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THE UNDERSIDE OF POWER: READING THE FANTASTIC IN THE
WORKS OF THE CHILEAN WRITER JOSE DONOSO

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the fantastic in the work of the Chilean author José Donoso (1924-1996). My thesis is that Donoso's invocation of the fantastic in these narratives, subverts social constructs and power structures, specifically those associated with identity and sexuality. Via textual analysis, I argue that narratives such as "Santelices" (1956), *El obsceno pájaro de la noche* (1970), *El jardín de al lado* (1981), *Naturaleza muerta con cachimba* (1990), *El lugar sin límites* (1971), and *Lagartija sin cola* (2007) invite us to rethink how we see ourselves as we interact with his characters, often portrayed as tormented souls in hellish spaces. I am interested in the manifestations of power in Donoso's works with emphasis on those forms which may compel us to reexamine our own identities and world views or to rethink Donoso's life experience as an author who survived self-imposed exile and life far from his beloved home of Chile. I maintain that Donoso's characters and use of the fantastic decenter individual and collective discourse with regard to identity, sexuality, gender roles, and other constructs created principally through language and culture.