

A QUESTION OF GENRE: DISCOURSE AND SOCIAL CRITICISM IN CRISTINA PACHECO'S *SOPITA DE FIDEO* AND *LA RUEDA DE LA FORTUNA*

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One of the consequences of Mexico's economic crisis, which began in the early 1980s, is that it helped to create a new form of Mexican literature whose influence can be observed well into the 1990s. Many of these narratives have a testimonial character that utilizes the realist configuration of the 1970s and mechanisms of journalism that describe the hardships experienced by their subjects. This essay evaluates Cristina Pacheco's use of the crossover genre of literary journalism through a reading of *Sopita de fideo* (1984) and *La rueda de la fortuna* (1993). Pacheco's narrative technique and the personal portraits she creates link individual imagination with social commentary and criticism thus privileging the reader with a perspective on working class Mexican society rarely seen by outsiders.

Una de las consecuencias de la crisis económica mexicana, que empezó al principio de la década de 1980, es que facilitó la creación de una nueva forma de literatura mexicana cuya influencia puede observarse a lo largo de la década de 1990. Muchas de estas narrativas tienen características testimoniales que utilizan la configuración realista de la década de 1970 y mecanismos del periodismo que describen las dificultades experimentadas por sus sujetos. Este ensayo investiga la estética de los textos de cruce del periodismo literario, por parte de Cristina Pacheco, a través de una lectura de *Sopita de fideo* (1984) y *La rueda de la fortuna* (1993). La técnica narrativa y los retratos personales, presentados por Pacheco, sirven para vincular la imaginación individual y la crítica social de manera que el lector goza del extraordinario privilegio de una perspectiva personal sobre la clase trabajadora mexicana.

A writer's use of genre may have both sociocultural and systemic dimensions. Recent interest has focused on rhetorical studies that deal with the social dynamics and constitution of "nonliterary" forms of writing. Friedrich Schlegel postulated that "without division, creation does not take place; and creation is the quintessence of art... Of most importance are the definite purpose and separation through which alone the work of art receives form and becomes complete in itself" (77). This essay evaluates Cristina Pacheco's use of the crossover genre of literary journalism through a reading of *Sopita de fideo* (1984) and *La rueda de la fortuna* (1993). This form of writing takes

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