la pareja sombría, concebimos el hijo que la pareja luminosa era incapaz de concebir.
> .....
> La Peta y yo, seres fantásticos, monstruos grotescos, cumplíamos con nuestra misión de sostener simétricamente desde el exterior ese nuevo medallón como un par de suntuosos animales heráldicos. (Obsceno pájaro, pp. 224-228)

There was a magical transfer of powers on the night that Boy was conceived. Humberto believes that Peta robbed Inés of her sexual ardor in exchange for the son by temporarily returning to Inés some of the fertility which she removed from the adolescent Inés on the night that she healed her. Humberto is convinced that an exchange of powers was made between him and Jerónimo. "A pesar de todo yo no era Jerónimo. Sólo mi sexo enorme era Jerónimo." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 217) And "si bien don Jerónimo me había robado mi fertilidad yo me robé su potencia." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 225)

When Jerónimo robs Humberto of his fertility on the night that Boy is conceived, Humberto robs Jerónimo of his virility. He fears that Jerónimo wants to take back his genitals by having Dr. Azula perform a

grafting operation in la Rinconada. The potency which he received from Jerónimo also makes Peta Ponce pursue him, he believes, since Peta, rejuvenated by her exchange with Inés, wants to be satisfied by that part of Jerónimo which Humberto possesses. Humberto's fear of Peta causes him to voluntarily castrate himself by disguising himself as one of the viejas.

> La satisfacción de ser madre del hijo de Jerónimo ... anuló todo deseo en Inés pero enardeció a la vieja que me acosa incansable para repetir con lascivia renovada el acto de esa noche, y yo no quiero, Madre Benita, me niego, me sigo negando, yo quiero a una Inés bella, de piel suave y pechos vivos. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 225)

In order to again be potent Jerónimo depends on Humberto's envious watching; he gains vicarious potency through Humberto. "Para no revelar mi impotencia desde esa noche en que engendré a Boy, tú eres el dueño de mi potencia, Humberto, ... necesito tu mirada envidiosa a mi lado para seguir siendo hombre." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 227)

The power of Humberto's eyes allows him to influence others to do his will. The eye is important in magic and symbolism since it not only enables a person to see but allows him to affect what he sees. "The eye can organize the world outside . . . into shapes and patterns, to bend or persuade other people at your will."[1] Humberto's eyes are his one salient feature, they are the only thing which Jerónimo needs from Humberto.

> Mi mirada es lo único que le interesa, prescindió siempre de todo lo demás, pero no de mi mirada, dolorida, nostálgica, envidiosa, lo demás de mi persona no le importaba nada, nada, nada. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 87)

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[1]Man, Myth and Magic, VII, p. 886.

As the viejas invent the imbunche[1] Humberto begins to consider himself that grotesque bundle. He begs them to sew up all of the openings of his body, even his eyes. "Que mis ojos consuman su propio poder en las tinieblas, en la nada, sí, cósanmelos, viejas, así dejaré a don Jerónimo impotente para siempre." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 87) This is the only successful way that Humberto devises to destroy Jerónimo. By ceasing to exist, by ceasing to give Jerónimo his envy, he feels that he will be able to destroy his master.

Throughout the novel the self-effacing shadow, Humberto, conspires against Jerónimo like an evil spirit, which, unable to possess the body it desires, seeks to destroy that body. Humberto believes that he can destroy Jerónimo by eliminating himself. The heraldic frieze would then collapse without the support of the world of shadows.

> Ahora me eliminaré yo para que te desplomes y te partas en mil fragmentos al caer y pondrán los fragmentos en el carro del Mudito y el Mudito los arrastrará hasta su patio para que la lluvia y el tiempo y el viento y las malezas te corrompan y te eliminen. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 471)

Without the envy of Humberto's eyes Jerónimo is vulnerable; his identity is weak. Humberto conspires with Emperatriz, Azula and Boy, who are still in la Rinconada, to destroy Jerónimo. Their plan is very subtle. The emotional challenge of entering the "inside-out" world where he is the epitome of monstrosity is too great for Jerónimo. He annihilates himself through personality fragmentation. Standing alone facing the crowd of monsters causes Jerónimo to doubt his own normality. His fragmentation is symbolized by his reflection in the pool in front of the

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[1]See footnote page 51.

Diana statue. The monsters force him to scrutinize his noble features in the still water. Then a monster casts a stone into his reflected face shattering it on the surface of the pool.

> Una piedra insidiosa al espejo de agua, triza mi imagen, descompone mi cara, el dolor es insoportable, grito, aúllo, encogido, herido, las facciones destrozadas, ... huyo tratando de arrancar con mis uñas esa máscara que no me puedo sacar aunque sé que es máscara porque esta noche es el baile de Emperatriz y yo me he disfrazado de monstruo, me rasguño la cara que sangra y sangrando me prueba que no es careta, pero rasguño más porque tengo que sacármela a pesar del dolor y aunque quede sin cara, sí, me reconocí monstruo retorcido en el reflejo del estanque, ... yo soy el bufón de esta corte de personajes principescos envueltos en el lujo de sus vestidos, ... tropiezo, caigo, la cara se me deshace en su golpe contra el piso de ladrillos, arrodillado en el suelo me aprieto lo que me queda de facciones para unirlas. (Obsceno pájaro, pp. 504-505)

Two extensions of personality accompany man throughout his life. The one is bright, the other dark: One is a clear reflection in a still pool, the other is one's shadow. Throughout El obsceno pájaro de la noche it is clear that Humberto is don Jerónimo's shadow and that don Jerónimo is the bright, clear reflection of Humberto. Both are the same person, the narrator. Both undergo complete annihilation through fragmentation. The shadow fragment of the personality imagines the destruction of the other fragment, the clear reflection in the Diana pool, then destroys itself.

In the credos of both religion and primitive magic life can only be renewed by the death of a sacrificial victim. It is analogous that Jerónimo, the creator and god of la Rinconada, a most perfect specimen of the aristocratic world, be sacrificed in the Diana pool in la Rinconada and that el Mudito, the inverse of Jerónimo be sacrificed by immolation,

symbolic in Christian lore of purification and union with God. Both deaths end in pools of water, the first beautiful and clear, the other stagnant and brackish, since water symbolizes rebirth. Thus they ensure the existence of their opposite gods.

> The sacrificial victim is a decadent version of the immemorial pagan rite--the killing of a god-substitute in order to ensure the reigning god's continuity.[1]

The world of El obsceno pájaro de la noche unifies opposite forces which are mutually dependent yet engaged in perpetual conflict. The primal forces are united in constant opposition: good and evil; light and darkness; beauty and grotesque ugliness; order and disorder; established, legitimate religion and primitive magic; the male, Christian God and pagan gods of mythology, especially Diana, the goddess of the moon and the patroness of witches. One is incarnated in external, physical reality, the other dwells in the intangible dimension of the spirit. The characters of the novel are aligned with the powers, each in contention with his opposite. Jerónimo, Inés and Jerónimo's uncle, Father Clemente are on the side of order, truth, beauty, God and goodness. Opposite them are Humberto, Peta Ponce and the old woman with magical powers who is the first Inés' nana. Jerónimo has four, noble, black, male dogs symbolic of his pure descent and his legitimate powers. Four is the number of solids and solidity of matter, of the way in which things are constructed. And four is especially the number of Earth, a solid object bounded by the four cardinal points."[2] Humberto and Peta

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[1] Man, Myth and Magic, IX, p. 1145.

[2] Man, Myth and Magic, VIII, p. 1029.

are symbolized by the yellow bitch, a cur, which is ever in opposition to the four black dogs. She is devious and associated with the world of spirits, of intangible phenomena. The two dimensions are symbolized in the serene façade of the marble frieze which masks the unceasing opposition of the psychic world which supports it.

El obsceno pájaro de la noche is a complete synthesis of the physical, external and factual, with the psychic, spiritual and ambiguous. The reality of the novel is a surrealistic blending of the conscious and unconscious realities, the states of waking and those of dreaming. The magical power of artistic creation in the novel is like the magical power of Peta Ponce: both have the power to create an intermediate reality. Donoso's writing is like a "sueño que al ser urdido por la Peta (tiene) la eficacia del hecho real." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 224)

In the novel the two realities characterized by opposite forces are joined when Inés seeks the intercession of Peta's magical powers as the legitimate powers of religion fail to help her have offspring. Though Inés belongs to the world of bright, physical identities portrayed in the aristocratic frieze, she is sympathetic to the opposite powers which are feminine. Bearing mythological resemblence to Eve, Inés takes the steps to enlist the evil powers of the spirit world by joining with Peta Ponce in her encantations. Inés pleads with Jerónimo not to harm the yellow bitch symbolic of Peta's powers. But in the dark night lighted only by the moon Jerónimo kills the cur. The sacrifice of the yellow dog provides the conversion of the spirit world into the physical frieze by making the Azcoitía scion a representative of the dimension of disorder and monstrosity. Boy and his world at la Rinconada are a hybrid of the opposite forces which engendered him.

> Cuando Jerónimo de Azcoitía entreabrió por fin las cortinas de la cuna para contemplar a su vástago tan esperado, quiso matarlo ahí mismo.
> .....
> Esta burla brutal significaba, entonces, que lo abandonaban las potencias tradicionales de las que él y sus antepasados recibieron tantas mercedes a cambio de cumplir con el deber de guardar Su orden en las cosas de esta tierra. También se vio abandonado por las otras potencias, las más oscuras, a las que Inés enloquecida por el ansia de darle descendencia, logró convencerlo que acudieran. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 162)

Through the birth of Boy the spiritual dimension finally gains tangible form. The long tradition of pure aristocracy depicted in the frieze is truncated. The result is a new reality, la Rinconada, which is a synthesis of external and psychic realities. Originally it is the large Azcoitía family estate, a very aristocratic dwelling which Jerónimo has inherited from a long line of illustrious ancestors. When la Rinconada is converted into a new world for Boy, Jerónimo moves all vestiges of a normal world out of the estate. All forms are altered so that they appear different to those in nature. Shrubs, trees, gardens and all other objects which portray Jerónimo's reality are erradicated. He removes furniture, books, pictures, everything that refers to the outside world. Statues are made to conform to this new, oneiric world inhabited by monsters. Doors and windows are sealed. Walls and hedges form endless, labyrinthine passages.

> La mansión quedó convertida en una cáscara hueca y sellada compuesta de una serie de estancias despobladas, de corredores y pasadizos, en un limbo de muros abierto sólo hacia el interior de los patios de donde ordenó arrancar los clásicos naranjos de frutos de oro, las buganvileas, las hortensias azules, las hileras de lirios, reemplazándolos por matorrales podados en estrictas formas geométricas que disfrazaran su exuberancia natural. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 230)

Don Jerónimo believes that his son can still appreciate aesthetics in this world of monsters. The opposite of beauty, he believes, is not grotesque ugliness but monstrosity.

> Una cosa es la fealdad. Pero otra cosa muy distinta, con alcance semejante pero invertido al alcance de la belleza, es la monstruosidad. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 231)

A statue of Apollo, the ultimate in masculine beauty, is modeled on Boy's features. Jerónimo hopes that as Boy grows he will find ideal feminine beauty in the statue of Diana at the head of a rectangular font. She is as beautiful and fine as the classical interpretation though she is depicted with a hunched back, twisted legs, an acromegalic jaw, and a full moon, symbolic of her patron planet, on her wrinkled forehead. The Venus set in a cave of ivy is pockmarked and terribly deformed by cellulitis.

The social order of La Rinconada remains the same. Boy Azcoitía occupies his rightful place as the only aristocratic monster. All things exist for Boy's pleasure. Other monsters descend from him in decreasing order. He is surrounded only by upper-class monsters. Their class status is determined by their beauty, education, personality or relationship to Boy. They, in turn, are served and surrounded by second-class monsters. The social order extends out in successively lower and lower classes of monsters.

La Rinconada has its counterpart in the Casa de Ejercicios Espirituales de la Encarnación de la Chimba. It is a grotesque, ugly counterpart to both Jerónimo's and Boy's la Rinconada. "Esta Casa es la Rinconada de antes, de ahora, de después." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 263) The fact

that the house was intended to be a place for spiritual exercises confirms its place in the dark, intangible world of shadow. Encarnación, the convent's name, honors the Word made flesh and also alludes to the miraculous child Iris Mateluna bears, a transmogrification of that myth. In la Casa disorder manifests itself in two ugly, marginal states of humanity: depraved children and arteriosclerotic old ladies.

La Casa resembles la Rinconada in many ways. The monster world and the convent are prisons for rejected members of the Azcoitía family. Both abnormal worlds are constructed for family members who have departed from the normal, traditional life prescribed in the frieze which depicts the noble family.

> Esta Casa está llena de toda la gente que Jerónimo quiso hacer desaparecer, los que saben demasiado de su vida, sus maquinaciones, o sus debilidades, los que quiere eliminar porque lo entorpecen... dicen... dicen que hace más de un siglo que los Azcoitía han estado mandando a esta Casa a toda la gente que quieren hacer desaparecer. ¿Quién sabe si la famosa beata no fue más que una chiquilla díscola cuya rebeldía fue necesario reprimir? (Obsceno pájaro, p. 445)

Although they are rejected and imprisoned, the Azcoitía family members retain their favored position in the special worlds of la Rinconada and the Casa which are constructed for them. But these are worlds "de abajo, de la siniestra, del revés, de las cosas destinadas a perecer escondidas sin jamás conocer la luz." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 183)

MONTAGE

In the surrealistic reality of the new novel characters are frequently interchangeable. Characters who are incompletely portrayed may, through similarities with other characters, form a montage. Character montage is a composite of characters made by juxtaposing or superimposing them through similarity or symmetry. This phenomenon is especially important in the character portrayals in Donoso's novel El obsceno pájaro de

la noche. "La novela para mí tiene tantos niveles," says Donoso, "pero probablemente uno de los más importantes es el nivel de las sustitutiones,"[1] since this is another method of destroying characters' psychological unities.

The narrator of the novel, el Mudito, builds a montage of several female characters into an archetypal woman who has several identities. Women perplex the psychotic little man very much though his uneasiness is characteristic of men in general.

> Goddess, victim, idol, plaything, mother, virgin, harlot, ministering angel, slut, enchantress, hag, "better half," or "weaker vessel"--woman plays all of these roles in supernatural contexts, partly in reflection of man's frequently professed inability to understand her. Women, in male eyes, are supposed to be contrary and mysterious creatures, bewilderingly combining all sorts of opposite characteristics, as changeable as chameleons, and yet somehow vexingly in touch with reality through intuition, through a secret sympathy with the heart of things.[2]

The archetypal woman el Mudito creates is both an old woman and a young woman at the same time. "Porque sí, hay un momento en que la mujer bella se transforma en mujer horripilante. Por sustitución, Afrodita tiene otra cara que es horrible."[3] This archetypal female has, like all women, gnostic powers which range from mere intuition to magical powers over their worlds and over men especially. Whereas men hold legitimate, physical power over women, women exercise mysterious powers over men, manipulating them, haunting them, plotting against them. The female controls the mysterious powers of attraction between the sexes and uses them to her advantage against men.

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[1]Rodríguez Monegal, "La novela como happening," p. 523.

[2]Man, Myth and Magic, XXII, p. 3050.

[3]Rodríguez Monegal, "La novela como happening," p. 524.

The female montage in El obsceno pájaro de la noche includes almost every female in the novel. It is based upon a similarity between Inés de Azcoitía and her ancestress, Inés. Both girls have old nanas who are their confidantes, Peta Ponce and an old woman whose name is never known because she is a previous incarnation of the eternal old woman symbolized by Peta Ponce.

The montage originates in the story of the first Inés de Azcoitía whom Inés de Santillana comes to know about through her nurse, Peta. Thus, the perpetuation of the legend of the first Inés is in the hands of Peta who twists and shades the legend as she likes. El Mudito, who writes the various legends into the novel, comes to know them from the talk of the viejas in the Casa.

In spite of the various legends which he has heard about her and written in the novel, in a moment of lucidity el Mudito rationally narrates what would appear to be the truth about the girl. She was neither a saint nor a witch but a solitary adolescent in a harsh, primitive, rural environment where she lived with her father and nine brothers. Her nurse, who could not refuse her caprices, arranged an affair for her with a gentle boy of lower social station. Disturbed by rumors among the peasants the male Azcoitías burst into her room one night. She was undoubtedly in the arms of her lover but the couple was immediately covered by her father's poncho. "Ese gesto torció el rumbo del relato y lo escindió en dos." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 356) In the popular legend which grew up about her the girl had magical powers by which she could become a

chonchón[1] and transform her nana into a yellow bitch. Together they roamed the dark countryside until dawn. She was a harpy, the obscene bird of night, who brought the drought and hard times to the area. The second legend which grew up in the family was that the nurse was a witch who tried to mislead the girl. She, being strong and saintly, chose to live her life in a convent, la Casa de la Encarnación de la Chimba, which her father built for the Capuchin order.

El Mudito cites two reasons to support his claim that neither the popular nor the family legend was correct but that she was merely a lonesome and unfortunate girl. Inés' father had his sons destroy the nurse as a witch, thus preventing her from disclosing any information that might dishonor the Azcoitía name. Since Inés never took her vows at the Casa de la Chimba it was evident that she was more a ward than a votary.

El Mudito speculates that the reason that Inés was not given burial in holy ground was not that she was a witch but that she was impure. It is believed that Inés had an illegitimate son who was given to a peasant family. In this way the noble blood mingled with the blood of peasants south of the Maule river.

Peta Ponce tells and retells young Inés de Santillana the various legends of her ancestress. She embroiders the stories "hasta sintetizar la conseja de la niña-bruja con la tradición de la niña-beata, devolviendo así la plenitud de su potencia a ambas." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 356)

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[1]Francisco J. Santamaría, Diccionario general de americanismos defines a chonchón as an "ave nocturna en que cree el vulgo, y que para unos es el huairavo y para otros el chucho o chuncho."

Inés de Santillana, who becomes Inés de Azcoitía by marrying Jerónimo, has more in common with her ancestress than the name. Both aristocratic young ladies are reared by a coarse, old nurse who pampers them and misleads them. Little is know about the first Inés but the legends tell of her in the convent clinging to a crude wooden cross made for her by the rough, old hands of her nurse. The cross gives her the power to perform the famous miracle of holding up the enormous adobe walls of the convent during an earthquake either through the power of Christianity symbolized in the cross or through the magical power invested in the cross by her nana. A similar, close attachment exists between Peta and Inés. During a family crisis Inés is sent to stay in the Casa where her ancestress had lived and mysteriously died at the age of twenty. A serious infection burns in her abdomen but she feels Peta's magical powers and a miracle is performed when Peta sucks on her stomach taking away the painful disease as well as Inés' fertility. Through this magical process the fates of the two women become inseparable.

Though legends implicate the first nana in sorcery little is known of her. Peta Ponce also deals in witchery. By symmetry she forms a montage with Peta Ponce. Both use the yellow bitch as their alternate identity. It is a common phenomenon in witchery for a person with magical powers to practice "shape-shifting." A sorcerer has the power to inhabit other bodies and adopt several identities. On the night that Inés' father enters his daughter's room and finds her with one of the peasant boys, her brothers kill the nana who had assumed the shape of a yellow bitch. The daughter screams: "--¡Nana! ¡Nanita! Que no la maten, papá,

que no la maten, que la dejen volver a su cuerpo. Si no la matan yo le juro que confieso todo." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 40)

Humberto believes that the yellow bitch has again been sacrificed on the night that Jerónimo and Inés finally conceive Boy.

> La cogí y la llevé a la cama y la poseí, como ya le dije. Más allá del silencio que nos aislaba, creo que oí los aullidos de la víctima y la tolvanera de los perros negros que la destrozaron.
> .....
> No quedó ninguna prueba de que esa noche Jerónimo se ausentó de su dormitorio para que Inés, usando la coartada sangrienta en que se sacrificó su nana, se escabullera para reunirse conmigo. (Obsceno pájaro, pp. 222-223)

El Mudito believes that Peta Ponce and the first nana may be the same person. Numerous references are made to Peta's immortality. "No muere jamás," (Obsceno pájaro, p. 156) he says on one occasion, though it is more likely that Peta merely adopted the legendary role of the first nana since "frequently witches . . . confessed to forms of witchery that were already well recognized. It was as if they were bent, in practice as well as in make-belief, on fulfilling a legend already there for them."[1]

The relationship between Peta and Inés is complicated because it derives similarity from the Humberto-Jerónimo doppelgänger as well as fitting the nana, Peta-Inés, Inés montage. In the same way that Humberto covets Jerónimo's wife and wishes, in fact, to become Jerónimo, Peta wants to become Inés and possess Jerónimo. Her ambitions are the same as Humberto's. El Mudito says to Inés, who becomes more like Peta as she grows old:

> Ahora estoy seguro que fuiste a Suiza para convertirte en la Peta Ponce que siempre quiso encarnarse en ti y tú en ella y

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[1]Man, Myth and Magic, IX, p. 1145.

> pronto, cuando terminen de fundirse los delgados cordones rojos de tus cicatrices para transformarse en arrugas y verrugas y bolsas de carne y piel desmoronada o reseca, la Peta y tú lograrán lo que vienen tratando de hacer desde el fondo de los siglos. La vida sin ser parte tuya no le interesa a la Peta Ponce. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 429)

Peta is not content to be Peta though she allegedly has Azcoitía blood, since she is a descendent of the first Inés' illegitimate child: "La Peta tiene sangre de la otra Inés de Azcoitía y desciende de ella." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 361) Peta is obsessed to become Inés. An "antiguo convenio decía, ... que las dos debían dejar de ser dos distintas para transformarse en una." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 429)

Peta is ambiguity. Through her obscure powers she is a prestidigitator who superimposes events, people, and time. Donoso says: "Peta Ponce encarna, míticamente para mí, la ambigüedad."[1]

> Pero en cuanto interviene la Peta en cualquier cosa todo se hace ingrávido y fluctuante, el tiempo se estira, y se pierde de vista el comienzo y el fin y quién sabe qué parte del tiempo está ocupada por el supuesto presente. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 356)

The part of Peta Ponce which never dies is, undoubtedly, a quality of all old women, not Peta Ponce herself. Witches, such as Peta, were in many cases nothing more than misunderstood old ladies whose arteriosclerotic disintegration evoked mysterious fear in people.

> As one examines the bizarre evidence of the witchcraft trials, one is struck by the psychotic flavour not only of many of the accusations but also of the confessions. One wonders to what extent many of those found guilty of witchcraft were, in fact, elderly people whose minds had disintegrated into some form of schizophrenia.[2]

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[1]Rodríguez Monegal, "La novela como happening," p. 525.

[2]Man, Myth and Magic, XV, p. 2053.

Girls hear from old women the legends which they preserve and continue to embroider as they become old women themselves. The mystique associated with femininity becomes superstition and paranormal powers in old women.

> Las viejas como la Peta Ponce tienen el poder de plegar y confundir el tiempo, lo multiplican y lo dividen, los acontecimientos se refractan en sus manos verrugosas como en el prisma más brillante, cortan el suceder consecutivo en trozos que disponen en forma paralela, curvan esos trozos y los enroscan organizando estructuras que les sirven para que se cumplan sus designios. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 222)

In the novel the aristocratic, youthful and elegant Inés whom el Mudito covets is almost completely transformed into the old, ugly Peta. She metamorphoses into Peta Ponce. When Inés retains only vestiges of her youth, el Mudito finally seduces her. He calls her "Inés," and when she calls him Jerónimo his life-long aspiration would seem to be fulfilled. But he suddenly feels the emptiness of their assumed roles. He knows that he is not Jerónimo and she is not very much like Inés. He wants her to accept him as himself, Humberto. She, being more Peta than Inés and calling him "Jerónimo," evokes an association between this night and the night he spent with Peta Ponce while Jerónimo and Inés were making love. Humberto and Peta played roles, addressing each other by the names of the other couple in order to conjure up fertility for them, vicariously. "Dijiste la misma palabra odiada que dijo la Peta Ponce esa noche en la Rinconada." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 465) Humberto wanted to become Jerónimo and possess Inés while retaining his own name and identity. Since Inés will not accept him as Humberto he denies her identity and abruptly leaves her. "Entonces yo tampoco aceptaré que seas tú. No sé quién eres, ya no

eres Inés." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 465) Humberto can never win. He can never possess Inés. "Te toqué y mi vara mágica te transformó en una arpia desdentada, desde el fondo de tu carne la vieja surgió a tu superficie y se apoderó de ti, desde el horizonte dorado regresó la bruja atada al tronco y se encarnó en la niña." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 466)

Inés accuses him of assault but her fantastic allegations are viewed as signs of insanity. She is put in a strait jacket and taken to an asylum. The Peta and Inés fragments vie for possession of her personality. El Mudito views this as a schizophrenic reaction.

> Entre todos amarrábamos la camisa de fuerza y ella pataleaba y mordía, pobre señora, pobre Peta Ponce, en el mismo cuerpo de Inés encerrándolas a las dos terminarás tus seculares persecuciones detrás de las rejas de un manicomio, lejos de mí, ... Sí, cuando llegues al hospital te habrás incorporado a la carne de Inés, después, allá adentro, quizás alguna de las dos prevalecerá o quizás no, quizás por temporadas seas la Peta y por temporadas Inés, o vivan el amor más completo encerradas en la misma carne. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 470)

Humberto accepts the transformation of Inés beauty. "Así tiene que ser, así ha sido siempre, Inés, Inés-Peta, Peta-Inés, Peta, Peta Ponce, jamás he podido tocar la belleza porque al desearla la convierto en desastradas dueñas de pensión." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 431)

Humberto frequented Peta Ponce's hut when he was Jerónimo's secretary for it was through Peta that he felt close to the idea of Inés. Humberto was in love with the archetypal female whom Inés symbolized rather than the individual, Jerónimo's wife. His explanation illustrates the depth of the Inés-Inés montage. "Era para tomar mate que yo acudía donde la Peta. Para sentarme junto a este brasero. Pero también para tocar a través de la vieja a una Inés más entera que la Inés de Jerónimo."

(Obsceno pájaro, p. 214) Humberto is in love with the Inés archetype which has emerged from the various legends he has heard. Inés de Azcoitía symbolizes that archetype although it is a montage composed of several women.

> Sí, veo el rostro de la antepasada en las tinieblas de mi amor. Y después, hundiendo mi atención en las facciones carcomidas para escudriñar a la Peta, a veces he logrado percibir, como un eco que llega rebotando desde una distancia infinita por el desfiladero de generaciones miserables, los signos tenues de las facciones luminosas de la familia patronal, de Inés bruja e Inés beata resucitadas en la Petra (sic) que me persigue. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 361)

Peta is an embodiment of all of the females of the novel. She has no single identity, she is ambiguity personified; she is half fantasy, or legend, and half real, or historical; she is both aristocratic and low-class at the same time. Donoso admits that she has caused him perplexity because of her ambiguous roots in his family's history.

Peta is the portrayal of one of José Donoso's ancestors who is shrouded in deliberate ambiguity. In his interview with Emir Rodríguez Monegal, Donoso discusses an obscure chapter in the history of his mother's family, the Yáñez, a very distinguished line but of recent prominence in Chilean society. Consulting with the social authority of Chile, don Luis Arrieta Canas, Donoso found a person whom his family had tried to ignore. According to relatives his maternal great-grandmother was Josefina Ponce de León y Guerrero de las Infantas. However, don Luis informed him that, in fact, her name was Peta Ponce and that she had once owned a gambling house in la Chimba and had transported women for immoral purposes.

> Toda la historia de Peta Ponce y de esa carreta llena de mujeres que mi abuela trasladaba de un lado para otro, mi

> familia niega de plano que haya existido. Ahora, a mí me divirtió mucho darle ese nombre a este personaje porque en el momento que me lo contó Luis Arrieta, me perturbió enormemente.[1]

Peta and Inés are different faces of the same archetypal female symbolizing feminine mystique and ambiguity. Peta Ponce

> es la conspiración de todas las viejas y de toda la mugre que se echa al hombre. ... La bruja eterna. Porque sí, hay un momento en que la mujer bella se transforma en mujer horripilante. Por sustitución, Afrodita tiene otra cara, que es horrible. Las diosas más antiguas y más bellas siempre tenían una cara aterrante que es mágica.[2]

Numerous types of substitutions take place between characters in Donoso's fiction. Saint and witch, normal people and monsters, servants and masters may all be substituted along with whole dimensions of reality. These seemingly opposite categories are facets of the same unity in Donoso's fiction.

> Volviendo al tema de la señora y de la empleada, ¿qué tiene que ver con todo esto? De nuevo; son dos caras de la misma cosa. Es el bien y el mal, juntos; el rehusar mío absoluto a creer que el bien y el mal son cosas distintas, que la santidad y el crimen son cosas distintas, que el servidor y el ser servido son cosas distintas, que el explotador y el explotado son distintos.[3]

The affinity between servants and masters, as between Humberto and Jerónimo, Peta and Inés, is an important parallel in the fiction of José Donoso. Relationships which develop between two women are frequent and particularly meaningful. In many of his novels an association develops between two women which subjugates and dominates men. The women have

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[1]Rodríguez Monegal, "La novela como happening," p. 525.

[2]Ibid., p. 524.

[3]Ibid., p. 526.

opposite roles, ama-criada, wife-lover, wife-mother, "que para mí constituye el núcleo de complicidad que domina al hombre, ... ambas tejen y destejen la vida de los hombres."[1]

In El obsceno pájaro de la noche a superficial substitution takes place between Raquel and her long time servant, Brígida, a relationship similar to that between Inés and Peta. Brígida's motivation seems to be her desire to become an indispensable part of Raquel's family while Raquel becomes more and more like Brígida. The servant has a gift of discernment which she successfully uses in financial matters. Brígida invests her meager earnings through Raquel's husband, a bank employee. She gives him detailed instructions regarding her investments and stocks thus demonstrating her gnostic awareness of the financial world. Each time Brígida makes a decision regarding her investments, dubious as it may seem, it always results very timely and fortuitous. She sees her fortune grow astoundingly. Raquel's husband follows her decisions with his own finances. After her fortune reaches awesome proportions her mistress, Raquel, states that she ought to use her money to set up her own household and become independent. Brígida, who has considered herself more than a servant, construes this to mean that she is not part of the family. She retreats to the Casa de la Chimba to live in poverty with the other old ladies. She continues to invest, however, through Raquel, who leaves her family and social obligations to manage Brígida's interests and care for Brígida's properties. Because of her relationship with Raquel and the money she is reputed to have, the other inmates treat

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[1]Ibid.

Brígida with deference. When she dies they rummage through the refuse in her room in search of the hoard of money she was rumored to have left. In her avarice she merely stipulated that Raquel give her an expensive funeral with her own money, with wreaths and condolences sent in the names of all of the family members in order to make it appear that she was truly loved by them. Her motivation is the same as that of other servant characters in the novel who attempt to incorporate themselves into the aristocratic families of their masters.

Este domingo contains a complex quadrangular substitution between don Alvaro, doña Chepa, Maya and la Violeta. A sexual relationship develops between the adolescent Alvaro and his maid, la Violeta, who is four years older than he. He has his first and only successful relationship with her. Indeed, Chepa's expectations on their wedding night cause Alvaro to feel inadequate and impotent. He is only able to save himself by conjuring up la Violeta in Chepa's body, thus achieving a sense of security. "Hizo el amor con la Violeta en la carne ignorante de la Chepa." (Este domingo, p. 88)

From the first summer Sunday morning when he was left alone with la Violeta in the large family house and smelled the browning empanadas, Sunday mornings became a ritual in don Alvaro's mind. Each Sunday, without fail, he goes to get empanadas for the Vives' lunch though his health has not permitted him to taste them for years. The ritual is full of sexual meaning for it symbolizes the security and sexual satisfaction which Vives found in la Violeta as an adolescent. Alvaro has always felt a special relationship with la Violeta and his family has always provided well for the servant girl. She was even remembered in Alvaro's mother's

will. She left la Violeta and her illegitimate daughter, Mirella, a cottage and an assured income for "servicios prestados." Her excessive generosity toward la Violeta "confundió a Alvaro sólo al principio, haciéndolo sentirse incómodo como un niño sorprendido robándose dulces." (Este domingo, p. 42)

> Su madre era una mujer rara. De alguna manera, casi sin moverse de su silla de la galería, mientras rezaba, mientras cosía, sin jamás trizar su discreción con una pregunta o una sospecha, su madre finalmente llegaba a saberlo todo. Y por lo visto a perdonarlo todo. (Este domingo, p. 43)

Chepa is partially defined through a montage with Alvaro's mother, misiá Elena. Both women are mother figures for Alvaro. Both are impeccably moral and decent, creating a guilt complex in Alvaro who feels that he is unable to live up to their expectations for him. Alvaro's guilt begins as a boy when he cannot help masturbating and his priest threatens him with his mother's disapproval. "Sé limpio. Qué diría tu madre si lo supiera." (Este domingo, p. 61)

Misiá Elena realizes that her adolescent son is sexually involved with la Violeta. By acquiescing to the affair the mother establishes an oedipal relationship since la Violeta vicariously fulfills Alvaro's sexual needs for misiá Elena. La Violeta tells Alvaro: "Tu madre que lo sabe todo sin que nadie le diga nada, cosiendo allá en el campo debajo del parrón." (Este domingo, p. 68) After years of unhappy, rigidly structured marriage Chepa also suspects, and la Violeta confirms, the adolescent relationship which Alvaro's mother had perceived.

Chepa and Alvaro's incompatability and separation force them to seek fulfillment in their own individual interests: Alvaro in his fantasy, his romances, his reading, his opera and solitaire chess; Chepa in her

charitable labors among the poor of the barriadas. Chepa finds her main interest in a prison convict, Maya, who is freed through her efforts and her husband's influence. Chepa frees him from a physical prison only to smother him with her own possessiveness. She fulfills her mother instincts and her latent sexual desires with Maya. He responds to her as a mother figure for he was reared as a street urchin and had never known such a relationship in his childhood. Chepa confesses to Alvaro: "Nadie, nunca, ni tú ni las niñitas ni mis padres ni mis nietos, nadie, nadie me ha... bueno, nadie nunca me ha interesado tanto como Maya." (Este domingo, p. 89)

Maya is a "born loser" who asks for Chepa's help. He is frequently out of contact with reality and sinks into emotional depression which he calls the "mano negra." He is ever changing and trapping Chepa by disappointing her expectations for him and then asking for her help. Chepa is irresistably attracted to him yet she cannot possess him. He becomes her reality by dominating her life. And in the end she is possessed by the same emotional derangement he had suffered, the "mano negra."

La Violeta robs Chepa of Maya the same way that she stole Alvaro. Maya does not feel that he fulfills Chepa's expectations for him. He could never consumate a relationship with her so he fulfills this drive with la Violeta. Both women are much older than he, signifying, for Maya, an oedipal attraction.

Chepa sees a clear similarity between the two couples: Alvaro and Violeta, herself and Maya. She sets up the quadrangular relationship since she cannot have Maya in her own home.

> ¿Quién mejor para delegar en ella el cuidado, el calor de hogar que debía proporcionársele a Maya? La Violeta era de Alvaro. Como Maya era de ella. La sonrisa de Alvaro era casi espontánea cuando la Violeta estaba cerca. Ella había florecido preparando la salida de Maya. Todos le decían: mijita, te has quitado diez años de encima, qué cutis, qué brillo en los ojos... Y de pronto, mirando a la Violeta que sorbía el té del platillo, sintió, como nunca había sentido, una hermandad, una cercanía a Alvaro. (Este domingo, p. 143)

The four are linked together through a suggestion of substitution. The men are linked emotionally to Chepa and physically to la Violeta. The men are like children; they are submissive and they lack virility. The women are dominant and mothering. Both Alvaro and Maya are able to fulfill their emotional attachments to Chepa through their physical contact with la Violeta since she requires nothing of them. They feel acceptable to her. Chepa forces others to need her and depend on her. She stifles the one viril quality which Maya and Alvaro manifest at times: an impulse to assert their independence.

> Las dos mujeres protagonistas, el ama y la criada, son un mismo ser y al mismo tiempo son dos seres: y no sólo comparten un hombre sino los dos hombres de la novela, ... lo que los convierte a ellos en "dobles" también.[1]

Chepa feels a psychological need for people to depend upon her, to need her. When the poor people whom she helps become independent she is no longer needed and feels frustrated. Part of her mothering obsession is due to a guilt complex related to her role as mother in her own family.

> --Me siento tan culpable de no haber sido nunca buena mujer de Alvaro ni buena madre de las niñitas. Tú sabes que nunca me interesaron... no, no creas que soy un monstruo. Pero dejaron de necesitarme tan luego. (Este domingo, p. 126)

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[1] Ibid.

Symmetry between Alvaro and Maya is established through their relationships with Chepa and la Violeta and also through their names. La Muñeca and Maya both end in the feminine vowel and both refer to female beings: the doll and the Brahman goddess of illusion. Each has a mole or blotch of dark skin on the mouth and on the breast, both erogenous parts of the body. These moles are important in their personalities, in their own minds and in other's. Both men have impeccable, almost feminine, taste in clothes and both are compulsively tidy and neat.

Alvaro and Maya seek to rid themselves of Chepa's mothering by injuring her. Alvaro imagines that he suffers from cancer in order to hurt Chepa and get pity. When the mole over his left nipple begins to metastasize he wants to shout to Chepa for help, to be examined by his son-in-law immediately, but restrains himself remembering the many previous occasions on which they scoffed at him for his imagined ills.

> Ella será la última en saberlo. Hará que su yerno se lo prometa, que se lo jure como hombre que desea manejar su propia muerte para que no se la arrebaten. Ella siempre se ha reído de sus aprensiones. Jamás ha sentido respeto por el sacrificio de sus dietas y sus fumigaciones, y por eso tiene que ser la última de todos en saberlo. ... Una venganza elegante, si uno quisiera vengarse. ... Ella se quedará sin participar en su muerte. (Este domingo, pp. 32-33)

Yet Alvaro does not have the strength to "manejar su propia muerte como hombre." He feels a compulsion, which he cannot restrain, to tell Chepa about his impending death. He saves the mole as a trump card to play when he needs to control Chepa.

> --Degenerada... y yo muriéndome.
> --No me hagas reir. Tú nos vas a enterrar a todos. Te cuidas como a una joyita. ...
> --Chepa. Me estoy muriendo.

--Déjame.
--Te muestro.
--¿Qué cosa?
--El lunar encima de tetilla.
--Está creciendo.
--No te creo. (Este domingo, p. 89)

Maya is more effective than Alvaro in hurting Chepa and in freeing himself from her oppressive mothering. He symbolically kills her. Since he continues to do the things that he knows will disappoint Chepa he wants to return to prison where he feels that he should be. Confirming the substitute relationship which exists between la Violeta and la Chepa, both mother figures for Maya, he wreaks his vengeance upon Chepa by violently ravishing and murdering la Violeta.

Two groups of children become doubles in Este domingo: Chepa's mischievous grandchildren and the slum children whom she has tried to aid with her charity.

On Sunday mornings her five grandchildren climb into her bed. Singing to them and telling them stories Chepa shares their world of fantasy. Chepa deliberately stimulates them to play imaginary games by giving them costumes and allowing them complete freedom in their own world in the attic. She wants them to be uninhibited and encourages them to invent games and unusual people and labyrinthine worlds of fantasy. Her grandchildren exist in a suspended state, unexposed to concepts of good or bad since their parents are permissive and refuse to subject them to such provincial and outmoded ideas. The children play in their own autistic world of complete relativity where values and concepts are not defined or differentiated. Their lives are an ingenuous loss of innocence, an amoral exposure to life. They live in a world of fantasy

and reality. Chepa's grandchildren's attitudes toward life are shaped by the great unconscious which is so close to the surface of their lives. They live, not in an external reality, but in a world of psychic reality with vague attachments in the physical world. They invent new worlds in which to live with their own myths and gods.

The children invent a goddess, Mariola Roncafort and construct an elaborate reality for her. Mariola is the queen and goddess of the "Ueks" a people superior to and more beautiful than any other. In order to apotheosize Mariola they find it necessary to kill her and to resurrect her. The last Sunday at their grandmother's house, the Sunday that Alvaro's cancer is discovered, Chepa suffers a violent emotional shock in the slum district and the family saga ends; the grandchildren perform an elaborate funeral for the queen. Chepa leads the sacrificial cortege through the house and helps cast the imaginary Mariola, symbolized by flowers laid on a pillow, to her death from the second story balcony. Mariola's death is symbolic of the death of their grandmother, their idol. It is an adumbration of what happens to Chepa after dark the same day in the callampa neighborhood at the hands of the poor children who do not play games of fantasy, like her grandchildren, but games that have a real consequence in physical reality. Everyone she mothers turns on her and tries to hurt her. The slum children become the doubles of her innocent grandchildren. For the unfortunate children she has been a symbolic mother, a substitute grandmother, bringing them gifts and attention. Searching the dark, labyrinthine alleys of the slums for Maya Chepa becomes lost. The children surround her and plague her in this moment of crisis. Eyes that had looked to her for help now watch her

with indifference. Children and dogs follow her and block her path. The children have no concepts of right or wrong behavior. They have never been taught. They are as innocent and amoral as her five grandchildren. They chatter at her innocently, mocking her desperate pleas. Fascinated by the furs around her neck they want to touch the "perritos." They call out, "--Pichito, pichito... Déjeme atocar los perritos, no sea mala." (Este domingo, p. 194)

The children, like her grandchildren, are not evil, nor do they maliciously persecute her nor try to rob her. She is not mistreated, indeed, the children pick her up when she falls in the mud and refuse. They tear her stole apart merely because of their curiosity and fascination for the "perritos," not because they are conscious of values. The same attributes of curiosity and imagination in her grandchildren were rewarded. Finally they leave her unconscious, in a deep emotional shock, on a pile of trash.

Alvaro uses a symbol for Chepa which characterizes her whole being. He describes her as a mother dog with sagging breasts to succor the poor and the unfortunate. In all their innocence, the barriada children become swarms of pups hungering after her, even in her own mind.

> Son voraces, quieren devorarla, sacarle pedazos de carne para alimentarse de ellos, y a veces, en sueños, siente que tiene miles de tetas y todos los miles de habitantes de su población, hombres, mujeres, niños, viejas pegados a esas teta (sic) chupándoselas y de pronto ya no se las chupan más sino que se las muerden, primero como quien juega y siente placer y ella pide que muerdan suave siempre pero más, pero después se entusiasman y muerden más y más fuerte y le sacan sangre y llora y le sacan pedazos que devoran golosos y llora más porque no puede soportar el dolor y grita, pero es maravilloso porque ellos se alimentan de su carne y con ella crecen y engordan y sanan y

> ella quiere dársela aunque la maten de dolor, no, que no la maten, lo único que les pide es que le dejen una minúscula llamita de vida para poder darse cuenta de que ella está alimentándolos. (Este domingo, p. 192)

As the crowd of children surrounds her in the slums her uneasiness grows into emotional tension. That tension becomes trauma and destroys her ability to perceive reality correctly. Her vision of people and actions begins to shift and waver. Chepa feels threatened by a small girl who symbolizes the poor, lower-class children, "sus pulguientos," (Este domingo, p. 36) whom Chepa has endeavored to help with Christian charity but who now threaten her in her moment of need. The girl, like all of the children, intends no harm. She has no concept of right or wrong behavior. She is motivated only by a desire to fulfill her physical needs and her curiosity. Though she is only vaguely portrayed she resembles Chepa's oldest granddaughter, la Magdalena, who is the most imaginative and precocious of her grandchildren. The slum girl shows acute perception as she judges Chepa: "--¿Ve? Así son las pitucas. Creen que una las va a ensuciar." (Este domingo, p. 194) When Chepa is incapable of preventing her from stroking the mink, the girl "acaricia y luego comienza a tirar una de la cola como si quisiera sacársela, observando la reacción de la Chepa." (Este domingo, p. 195)

In her distraught emotional state Chepa has lost her hold on reality and is unable to perceive that the girl is only a child. "No puede ser una niña sino mujer vieja o una enana." (Este domingo, p. 192) "La chiquilla lanzó una carcajada áspera, como de vieja." (Este domingo, p. 193) The girl's identity changes. Chepa hears another child ask a question of the "niña, o mujer o enana." (Este domingo, p. 193) The

girl's voice is not that of a girl but reminds Chepa of the "voz de hombre que fuma y fuma." (Este domingo, p. 194) All of these forms of the girl are images which threaten Chepa: an old woman, an impish dwarf, a hoarse man.

Chepa goes to the slum neighborhood in search of Maya. The symbolism of his name now becomes clear. Maya is the Brahman goddess of illusion who makes the external world seem real. He "is the phenomenal world conceived as a shifting amorphous veil through which one may catch glimpses of reality. Maya glitters and flows, revealing this reality, being indeed an aspect of it, but always distorting and obscuring it."[1] He is the only person who gives Chepa's life meaning; it is through him that she attempts to grasp life. When Chepa does not find him in the barriada she loses her grasp of reality; external life no longer has the illusion of being real. After her experience in the slums she falls into a permanent state of emotional derangement. She suffers a lifeless, catatonic disorder such as the one Maya regularly experienced, which he called "la mano negra."

Chepa's emotional collapse takes her out of the physical world. The children's grandmother, like Mariola Roncafort, never returns to the conscious world but disappears into a deep world of the unconscious.

Chepa Vives' demise is foreseen by the grandchildren on this last Sunday. They watch their grandmother attacked by her daughters in a bitter quarrel. Since Chepa is part of the children's world of fantasy--

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[1]Walcutt, Man's Changing Mask: Modes and Methods of Characterization in Fiction, p. 211.

she is their idol, Mariola Roncafort, the grandchildren feel the aggression personally, remembering their own punishments.

> Nos levantamos de la mesa y orgullosos subimos al mirador. Nosotros éramos los ofendidos. Estábamos contentos, pero callados, porque mi madre y mi tía Meche la castigaron, como a veces nos castigaban a nosotros. Nuestros disfraces vacíos cayeron al suelo. Los ejércitos de la Mariola quedaron diezmados por la alformbra. (Este domingo, p. 106)

Reality, with all of its convincing sharpness, destroys their world of fantasy. Their attention is drawn to a picture hung on the wall portraying a scene similar to the funeral which they have given Mariola and which foreshadows the collapse of doña Chepa later that evening in the slum district.

> Un séquito de muchachos y doncellas, al caer la tarde bajo la sombra de una pineta, se lamentaban alrededor del cadáver cubierto por un lienzo blanco y por flores. Pensábamos en lo maravilloso que sería poder llorar así, arrodillados, mesándose los cabellos, tirando flores y esparciendo incienso, frente a una tragedia realmente grande bajo un atardecer dorado. Pero no pasaba nada si no lo inventábamos nosotros. (Este domingo, p. 107)

Though the idealized picture and the funeral of Mariola are symbolic of Chepa's catastrophe, they are the elegant and fantastic inverse of the dirty, ugly fate which awaits Chepa in the real, physical world.

The family mansion, which for the young narrator is an "extensión de mi abuela," (Este domingo, p. 24) is personified in the novel. It feels the interpersonal conflicts in the family during two generations or more. It sees the drama of the grandmother who seeks self-fulfillment in what appear to be altruistic acts of charity. In the end, when Chepa is no longer there to bind the discordant family together, the family mansion loses its importance. It is locked up and abandoned. As time passes it

falls into ruin. The inside of the house is destroyed by human termites, orphans who seek shelter and burn the woodwork for warmth. The house, even after her death, is a prolongation of Chepa's need to nurture. It is like a womb which still succors the helpless; it is Chepa. Before, it was always full of fair bourgeois grandchildren. Now it is inhabited by their beggarly doubles.

> Niños vagos saltan la reja, fuerzan la puerta o las ventanas, duermen en la casa de mi abuela. Si hace mucho frío no salen durante semanas enteras. Dicen que cada día se llena más de chiquillos andrajosos con perros pulguientos.
> .....
> Nadie jamás ha dado un paso definitivo para impedir que esa casa, sea de quien sea, se transforme en un asilo de niños vagabundos. ... Me gusta que esos niños se refugien allí, como si esa casa que era prolongación del cuerpo de mi abuela viviera aún: la cornucopia derramándose todavía. (Este domingo, pp. 209-210)

Donoso demonstrates a propensity for symmetry in his character portrayals. Especially in his later works, Este domingo and El obsceno pájaro de la noche, this develops into montage and doppelgänger. A simpler kind of symmetry can be seen in his first novel, Coronación, between two couples: Mario and Estela, René and Dora.

Mario, a teen-ager, is faced with the challenge of becoming independent and finding a place for himself in the adult world. Estela is a young maid who is new in the big city. Mario's older brother, René, is a thief. He abandons his shabby wife, Dora. Dora and René symbolize the reality which replaces romantic illusion. The young couple, Mario and Estela, symbolizes the romantic illusions of young love.

Mario wants to escape from the ignoble poverty, the ugliness and unhappiness which fill René and Dora's lives. Dora, whom Mario idolized

when she was first married to René, is now weakened by too many children, is toothless, and is exhausted by overworking. Mario's conflict is one of ambivalence. On the one hand he feels compelled to accept his fate of becoming like René. On the other hand he tries to fight against his destiny, which René symbolizes. Because of his birth his fate is involvement in illegal activities, poverty, and the burden of an unwanted family.

The symmetry between the two couples is suggested throughout the novel but it is skillfully intertwined in the space of four pages. René reluctantly takes Dora out of the house for an afternoon. This is a victory for Dora, who needs to be seen with René in public in order to quiet rumors that he has abandoned her. It is a painful experience for René who does not want to be seen with her but needs her cooperation so that a questionable affair in which he is involved will go smoothly. Though repulsed, René consents to make love to Dora in a secluded part of a park in the late afternoon. Unaware of them, Mario and Estela make love for the first time a short distance away. The link between the two couples and their destinies is a bird which circles above the other couple.

> Un pájaro sorprendido circuló largo rato en la última vigilancia perfectamente azul del aire, muy alto sobre la pareja yacente.
> .....
> --Mira... --susurró Estela a Mario, señalando el pájaro, que circulaba una y otra vez sobre ellos.[1]

The bird, symbolic in tradition and folklore of prophecy and destiny, circles above both couples auguring the fate of the young lovers.

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[1]José Donoso, Coronación, (Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, S.A., 1968), pp. 96-97. Henceforth page numbers of quotations from this novel will be given in the text.

Though Mario and Estela are unaware of the other couple or of the symbology of the bird, it confirms their destiny of becoming like the unhappy couple.

Love for Donoso's characters is a form of selfish envy. "El amor lo veo más como un forma de envidia."[1] It is a game which men and women play to get what they want; it is an attitude taught to the young by society. René teaches Mario that "todas las mujeres son iguales, cabro, todas, lo único que quieren tener es un gallo que las pise y que les dé plata para no tener que trabajar." (Coronación, p. 106) El Club Deportivo, El Cóndor de Chile, is a gathering place where boys and men hiding behind braggadocio masks of machismo talk about women as conquests and possessions. Women are objects for Donoso's male characters, objects to be exploited, bought and discarded. Women, knowing what men want, attempt to gain power over men by withholding themselves or selling themselves.

There is a lack of virility in most of Donoso's male characters. There is, on the other hand, a certain domineering, maternal quality in all of his female characters regardless of age. The "René, mi hijito..." and "Mi hijito, mi hijito lindo..." (Coronación, pp. 95, 96) which Dora repeats to her husband are more than diminutives of endearment, they express a motherly attitude toward him. His loathing to make love to her may be a natural reaction, a feeling of repugnance toward her physical appearance. But his lack of aggressiveness in the sexual act denotes a lack of virility in René, as do his relationships with people other than Dora. He is noted for being only a braggart.

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[1]Castillo, "Entrevista," p. 958.

Like his brother, Mario consciously attempts to hide behind a façade of machismo. In the act of making love to an inexperienced huasa he pleads, "Ayúdame, no sé..." (Coronación, p. 100) After the seduction his words return to him to haunt him.

> Súbitamente, sus propias palabras dichas en un momento de ardor confuso regresaron a su memoria para derribar el orgullo. Miró a esa mujer que cosía satisfecha, como para destruirla con su resentimiento por conocerlo tan débil y desnudo. (Coronación, p. 100)

The triumph of the seduction may well have been her victory rather than his. Estela has successfully employed her feminine mystique to control the act while permitting Mario to believe that he has dominated her.

Regardless of her age, there is a mature, maternal quality in Estela's portrayal. Indeed, it is usually reserved for mothers to know their neophytes in states of "debilidad y desnudez." Young though she is, Estela symbolizes for both Andrés and Mario, two very different male characters, salvation from their crises and destinies.

Through a process of transference Mario associates Estela with Dora and other pregnant women. Estela's news about her pregnancy fills the boy with despair and rage, though he still loves her. After seeing Estela he returns home late at night on a streetcar that has only one other passenger: a woman who is about to give birth. Already having labor pains, she begs Mario to help her off the vehicle and take her to the Asistencia Pública a block away. The romantic love which he and Estela had has led to Estela's pregnancy and he has a brutal awakening to the reality of what this means as he helps the groaning woman down a dirty, dark street. He feels very uncomfortable. The thought of having

to support Estela in the same fasion is a horrible vision of fate in the boy's mind. When the woman falls on his shoulder, he carefully puts her on the ground. Unable to remain in her presence he abandons her and goes for help.

> --No, no --gemía la mujer, y sus gemidos crecieron en la calle solitaria a medida que Mario se alejaba corriendo a la Posta.
>
> ¡No! ¡No! A él no lo iban a pescar para esto...
>
> Entró de carrera en la Posta, dio aviso al nochero adormilado, y huyó, huyó de Estela para siempre, porque el horror había borrado hasta la última seña del cariño de la hora anterior. Y fueron los prolongados gemidos de Estela los que le destrozaban los tímpanos a medida que huía. (Coronación, p. 192)

Estela's maternal qualities and the boy's despair at having given her an unwanted child have been emphasized in Mario's mind by a process of substitution between Estela and the pregnant woman. It is a vision of the fate which he has dreaded.

NAGUALISM

Modern art is no longer an exclusive portrayal of external reality which sets up a rigid separation of individual beings and objects. In many modern novels the human character is not a separate, discrete entity but a part of a unity which includes objects, animals and other characters. In the reality of the new novel objects and beings are not seen as different and separate but similar and related. In modern fiction "the vital energy leaves the human form that was theretofore its highest embodiment and awakens extra human and prehuman forms."[1] Associations drawn between the human character and other beings have no explanation in the conscious mind. The similarity or the relationship between

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[1]Heumann, Art and the Creative Unconscious, p. 119.

the character and other beings may have been long ago. In the present the relationship is lost in the unconscious where it still evokes an unexplainable kinship.

Among the Indians of Central America "the nagual or naual is . . . generally an animal, which stands in a parallel relation to a particular man, so that the weal and woe of the man depends on the fate of the nagual."[1] The term has come to be an accepted literary expression in the criticism of Latin American fiction where nagualistic relationships are a fairly common phenomenon.

A nagual is a bird or beast, then, with whom a human feels a strong identification. The person's unconscious senses a relationship between the human personality and the animal personality, perhaps reaching back across centuries to prehuman forms which the two had in common. Possibly the most famous example of nagualism in world literature is the association between Harry and the wolf of the steppes in Hesse's Steppenwolf.

It is not enough that a person be described through an animal image, such as doña Chepa, who is described as a "perra parida echada en un jergón, los cachorros hambrientos pegados chupándole las tetas, descontenta si no siente bocas ávidas de ayuda, de consuelo, de cuidado, de compasión pegadas a sus tetas." (Este domingo, p. 33)

In its title, El obsceno pájaro de la noche, Donoso's novel makes reference to extra human forms of character portrayal, an influence of the unconscious in Donoso's fiction. In the popular tradition of the

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[1]Frazer, The Golden Bough; A Study in Magic and Religion, p. 796.

history of the Azcoitía family Inés and her nana develop a close relationship in which the nurse instructs the girl in the black arts. At night the nurse is transformed into a yellow dog and Inés into a harpy; her head is superimposed on the body of a chonchón.[1] This harpy is the obscene bird of night in the title which is taken from a letter from Henry James, Sr. to his sons: "The natural inheritance of everyone who is capable of spiritual life is an unsubdued forest where the wolf howls and the obscene bird of night chatters."[2] In the novel the howling wolf is the howling yellow dog, symbolic of the nana's powers; it is also her nagual.

The peasants invent the harpy to explain the bad times, the drought, sickness and darkness which are strangling the country.

> Sobre las vegas secas donde las bestias agonizaban hinchadas por la sed, la cabeza de la hija del patrón iba agitando enormes orejas nervudas como las alas de los murciélagos, siguiendo a una perra amarilla, verrugosa y flaca como su nana, que guiaba el chonchón hasta un sitio que los rayos del astro cómplice señalaban más allá de los cerros: ellas eran las culpables do todo, porque la niña era bruja, y bruja la nana, que la inició también en estas artes, tan inmemoriales y femeninas. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 36)

After the nurse's death and two centuries after the first Inés, the yellow dog reappears as the nagual for another nana, Peta Ponce. Besides the magical powers which the dog symbolizes, it also represents the envy of the old, poor, common nurses for their aristocratic young girls' beauty and sexuality. The yellow dog, a poor, mangy cur, is the persons who attempt to attach themselves to the two aristocratic Inés.

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[1]See footnote page 75.

[2]See the epigraph of El obsceno pájaro de la noche.

The dog reappears throughout the novel following, abetting, and envying the Inés figures.

After the yellow dog is sacrificed on the night that Boy is conceived, Peta Ponce does not reappear in person in the narration of the novel. Thereafter the yellow dog reappears as one of the numerous identities of Humberto. He prowls the gardens of la Rinconada vicariously enjoying Jerónimo and Inés' love making.

> Inés lanzó el grito final, Madre Benita, que no fue sólo un grito de placer sino también un grito de terror, porque al abrir los ojos para ver la constelación de miradas relucientes de los testigos alrededor del rostro de Jerónimo, vio a la perra amarilla que se acercó a husmearlos o a lamer los jugos que sus cuerpos dejaron sobre las hojas: la perra amarilla, acezante, babosa, cubierta de granos y verrugas, el hambre inscrita en la mirada, ella, dueña del poder para provocar el grito. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 194)

The yellow cur also appears when Iris Mateluna, another Inés figure, makes love in the back seat of the dilapidated Ford to the boys wearing Romualdo's giant mask. The dog, jealous of their possession of Iris, ruins one of the boys' first sexual adventure. The neighborhood boys assault Romualdo and destroy his giant mask in defense of Tito.

> Se reía todo el tiempo porque una perra que se metió adentro del Ford nos miraba desde la ventanilla, y después salía y le langueteaba la pierna, y a mí me tironeaba los pantalones. Mira, me los rajó aquí. Y la Gina se estrujaba de la risa, la tonta. ... Apareció otra vez la perra mirándonos desde la ventanilla, como con cara de risa, langueteándose el hocico y moviendo la cabeza como si estuviera saboreándose. ... Esa perra amarilla siempre anda siguiéndola y dicen que a otros cabros también les ha echado a perder el asunto. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 106)

When Jerónimo appears at the old Ford to exploit Iris Mateluna he is only able to have intercourse with her when the dog's eyes return

to him some of the potency which had been exchanged for Humberto's fertility, solidifying again the relationship between Humberto and the yellow dog.

The bitch reappears in a game which Inés plays with the old harpies who inhabit the house. The Canódromo is a game of dice in which plastic dogs of various colors race on a checkered track. Inés always selects the yellow dog which symbolizes her complicity with the dark, pananormal powers of the spirit world to which Humberto and Peta belong. The dog travels across the countryside howling in the moonlight pursued by the other dogs which are unable to catch her. She is powerful and she always wins. Inés wages her furs and her elegant clothes stored in the Casa against the poor, stinking tatters of the other old ladies. As the bitch keeps winning Inés takes off her clothes and puts on the ragged and filthy ones which she wins in each game, becoming more and more like Peta Ponce. Whenever the yellow dog wins, it brings hard times for the poor, whether in the rural area south of the Maule river or in the Casa.

In the Canódromo the yellow bitch races through the dark countryside like the first nana, leading the second Inés who, in her increasingly agressive attitude toward the poor inmates, becomes another harpy.

The cur pauses in her race across the dark countryside to ask for help from the moon, the "astro cómplice." She is

> débil pero corre sin que las demás perras puedan alcanzarla, a pesar del agotamiento, de la necesidad de descansar, duerme durante generaciones en los bosques donde nadie la encuentra y cuando despierta sale a husmear en los basureros buscando comida, los chiquillos la patean. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 421)

Symbolically, the yellow dog is an eternal reincarnation of the evil powers of old women. Her dark, mystical powers vie with the powers of legitimate religion to possess Jerónimo and Inés. Hers is an eternal, cabalistic power of the moon dealing with the supernatural, with herbs, potions and effigies. The other eternal power, that of established religion, that of the Roman Church, emanates from God and is symbolized by four black dogs.

A power struggle occurs in the novel which aligns legitimate powers against the mystical powers of magic. On the one hand is God with the powers of light, masculinity, the Church, Jerónimo, his uncle, Padre Clemente, the traditional aristocratic establishment. These are symbolized by Jerónimo's "cuatro perros nobles," (Obsceno pájaro, p. 220) which, "como las sombras de los lobos tienen el instinto sanguinario, las pesadas patas feroces de la raza más pura." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 188)

On the other side are Satan and the sinister powers of darkness, femininity, cabalistic magic, Inés, her nana, the sorceress Peta Ponce, and the dark, threatening masses of the underworld. These are symbolized by the yellow bitch, "un garabato flaco, ansioso, voraz, insaciable, capaz de comer cualquier cosa, hasta la más repugnante," (Obsceno pájaro, p. 189); she is the "enemiga de (los) cuatro perros negros." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 221)

The four black dogs first appear in Donoso's novel, El lugar sin límites, where they represent the power of don Alejo Cruz who "en el pueblo es como Dios." (Lugar sin límites, p. 74) Don Alejo is like the Old Testament Jehovah. He "había creado este pueblo, tenía ahora otros designios y para llevarlos a cabo necesitaba eliminar la Estación el

Olivo." (Lugar sin límites, p. 59) He has complete power over his creation, even the power of life and death. His dogs are constantly with him and enforce his orders. When one begins to get old don Alejo breeds a new litter. He selects only the most vicious, the purest pup to replace the oldest of his four dogs then destroys the rest of the litter. They always have the names Negus, Sultán, Moro, and Otelo.

Don Alejo's dogs enforce his orders and carry out his commands with sanguine enthusiasm. With this background the symbology of the dogs becomes clearer in El obsceno pájaro de la noche; it culminates in the four priests with black robes at the end of the novel, who zealously round up the flock of old viejas, and herd them into the new micro-buses to be transported to the new convent "como cuatro benévolos perros rodean a un pino, ... cuatro curitas jóvenes, sus elegantes sotanas de un negro nunca antes visto en la Casa." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 526)

Nagualism, through association with aspects of an animal's behavior, adds a dimension to the personality of the human character. It goes beyond a static relationship, a metaphor, to incorporate living nuances which associate the animal's personality with the human's personality.

Donoso's short story, "Paseo," is the best illustration of nagualism in his fiction. Tía Matilde's personality, at first rigidly static begins to change through her association with a stray, white dog which wanders into her life.

In the beginning of the story tía Matilde is a devoted sister, and mother figure for her three single brothers and her nephew, the young narrator of the story. Being an only daughter whose lack of physical

attractiveness precludes her marriage, she consecrates herself to a life of service by providing for her brothers the basic comforts of physical living--clean clothes, wholesome food and rigid schedules. The strictly ordered life of the family depends upon her. Like a high priestess she presides over the ritual of the family's life. She sets an emotionless tone in the home where everything is consigned a place and no expression of sadness or happiness is tolerated.

> Además, como todas las mujeres, poseía en grado sumo esa fe tan oscura en que el bienestar físico es, si no lo principal, ciertamente lo primero, y que no tener hambre ni frío ni incomodidad es la base para cualquier bien de otro orden.[1]

The only emotion which tía Matilde displays is a strong reaction against any show of emotion. She is constantly alert to avoid even any physical discomfort which may cause emotion. "Las fallas ... la impacientaban, y al ver miseria o debilidad en torno suyo tomaba medidas inmediatas para remediar lo que, sin duda, eran errores en un mundo que debía, que tenía que ser perfecto." ("Paseo," p. 138)

The narrator, remembering his childhood, felt an equivocal love for his aunt. Several times he broaches the subject of whether there was love in tía Matilde's home and concludes that possibly there was a love of which he was unaware.

When a stray bitch enters the household tía Matilde's life, and that of the whole family, begins to change imperceptibly. The change is directly related to a mystical union between tía Matilde and the stray

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[1]José Donoso, Los mejores cuentos de José Donoso, (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Zig-Zag, S.A., 1966), p. 138. Henceforth the page numbers for quotations from this story will be given in the text.

white bitch. From the instant they meet on the street, from the moment "mi tía miró a la perra y los ojos de la perra se cruzaron con su mirada," ("Paseo," p. 143) there was an esoteric understanding between them.. Perhaps tía Matilde's magnanimity shows through the harsh voice with which she tries to reject the dog that begins to follow her, but her effort to shun the dog was "como un deseo impotente de alejar un destino que ya se ha tenido que aceptar." ("Paseo," p. 143) It follows her home.

At first the dog is the extreme opposite of tía Matilde. She is cowardly, she complains softly and "pregonaba toda una genealogía de mesalianzas callejeras, resumen de razas impares que durante generaciones habían recorrido la ciudad buscando alimento en los tarros de bil, tiritando de frío o de fiebre." ("Paseo," p. 143)

Tía Matilde keeps the dog in order to nurse it back to health, but it begins to "establecer un desnivel en lo acostumbrado." ("Paseo," p. 146) The cur begins to transform the woman's life with its open disregard for order, with its capriciousness, reinforcing an all but extinguished fragment of tía Matilde's personality. Soon after the dog establishes itself in her life tía Matilde breaks out into a loud laugh, for the first time in her life, shocking her brothers with her display of emotion. Her brothers abandon the room "para no presenciar ese desmoronamiento del orden mediante la intrusión de lo absurdo." ("Paseo, p. 148) Even her features show the tension of inner conflict.

When tía Matilde begins to walk the dog each evening she has established a new order which the other members of the family feel "era demasiado exclusiva." ("Paseo," p. 149) The two exchange "cómplices

miradas de entendimiento," ("Paseo," p. 150) which also alienate the other members of the family. The dog brings out an unknown facet of tía Matilde's personality.

> Yo sentía que la perra era la más fuerte de las dos, la que mostraba y enseñaba cosas desconocidas a tía Matilde, que se había entregado por completo a su experiencia. ("Paseo," p. 150)

The personalities change through mutual influence, bringing the dog and the woman closer together, flowing into one another's lives. The restive, adventurous and emotive aspects of tía Matilde's personality express themselves after being reinforced by the kindred spirit of the white cur. The dog's personality changes also, adopting some of the refinement of tía Matilde's life without submitting to the hollow rituals.

> La perra era silenciosa, y abandonando sus modales de callejera, pareció adquirir las maneras un tanto dignas de tía Matilde, conservando, sin embargo, todo su empaque de hembra a la cual las durezas de la vida no han podido ensombrecer ni su buen humor ni su inclinación por la aventura. ("Paseo," p. 151)

Tía Matilde ventures for longer periods of time into the city's dark streets, where "había algo poderoso que la arrastraba." ("Paseo," p. 152) As she becomes more of a callejera, like the white bitch, she returns later and later, hat in hand, hair dishevelled, mud on her shoes, and her dress torn. Her eyes reveal the change showing "una alegre inquietud parecida a la de los ojos del animal. ... Esas dos eran compañeras." ("Paseo," p. 152) It is important that her eyes make that revelation since her inner personality, her soul, changed and, traditionally, the eye is the light of the body.[1]

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[1] The Gospel According to Saint Matthew, 6:22.

One night tía Matilde fails to return and is never heard of again. "Arrastrada por la perra blanca, se perdió en la ciudad, o en la muerte, o en una región más misteriosa que ambas." ("Paseo," p. 154) Wherever she became lost one concludes that she found there a free expression of her inner self.

Beneath her impassive mask tía Matilde's personality was in conflict. Beneath the well-integrated, suffocating mask of order, which had characterized her life, a strong impulse for freedom came to life through the influence of her nagual.

Donoso makes great use of symmetry in his fiction. In the real, external world this symmetry may seem artificial. In fact, it is a manifestation of psychic reality which attempts to interrelate all phenomena rather than segregate and differentiate it as occurs in the conscious mind. Symmetry, the manifestation of similarity and relationship, affects character portrayal in Donoso's later fiction through doppelgänger, character montage and nagualism. In his later fiction characters are not discrete individual entities but parts of a monistic unity which may include objects, powers and other beings, human as well as non-human.

If Donoso's first writings are traditional, conscious efforts, his later works show the influence of automatic writing for in the latter he displays a free expression of the creative powers of the unconscious. He says of El obsceno pájaro de la noche: "Yo sostengo que la novela me ha escrito a mí y no yo la novela."[1] The artist has turned inward to the

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[1]Eduardo García Rico, "Entrevista," Indice, Nos. 280-281 (December 1-15, 1970), p. 72.

unconscious and finds relationships of attraction and repulsion, images and archetypes in his characters who are meaningful in a new reality, a blend of both the physical and the psychic.

Erich Neumann's observations on modern art are fully applicable to Donoso's fiction. He could well have had El obsceno pájaro de la noche in mind when he wrote:

> There is in modern art a psychic current which descends like a waterfall into the chasm of the unconscious, into a nonobjective, impersonal world. With their animism that brings to life the inner world and the realm of participation mystique, many of these works are charged with a demonic force that can suddenly leap out at the overwhelmed and terrified beholder at any time, in any place, and strike him like lightning, for modern art lives in a world between chaos and archetype; it is filled with plasmatic forces out of which such an archetype can suddenly be constellated.[1]

In José Donoso's fiction character portrayal has significance beyond the individual importance of his people. Joined through doppelgänger, montage, and nagualism to other characters and to the transpersonal forces of the universe they become encarnations of contents of the unconscious.

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[1]Neumann, Art and the Creative Unconscious, p. 123.

Si no nos disfrazamos de algo no somos nada.

--José Donoso

CHAPTER IV

MASKS AND TRAVESTY

The first criticism on José Donoso's fiction classified him primarily as a social writer. On the surface his earlier works do, indeed, manifest a preoccupation with Chilean social classes and their conflicts, a characteristic of Chilean writers extending back to Alberto Blest Gana. However, this somewhat shortsighted appraisal of his fiction irritates Donoso.

> Nada me irrita tanto como los críticos que reducen mis novelas a sus elementos sociales, ésos que quieren que yo haya escrito el "canto del cisne" de las clases sociales chilenas. Las clases sociales desaparecieron en Chile hace muchísimo tiempo. En mis novelas utilizo las colas que alcancé a atisbar pero las utilizo como un arquitecto utiliza hormigón, hierro, vidrio: ... Crecí en una época en que las clases sociales iban perdiendo importancia, los matices se confundían, y quedaban sólo pintorescos residuos. Por razones psicológicas personales, neurosis juvenil o lo que se quiera llamarla, ese mínimo matiz de destierro al que ya nadie daba importancia más que yo, se fue hinchando en mí como un abceso, se hizo doloroso, cruel, obsesivo, y durante mucho tiempo este desface subjetivísimo ... me sirvió de lupa para mirar el mundo, magnificando algo insignificante.[1]

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[1]Donoso, "Entrevista a propósito de El obsceno pájaro de la noche," p. 74.

Donoso's fiction is more than a portrayal of conflict between the lower, working classes and the decadent aristocracy in Chile. His fiction treats much more universal conflicts which take place between the individual and society, regardless of class, and the inner conflict which the individual feels in the face of life's uncertainties.

There is, in every society, a continual battle between the collectivity and the individual, between societal controls and freedom of personal expression. The human unconscious contains the impulses, instincts, attitudes and archetypes which, expressed by individuals, grow into the structures, values and controls of the collective consciousness. These controls, in turn, protect the society from contents of the unconscious which may be destructive. Normally these two systems are in equilibrium which means social well-being for the society and psychological well-being for the individual.

> La relación normal de ambos sistemas es el equilibrio, pues mientras la afloración de nuevas formas arquetípicas del inconsciente colectivo vivifican la sociedad, el canon cultural consciente sirve de barrera contra contenidos inconscientes que pueden ser destructivos. Sin embargo, esta defensa, que implica una restricción sistemática de la naturaleza de los individuos corre el peligro señalado por los surrealistas: llegar a un desequilibrio y rigidez que mutilen las potencialidades de la personalidad individual y colectiva.[1]

Society's controls are frequently too restrictive--its values and mores too fixed and outmoded. The individual's instincts rebel against the prescribed roles and traditionally acceptable behavior causing great stress in the personality. The result is that society's roles and

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[1]Hernán Vidal, José Donoso: surrealismo y rebelión de los instintos. (Barcelona: Ediciones Aubi, 1972), p. 18.

traditions become empty masks which are devoid of meaning, having lost the support of the members of the society.

MASKS

Below their exterior masks Donoso's characters are deep, complex and very human. Since the human personality is composed of many changing nuances--fragments--one has no set identity except as one adopts masks to express himself. "Yo no puedo aceptar una realidad lineal como la que todos creemos vivir," says the novelist. "Veo la realidad como un juego de disfraces, máscaras, trapos."[1]

The construction of a mask is important since it is a personality's representation. In El obsceno pájaro de la noche Humberto says "si no nos disfrazamos de algo no somos nada." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 154) One's mask is that identity which others perceive as the individual; one's mask is, in part, the identity which one has in the society. Jung uses the term persona to refer to the mask which characterizes one's role.

> Fundamentally the persona is nothing real: it is a compromise between individual and society as to what a man should appear to be. He takes a name, earns a title, represents an office, he is this or that. In a certain sense all this is real, yet in relation to the essential individuality of the persona concerned it is only a secondary reality, a product of compromise, in making which others often have a greater share than he. The persona is a semblance, a two-dimensional reality.[2]

It is easy for persons in the upper-class to gain a satisfactory identity through a mask which society projects upon them. Individuals

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[1]García Rico, "Entrevista," p. 72.

[2]C. G. Jung, "The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious," The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung, (New York: The Modern Library, 1959), p. 138.

whose pictures are publicized in society columns and whose names are repeated in the captions, people with a profession and persons involved in the official functions of society are able to obtain a unified, well-known public mask. Beneath the persona, however, they are, as Humberto observes, psychologically insecure and mutable like other people.

> Quitémosles los disfraces y quedan reducidos a gente como yo, sin rostro ni facciones, que han tenido que ir hurgando en los basureros y en los baúles olvidados en los entretechos y recogiendo en las calles los despojos de los demás para confeccionar un disfraz un día, otro disfraz otro, que los permita identificarse aunque no sea más que por momentos. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 155)

The lower classes of society are far less structured, less bound by traditions and prescribed roles. Individuals in these classes receive no professional deference, no recognition from society; they have no official identity. Personality fragments gain autonomy giving the instincts and impulses of their personalities greater freedom of expression. The masses are forced to grasp at external façades as temporary expressions of their personalities.

> Yo no entiendo, Madre Benita, cómo usted puede seguir creyendo en un Dios mezquino, que fabricó tan pocas máscaras, somos tantos los que nos quedamos recogiendo de aquí y de allá cualquier desperdicio con que disfrazarnos para tener la sensación de que somos alguien, ser alguien, gente conocida, reproducción fotográfica en el diario, y el nombre debajo. ... Uno va aprendiendo las ventajas de los disfraces que se van improvisando, su movilidad, cómo el último ocultó al previo, basta un trapo a cuadros amarrado a la cabeza, un parche de papas en las sienes, afeitarse el bigote, no lavarse durante un mes para cambiar de color, cómo alterarlos y perderse dentro de sus existencias flúidas, la libertad de no ser nunca lo mismo porque los harapos no son fijos, todo improvisándose, fluctuante, hoy yo y mañana no me encuentra nadie ni yo mismo me encuentro porque uno es lo que es mientras dura el disfraz. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 157)

Whereas individuals of the lower classes have the problem of creating themselves a mask, an exterior identity, those in the upper-class have a very different problem: they are bound to such an extent by conservative tradition, ritual, mores and social custom that they find that they have a very permanent mask already constructed for them which hinders the expression of their personalities. These individuals find it difficult to reconcile their impulses and instincts with the prescribed mask, or persona, which society has conferred upon them at birth. "Deformada la personalidad las relaciones humanas se dan como exhibición de máscaras sin significado ni sentido, que los seres adoptan por inercia, por continuar obedientemente un conjunto de costumbres."[1]

In Donoso's novel, Coronación, Andrés Abalos is a bachelor who has had an unimpressive career as a lawyer and finally gives himself up to a very inactive retirement. He is treated with deference because of his social and professional standing but he has few friends and few interests. At the end of his life he has many regrets and many fears.

Lying in bed listening to the chattering of his insane grandmother, misiá Elisita, Andrés' recalls the fear and the guilt imbued in him in his youth by his religious grandmother.

He ponders the obscene words which he hears at school. When he innocently expresses these words to his maid, Rosario, he is lectured on the punishment awaiting him in hell. He is told that he must change and be good so that he can become pure and go to heaven. In his mind heaven becomes a place where people like his grandmother and his maid will

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[1]Vidal, José Donoso: surrealismo y rebelión de los instintos, p. 32.

dwell, a place that is austere and cold. On the other hand, the lavatory is symbolic of hell, which he prefers to his grandmother's ascetic heaven. Andrés takes refuge in the excusado from Padre Damián's lectures on morality which cause him to feel guilt. He overhears a conversation between two, more precocious boys in the lavatory. When they discover that Andrés has heard them they beat him, thereby reinforcing the association in Andrés' mind between hell, punishment and excusado.

At his first communion Andrés does not confess the guilt which he feels for having heard and spoken the bad words, for he knows that if he were to confess his sin he would have to answer Padre Damián's insistent questions: "--¿Cuántash veshesh, hiho?" (Coronación, p. 59) Out of fear Andrés avoids the priest and convinces himself that he is eternally damned for having communed without confessing his venial guilt. By communing in sin Andrés adopts a false, exterior appearance; he has complied with prescribed conduct but he has introduced psychological turmoil into his life. Because of his guilt the day of his first communion "no fue, como le dijeron que debía ser, el día más feliz de su vida." (Coronación, p. 59) Andrés has set a precedent of not facing his problems and hiding his true self behind a façade of appearance.

His fanatical grandmother impresses upon him that all men are cochinos, increasing his sense of guilt. Andrés avoids contact with the opposite sex when other boys are developing normally, indeed, he completely excludes sexuality from his life by hiding his normal instincts and impulses under strictly ordered patterns of living. He spends his time reading French history and collecting rare canes, the number of which must always conform to ten. He chooses a career in law merely because it

is expected of him since he was reared in a family of lawyers. But his neurotic life of order cannot atone for his sense of perdition so he attempts to rid himself of his guilt by disavowing religion. "Con un convencimiento racional que disfrazaba los terrores de su niñez, pronto descartó para siempre la fe religiosa, esa fe con que su abuela tanto lo había martirizado." (Coronación, p. 61) Andrés replaces religion with agnostic, existentialist reasoning but his fear of hell is merely replaced by a fear of death. His friend, Carlos Gros, points out to him that religion, philosophy and myth "no son más que disfraces del instinto de conservación," (Coronación, p. 156) and for this reason they cannot offer him absolute and satisfying assurances. Andrés' insecurities and fears cause him to take refuge in a world of self-delusion which eventually leads him to insanity.

Andrés invents a world of fantasy which he calls "omsk." In his mind it is a beautiful, exotic reality in which one is safe from the concerns related to the real world. The "omsk" world is an irrational defense through which Andrés evades his preoccupation with existence; it is an autistic world which he alone understands. When Andrés' only friend, Dr. Gors, uses the term giving it a stoic connotation, "Andrés no entendió con claridad lo que su amigo quiso decirle." (Coronación, p. 66) The non-initiated cannot penetrate the significance of the "omsk" because it is an esoteric, personal world in which Andrés takes refuge.

Though Andrés despises Carlos' lack of continence he envies his friend's insensitivity to the enigmas of existence which perplex Andrés; he covets Carlos' involvement in life, his freedom to express himself and

to feel pleasure. Andrés regrets that he has no positive reaction to life to counterbalance his pessimism and fear.

Taking advantage of his high social position Andrés attempts to get involved with his young maid, Estela, in an effort to repossess life and to experience the pleasure which Carlos advocates. His lust only terrifies and repulses the young girl convincing him of the futility of his late attempt to free his impulses and participate in life.

Misiá Elisita's world of insanity, which he has feared so much, appeals to him as the ultimate escape from his problems. He concludes that "el único orden es la locura." (Coronación, p. 157)

> Llegado a esta conclusión lo refrescó una gran tranquilidad como si por fin, al darse cuenta de su locura y aceptarla, fuera capaz de huir de toda responsabilidad, aun de la de separar lo real de lo ficticio. Quizás la muerte, por último no fuera más que una ficción espantosa. ¡Oh, entonces la locura era la libertad, la evasión verdadera! (Coronación, p. 215)

Andrés decision to take refuge in insanity is a conscious option. He feels that if he can establish his insanity with Dr. Gros he will then be free to join the insane world of his grandmother. His decision to escape into insanity is similar to a decision to commit suicide--indeed, his action is a form of suicide, a renunciation of existence. After acting out a series of irrational dialogues with his friend Andrés insists: "tú lo que crees es que estoy loco de remate," (Coronación, p. 215) for he knows that one of the symptoms that a person borders on insanity is the obsessive insistence that he is not insane. Andrés performs his act well--his mask convinces Gros.

> Andrés sintió el placer de cortar sus últimas amarras con la realidad. Si era capaz de convencer a la gente, y sobre

> todo a Carlos que era médico, de que él estaba loco, entonces, simplemente, lo estaba. (Coronación, p. 215)

Andrés continues his disguise by pretending that he has lost contact with reality until Carlos finally admits: "--Sí, sí, te creo." (Coronación, p. 217) Gros participated in his game by conceding that Andrés is mad in spite of his previous insistence that Andrés was sane. The doctor's words cut the "últimas obligaciones con el mundo de los vivos;" (Coronación, p. 216) Gros feels that Andrés' life is now "como la de un ser irresponsable al que hay que cuidar y comportarse con él como con un niño delicado." (Coronación, p. 217) Andrés has escaped into a free, irresponsible state of anarchy, a state of insanity like misiá Elisita's world of senility.

Most of Donoso's characters live in anarchical rebellion against society for they are very old, very young or emotionally or mentally unbalanced. His characters are what Donoso calls personajes marginados for they live on the perimeter of reality. Their personality fragments enjoy free expression disregarding society's rigid sanctions; anarchy is the most complete freedom.

> Me resulta mucho más fácil existir en los personajes marginados que en personajes gemelos a mí; puedo hacerlo a través de personajes marginados por la infancia extraña, la ancianidad, la locura, la neurastenia. Personajes cuyos límites de juego, si los hay, ellos mismos me señalan, y lo único que yo hago es invitar al lector a que los comparta.[1]

Old women reappear throughout the novels of José Donoso plagued by arteriosclerosis and psychoses. They wrap their sordid personal effects in small packages and conceal them under their beds. Their language is

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[1]Saladrigas, "Monólogo con José Donoso," p. 27.

at once obscene and pious. They censure men because of their insatiable sexual demands. Describing Inés in her old age in El obsceno pájaro de la noche, Humberto gives a fitting portrayal of the first old lady in Donoso's novels, misiá Elisita, Andrés' grandmother: "La vejez es la forma más peligrosa de la anarquía, que no respeta leyes ni tratos prestigiados por los siglos." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 429)

Tortured by feelings related to sexual inadequacy or inferiority which are never specifically revealed in the novel, misiá Elisita manifests a preoccupation with sexual guilt and purity. The menopause brings her life into crisis when she loses control over her previously well-masked personality fragments; her thoughts, her criticisms of people, her fantasies and fears "que había mantenido oculto por un tiempo bajo superficies armoniosas, estalló con violencia." (Coronación, p. 22) Now, in her old age, "cuanto su imaginación tocaba se iba convirtiendo en suciedad, acusando a todo el mundo de amoralidad repugnante, de los más descabellados excesos sexuales." (Coronación, p. 22)

Jung's explanation of the personality fragmentation which accompanies the loss of the exterior mask is an accurate portrayal of misiá Elisita's derangement.

> With the disintegration of the persona there is a release of involuntary fantasy, which is apparently nothing else than the specific activity of the collective psyche. This activity brings up contents whose existence one had never dreamed of before. But as the influence of the collective unconscious increases, so the conscious mind loses its power of leadership. Imperceptibly it becomes the led, while an unconscious and impersonal process gradually takes control. Thus, without noticing it, the conscious personality is pushed about like a figure on a chessboard by an invisible player.[1]

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[1]Jung, "The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious," p. 141.

What was previously hidden under misiá Elisita's persona, what she had "mantenido guardado, por miedo o inseguridad o vergüenza, al debilitarse la exclusa de su conciencia, irrumpe en su vida llenándola de presencias fantasmales." (Coronación, p. 24) In her senescence misiá Elisita fluctuates between sanity and insanity putting on and removing masks so that for Andrés "subir a visitar a su abuela era una lotería;" (Coronación, p. 37) she freely expresses the various fragments of her personality. The old woman loses her grip on time, living simultaneously in the present and the past; time comes to have no meaning for her. Her birthday, which has always been ritualistically observed no longer interests her.

> --¿Cuántos años cumple, abuelita?
> --No cambies el tema. Diecinueve. ¿Qué te importa? (Coronación, p. 49)

She abruptly exchanges the teenage mask for a mask of decrepitude, giving expression to the chaos of her mind.

> --Acuérdese que hoy es su cumpleaños y tiene que portarse bien...
> --Mira, insolente, no me vengas a tratar como a una chiquilla chica, que tengo casi cien años y hace tiempo que debía estar bien agusanadita en mi tumba... (Coronación, p. 51)

As a younger woman misiá Elisita was much like other women portrayed in Donoso's fiction: misiá Elena Vives, doña Chepa Vives, and Dr. Gros' wife, Adriana--women who are not completely happy in marriage and who expend their energies in charitable activities outside of the home. Adriana Gros is a particularly interesting study of Donoso's women who displace their marital frustrations through zealous efforts to construct a satisfactory persona--to establish a good appearance in

society. She wishes only to be regarded as pious and discreet.

> Adriana no era una belleza y había ocultado los buenos puntos de su aspecto con la máscara trivial de la mujer que ha renunciado a ser seductora para los hombres, por verse bien ante los ojos de las mujeres. (Coronación, p. 162)

Behind the calm mask which she wears in society lie frustrations and emotional turmoil caused by her unhappy relationship with her husband. "Después de su primer desencanto, que fue brutal, y de muchas secretas frustraciones, orientó su vida con un celo casi profesional a ser mujer decente." (Coronación, p. 164)

Marriages in Donoso's fiction are socially prescribed arrangements and imposed roles which lead to unhappiness. Carlos Gros does not love his wife; at home he finds only emotional frustration; he compensates for what his home lacks by seeking pleasure and friendship elsewhere. Likewise, Adriana is unable to find her interests in the home so she participates in social clubs and charitable enterprises. Having waged inner battles of conflicting impulses and disappointments she has painfully constructed a suitable mask in which she feels safe and comfortable--a mask which she refuses to remove because it would leave her vulnerable to a reoccurrence of the conflicts which she has suffered and an awakening of the impulses which she has subdued. Adriana wants only to be regarded as an exemplary and decent woman among other women. She gives the appearance of being a good wife and mother, but Adriana is only willing to give what social tradition absolutely requires in a marriage. She tolerates Carlos' sexual drives but insists on living in separate rooms and refuses to share any of his emotions for the strife of marital

adjustment in the first days of their marriage destroyed her willingness to share his feelings.

> Era simplemente un deseo de vivir tranquila, porque a su altura nada era peor que abrir necesidades que se hallaban cómodamente selladas en un rincón de su ser, casi, casi olvidadas. No. Carlos tenía muchos derechos sobre ella, pero no el de exigirle que se conmoviera.
>
> Tensa en el lecho, Adriana aguardó que, creyéndola dormida, Carlos se marchara a su propio dormitorio, o por lo menos que se durmiera tranquilo allí donde estaba. (Coronación, p. 166)

There is no love binding Donoso's characters together, there are only the bonds of social arrangements.

Donoso's "Paseo" is, perhaps, of all his short stories the best description of the breakdown of order and patterns of life revealing that these are mere masks disguising the terror which Donoso's characters feel underlying their existence.

The family, consisting of three unmarried brothers, their sister and the young narrator of the story, is an upper-class family which is set in ritualistic patterns of living. The neurotic order of their lives masks their insecurity; their emotionless faces stoically attempt to hide the terrible emptiness of life.

The story centers on tía Matilde, an unattractive woman who has accepted the fact that she will never marry. She dedicates her life to providing for her brother's physical necessities showing only in this way the love which the young narrator believes that she undoubtedly feels for them. If there was love between the brothers and their sister, however, it "existía confinado dentro de cada individualidad, sin saltar límites para expresarse y unir." ("Paseo," p. 137)

Tía Matilde directs all of the family's ritualistic patterns of life, "una liturgia antiquísima en la familia." ("Paseo," p. 138) Each member of the family has a set behavioral pattern, a mask, which the others accept as his only identity. Reactions which might expose inner emotion are stoically hidden behind their impassive masks. When the young narrator sees his father with perplexed thought showing on his face, the man immediately reassumes his severe, expressionless countenance and quickly dissimulates his concern.

> --¿Qué hace aquí, papá? -- susurré.
> Al responder algo se cerró súbitamente sobre la desesperación de su rostro, como el golpe de un póstigo que se cierra sobre una escena vergonzosa.
> --¿No ves? Estoy fumando... -- replicó. ("Paseo," p. 136)

Chaos and terror replace order in the family when tía Matilde begins to change. The agent of the resulting disorder is a stray dog which attaches itself to her and develops a relationship with the woman which excludes the other members of the family. A mild insanity manifests itself as tía Matilde's mask begins to fragment and deep, hidden parts of her personality reveal themselves: she makes mistakes in calling out the turns in billiards, the family's usual after-dinner activity; she forgets many of the small considerations she has shown to her brothers; she bursts out laughing over an insignificant episode which is an injury to Armando's dignity; and she shows feelings for the bitch which she has never displayed toward the family. Indeed, the young narrator, envious of the love which tía Matilde bestows upon the dog, has a "vehemente deseo de enfermar de gravedad, para ver si así lograba yo también cosechar una relación parecida." ("Paseo," p. 150) Whereas before tía Matilde spoke in monologues to people, now, for the first time, she begins to "dialogar

... con una interlocutora cuya voz yo no oía." ("Paseo," p. 150) Her eyes show an "alegre inquietud parecida a la de los ojos del animal;" ("Paseo," p. 152) When she takes the dog and goes out into the street each night the family waits for her. One night the narrator observes her return:

> Me pareció oirla cantar una melodía suavemente y con gran dulzura, entreabrí mi puerta y me asomé. Al verla pasar frente a mi cuarto, con la perra blanca envuelta en sus brazos, su rostro me pareció sorprendentemente joven y perfecto, aunque estuviera algo sucio, y vi que había un jirón en su falda. ("Paseo," p. 153)

The woman's impulses rebel against the stifling order of her life and as she begins to change, the rest of the family experiences great emotional stress. When she fails to return from one of her strolls with the dog the family's patterns of life have been destroyed. When the mask of order is removed it "causa horribles angustias y horribles dolores: significa la destrucción de 'patterns' de vida, de esquemas de comportamiento; significa la necesidad de volver a construir mil cosas."[1] Nevertheless, the brothers keep their concern hidden behind their expressionless faces.

> Los acontecimientos parecieron paralizar a los hermanos, dejándolos como ateridos de horror. Luego comenzaron a construir un muro de olvido o indiferencia que lo cubriera todo para poder enmudecer sin necesidad de martirizarse haciendo conjeturas impotentes. ("Paseo," p. 135)

The narrator is not so set in the traditions of the family that he can, like his father and uncles, merely reconstruct a mask and hide the emptiness which tía Matilde has left. He yearns for openness but the

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[1]Emir Rodríguez Monegal, "La novela como Happening," p. 525.

men lock themselves in their rooms and a stoic silence pervades the house. When they gather in the library the boy hopes that they will expose their feelings and take measures toward resolving the family's problems.

> Yo deseaba que allí dentro estuvieran hablando de lo que era importante de verdad, que, abandonando el respetuoso frío con que se trataban, abrieran sus angustias y sus dudas haciéndolas sangrar. ("Paseo," p. 135)

Undoubtedly the men will construct new patterns of living to hide the terrible change which has been introduced into their lives.

It is the terrible absurdity of existence such as Matilde's brothers experience which, on a universal plane, leads mankind to construct myths and traditions. Myths are a metaphysical attempt to find order and purpose in life --they transcend the physical world and attempt to make a meaningful explanation of man's existence. Human fantasy stemming out of the collective unconscious finds order in chaos and hope in death by disguising them in myth.

> Tú ves que en todas mis obras, el disfraz tiene una importancia bastante grande. ... Es una forma de preservar, una forma de protección. ... Se disminuye el terror. Se disminuye el miedo.[1]

There are interesting parallels between universal myths and the worlds of fantasy which children create. In Este domingo doña Chepa encourages her grandchildren to develop their imaginations and she abets them by participating in their games and giving them old clothing in

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[1]José Donoso in an interview with Sergio Bocaz, February, 1969 at Fort Collins, Colorado. See Bocaz' dissertation, La novelística de José Donoso y su cosmogonía estética a través de dos influencias principales: Marcel Proust y Henry James. The University of Colorado, 1972.

which to disguise themselves. The grandchildren's favorite game is "Tú eres ideal," in which the four children become an audience for the fifth who must act out the roles which they invent. From one of these stylizations Mariola Roncafort is born. The imaginative children endow her with a complete personality as well as a cultural context. She and her ideal society, the "ueks," are the epitome of intelligent and beautiful people.

> Nos dedicamos a crear y vivir el mundo y la vida de la Mariola Roncafort. Ella era ueks. Y los ueks eran gente increíblemente bella y dotada, tan rica y atrevida, que los demás seres sólo podían amarlos, admirarlos, bañarse en su luz. (Este domingo, p. 102)

Mariola becomes a mask for their ego-ideal; she represents the most desireable characteristics which they can imagine. Their stylization goes beyond mere idealization, however, as they construct a whole cosmogony for Mariola. Subordinate to her utopistic reality is the world of her enemies, the "cuecos" and the "hombres-hombres." The children's goddess, however, has been idealized out of the world of humans and they find it necessary to apotheosize her. Through a sacrificial rite which resembles many of the myths of primitive societies and Western culture, even the Christian myth, they immolate Mariola so that she can become resurrected, immortal and deified. In their elaborate sacrificial cortège doña Chepa leads the way to the second story balcony swinging a censer as the three grandsons bear a pillow with flowers on it symbolizing Mariola and the two granddaughters follow lamenting and singing hymns. The procession moves slowly and majestically; the children are dressed in "tirones de terciopllo, con cortinas drapeadas como peplos, con palos que son alabardas, plumas que son penachos, ramas que son guirnaldas, cartones que son sables." (Este domingo, p. 81) The sacrifice is

accomplished by throwing the pillow over the balcony. They plan to resurrect their heroine the next weekend at their grandmother's house. The sacrifice of Mariola, however, foreshadows the tragedy which befalls Chepa later that evening in the slums. Sundays at their grandmother's house have come to an end and their games are left unfinished; the children are unable to realize their weltanschuung. The lack of a resolution to the continuing life of their deity is a commentary on the actuality of resurrection myths. The unfulfilled resurrection of Mariola, notwithstanding the children's faith in and love for her, parallels man's notions of life after death.

The construction of universal myth is an effort by man's reason and fantasy to give order to the universe and purpose to man's existence. It is a mask to hide the terror which man feels when confronted with the overwhelming enigmas of his existence and the nothingness which follows life. The grandchildren, who have been deliberately shielded from the myths of Western civilization by their liberal parents, find pleasure and security in the Mariola myth which they create.

TRAVESTY

Travesty is a grotesque imitation of what society accepts as normal in the real world. Etymologically it means to portray something in its opposite dress; thus the real world is masked through a grotesque or burlesque inversion of reality. Travesty is the reality of insanity which exhibits unexpected and aberrant relationships. It is one of the frequently recurring masks in Donoso's fiction.

The coronation of misiá Elisita is a mockery of the Catholic canonization of a saint. "Ya ves, dime si no merezco corona de santa," (Coronación, p. 150) misiá Elisita cries. She believes that she is the only person free of immorality yet her abusive, supercilious piety belies her own hidden guilt and insecurity. On her birthday she waits all day for visits from friends. When it is evident that none have remembered her, Rosario and Lourdes, her faithful maids, organize a birthday party which combines a bacchanalia and a canonization. They devise a crown for her head and force a scepter into the grasp of her aged fingers. By forcing open her mouth they attempt to revive her with the alcoholic drink which they have prepared for the occasion. Bearing her gifts "como los mercaderes orientales de las leyendas," (Coronación, p. 201) singing and dancing, the drunken maids celebrate her coronation by showering her with rose petals. Sitting under a bright light in the dark house "la luz hizo incorpórea la figura de misiá Elisa Grey de Abalos, aislándola como en un nicho rodeado de flores en medio de la oscuridad de la habitación." (Coronación, p. 200)

The coronation has a sequel in El obsceno pájaro de la noche when the old women worship the madonna and her miraculous child. Iris Mateluna, a lascivious, preadolescent orphan, is transformed by the old witches of the Casa de la Encarnación into a sacrilegious imitation of the Virgin Mary and the deformed el Mudito is placed on her lap as the Holy Child; together they are worshipped in the execrated chapel of the old asylum.

The black nativity in the Casa is like the gathering of a witches coven to celebrate mysterious rites honoring the Arch Fiend; it is the

observance of the witches sabbath, walpurgisnacht,[1] in that it confuses the religious with the heathen, the holy with the heretical. Brígida was like a saint for the inhabitants of the Casa and she held great influence over the psychotic minds of the old inmates. It was Brígida who initiated belief in the miraculous pregnancy of Iris Mateluna and gathered seven of the old women into a secret group to prepare for the appearance of their redeemer. Though Brígida dies before the birth of the child, the beatas continue to expand the weird doctrines of their redemption and eternal life in the Casa. Their homage to Iris and Humberto is a heretical blending of pagan fertility rites and devil worship with Christian dogma. The fanatic old women who profess to be beatas are more like witches.

La Casa de Ejercicios Espirituales de la Chimba was once a retreat for religious persons wishing to consecrate themselves to God. It has been transformed into a place of supernatural, evil exericses and heathen practices which travesty the rites of legitimate religion. Don Clemente, Jerónimo's uncle, goes insane in his old age and is sent to the Casa. His religious dedication was a mask hiding sexual conflicts which are revealed when his superego loses control and the insane man's impulses are manifested. He becomes aggressive and combative; he strips and runs naked through the cloisters of the old asylum attacking everything with his cane, a phallic symbol which he uses vigorously to

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[1] Walpurgisnacht, the night of April 30, in German tradition, is the witches sabbath. On this night witches gather in the Harz Mountains to do homage to the Devil. It originated in the popular confusion of an eighth century Anglo Saxon saint, Walpurga, who spent her life as a missionary among the Germans, with a local fertility god, Waldburg; thus the walpurgisnacht is associated with the renewal rites of May Day. See Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. by James Hastings (12 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, n.d.), IV, 331, 335.

compensate for many years of celibacy. Ironically, the former priest enters the chapel profaning it with his nakedness. The "viejas enloquecidas" always fear being accosted by his ghost in the dark corridors of the house; in order to exorcise his ghost they have been heard

> rezando más y más rosarios porque aseguran que con sus rosarios conseguirán vestir el anima del pobre don Clemente, a quien Dios tiene condenado a rondar por la Casa desnudo en castigo por haberlas escandalizado con la exhibición de sus vergüenzas y que Dios solo perdonará al clérigo cuando tantas, tantas viejas hayan rezado tantos, tantos rosarios, que El, en su Misericordia consienta en ir devolviéndole poco a poco su indumentaria, para que así pueda entrar vestido en el Reino de los Cielos. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 58)

The inmates of the Casa make distorted statues of saints for the vacated chapel and in doing so depict the reality of la Chimba. They find fragments of plaster of paris idols in a trash heap from which they begin to "armar seres, organizar identidades arbitrarias al pegar trozos con más o menos acierto," and they believe that "puede resultar un santo de verdad con estos pedazos que vamos pegando." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 327) The distorted, psychotic reality of the inmates of the Casa is reflected in the statues which are montages of fragments and are a travesty of Catholic idols.

> --Miren, este santito me resultó precioso.
> --Un poco raro, las piernas tan cortas...
> --Y la cabeza tan grande...
> --No importa, de ser santo, es santo porque lo hice con pedazos de santo. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 328)

Puzzling what to call the new statue, el Mudito canonizes a new saint by painting the name Santa Brígida, la primera, on the pedestal. El Mudito, the architect of the monstrous world, canonizes another statue San Jerónimo and searches for the right hue of blue for the aristocrat's

eyes which he envies so much. He also canonizes a statue with a libidinous gaze Santa Peta Ponce; then he makes a San Doctor Azula. The penates of the Casa, however, are subordinate to the patron saint, la Beata Inés de Azcoitía, just as its male counterpart, Apollo, modeled on Boy Azcoitía, dominates la Rinconada.

El Mudito is also the designer of another world which is a travesty of normal reality: the monster world of la Rinconada. Originally it is the large Azcoitía family estate, a very aristocratic dwelling which Jerónimo has inherited from a long line of illustrious ancestors. When la Rinconada is converted into a new world for Boy, Jerónimo moves all vestiges of a normal world out of the estate. All forms are altered so that they appear differently from those in nature. Shrubs, trees, gardens and all other objects which portray Jerónimo's reality are erradicated. He removes furniture, books, pictures--everything that refers to the outside world. Statues are made to conform to this new, oneiric world inhabited by monsters. Doors and windows are sealed. Walls and hedges form endless, labyrinthine passages.

> La mansión quedó convertida en una cáscara hueca y sellada compuesta de una serie de estancias despobladas, de corredores y pasadizos, en un limbo de muros abierto sólo hacia el interior de los patios de donde ordenó arrancar los clásicos naranjos de frutos de oro, las buganvileas, las hortensias azules, las hileras de lirios, reemplazándolos por por matorrales podados en estrictas formas geométricas que disfrazaran su exuberancia natural. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 230)

Don Jerónimo believes that his son can still appreciate elegance in this world of monsters. The opposite of beauty, he believes, is not grotesque ugliness but monstrosity. "Una cosa es la fealdad. Pero otra cosa muy distinta, con alcance semejante pero invertido al alcance de la belleza, es la monstruosidad." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 231)

A statue of Apollo, the ultimate in masculine beauty, is modeled on Boy's features. Jerónimo hopes that as Boy grows he will find ideal feminine beauty in the statue of Diana at the head of a rectangular font. She is as beautiful and fine as in the classical interpretation though she is depicted with a hunched back, twisted legs, an acromegalic jaw, and a full moon, symbolic of her patron planet, on her wrinkled forehead. The Venus set in a cave of ivy is pockmarked and terribly deformed by cellulitis.

The Azcoitía family not only dominates society in the normal world but also in the two inverted realities which are travesties of it. Boy Azcoitía occupies his rightful place as the only aristocratic monster in la Rinconada and the various Inés de Azcoitías receive the same deference in la Casa de Ejercicios Espirituales. In fact, the two abnormal worlds are the same: "Esta Casa es la Rinconada de antes, de ahora, de después." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 263) Both are labyrinthine, hermetically enclosed spaces which, like the imbunche and other closed spaces in Donoso's fiction, represent an end, a terminal state of life in which time stands still. They are like the womb in that they terminate a stage of existence while implying a metamorphosis into a new life.

Perhaps the strongest sanctions of Western culture relate to sexual roles and sexual behavior. The sexual identity is the most basic identity of the human individual, consequently, deviation from acceptable sexual behavior has traumatic effects on the individual's personality. Inversions of sexual patterns are common forms of travesty. Donoso's characters frequently manifest homosexual attractions and one of them, la Manuela, makes a travesty of sexual norms by flaunting his homosexuality

and transvestism. Sexual forms of travesty imply a rebellion of unconscious impulses and instincts against the restrictiveness of society and a basic, sexual insecurity.

None of Donoso's male characters are paragons of virility. Male sexual inversions are suggested in the portrayal of most of his characters ranging from latent homosexual attractions to a mask of transvestism over a character's masculinity.

Ostensibly the most virile and normal of Donoso's men is Jerónimo. He is tall and well-proportioned and attracts female attention. Portrayed through the unreliable narration of el Mudito, however, he manifests a marked feeling of sexual inadequacy. Jerónimo is not sexually stimulated by normal sexuality but must have el Mudito as a voyeur. In the glades of the Rinconada estate he is conscious of the yellow dog, one of Humberto's identities, watching him make love to Inés. Jerónimo remarks: "Préstame tu envidia para ser potente." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 237) Jerónimo takes Humberto with him to witness his relations with prostitutes. Moreover,

> cuando él hacía el amor con la Violeta o con la Rosa o con la Hortensia o con la Lila bajo el beneplácito de mi mirada, yo no sólo estaba animándolo y poseyendo a través de él a la mujer que él poseía, sino que mi potencia lo penetraba a él, yo penetraba al macho viril, lo hacía mi maricón, obligándolo a aullar de placer en el abrazo de mi mirada aunque él creyera que su placer era otro. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 227)

El Mudito, the unreliable narrator, is undoubtedly describing his fantasies for he does not know Jerónimo. The fact that he imagines himself as the aggressive male and subjects Jerónimo to an inferior role is an absurd travesty of the normal difference between the two men's sexual roles.

> Castigaba a mi patrón transformándolo en humillado, mi desprecio crecía y lo desfiguraba, don Jerónimo ya no podía prescindir de ser el maricón de mi mirada que lo iba envileciendo hasta que nada salvo mi penetración lo dejaba satisfecho. (Obsceno pájaro, p. 227)

The fact that el Mudito obsessively imagines himself as aggressively masculine shows the strong teachings of the socialization process: society makes normal sexuality absolutely masculine. The travesty of Humberto's and Jerónimo's sexual portrayal shows that sexuality and sexual roles are not absolute but relative. Humberto fantasizes that he exchanges his inferior sexuality for Jerónimo's masculinity by giving the aristocrat the fertility which he lacks to beget a son. El Mudito's narration reveals more about his personality than Jerónimo's. He compensates for the insecurity of his sexual identity--his fantasies are a mask which hides the fear that he is sexually passive and female. His feminine nature manifests itself again when he assumes the role of an old woman in the Casa.

The childhood which Humberto sketches shows that his confused sexual identity derives, in part, from the ambiguous role which he learned from his father; Humberto views his father's tender, gentle behavior as a latent insecurity. His emotional preaching imbues Humberto with an obsession to gain a firm identity, "me lo exigía sin exigírmelo, con la vehemencia de su mano tierna pero pudorosa que quería tocar la mía sin atreverse a hacerlo." (Obsceno pájaro, p. 99) As a child Humberto felt only disdain for his mother and attraction for his father.

Andrés Abalos' masculine identity is diminished by a neurotic sense of guilt which his grandmother instilled in him in his youth. One episode from Coronación illustrates Andrés' pathetic sexual conflict.

Taking an evening stroll he comes upon two burly truck drivers talking about their machines, which possess almost feminine attributes for these manly laborers. The men represent in Andrés' mind all of the characteristics of the male which he feels that he lacks: they are robust, free, and aggressive. "Andrés no pudo resistirse a acercárseles, a decirles cualquiera cosa para compartir algo siquiera de esa vitalidad a la que no tenía entrada." (Coronación, p. 134) For a moment Andrés even contemplates abandoning his life and attempting to join them but he can only bring himself to ask them for a match.

Many of the male characters in Donoso's novels do not manifest complete inversion in their sexual roles so much as an inversion in what society establishes as a normal relationship with their wives. Donoso's fiction suggests that the lack of aggressiveness on the part of the male leads to a marriage relationship in which the woman becomes protective and dominant. In Coronación Andrés visits Donaldo and Tenchita, owners of an antique shop where Andrés buys rare canes for his collection. Donaldo is fastidious, artistic and submissive while Tenchita is motherly, ebulient and sensual. Their clearly inverted roles flaunt an oedipal relationship which is a travesty of normal husband and wife roles.

> Donaldo ... era como un hijo único muy delicado y muy querido, y el anticuario trataba a su mujer como a una madre, una madre a la que es preciso mimar y obedecer. Era una relación incestuosa que a ambos hacía muy felices. (Coronación, p. 100)

This travesty of normal marriage relationships shows that persons need not adhere to society's traditional roles in order to be happy; Donaldo and Tenchita's marriage is the only happy one in Donoso's fiction.

The unhappiness of other marriages, such as Alvaro and Chepa's, Carlos and Adriana's, Jerónimo and Inés', is the result of the couple's inability to live the roles which society has dictated as normal.

The title of Donoso's novel, El lugar sin límites, is taken from Marlow's Dr. Faustus and refers to hell as a place without limits; the implication is that life is hell and all transformations are possible in life. "El lugar sin límites es ese espacio de conversiones, de transformaciones y disfrazamientos."[1] In its numerous inversions the novel "continúa la tradición mítica del 'mundo al revés', que practicaron con asiduidad los surrealistas."[2]

La Manuela, the culmination of the inversions previously suggested in the male characters of Coronación and Este domingo, is completely confused by the conflicts of his sexual identity. His conflicts derive from his struggles with society's stringent sexual roles. Rather than conform to an exclusive sexual identity, he rebels against society by manifesting complete sexual relativity in his life; he is able to manifest the extremes of sexual roles from the manly to the feminine. Though he has adopted a permanent mask as a transvestite homosexual, in moments of crisis he manifests normal masculine reactions.

His identity problem derives from the guilt and trauma of a childhood experience in which he was expelled from primary school for submitting to a sexual relationship with a classmate. The guilt and anger which Manuel experiences cause him to rebel against society by

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[1]Severo Sarduy, "Escritura/Travestismo," Mundo Nuevo, No. 20 (February, 1968), p. 73.

[2]Ibid., p. 72.

exhibiting abnormal behavior. His epithet, "la Manuela," is part of his transvestite mask; it combines his given name, Manuela González Astica, with his dress: he dances in brothels "vestida de manola." In the first five chapters of the novel his identity is deliberately confused; the reader assumes that the hero dressed in a bright red dress is a woman. The adjectives, nouns and articles confirm his feminine identity. After the reader has formed a female image of la Manuela it is revealed that he is a transvestite.

There appears to be no physical reason for his sexual insecurity. When other, normal males see him nude they are astounded at his masculinity.

> --¡Qué burro...!
> --Mira que está bien armado...
> --Psstt, si éste no parece maricón.
> --Que no te vean las mujeres, que se van a enamorar.[1]

Probably as a result of aberrant childhood experiences and negative role reinforcement, as well as his gentle, artistic temperament, la Manuela finds security in his female role. He feels at ease with women and expresses a "fingida pasión" (Lugar sin límites, p. 17) for males. He refers to himself as a "vieja verde" (Lugar sin límites, p. 62) and as a "chiquilla" (Lugar sin límites, p. 128) like his daughter, Japonesita. He encourages his frigid daughter to exert herself in the female role as he had to do: "que aprenda a ser mujer a la fuerza como aprendió una." (Lugar sin límites, p. 111) When la Japonesita insists on calling him father he denies his masculine role and claims to be her mother: "--Claro, soy tu mamá." (Lugar sin límites, p. 129)

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[1]José Donoso, El lugar sin límites, (Mesico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1966), p. 80. Henceforth page numbers for quotations from this novel will be given in the text.

Complicating his inversion, la Manuela is persuaded to make love to the manager of the brothel, la Japonesa, while the owner, don Alejo Cruz, who is the local land baron and his associates watch the cuadro plástico. On a bet in which she wins the establishment from don Alejo, la Japonesa succeeds in stimulating and seducing la Manuela. The old prostitute is surprised to experience pleasure with the effeminate la Manuela. She awakens his masculinity for a moment and he, without wanting, succeeds in satisfying her.

> Y algo sucedía mientras ella me decía sí, mijita, yo te estoy haciendo gozar porque yo soy la macha y tú la hembra, te quiero porque eres todo, y siento el calor de ella que me engulle, a mí, a un yo que no existe... y ella me dice al oído, como entre sueños: mijita, mijito. (Lugar sin límites, p. 109)

La Manuela represses the male identity which wants to manifest itself, the "un yo que no existe" which wants to destroy his female mask. "Lo que la Manuela muestra es la coexistencia, en un solo cuerpo, de significantes masculinos y femeninos: la tensión, la repulsión, el antagonismo que entre ellos se crea."[1]

In moments of crisis la Manuela's true, male nature manifests itself and the female mask is removed.

> La máscara nos hace creer que hay una profundidad, pero lo que ésta enmascara es ella misma: la máscara simula la disimulación para disimular que no es más que simulación.[2]

When others accept him in his adopted female role he is comfortable. When other reject his mask and treat him as a male, la Manuela's

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[1] Ibid., p. 74.

[2] Ibid.

fear awakens his masculine identity and he reacts to defend himself.

> Parada en el barro de la calzada mientras Octavio la paralizaba retorciéndole el brazo, la Manuela despertó. No era la Manuela. Era él, Manuel González Astica. Y porque era él iban a hacerle daño y Manuel González Astica sintió terror. (Lugar sin límites, p. 130)

The men who threaten la Manuela are Pancho Vega and his brother-in-law, Octavio. Pancho feels a strong ambivalence toward la Manuela--he simultaneously experiences obsessive attraction and hatred. Vega was reared in Estación el Olivo by don Alejo Cruz, who is probably his father, and in his childhood he was coerced to play with don Alejo's daughter, la Moniquita. When other children saw him playing girl's games they teased him: "--Marica, marica, jugando a las muñecas como las mujeres." (Lugar sin límites, p. 97) Since his childhood Pancho has been submissive to don Alejo. Contact with don Alejo suggests a sexual relationship in Pancho's mind.

> Te pillé chiquillo de mierda. Y su mano me toma de aquí, del cuello, y yo me agarro de su manta pataleando, él tan grande yo tan mínimo mirándolo para arriba como a un acantilado. Su manta un poco resbalosa y muy caliente porque es de vicuña. Y él me arrastra por los matorrales y yo me prendo a su manta porque es tan suave y tan caliente. (Lugar sin límites, p. 97)

As an adult, when Pancho and Octavio awaken don Alejo late at night to settle the debt on Pancho's truck, Vega is unable to face don Alejo. He asks his brother-in-law to transact the business "porque él no se va a dejar montar por don Alejo, como me monta a mí." (Lugar sin límites, p. 96)

Pancho tolerates la Manuela's kisses and other sexual overtures until Octavio, a more normal male, accuses him of his attraction for the homosexual.

--Ya pues, compadre, no sea maricón usted también...
Pancho soltó también a la Manuela.
--Si no hice nada...
--No me vengas con cuestiones, yo vi...
Pancho tuvo miedo. (Lugar sin límites, p. 129)

Pancho attempts to recover his lost esteem and he attempts to deny his attraction for la Manuela by injuring him. La Manuela escapes down an embankment and hides from them in the darkness. They find him, however, and attack him "como hambrientos."

> Octavio, o quizás fuera Pancho el primero, azotándolo con los puños...tal vez no fueran ellos sino otros hombres que penetraron la mora y lo encontraron y se lanzaron sobre él y lo patearon y le pegaron y lo retorcieron, jadeando sobre él, los cuerpos calientes retorciéndose sobre la Manuela que ya no podía ni gritar, los cuerpos pesados, rígidos, los tres una sola masa viscosa retorciéndose como un animal fantástico de tres cabezas y múltiples extremidades heridas e hirientes, unidos los tres por el vómito y el calor y el dolor allí en el pasto, buscando ... bocas calientes, manos calientes, cuerpos babientos y duros hiriendo el suyo. (Lugar sin límites, pp. 132-133)

Octavio, who has been virile and aggressive throughout the novel, takes part in the sadistic orgy which ends in the death of la Manuela. Though he is one of Donoso's most masculine characters, even Octavio manifests transsexual ambivalence.

La Manuela's daughter is the owner and manager of the brothel in Estación el Olivo, yet, ironically, she is a frigid eighteen year old girl who has not yet entered womanhood. This is a curious inversion of what one would customarily find in a brothel under real circumstances. Sarduy points out the travesty in this situation:

> Otra inversión se sitúa en el plano de las funciones sociales: la matrona del burdel es virgen, y, como para subrayar que en este mundo invertido la única attracción posible es la que ejercen los disfraces, nadie la desea.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 73.

La Japonesita is a virgin and is not at all inclined to dedicate herself to the type of life which goes on in her house.

The girl manifests conflicting personality tendencies, which, like her father's psychological problems stem from insecurity in her sexual identity. She vacilates between an inclination to accept her destiny and become a prostitute in the brothel which she has inherited from her mother, la Japonesa Grande, and her father, la Manuela, or to escape the sordid environment by getting married and having children. Ironically, she is physically incapable of either role since she has not yet entered puberty; she is neither attractive to the men who frequent the house nor is she capable of becoming a mother.

La Japonesita decides to accept Pancho Vega in order to resolve the inner conflicts of her personality--to see if she is capable of a relationship with a man. "Sí, sí, para saber quién eres, Japonesita, ahora lo sabrás y esa mano y ese calor de su cuerpo pesado y entonces, aunque él se vaya, quedará algo siquiera de esta noche..." (Lugar sin límites, p. 121)

> La Japonesita, en cambio, era pura ambigüedad. ... Empezaba a decir que le gustaría casarse. Y tener hijos. ¡Hijos! Pero si con sus dieciocho años bien cumplidos ni la regla le llegaba todavía. Era un fenómeno. Y después decía que no. Que no quería que la anduvieran mandoneando. Que ya que era dueña de casa de putas mejor sería que ella también fuera puta. Pero la tocaba un hombre y salía corriendo. (Lugar sin límites, p. 25)

The novel carries inversion to its limits to reveal the falsity and absurd monstrosity of the façades of behavior and identity adopted in normal reality. The travesty suggests that normal reality is an exterior which masks the underlying ambiguity and relativity of existence.

Donoso's characters wear masks as façades for several reasons: as a protection from the existentialist insecurities of life; as a representation of their role in society; as a momentary, unified identity to hide the many, contradictory fragments of their personalities. Whereas lower-class characters have no identity in society, those in the upper-class find it oppressive to conform to their prescribed persona and the rigid traditions which are theirs by birth.

> Against the rigidities of society, there is an everpresent oceanic sense in Donoso into which his heroes plunge. These pathetic and at times comic figures are pilgrims of their own brand of truth, vague searchers for a freer self and society, constantly at odds with the reality of their own spiritual suffocation. A groping for a sense of transcendence, a whole process that inevitably entails the encounter with the monster that is within them, engendered out of the mathematical rigidities with which societies function in apparent order.[1]

In Donoso's fiction grotesque alterations are made of normal behavior and the patterns of life sanctioned by society. Through travesty Donoso places a mask of surrealism on the normal world.

> De nuevo es mi gran obsesión con la no-unidad de la personalidad humana. ¿Por qué me interesan tanto los disfraces? ¿Por qué me interesan los travesti? ¿Por qué me interesa en Coronación la locura de la señora? ¿Por qué en Este domingo los disfraces tienen un lugar tan importante? Es porque estas son maneras de deshacer la unidad del ser humano. Deshacer la unidad psicológica, ese mito horrible que nos hemos inventado y que hoy en día ya se está viendo que no vale siquiera la pena ... hablar de él.[2]

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[1]Alexander Coleman, "Some Thoughts on Donoso's Traditionalism," Studies in Short Fiction, VIII (Winter, 1971), p. 155.

[2]Rodríguez Monegal, "La novela como happening," p. 525.

In moments of crisis Donoso's characters come into conflict with society by seeking expression for their instincts and impulses; the mask which has represented the whole person, is removed and the chaotic, relative, multifarious nature of the inner personality is revealed.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Character portrayal in José Donoso's fiction illustrates new understanding of man's psychology gained in the twentieth century, especially the fragmentary nature of the personality, the relativity of man's perception of reality as a product of the unconscious, and the effects of the individual's struggles against the rigidities of societal canons. Whereas many contemporary novelists continue to make traditional portrayals of characters as discrete and unified individuals, and other, more experimental novelists--especially those of France and America--react against the psychological penetration of the stream-of-consciousness masters by attempting to eliminate human psychology from their pages, José Donoso's fiction is representative of powerful and complex psychological portrayals of characters in post mid-twentieth century fiction in Latin America.

Donoso's exploration of the human personality through fragmentation applies to fiction the understanding of man's psychology advanced in the twentieth century by Freud and Jung and their followers. Modern studies in human psychology have shown that the personality is composed of many complexes; although individuals tend to think of themselves as

discrete and indivisible unities, one's personality is composed of differing nuances of identity. Fragmentation, as seen in Donoso's fiction, is the portrayal of the personality broken into its numerous identities, the portrayal of the many and contradictory aspects of personality which contribute to the impression of psychological individuality. Working with those individuals whom he calls marginal characters, those whose uninhibited personalities cause them to exist on the perimeter of society, Donoso shows that when the ego complex is divested of its habitual supremacy it is replaced by other complexes which gain autonomy and act as a representation of the character who narrates from these shifting points of view. The character, as in the case of el Mudito in El obsceno pájaro de la noche, may have an unlimited number of fluctuating identities yet seen in composite his personality gives an integrated impression like a mosaic which has a configuration despite the numerous, discrete fragments which compose it.

Mature adults, society's base of support, are noticeably absent in Donoso's work. The novelist is not interested in these people who stifle their personality expression by inhibiting it behind the social masks of prescribed behavior. His characters are from the marginal states of humanity--old age, youth, and the emotionally unstable--where psychology fluctuates freely and manifests the different, even conflicting, facets of the personality. These are anarchical states in which the personality exhibits itself in spite of pressure to conform to social convention.

Donoso's marginal characters are abused and neglected by those who keep the established society rigidly functioning. Wherever children

appear in Donoso's fiction they are ignored, not understood; they are acutely aware of their lack of importance. They spend their time observing life passing around them and they substitute an autistic world of fantasy for the lonesomeness of their existence.

Donoso's men are insecure in their sexual identity. Usually they live under the wing of a domineering woman who controls them and puts order into their lives. Many of his characters, male and female, are beset by fear and guilt related to their sexual identity. They become pathetic old people whose repressed fear, guilt, frustrations and instincts overcome them filling their lives with grotesque and rebellious identities; their anarchical personalities mock the society in which they had once functioned normally when the superego complex was in balance with the powerful contents of the unconscious.

Several of Donoso's characters exist on the margin of society because they manifest behavior which the collectivity considers strange. They are neurotics, schizophrenics and psychotics whose identities have become possessed by the aggressive and multitudinous fragments of their chaotic personalities.

Donoso's characters show that the schizophrenic, the dreamer and the normal man's unconscious have a common reality which is insanity; they do not see themselves as discrete entities but in montage with other characters, forming, perhaps, an archetype; they find spiritual reinforcement in a kindred animal spirit, their nagual; a doppelgänger identity may emerge from their personality and threaten them; or they may be in full union with the transpersonal powers of the universe as is evident throughout El obsceno pájaro de la noche. The individual is not separate

and discrete but in full participation with the world. Reality becomes a surrealistic combination of the psychic and physical in which all things are relative, mutable and in unity. Through his very free, automatic writing which taps the creative powers of the unconscious, the artist portrays these very complicated relationships and identities; Donoso's writing is chaotic, free, contradictory and relative--a "happening"--rather than something which is cogitative.

The individual in Donoso's fiction is never free from his relationship with the collectivity. A perpetual struggle occurs in Donoso's novels between individuals seeking freedom of personality expression and the collective controls which oppress their behavior. Donoso's characters are also aware, however, that they cannot remove their ego mask and reveal the chaos of their inner personality; they adopt masks as representations for their personality and as a protective façade for those fragments which must remain hidden. Donoso's upper-class individuals find themselves trapped in the very rigid <u>persona</u> which traditions in their society have prescribed for them. When the distance between the exterior <u>persona</u> and the inner impulses becomes too great to be harmonized by the ego, the ego complex may be completely divested of its supremacy and other complexes may gain autonomy and take control of the personality leading to a form of insanity. By portraying roles and behavior through travesty, that is, in a manner which is aberrant, grotesque and opposite to that which one would expect to find in normal reality, Donoso shows that society's roles and accepted behavior are only masks which give a semblance of form and order to the relativity of existence.

The result of Donoso's character portrayal is the destruction of the psychological unity of the individual. El Mudito, Inés Azcoitía, Peta Ponce, Anselmo, misiá Elisita and numerous other characters attest that the exterior semblance of unity is nothing but a mask, an optical illusion created by physical reality, an erroneous impression which man has held for centuries. Donoso's fiction is an exploration of man's personality through the destruction of the psychological unity in order to examine the numerous inner fragments which, when viewed as a whole, give an impression of unity to the personality. "No creo en la unidad de la persona humana. ... Yo al describir a un personaje lo desintegro."[1]

Writing on modern art and its relationship to the creative unconscious, Erich Neumann says that "where there is new knowledge of man, new art will be discovered, and the eternal in the art of the past will be discovered afresh."[2] Some of the greatest advances of modern thought have dealt with the last great frontier about which so little is still known: the human psyche. Rejecting the superficial notions of man in the traditional novel Donoso's fiction offers a new dimension in the portrayal of man.

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[1]García Rico, "Entrevista con José Donoso," p. 72.

[2]Neumann, Art and the Creative Unconscious, p. 141.

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