

empleo de esas tendencias en una manera única. De este modo anticipó en "Claror lunar" el aspecto surrealista del vanguardismo a la vez que expresó el tema del conflicto en su ser interior.

Notas

¹ "Claror lunar" en *Alma y corazón: antología de las poetisas hispanoamericanas*. C.R. Perricone, ed. (Miami: Ed. Universal, 1977) 64. Todas las referencias al poema reproducido abajo están tomadas de esta antología:

Lirios, lirios, más lirios..., llueven lirios...
 La noche es blanca como la ilusión
 y flota la dulzura del perdón
 sobre el llanto de todos los martirios.
 Hay una vaga claridad de cirios...
 La luna es una hostia en comunión
 y el alma se recoge con unción
 castigada por todos los delirios.
 Y es bajo el claro de la luna suave
 cuando el poeta que medita sabe
 las tristezas enormes de Pierrot.
 Y cuando le asesina la agonía
 de las nostalgias blancas de María
 y las nostalgias rojas de Margot.

² Véase, por favor, Conrado Nalé Roxlo y Mabel Márbol, *Genio y figura de Alfonsina Stornia* (Buenos Aires: Ed. Universitaria, 1964) para una discusión de la vida de la poetisa.

³ Además de *La inquietud del rosal*, sus obras incluyen *El dulce daño* (1918), *Irremediabilmente* (1919), *Langüidez* (1920), *Ocre* (1925), *Poemas de amor* (1926), *Mundo de siete pozos* (1934), *Mascarilla y trébol* (1938), póstuma. Una notable excepción en *La inquietud del rosal*, la cual señala el camino feminista que seguirá después, es "Yo tengo un hijo, fruto de un amor sin ley..."

⁴ Se cree que el padre de su hijo natural tenía suficientes años para ser padre de la poetisa misma.

⁵ Pierrot se originó en la comedia del arte italiana llegando a ser personaje en el teatro francés del siglo XIX en el que fue amante melancólico de la luna y desairado galanteador de Colombina. J.A. Pérez-Rioja, *Diccionario de símbolos y mitos* (Madrid: Ed. Tecnos, 1980 reimp.) 352.

⁶ Pérez-Rioja 288-89. Me refiero al paralelismo entre Alfonsina en su juventud y Margarita ("Gretchen" del Fausto). Las diferencias ocurren después en la reacción: Margarita se vuelve loca y comete un infanticidio; Alfonsina, por supuesto, cría a su niño Alfonso.

(De)ciphering Reality in "Los extraños objetos voladores"

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"La hemos ahuecado para eso. Para comprobar su ausencia."

Peri Rossi, *El libro de mis primos*

"Los extraños objetos voladores," the first story in Cristina Peri Rossi's collection, *Los museos abandonados*, opens with a scene in which the equivocations of vision provide access to the realm of the fantastic. "Ven a ver lo que yo veo," calls the old man, and his wife obediently looks up through the dusty air of a six-month drought: "¿Para qué quieres que mire el pájaro?" Her husband insists that she look more closely, "No es un pájaro. Otra vez te equivocaste. No ves bien. Va a haber el día que no verás nada". (11). The woman, tired of the unending sameness of the drought-afflicted country, tired of the importunities of her husband, tired of the eternal cycle of her round of household chores, shades her eyes and looks up into the sky again:

Así se veía mejor.

Ella nunca había visto algo de eso en el aire.

—Fíjate bien, mujer.

Ella nunca había visto algo de eso en el aire. (15)

The aged couple of peasant farmers have no name for the strange object/animal in the sky. It is not a bird, yet it hovers bird-like over their house, a vaguely threatening yet strangely comfortable presence. Having no name to put to it, they continue to refer to it as "el pájaro" and the reader of the story, unsure whether to accept or reject the conclusions drawn from such a problematic, equivocal sighting, will still recognize the form of that object—an "extraño objeto volador," an Unidentified Flying Object.

Whether the reader accepts the existence of UFOs or not is hardly the point. Since our perceptions of the story are filtered through the consciousness and the admittedly inadequate eyesight of the old couple, even the firmest believer in extra-terrestrials must experience a moment of uncertainty as to the validity of the evidence even as she is swept into the decorum of the story. It is this uncertainty, this hesitation before a phenomenon that can be neither accepted nor rejected that provides, for Todorov, the central condition of the genre he defines as the Fantastic (23). The hesitation involved in the recognition of an uncanny object effects, thus, a mediation between the world of the reader and the world of the characters whose problematic sighting allows the eruption of this bird-no-bird into their reality as, at least, a theoretical possibility. Furthermore, the hesitation between reader and character is accompanied by a second hesitation, between character and text focussing on the problem of inaccurate vision highlighted by the opening lines of the story. This distinction is a crucial one in Peri Rossi's text, for the "nunca visto," the bird which is not a bird, becomes a catalyst in the world of the old couple, provoking other sight disorders. Its spectral or fantastic existence, hesitating between the unknown and the unseen, threatens the existence of other, traditionally less problematic objects. This uncanny bird then, mediates reality and the unreal; by its scarcely discernible silent presence high in the sky it signals the boundaries of the world of the peasants, and further, by its insidious effects on this "real" world points to the limits of reality, to its ambivalences and ambiguities.

If the hesitation between two versions of reality did not exist, the fantastic would, as Todorov suggests, collapse into another genre (25)—in this case, into science fiction. In this story, the ambivalence is maintained; the UFO is both familiar (a bird) and completely alien ("nunca visto"). It represents not the collapse of two realities, but the maintenance of tension as reality is layered with its imaginative reconstruction—an uncanny presence in all the richness of meaning that Freud has given to the word "uncanny." Says Peri Rossi in an interview: "Yo no pienso que deba existir divorcio . . . entre realidad e imaginación, sino una coexistencia dialéctica. . ." (Deredita, 135). The strange object is both present in the phenomenal world as established by the text, yet it remains separate from and unassimilable to it; it is both an opaque artifact which cannot be submitted to interpretation and a metaphor with a distinct political and ideological context.¹ An insubstantial object which signifies nothing, which has no power or function of signification of itself, yet it still functions as a mediating link between past and present, between present and future defining destinies and subverting the phenomenal world from which it seems so distanced.

For the old couple, the bird appears practically as an objective correlative of the drought. Its presence hastens the process of desiccation and disappearance begun by the hot sun and the scouring dust. Familiar objects

become strange, transmuted, alien; notwithstanding the ritual movements of housekeeping, they already begin to take on a tentative appearance. A sheet of dust covers the furniture "como si todos los muebles de la casa se hubieran muerto y estuvieran esperando en sus cajones que alguien se acordara de velarlos" (12). Only the "as if" rescues the furniture from its precarious balance on the brink of oblivion, but already it has become, like the old cuckoo clock that only strikes at 4:10, a set of non-functional objects in a transmuted world. This subversion of the most banal objects of daily life is only briefly stayed from the onrush of transformation; for Lautaro, these common objects of daily use fade away from one moment to the next as he helplessly struggles to maintain a pretense of normal activity in an estranged world.

For María, the strange object provokes reminiscence on things already lost: "La vida era eso: ir buscando cosas que se han perdido y encontrarlas en lugares lejanos, cuando ya se ha dejado el aire por el agua, o el aire por la tumba. Hijos/ parientes, culpas, deberes, deudas, todo se iba buscando un día. . ." (17). Her function is to mediate two realities—inside and outside. Life and death, objects in process of transformation and objects that have achieved a final form—and her tired repetition of the phrase, "Había que vivir así, saliendo y entrando" (11) in numerous slight variations, provides the key to her existence. Comfortable with the processes of both life and death, with the ordinary metamorphoses of objects, she has no patience for the real or imagined infirmities and disorders of vision that afflict her husband: "¿Qué iba a tener el viejo? Ignorancia, eso era lo que tenía. O pereza" (13). So when María sees the strange bird, her reaction, unlike that of her husband who finds the unfamiliar object a threat to the stability of his familiar world, is to search for the lost connection "en el sótano de la memoria" where her thoughts and her memories of past persons and events "se iban embalsamando" (18). For María, then the object is uncanny in a different sense than for her husband. While for Lautaro, the bird-no-bird points forward to the emptying of the self in death, for María it points backwards, serves as a catalyst to bring back to life dead memories. The phantom bird is a fecundating presence stirring her old mind, her infertile womb to revivify "hijos, parientes, culpas". Her effort to find the missing correlative of the UFO leads her back into these other correlative events and persons, the history of herself and her family. María has instinctively re-enacted the drama of her life, her compulsion to repeat the dead past only the other face of her need to give life—to her children, to the inanimate/animate object floating above her head. Her need is contiguous with her recognition of the role of the woman as entering and leaving; her desire to return to the past dependent upon her realization that for her certain entrances and exits are now closed, as embalmed as her memories:

¿Es que acaso, los pájaros, como ella, necesitaban operaciones para no producir más hijos? ¿Se les cerraba la matriz, como a ella . . . colocándole aquello entre las piernas, para que no más Luises, Joaquines, Sebastianes, Césares vinieran al mundo? (15)

The passivity of the woman when confronted by the strange bird/ a passive acceptance of its presence that contrasts markedly with the suspicion and fear experienced by Lautaro is understandable. Woman and bird are drawn together by a bond of sympathy on her part, by her implicit recognition that they are parallel beings: one alien, the other alienated deprived even of the essential functions of her own body. "Aquello entre las piernas" traduces her very nature and function; like the old woman in Williams' poem who "wear[s] a china doorknob / in her vagina to hold her womb up" (238), it represents a door nailed shut prohibiting entrances and exits.

For Alicia, the other female figure in the story, the alienation is even more complete. For her there are no entrances, no exits; her womb has been closed before it had a chance to exercise its function. While the old woman looks back into the history of the self for half-forgotten beings and objects, Alicia shows "esa ajenidad permanente de los seres que han comprendido la vacuidad de pensar" (60). Once a week the receptacle of the town doctor's intermittent sexual desires, she looks neither back nor forward, neither towards dead memories nor a dead future. Instead, her emblem is her pocket mirror, in which she minutely examines this plastic, non-historical self, dialoguing with her lifeless image in a sort of primary narcissism, a mindless, silent, dead language. Alicia too is vouchsafed a vision of the flying object, but unlike María/ or even Lautaro/ who find the object intimately connected with their lives, Alicia's indifference is complete. While on first sight, "le pareció simpático y lo miró un rato," she soon loses interest: "aquello giraba en el aire . . . y no parecía tener ninguna conexión con la tierra, con el camino/ el consultorio, las sábanas un poco sucias. . . ." Her turning away from the object, and from the phenomena of her world with which she so pointedly finds *no* connection corresponds to a return to the mirrored self, the plastic mannikin of a woman extracted from the pages of a crumbling woman's magazine: "no parecía tener ninguna conexión . . . de modo que no le prestó más atención, y se dedicó a recordar una receta de buñuelos de espárragos que había leído en una revista" (66). Although Alicia cannot recognize the fact, her incongruous dreams of asparagus fritters in a dusty provincial town are at least as distanced and as unconnected with her reality as a spaceship is to the dirty sheets of her weekly surrender to the doctor's indifferent lusts.

In both the interest of María and the indifference of Alicia there is, then, a return to an estranged present. Neither woman, after all, can find the connection of the spaceship to reality, yet through the agency of its very

presence, the mundane frustrations of their existence are rehearsed and become symbolic. Freud speaks of the "involuntary repetition" (43) which is a province of the uncanny, and finds that in general, "the 'uncanny' is that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar" (20). Yet for María, the object is hardly terrifying. In response to her husband's statement that, "Eso es mágico," the wife responds, "Es como si tuviéramos visita" (27) countering his categorical statement with a more hesitant affirmation of her own phrased in the subjunctive tense. While the object holds a terrifying aspect for Lautaro, for María the strange comes home to rest, an old friend. She even entertains herself with fantasies of the object coming down to earth, of herself fulfilling her duties as a hostess (though not with asparagus fritters): "hasta quizás ella le alcanzara una taza de algo, de leche o de caldo, porque fuera el animal de la clase que fuera, alguna de las dos cosas le habría de gustar. . ." (34). The object never allows María to realize this secret ambition; the "animal," "object," "bird" remains on the fringes of reality, refuses to be classified as a milk or a broth drinker. Such reticence on the part of the object does not prevent María from long, contented exchanges, from a feeling of fellowship and compassion: "Lo que más me apena es la noche. . . . Toda la noche allí, dando vueltas, sin nada para ver. Me parece como una falta de cariño" (43). No longer a strange or estranged presence, she imagines the object to feel, perhaps, a hesitancy parallel to her own fear of the city: "en la ciudad ni iría, ni sabría caminar ni mirar ni respirar ni comer ni entrar ni salir y me perdería. . ." (19-20). She, a woman of entrances and exits, a searcher after lost objects, feels she understands the reluctance (or inability) of another being like herself, likewise closed and sealed, to lose itself in an alien environment.

For Lautaro, the first to see and recognize the UFO as an alien object in their world, the presence of the unknown signals a disruption in the orderly organization of the universe. The object is indecipherable and ominous because its silent presence does not respond to questions, does not fit the predictable categories of his daily life. A simple peasant, whose world is bounded by his fields and a dusty bit of road, looks up from his drought-afflicted land into the sky and stares into the supernatural. He recognizes that, henceforth, the existence of all recognizable phenomena of his world has been jeopardized. Lautaro's first reaction, as his first reaction to the recalcitrance of the cuckoo clock, is a violent one. He ineffectually throws a slipper at the clock, and when his wife suggests that his energy would be better applied in fixing it, he responds, "No puedo. Estoy enfermo" (12). Similarly, Lautaro's first reaction on sighting the "objeto marrón" is to take out his rifle and, ineffectually, shoot at it. When he fails to bring it down, Lautaro decides the object is magic and retires to the house— to find himself gradually condemned to a magical illness.

At the same time María debates whether to offer her unexpected visitor milk or broth. Lautaro stares with horror at his face in the broken bathroom mirror: “—Me falta un pedazo de la cara—murmuró el hombre, alucinado por su descubrimiento, mirando enloquecido hacia el espejo turbio. . . .”(35). The unpredictable appearance of the strange bird has subverted the normal balance of the world, and Lautaro's increasing alienation from things, from his own face, represents his response to a changing reality. Soon, the artifacts, the institutions which represent the “realities” of his existence, no longer have the power to impose themselves onto his consciousness. For the old man, whose claims of illness have always served him in good stead to shirk responsibility, this new metaphysical illness sets him outside the realm of prescribed daily activity altogether. Lautaro, who has avoided doing, now does not know what to do or how to do it—he has been bereft of control.

The problematization of vision is the most striking consequence of Lautaro's illness. Can we trust him when he speaks of losing half his face? Should we trust his wife, who calls him a crazy old man who only wants to avoid working? Significantly, Lautaro's confirmation of his loss is through the agency of the mirror, an “espejo turbio,” splattered with paint and stained with iodine (35); a mirror already opaque, which renders a distorted reflection. It is this splotched mirror which confirms Lautaro's loss of face/just as Alicia's pocket mirror defines her alienation, and it is ironic that the illness perceived in the bathroom mirror is, eventually, declared cured by the image reflected back from Alicia's equally distorting pocket mirror. What Todorov says of Hoffman is equally true of Peri Rossi: “it is not vision itself that is linked to the world of the marvelous, but rather eyeglasses and mirrors, those symbols of indirect, distorted, subverted vision. . . . These objects are, in a sense, vision materialized or rendered opaque, a quintessence of sight” (122-3). Lautaro's fear of a loss of self is linked to his fear of a loss of sight; further, his identity is erased in the distortions of the mirror reflection. It is as if the strange bird had exercised its magical effect upon the mirror so that Lautaro, when he peers into it, finds himself replaced by his image, the splotches on the mirror reproduced in the absence of one-half of the original man.

Significantly, Lautaro regards the bird as “un gran ojo,” (51) an enormous single eye which has become an untiring spy upon his action an implacable enemy. As Freud notes, “One of the most uncanny and widespread forms of superstition is the dread of the evil eye” (45), and the mere fact of the unknown object's presence is enough to assure Lautaro of its secret intention to cause him harm. Gradually, the magic of the obscure eye operates on other artifacts as well; first the bed disappears—though his wife is able to fall asleep in midair in the approximate site of its customary location—then, “mientras trabajaba en el campo, fueron desapareciéndole así

. . . varias otras cosas, de un momento al siguiente” (47). They disappeared, or the single eye left him is incapable of such discriminations. The search for the lost objects only provokes more and more disappearances as if any action on his part widens the gulf between concrete objects and their visual representations instigated by his actions. Lautaro, always a man who had to be prodded into action, is increasingly passivized his hesitancy to continue the search intensified by the fear that such activity on his part will result in greater losses. Thus, “no quiso más entrar al baño” (40) to avoid further confrontations with the mirror. Eventually, the circle of prohibitions grows tighter around him.

The ultimate source of Lautaro's anxiety is clear; Peri Rossi alternately describes it as a concern that “un día de estos amanece y yo estoy solo en el mundo. . . y lo único que vas a ver es el sol, el sol amarillo” above a world left vacant (49-50) and, more mundanely, as the dreadful apprehension that his pants will disappear: “Andaría con las manos en los bolsillos, sujetándose los pantalones, de modo que si trataban de llevárselos él se daría cuenta” (51). Lautaro's dodging from fear to fear—from the transcendental to the extremely ordinary—reaffirms both the fear and its basis in a psychological displacement. Freud relentlessly underscores the connection between the loss of eyes and the loss of pants: “a morbid anxiety connected with the eyes and with going blind [or losing track of the phenomena of the physical world?] is often enough a substitute for the dread of castration” (36), and Cixous adds, “What lies on the other side of castration? ‘No meaning’ other than the fear (resistance) of castration” (536). Lautaro's anxiety that the world will dissolve into nothingness heralds the fear of meaninglessness, of the loss and ruin of the self by old age and of the land by drought. Split in the implicit recognition of this double abyss, Lautaro reaches an abrupt decision: “Me voy al pueblo” he tells his wife and, carefully keeping his hands in his pockets so as not to lose his pants, he goes off to see the town doctor.

When Lautaro leaves his house for the town, the story neatly divides itself into two sections and María, the dominant force in the first half, in effect disappears from the textual inscription of the story just like the bed, the farm implements, the half of Lautaro's face. Her role as the voice of reason and scepticism is taken over by the doctor. The parallel is an imperfect one however. For while Lautaro seeks the aid of the doctor to regain his ability to find objects present now only in memory, the doctor—an intensely introspective and self-centered character—is arguably the blindest of the characters in the story. Like Lautaro, on a different level, the doctor considers himself a martyr of the system, pressed into a service he despises by the malevolent will of the “mutualista.” In addition, the doctor, like Lautaro, has recourse to a “presencia mágica”; “Ya no resistía la convocación del alcohol. . . .” (53), and it is clear that this assumption of mar-

tyrdom at the hands of the government for the sake of a group of unappreciative peasants is nothing but a ruse, an excuse similar to Lautaro's equally self-serving excuse of illness to escape his responsibilities. The doctor feels harried by bureaucracy, as Lautaro feels threatened by the UFO, and rather than stoically enduring his fate (or the consequences of his choice), he brackets himself off from a repellent reality seeking solace in the mirages of an alcoholic haze. What the drought represents for Lautaro, then, is similar to what the "aburrimiento mortal" (63) of provincial life means to the doctor: the stagnation of possibility, the erosion of the future.

The doctor's patients all blend into one patient, issued numbers like customers in a meat market. "Casi todos," he finds, "tenían la mirada humilde y aterrada de los pueblerinos descompuestos por un malestar que desorganizaba sus monótonas existencias, confundiéndolos." As these faceless numbers repeat, over and over, the same story, the doctor entertains his boredom by writing "cifras rojas" (59-60) on his prescription pad. When Lautaro enters the clinic, the UFO accompanies him, but the doctor's self-centered detachment is not disturbed in the slightest by the strange apparition: "hacia el cielo, elevó la mirada y vió un extraño objeto marrón que se movía lentamente, a gran altura, sin descender" (63). Lautaro's strange companion does not individualize him in the doctor's eyes in the least. He receives the standard examination, the standard prescription: "También tendré que darle sedantes" (67). Another red cipher on a white pad, another tired repetition of standard formulas; significantly, these formulas are as undecipherable, yet as meaningful to Lautaro, as the strange apparition that provoked his disorder. The doctor:

Había observado . . . el efecto reconfortante que producía en el paciente el uso de términos técnicos que no estaban a su alcance . . . /H/ e aquí, oh maravilla, hemos descubierto el mal, le hemos puesto un nombre, designado con un símbolo que lo destacara del resto . . . , felicidad, felicidad. (68)

He cynically recognizes that the cause of illness is a failure in the signifying system, a failure which can be remedied by the application of the balsam of still another unknown signifier. Lautaro has no qualms in accepting this substitution of the unintelligible for the unbelievable. The unknown is, for him, as has already been noted, magical, and the doctor's magical word possesses the power to erase that other magical presence, to undo the effects of that magic in his daily life. He looks into Alicia's mirror and "allí estaba su rostro de siempre, completo. . ." (71).

Yet the "cure", so cynically dispensed with a cipher and a magic word, represents not an accession to an improved state of health, but a return to the order of the repressed, to a world which is no more amenable than

formerly to the blandishments of a magical word, a magical look. Appearances and reality do not simply meld through the agency of tranquilizing words and pills. Nevertheless, Lautaro sees his face whole and believes the world will re-establish its accustomed orders: "el bicharraco marrón . . . no le molestaba" since "seguramente en dos días ya no lo veo más" (72). For the newly tranquilized Lautaro, the UFO must belong to the illusory order of appearances; yet the story has clearly established that this uncanny artifact is the factor which most signally distances Lautaro from the phenomenal world. The illness which has voided real objects of their substance will, with its cure (or so he concludes), cause the erasure of this equivocal object which is itself the sign, the cipher of his disease. Still, Lautaro intuits that the doctor's magical pills are nothing more than another version of the magical bird: "Con las pastillas . . . las apariencias no aparecerían, sino que aparecerían las cosas mismas. Pero si las cosas mismas aparecían con su apariencia, ¿había que confiar en ellas?" (73) The repressed, rather than being dissolved as a mere insubstantial disorder of vision, returns with terrifying force in this merging intersection of reality and appearances. As Lautaro comes to realize, the pursuit of reality produces the cancellation of such pursuit; matter, when perused too deeply, is hollowed out revealing the emptiness at its center. Too much compression explodes into what Derrida calls "dissemination":

. . . dissemination represents the affirmation of this non-origen, the remarkable empty locus of a hundred blanks no meaning can be ascribed to, in which mark supplements and substitution games are multiplied *ad infinitum*. In *The Uncanny*, Freud—here more than ever attentive to undecidable ambivalence, to the play of the double, to the endless exchange between the fantastic and the real . . . —can, without contradicting this play have recourse both to castration anxiety, . . . and to the substitutive relation. . . . (268)

Lautaro's anxiety, an anxiety he shares with the other nameless numbered ciphers of the doctor's office, represents a delineation of the frustrations of a peasant's life during drought time, of the interruptions of a ritual existence by the presence of the fantastic, the uncanny, or the recognition of a reality become unacceptable. This ritual, once suspended by circumstances, physical or metaphysical, is both reestablished and erased by a merely rhetorical cure. This rhetorical cure, however, awakens Lautaro to other rhetorical considerations on reality and appearances, precipitating a fictional *mise en abîme* in which rhetoric and reality are both put into question. That which was most secure, the ability of the peasant to confer identity through the definition of the quotidian implements of his daily life, now becomes subject to the same slippage as bed, face, and farming tools, and

the wish for a cure shades into a wish for magic of his own to stabilize the shifting forms into durable representations.

Yet, at the same time the story registers Lautaro's desire to make a permanent mark, it also suggests its own underlying structural thrust towards completion in the dissolution of the "reality" of the text established heretofore in the implicit narrative decorum of the work: "El camino se iba pelando, como una fruta seca. Encontraba menos pastos, menos hierbas, menos casas, casi ningún árbol, y el cielo, cada vez mas marrón" (75). Lautaro closes his eyes to avoid the false lure of appearances, opening them when he has covered the remembered distance between the town and his home: "todo había desaparecido y nada se hallaba en su lugar" (76). Lautaro's cure, a harsh cure, administered by the unseen narrator of the story, is a cure by fictional magic, a cure of appearances by appearances. The drought, the spaceship, the gradual disappearance of objects are merely a rehearsal for the final affirmation of appearance over reality, an anticipation of non-representation in the blank space following upon the last printed word written on the last page of "Los extraños objetos voladores" where the flying objects can finally be identified with the doctor's ciphers or the scattered bits of paper littering a road and flying up into the air at the slightest breeze.

At the same time, the desire for representation that operates in Lautaro functions in the reader as well. His anxiety is our anxiety, and as the world itself dissolves, the reader-voyeur's scepticism is absorbed into a parallel fear of non-representation. The reader's fear, paralleling the character's fear, provokes yet another onrush of vacillation, another moment of hesitation before the uncanny, this one reaching outside the story to touch the convenient fictions, the rhetoric of the reader's existence and the structuring impulse of the desire for stable form. The final sentence of the story comes almost as an afterthought: "El objeto marrón también había desaparecido" (77).

Note

¹ cf Zeitz. In this interview Peri Rossi says, "En mi caso, la existencia de la censura funciona como un aliciente para elaborar la metáfora capaz de desbordarla. . . . No . . . prefiero la literatura realista, por lo menos en el sentido habitual del término. Las claves de la realidad están casi siempre en la imaginación, en la fantasía y en el sueño. Y el símbolo de las cosas suele ser más eficaz que las cosas mismas." (81, 84)

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