



TEXTUAL EXPOSURES: PHOTOGRAPHY IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY SPANISH AMERICAN NARRATIVE FICTION

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ISBN 978-1-55238-784-9

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CONCLUSION

We are on the cusp of an epochal change that is witness to the digitalization of picture making, the convergence of verbal, visual, and aural media in new supports and platforms that eschew paper in favour of electronic devices, and the consolidation of new forms of production, distribution, and storage of information in the computerization of everyday life. These developments seem to put a definitive end to the “Age of the Photograph,” to use an expression Barthes coined three decades ago and was already investing with a mournful aura.¹ As Mulvey points out, by the 1990s “the digital, as an abstract information system, made a break with analogue imagery, finally sweeping away the relation with reality, which had, by and large, dominated the photographic tradition.”² The current crisis of the photographic sign may perhaps be its last, but it should be pointed out that photography has had many deaths since its inception. Even today, when film photography is in its last throes, we still speak of digital *photography*, thus keeping alive its *noeme* (to use Barthes’ term) and thus preserving not an “essence” but a cluster of practices of image production and dissemination, above and beyond its many specific incarnations.

While the photograph has lost the currency it once enjoyed as a cultural token and key metaphor, the need to fix images has not and will not disappear with the emergence of video and digital technologies. Moreover, photographs, in whatever form they may be created and distributed, will still be a privileged means by which to relate to past events and document

the present—to fulfill the abiding human need to make sense of our existence through time.

Only when a cultural epoch fades and a new one emerges are the displaced (but not yet forgotten) cultural institutions, practices, and assumptions of the old cultural regime brought into sharper relief. The case studies in this book are meant to help us better understand this historical shift in modern media by analyzing literary texts in the context of the visual culture of their times.

Photography's many uses are reflected, and put into creative use, in the literature created during the medium's inception, development, growth, and decline, as the anthologies assembled by Jane M. Rabb show. The wealth of texts I have explored attests to the productive interactions between Latin American literature and photography in the twentieth century. This creative dialogue indicates that many canonical writers show an interest in this visual medium, and it shows the variety of imaginative approaches that they employ to achieve their literary effects.

The historical arc spanning from Darío's "spiritual" critique of modern visual technology at the end of the nineteenth century to Tomás Eloy Martínez's realist rendition of photography's many uses and instances covers a broad panorama of twentieth-century visual culture, showing photography's productive interactions with other technologies of representation (X-rays, cinema, television), communication media (print journalism), and a variety of social and cultural practices, from portraiture and family albums to travel photography.

While each chapter highlighted a number of concerns common among the featured authors, the overarching thread that unites the texts is this: photography is a medium that, when rendered in works of literature, constantly strives to surpass its representational bounds. From Darío's, Cortázar's, and Elizondo's fantastic or uncanny plunging into the menacing depths of the body or the mind, to Rulfo's, Piñera's, and Martínez's use of photographs as narrative folds (visual signs within a story that codify and trigger more stories), photography is endowed with an excess of signification. In this sense, photographs—ekphrastically constructed—encapsulate a power that strives to transcend the verbal context that makes them possible. More often than not, with their power to convince, fascinate, excite, or haunt, they function as representations of last resort.

What is the future of the photographic motif in literature when “traditional” practices and institutions of the medium are being phased out, if not already obsolete? We have seen the migration of paper-based images to computer screens, the rise of Photoshop effects that make a painterly palette of a photographic image, and the bankruptcy of enterprises such as Eastman Kodak, the iconic company closely associated with the rise and dissemination of photography as an everyday practice in modern times.³

Brunet considers the movement towards autofiction, “a genre of fictionalized autobiography often accompanied by photographs,” as a shift in the hybridization of literature and photography in recent decades.⁴ This trend has gained prominence since the 1980s and is epitomized by the commercial and critical success of writers such as W. G. Sebald. However, Brunet notes, “it is too early to tell whether they signal a durable pattern, especially as cyberliterature starts to offer another, more radical, alternative to traditional fiction writing.”⁵

Works by Latin American novelists address the question of the place of photography in narrative fiction in the twenty-first century. *Sueños digitales* (2000), by Edmundo Paz-Soldán, is a case in point. The novel centres on Sebastián, a graphic designer who works for a newspaper in the fictitious city of Río Fugitivo, in an unnamed South American country. He has abandoned photography altogether, mastering instead the marvels of Photoshop. His main accomplishment is the creation of digital collages that fuse incongruous personalities through their body parts, such as the head of Che Guevara grafted onto the body of Raquel Welch. Eventually his skills get noticed by the Ministry of Information, and he is recruited to alter the visual record of the authoritarian regime and present a sanitized historical version of the dictator Montenegro. Along with a love story that goes sour, the plot of political intrigue and personal alienation will leave Sebastián in a wasteland and, ultimately, lead him to suicide. From the personal and intimate to the collective and political, the photographic image in *Sueños digitales* becomes too pliable a tool. The novel explores the new management of images in Latin America’s peripheral modernity in a moment of cultural transition dominated by neoliberal policies. It could be framed in terms of Paz-Soldán’s own commentary on the seminal novel *La invención de Morel* (1940), by Adolfo Bioy Casares. Paz-Soldán writes that the aim of the novel in the twenty-first century could be, given the new challenges facing literary fiction, to “redefinirse como

un instrumento narrativo capaz de representar la multiplicidad de medios presente en la sociedad contemporánea, como una práctica discursiva que puede ayudar a entender la relación del individuo con este cambiante universo mediático” [redefine itself as a narrative instrument able to represent the multiplicity of media in contemporary culture, as a discursive practice that can help understand the relation between the individual and that changing media universe].⁶

Sueños digitales is a contribution in this direction.⁷ However, while the novel captures the anxieties, dislocations, and melancholy ushered in by a new media environment, it is perhaps too much a novel of manners, too aware of “the way we live now,” too close to the events and moods it purports to document. Some cultural distance may be needed before delving into a more subtle or imaginative literary exploration of our rapidly changing technological age.

It would be unwise to forecast the shape that interactions between literary word and photographic image will take in the digital age. However, if an assessment can be ventured, it is this: the future of photography as a literary motif lies in its multifaceted past, in its perhaps inextricable relation to nostalgia, history, and visual discovery.⁸ On the one hand, readers and scholars will find plenty of photographs written in the texts of authors, big and small, who worked in the historical period bracketed by the invention of photography, in the first third of the nineteenth century, and its gradual demise, at the end of the twentieth. Like so many shoebox collections hidden in chests and closets, this wealth of textual photographs will become an abiding source of discovery, mystery, awe, and interpretation. On the other hand, the massive photographic archive of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will provide plenty of inspiration and ideas to writers who wish to weave stories around photographs and photographers. This need not be restricted to the medium’s indexical or documentary nature, but it will allow new imaginative directions. A canonical text provides a case in point. Its use of photography, seemingly marginal, nonetheless plays an important role in the narrative. Moreover, while literally or historically mistaken, its reference to photography can be considered a stroke of literary insight. In *Aura* (1962), Carlos Fuentes weaves a fantastic story about the preservation of life against the ravages of time. Consuelo Llorente lures a young historian, Felipe Montero, into her darkened abode in downtown Mexico City in order to make him write the story of her late husband,

magically conjuring both his spirit and her lost youth. By the end of this task of writing the life of General Llorente—all the while fascinated by the alluring presence of Aura (the emanation of Consuelo herself)—Felipe finds in Consuelo's trunk a trove of photographs. This is a key moment in the story. The manifest wish of Consuelo is to persuade Felipe to write and publish her husband's memoirs, but his textual discovery comes to an end when he finds these visual documents of Consuelo and the general. The moment of anagnorisis comes when he sees himself pictured in the old images of General Llorente. In this sense, the photograph functions as a magical mirror that reveals a shocking, overwhelming reality:

Y detrás de la última hoja, los retratos de ese caballero anciano, vestido de militar: la vieja fotografía con las letras en una esquina: *Moulin, Photographe, 35 Boulevard Haussmann* y la fecha 1894. Y la fotografía de Aura: de Aura con sus ojos verdes. . . . Aura y la fecha 1876, escrita con tinta blanca y detrás, sobre el cartón doblado del daguerrotipo, esa letra de araña: *Fait pour notre dixième anniversaire de mariage* y la firma, con la misma letra, *Consuelo Llorente*. Verás, en la tercera foto, a Aura en compañía del viejo, ahora vestido de paisano, sentados ambos en una banca, en un jardín. La foto se ha borrado un poco: Aura no se verá tan joven como en la primera fotografía, pero es ella, es él, es . . . eres tú. (58)

[And after the last page, the portraits. The portrait of an elderly gentleman in a military uniform, an old photograph with these words in one corner: "*Moulin, Photograph, 35 Boulevard Haussmann*" and the date "1894." Then the photograph of Aura, of Aura with her green eyes. . . . Aura and the date "1876" in white ink, and on the back of the daguerreotype, in spidery handwriting: "*Fait pour notre dixième anniversaire de mariage*," and a signature in the same hand, "*Consuelo Llorente*." In the third photograph you see both Aura and the old gentleman, but this time they're dressed in outdoor clothes, sitting on a bench in a garden. The photograph has become a little blurred: Aura doesn't look as young

as she did in the other picture, but it's she, it's he, it's . . . it's you. (135–37)]⁹

The narrator mentions a daguerreotype, which could be read as a metonymy for any old photograph, but taken in its strict sense its use is a blatant anachronism. The production of daguerreotypes had been totally discarded and replaced by less cumbersome and more affordable techniques well before 1876, when the couple's photograph was supposedly taken. However, the mistaken reference is interesting within the context of the story. In a text that explores the prodigious possibility of survival beyond the normal span of a lifetime, the daguerreotype becomes the visual token of a past that does not die, of a past where even discarded technologies are still in use. Even more, daguerreotypes were made of shiny metal sheets on which viewers could see, at a certain angle, their own features reflected, as in a mirror. In this sense, nothing is more suited to picture Felipe's moment of truth than the visual dialectics afforded by a daguerreotype.

While photography's epistemic claims are now diminished, its traditionally salient aspects—its referential power and its visual impact—will still inspire writers to summon the past and keep telling stories.

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NOTES

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

- 1 Price and Wells, "Thinking about Photography," 26; see Scott, *Spoken Image*, 14.
- 2 See Meyer, *Verdades y ficciones*; Amelunxen, Iglhaut, and Rötzer, eds., *Photography after Photography*; Ritchin, *In Our Own Image: The Coming Revolution in Photography* (1999) and *After Photography* (2008); and Grundberg, *Crisis of the Real*.
- 3 Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 14.
- 4 Trachtenberg, "Introduction," xiii.
- 5 In her first anthology, Rabb included Pablo Neruda's poem "Tina Modotti is Dead" (327–29) and Octavio Paz's composition "Facing Time," on the photographs of Manuel Alvaréz Bravo (484–87), only in translation.
- 6 See Brunet, *Photography and Literature*, 85.
- 7 Collections of scholarly essays on literature and photography—such as *Photo-Textualities: Reading Photographs and Literature*, edited by Marsha Bryant—share the cultural and linguistic limitations of Rabb's anthologies. The same applies to the illuminating *Photography and Literature* by François Brunet and the special issue of *Poetics Today* devoted to photography in fiction edited by Silke Horstkotte and Nancy Pedri.
- 8 Balderston, "Twentieth-Century Short Story," 478.
- 9 The parallel in modernity between word and photographic image was celebrated by Hungarian avant-garde photographer and theorist László Moholy-Nagy, who famously declared that "The illiterate of the future will be ignorant of the pen and the camera alike" (quoted in Lyons, 80).
- 10 Shloss, *In Visible Light*, 14.
- 11 Zola, "The Experimental Novel," 7; see Rabb, ed., *Literature*, xxxviii. As Brunet points out, this debate

- dates back some decades: “Since 1850 the daguerreotype and photography had been associated by conservative critics with the rise of the new literary school alternatively called ‘realism’ or ‘naturalism’. Writers of this obedience—such as Flaubert and especially Théophile Gautier—were called ‘photographic’, with distinct nuance of abuse, by self-styled defenders of the ‘ideal’” (*Photography and Literature*, 71).
- 12 Bazin, “Ontology,” 9; Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 31; McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 201.
- 13 Nicaraguan author Sergio Ramírez states that “Uno puede imaginarse toda una historia a raíz de una foto” [One can imagine an entire story based on one photograph] (quoted in Perkowska, *Pliegues visuales*, 74).
- 14 Burgin, *Thinking Photography*, 144.
- 15 Genette, *Paratexts*, 3.
- 16 Rabb, *Literature*, xxxix. Clive Scott asserts the close links between literature and photography, stating that “Writers are often photographers,” and further, that “our assessment of photography, and in particular our ways of talking about it, are often generated by literature: for example, even when they are writing about photography, Benjamin, Sontag and Barthes remain essentially literary critics” (*Spoken Image*, 12). See Brunet, *Photography and Literature*, 79.
- 17 Photographs of Bioy Casares are included in María Esther Vázquez’s biography of Borges, *Borges: Esplendor y derrota*.
- 18 *Cartas 1937–1983*, vol.1, 105; *Cartas 1937–1983*, vol.3, 1605; Goloboff, *Julio Cortázar*, 155.
- 19 Picón Garfield, *Cortázar por Cortázar*, 33. The full quotation reads: “[D]esde muy joven, cuando empecé a trabajar y tuve dinero para comprar un pequeño aparato fotográfico muy malo, empecé a sacar fotos de manera bastante sistemática tratando de perfeccionarme. Y luego tuve una segunda cámara que era un poco mejor. Con ésa ya hice buenas fotos en la época. El motivo no te lo puedo explicar. Yo pienso que en el fondo es un motivo bastante literario. La fotografía es un poco la literatura de los objetos. Cuando tú sacas una foto, hay una decisión de tu parte. Tú haces un encuadre, pones algunas cosas y eliminas otras. Y el buen fotógrafo es ese hombre que encuadra mejor que los otros. Y además que sabe elegir al azar y allí entra el surrealismo en juego. Cada vez que yo he tenido una cámara en la mano y he visto juntarse dos o tres elementos incongruentes, por ejemplo, un hombre que está de pie y por un efecto de sol la sombra que proyecta en el suelo es un gran gato negro, pues eso me parece maravilloso si uno puede fotografiarlo. En el fondo estoy haciendo literatura, estoy fotografiando una metáfora: el hombre cuya sombra es un gato. Yo creo que es por el camino literario que fui a la foto.” (45). [When I was

very young and began to work and had some money to buy a very poor camera, I began to take photos in a very systematic way, trying to perfect my technique. Later, my second camera was a little better. With it I took good pictures. I don't know how to explain to you the reason for that interest. Down deep I think it was a literary one. Photography is sort of a literature of objects. When you take a photo, you make a decision. You frame some things and eliminate others. A good photographer is one who knows how to frame things better. And besides he knows how to choose by chance and there's where surrealism comes into play. It has always seemed marvelous to me that someone can photograph two or three incongruous elements, for example, the standing figure of a man who, by some effect of light and shade projected onto the ground, appears to be a great black cat. On a profound level, I am producing literature, I am photographing a metaphor: a man whose shadow is a cat. I think I came to photography by way of literature (Picon Garfield, "A Conversation with Julio Cortazar," 12)].

- 20 For a list of authors and works in this field, see Perkowska, *Pliegues visuales*, 33–36.
- 21 Price and Wells, "Thinking about Photography," 50–51.
- 22 Barthes, "The Photographic Message," 18.
- 23 For a useful survey on Plato's and Aristotle's theories on mimesis, and the tradition of *ut pictura poesis* stemming from Horace, see Hagstrum, *Sister Arts*, 1–35.
- 24 Spitzer, "The 'Ode on a Grecian Urn,'" 72.
- 25 Krieger, *Ekphrasis*, 6; Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 154.
- 26 Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 152.
- 27 Wagner, "Introduction," 14. See also Hagstrum, *Sister Arts*, 18, 29, 35; Heffernan, *Museum of Words*, 1; Preminger and Brogan, eds., *Princeton Encyclopedia*, "Ekphrasis," 320–21; Bartsch and Elsner, "Introduction," i–vi; and Robillard and Jongeneel, eds., *Pictures into Words*. The original meaning of the term "ekphrasis" in classical rhetoric is "a speech that brings the subject matter vividly before the eyes," regardless of subject matter (Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination*, 1). It is closely related to the notion of *enargeia*, defined as the "vivid description addressed to the inner eye" (Hagstrum, *Sister Arts*, 11, 29; Krieger, *Ekphrasis*, 7; Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination*, 5). Webb traces the evolution of ekphrasis from its classical roots to its modern sense, showing its elevation in literary criticism from an obscure technical term to a literary genre, a move that she attributes to Spitzer (*Ekphrasis, Imagination*, 5–7, 28–38). De Armas provides a typology of ekphrases in "Simple Magic," 21–24. Wagner, striving to go beyond the classical "sister arts" analogy between poetry and painting, proposes the concept of intermediality to deal with

- the variety of relations between verbal and visual representations (“Introduction,” 17). In the Latin American context, *Entre artes entre actos: Ecfrasis e intermedialidad*, edited by Susana González Aktories and Irene Artigas Albarelli, is a collection of essays that explore ekphrasis with regard to a variety of arts beyond the visual.
- 28 Krieger, *Ekphrasis*, xv.
- 29 Barthes, “The Photographic Message,” 19.
- 30 Hollander, “The Poetics of Ekphrasis,” 209.
- 31 Heffernan, “Preface,” xv. See also Hagstrun, *Sister Arts*, 66; Mitchell, *Iconology*, 47; Wagner, “Introduction,” 26, 28.
- 32 Da Vinci, *Paragone*, 49–65.
- 33 Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second*, 55.
- 34 Freud, “The Uncanny,” 220.
- 35 A sample of works would include Anthony Vidler’s *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (1992), Hal Foster’s *Convulsive Beauty* (1997), David Ellison’s *Ethics and Aesthetics in European Modernist Literature: From the Sublime to the Uncanny* (2001), the essays in the art catalog *The Uncanny: Experiments in Cyborg Culture* (2001) edited by Bruce Grenville, Nicholas Royle’s *The Uncanny* (2003) and the collection of essays *Uncanny Modernity. Cultural Theories, Modern Anxieties* edited by Jo Collins and John Jervis (2008).
- 36 Freud, “The Uncanny,” 251.
- 37 Perkowska, *Pliegues visuales*, 23–24, 96n14; Ríos, *Espectros de luz*, 27–28.
- 38 A noteworthy exception is Sugano, “Beyond What Meets the Eye.”
- 39 These works can be considered part of what Perkowska calls, acknowledging the depth of the Argentine writer’s contributions, the *proyecto-Cortázar*, namely, “distintas variantes de construcción textual tipo *collage*, en la que las fotografías nunca ocupan un lugar inferior (suplementario, ilustrativo, ornamental) con respecto al texto” [variations of a collage-type textual construction, in which photographs never occupy a subordinate role (supplemental, illustrative, ornamental) with respect to the text] (*Pliegues visuales*, 34).
- 40 See Schwartz, “Writing against the City.”
- 41 These texts include prologues to the books *Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires* and *Humanario*, both photographs by Sara Facio and Alicia D’Amico. The latter is about the living conditions in a mental institution in Buenos Aires, and Cortázar’s prologue was included in *Territorios* with the title “Estrictamente no profesional.” Also included in *Territorios*, see “Carta del viajero,” on the photographs of Frédéric Barzilay. See also *Paris, ritmos de una ciudad*, with photographs by Alecio de Andrade, and *Alto el Perú*, with photographs by Manja Offerhaus. A brief commentary on

- photographs by Antonio Galvez, entitled “Luz negra,” is included in Cortázar’s posthumous *Papeles inesperados*. In general, these texts are free, poetic meditations on memory, travel, the power of the gaze, and the exploration of urban space triggered by images. Marcy Schwartz has analyzed how Cortázar renders or recycles his aesthetic insights in these collaborative works; see Schwartz, “Cortázar under Exposure.”
- 42 Cortázar, “Algunos aspectos del cuento,” 371. See also Cortázar, *Clases de literatura*, 30–31.
- 43 In Chapter 109 of *Rayuela*, a narrator refers to the fictional writer Morelli, who poses yet another schematic distinction between photography (representing the unavoidable fragmentarity of knowledge) and film (the deceiving coherence of continuity).
- 44 I am also excluding *Tinísima* by Poniatowska, a novel based on the life and works of photographer and political activist Tina Modotti, since the work does not fit my theoretical framework. A collection of Monsiváis’s essays on Mexican photography, entitled *Maravillas que son, sombras que fueron*, was published in 2012. For a list of authors who have explored the links between the journalistic chronicle and photography, see Perkowska, *Pliegues visuales*, 35.
- 45 References to photography and photographers appear in Allende, *Paula*; Amorim, “La fotografía”; Bellatín, *Shiki Nagaoka*; Bioy Casares, *La invención de Morel*

and *Las aventuras de un fotógrafo*; Borges, “Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius,” “La otra muerte,” “El milagro secreto,” and “El Aleph”; Cabrera Infante, *Tres tristes tigres*; Chejfec, *Los planetas*; Donoso, “Santelices”; Fuentes, *Aura*; García Márquez, “La increíble y triste historia” and *Cien años de soledad*; Gorodischer, “La cámara oscura”; Onetti, “El álbum,” “El infierno tan temido,” and “La cara de la desgracia”; Ramirez, *Mil y una muertes*; Rivera Garza, *Nadie verá llorar*; Roberto Bolaño, *Los detectives salvajes*, *Estrella distante*, and “Fotos”; Shua, *El libro de los recuerdos*; and Walsh, “Fotos.” On the presence of photography in Borges’s short fiction, see Russek, “Borges’ Photographic Fictions.” For more references, see Perkowska, *Pliegues visuales*, 24–25, and Ríos, *Espectros de luz*, 19–20.

1 | UNCANNY VISIONS IN DARÍO, CORTÁZAR, AND ELIZONDO

- 1 Poe Lang, in “Vera Icona,” examines the historical and semiotic dimensions of the photographic sign deployed in the text, though she gives scant attention to the crucial role the X-rays play in the story. The same can be said of Ríos, *Espectros de luz*, 30–31,] and A. Torres, “La Verónica modernista.”
- 2 See Hahn, *Cuento fantástico*, 85; Anderson Imbert, “Rubén Darío,” 106; H. M. Fraser, *In the Presence*, 35.

- 3 Paz, "Caracol," 845.
- 4 H. M. Fraser, *In the Presence*, 74; Ríos, *Espectros de luz*, 51–52.
- 5 With regard to American and European literatures, Brunet refers to a "history of literary discoveries of photography," of which the first moment "is centred around 1900 and the 'graphic revolution', and manifests itself, above all, in the emergence of photography as a topic for fiction. Whereas up until 1880 'serious' fiction had been slow to incorporate photographs and photographers, in the following decades both topics became frequent" (*Photography and Literature*, 78–79). In the Latin American context, Darío proved to be at the avant-garde of this development.
- 6 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.
- 7 In his study about the modern literary versions of Jesus Christ, Ziolkowski notes that "the effect of this genre depends in large measure upon the intentional anachronism, the glaring incongruity between past and present" (*Fictional Transfigurations*, 21).
- 8 Anderson Imbert, "Rubén Darío," 101–2. See also Rama, "Prólogo," 20–31, and Hahn, *Cuento fantástico*, 75.
- 9 Jade, *Rubén Darío*, 10.
- 10 Jade, "Respuesta dariana," 167.
- 11 Ziolkowski, *Fictional Transfigurations*, 19.
- 12 Hammond, "Naturalistic Vision," 293–309; Gernsheim, *Creative Photography*, 131–48; Jussim, *Slave to Beauty*, 6–10; Newhall, *History of Photography*, 141–58.
- 13 Jussim, *The Eternal Moment*, 202–3.
- 14 In the index to Zanetti's otherwise helpful edition on Darío's collaborations with *La Nación*, the first word of the title is misspelled: instead of "Diorama," it says "Drama" (*Rubén Darío*, 142, 177).
- 15 It is not clear when Darío did visit Lourdes. See Russek, "Photographing Christ," 364, 373n7.
- 16 Darío's reference to the reporter reflects a contemporary practice. Mraz quotes a passage from fellow Mexican *modernista* poet and essayist Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera, who cast doubts on the moral integrity of the reporter, who in turn represents the burgeoning values of crass American pragmatism: "The chronicle has died at the hands of the reporters. Where else could reporters have come from if not from the country of revolvers, where the repeating journalist, instant food, and electricity flourish? From there we got the agile, clever, ubiquitous, invisible, instantaneous reporter who cooks the hare before trapping it" (*Looking for Mexico*, 43–44). As I show in chapter 3, Cortázar also dismisses the attitude of the reporter as suspect in "Las babas del diablo." About the figure of the reporter, see Newhall, *History of Photography*, 128, and Rosenblum, *World History of Photography*, 446. Gumbrecht devotes a chapter to the practice of the reporter in

the 1920s. He points out that “the restless life of the reporter and his surface view of the world are linked with the collective—and often repressed—fear that ultimate truths are no longer available,” thus encapsulating the shifting ground that modernity brings forth regarding knowledge and certainty (*In 1926*, 188).

- 17 Commenting on Lugones’s scientific stories, Howard M. Fraser points out that his “investigators, Faustian scientists all, become victims of their own creations and their *idée fixe*” (*In the Presence*, 109). The same applies to Fray Tomás’s tragic fate. The “knowledge” that the friar strove to achieve was not restricted to modern positive sciences, but included the occult lore of ancient traditions (Pythagoreanism, Platonism, Neoplatonism, Kabbala, etc.), reinterpreted in late-nineteenth-century France by the likes of Mme. Blavatsky and Papus. We read in the text that Fray Tomás, among his many interests, “había estudiado las ciencias ocultas antiguas” (416) [had studied the occult sciences]. On the important influence of the esoteric tradition on Darío’s work, see Anderson Imbert, *Originalidad*, 62; H. M. Fraser, *In the Presence*, 33; Jiménez, “Prólogo,” 17; Jrade, *Rubén Darío*, 9; and Rama, “Prólogo,” 25–31. Fray Tomás could be seen as embodying an attitude that Raimundo Lida considers central to Darío’s work, namely, the “afán de abismarse . . . en la

más sombría entraña del universo” [a will to (. . .) plunged into the deepest recesses of the universe] (“Cuentos de Rubén Darío,” 253). Lida, in reference to “La extraña muerte de Fray Pedro,” a second version of the story published in 1913, brings to the fore the fundamentally religious act of venturing into the Unknown, albeit with tragic consequences. After all, “Fray Pedro suspira por apresar en la placa fotográfica la figura de Dios, del mismo modo que el Edison de *La Eva futura* ansía grabar en el disco Su palabra. Y el fraile logra al fin su objeto. Satán ha cumplido. El terrible misterio de las cosas está de verás allí, presente y active” [Fray Pedro wishes to capture God’s image in the photographic plate, as Edison wishes to record on a disc His Word in *Tomorrow’s Eve*. And the friar achieves his goal at the end. Satan has kept his word. The terrible mystery of things is truly there, present and active] (*Ibid.*).

18 Gunning, “Phantom Images,” 42. Darío referred to this kind of photography in a text entitled “La ciencia y el más allá,” published on 9 February 1906 and later included in *El mundo de los sueños*. At the beginning of this article, he mentions a photograph of a ghost that appeared in the Parisian press and the scientific experiments on spirits lead by “un sabio y cuerdo profesor, M. Richet” (*El mundo*, 83). The idea of photographing apparitions had already been mentioned in *Down*

- There* by Huysmans (an author Darío admired, and even quoted in “Verónica”), the protagonist of the novel, Durtal, meditating on the abiding mystery that surrounds the realm of spirits, refers to the experiments of the British physicist and chemist William Crookes in these terms: “the apparitions, doppelgänger, bilocations—to speak thus of the spirits—that terrified antiquity, have not ceased to manifest themselves. It would be difficult to prove that the experiments carried on for three years by Dr. Crookes in the presence of witness were cheats. If he has been able to photograph visible and tangible specters, we must recognize the veracity of the mediaeval thaumaturges” (Huysmans, *Down There*, 211). Crookes, both a Nobel Prize winner, in 1907, and a believer in Spiritism, is also mentioned in “Verónica.” On Crookes, see Darío, *La caravana pasa*, 175n399. On the links between nineteenth-century photography and the Spiritualist movement, see Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second*, 43–44, and Gunning, “Phantom Images.”
- 19 Gunning, “Uncanny Reflections,” 83.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Newhall, *History of Photography*, 129.
- 22 In 1858, a young peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous, had visions of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes, which soon became an important magnet for the faithful. A local feast of the apparition of Our Lady

of Lourdes was sanctioned in 1891 (Cross and Livingstone, “Lourdes,” 999.) Given the roots in popular religion of the belief in Bernadette’s apparitions, as well as its links to the “devout understanding of simple folk and children” (Grote, “Lourdes,” 339), it is interesting that Fray Tomás rejects the basic simplicity of faith in order to probe the depths of religious belief through empirical means.

- 23 The first daguerreotypist to set up shop in Buenos Aires was an American called John Elliot, in 1843. By 1860, there were fifty photographic studios in the city, most of them run by foreigners who catered to the upper classes. The *carte-de-visite* format democratized the photographic portrait by lowering the cost of producing sets of pictures. As in Europe and the United States, photographic portraiture would usurp the traditional place of the painter and soon become widespread. Besides portraiture, social scenes, civic ceremonies, landscape, and architecture were photography’s main subjects, making the photographer a common sight. Newspapers such as *La Prensa* (founded in 1869) and *La Nación* (1870) would incorporate illustrations in the form of etchings. Photogravure, based on the halftone process, was introduced in 1897, beginning the displacement in the news section of handmade illustrations. For the history of photography in Latin America, see Becquer Casaballe

- and Cuarterolo, *Imágenes del Río de la Plata*; Debroise, *Fuga mexicana*; Facio, *Fotografía en la Argentina*; García Krinsky, *Imaginario y fotografía*; and Watriss and Zamora, *Image and Memory*.
- 24 Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 209.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 208.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 221.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 49. See Dubois, *L'acte photographique*, 22, and Gubern, *Patologías de la imagen*, 84. Barthes explicitly refers to the aqueiropoetic nature of photography in *Camera Lucida*, 82.
- 28 Weinzierl, "Modernism," 608; Ziolkowski, *Fictional Transfigurations*, 40, 83–84.
- 29 Relics and photographic images can become intertwined. Commenting on a public exhibition of the holy shroud of Turin in May 1898, Frizot writes, "Secondo Pia, a photographer who was also a lawyer, was authorized to make a photographic reproduction of the shroud. He found, when developing his glass negatives, that they gave a 'real' picture of Christ, whereas the original was difficult to see. People were inclined to think that the imprint visible on the holy shroud was something like a 'negative image,' by analogy with the photographic negative. Its reversal to a positive image by photography rendered its contours perfectly *legible*. This discovery gave a new theological value to the shroud. Its possible authenticity, corroborated by photography, took on a very different resonance. The shroud itself could be considered as a sensitive plate upon which the emanations of a body had left their impression" ("The All-Powerful Eye," 282–83).
- 30 Méndez, "La incursión de Rubén Darío."
- 31 Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, 36; Dubois, *L'acte photographique*, 141.
- 32 Freedberg, *Power of Images*, xxiv; Ziolkowski, *Disenchanted Images*, 81; Gubern, *Patologías de la imagen*, 69.
- 33 In the second version of the story, "La extraña muerte de Fray Pedro," Christ's gaze has become "dulce" (401) [sweet], as if Darío, close to his death and suffering physically and psychologically, retouched the image of the Savior under a more compassionate light. A number of commentators have pointed out the weakness of the second version's ending; see Anderson Imbert, "Rubén Darío," 106, and Hahn, *Cuento fantástico*, 84.
- 34 Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 19.
- 35 Mraz considers that this attitude follows the "logic of modernity, which was finally based on the inductive principles of the Enlightenment, that 'truth' was to be discovered from observation of the world rather than through abstract philosophizing" (*Looking for Mexico*, 46). Sontag points out that "In the modern way of knowing, there have to be images for something to become 'real'" (*On Photography*, 125). This conception dovetails with one of

- the traits of fantastic literature, according to Jackson: “making visible the un-seen” (*Fantasy*, 48).
- 36 Frizot, “The All-Powerful Eye,” 281.
- 37 Pasveer, “Representing or Mediating,” 42.
- 38 Goldberg, *Power of Photography*, 48–49.
- 39 Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History*, 216.
- 40 Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 127.
- 41 Holmes, “The Stereoscope,” 74.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Williams, *Corporealized Observers*, 12–13.
- 44 Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 62.
- 45 Crary describes the alienated condition of what he calls the “nineteenth century observer” in terms that may fit Fray Tomás’s fetishistic obsession with the picture of Christ: “Empirical isolation of vision . . . enabled the new objects of vision (whether commodities, photographs, or the act of perception itself) to assume a mystified and abstract identity, sundered from any relation to the observer’s position within a cognitively unified field” (*Techniques of the Observer*, 19).
- 46 Mitchell, *Iconology*, 98.
- 47 See John 20:24–29.
- 48 Translation from *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is by Gregory Rabassa.
- 49 Newhall, *History of Photography*, 16–17. Mraz points out that “the ‘prodigious exactitude’ with which the daguerreotype portrayed the visible world signalled the onset of a culture built around the credibility of technical images” (*Looking for Mexico*, 18).
- 50 Cortázar, *Ultimo round*, vol. 1, 246–47.
- 51 Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second*, 27; Collins and Jarvis, “Introduction,” 1.
- 52 Critics have seen in Roberto Michel a symbol of the artist (Zamora, “Voyeur/Voyant,” 51; MacAdam, *El individuo*, 124). The amateur photographer, however, is a more ambiguous, disengaged figure, since he can situate himself in the margins of artistic conventions and institutions while still producing (conventionally sanctioned) works of art. This modern approach to image production—de-centred, democratic, and unpretentious—is central to the idea of photography (Scott, *Spoken Image*, 30). Michel’s attitude and practice bring to mind what Westerbeck and Meyerowitz have remarked about the nature of urban photography by the late nineteenth century, epitomized by the life and work of Atget: “Working often in streets that were deserted, but courting the kind of surprise compositions and curiosities of framing that would become common later, the best photographers of the time set the stage for the drama that would unfold in the street photography of Cartier-Bresson, Walker Evans, or Robert Frank” (*Bystander*, 105).
- 53 Marcy Schwartz remarks that “Cortázar’s short fiction perpetuates a contemporary version of the Parisian *flâneur*

- moving among metropolitan crowds in search of alternative experience. . . . Cortázar uproots his *flâneurs* from the street and displaces them in urban interstices such as windows and corridors to emphasize fantastic otherness and the betweenness of Latin American urban cultural identity” (“Writing against the City,” 30). Sontag links the *flâneur* to the photographer, and both to voyeurism (*On Photography*, 24, 55). See also Gutiérrez Mouat, “Las babas del diablo,” 39.
- 54 Cortázar, “Algunos aspectos del cuento,” 371.
- 55 Sugano, “Beyond What Meets the Eye,” 335–36.
- 56 Translations of “Las babas del diablo” are from “Blow-Up,” translated by Paul Blackburn.
- 57 *The Mind’s Eye*, 42. See also Scott, *Spoken Image*, 63.
- 58 *The Mind’s Eye*, 66.
- 59 Kirstein, “Henri Cartier-Bresson,” 4. See Shloss, *In Visible Light*, 7.
- 60 The perceptual, and even “spiritual” and metaphysical, disponibility—or, to borrow a key concept in Cortázar’s writings, this openness or aperture, heir to the tradition of fantastic literature (Jackson, *Fantasy*, 22)—is a key feature in Cortázar (Sugano, “Beyond What Meets the Eye,” 334). In the essay “La muñeca rota,” included in *Ultimo round*, he speculates about the creative wealth of coincidences that, given the proper state of attention, coalesce around an event (vol. 1, 248). See also *Prosa del observatorio*, 49. This central attitude finds a graphic parallel in the way the photographic image ends up magnified, literally and figuratively, in “Las babas del diablo.” Michel blows up a first print when he returns from his stroll to the island, and he finds it so good that he repeats the procedure. The poster-size picture will eventually appear like a movie screen on which events uncannily unfold. Thus, the enlargement in size leads to a new, heightened regimen of representations: from fixed to moving image. A similar strategy is employed in “Apocalipsis de Solentiname.” Sugano writes that this story is “a blow-up of ‘Blow-up,’ politically, socially, and historically speaking” (“Beyond What Meets the Eye,” 345).
- 61 Kirstein, “Henri Cartier-Bresson,” 3.
- 62 Moran points out the irony of Michel’s “misjudgments, baseless conjectures, and the multiple and inconclusive angles from which he has viewed events” while he simultaneously expects “to capture the ‘naked’ truth in a single, apodictic gesture” with his camera (*Questions of the Liminal*, 98).
- 63 Volek, “Las babas del diablo,” 32.
- 64 See Gutiérrez Mouat, “Las babas del diablo,” 43; Meyer-Minnemann and Pérez y Effinger, “Narración paradójica,” 200; Moran, *Questions of the Liminal*, 13, 95; and Sugano, “Beyond What Meets the Eye,” 342.
- 65 *Fantastic*, 83. Musselwhite explains the dissolution and “death” of

- the singular self in the story in terms of the psychoanalytical concept of the phantasm, and the scattered narrative positions as a sort of psychosis (“Death and the Phantasm,” 63). Luciani reads the plot in terms of a mental breakdown too (“The Man in the Car,” 187). See also Zamora, “Voyeur/Voyant,” 49. Photography articulates the topic of mental breakdown in other writings by Cortázar: see his prologue to the book of photographs *Humanario* by Sara Facio and Alicia D’Amico entitled “Estrictamente no profesional.”
- 66 The links between photography and Surrealism have been highlighted by many critics. Sontag declared that, at the very “heart of the photographic enterprise,” and its interest in producing a reality in the second degree, lies Surrealism as a constitutional factor (*On Photography*, 52). Scott argues that “given that the speed of the shutter is what marks photography off from all other visual media, chance is crucial to any ‘aesthetic’, and indeed any expressivity, associated with photography, even at its most deliberately posed. In this regard, photography has aesthetic affinities with Surrealism, for the Surrealists not only looked upon chance as the instigator of images . . . they also believed in ‘le hasard objectif’ (‘objective chance’), that magical way in which external reality often fulfills the desires and impulses projected into it, a preordained coincidence” (*Spoken Image*, 18). Rosalind Krauss remarks that the photographic code captures better the surrealist aesthetic than the critical concepts drawn from traditional painting. She claims that the notion of reality-as-representation, which “lies at the very heart of surrealist thinking,” was best conveyed through the manipulations of spacing and doubling that surrealist photographers produced (“Corpus Delicti,” 112). For a thorough investigation of the links among the Surrealist project, the Freudian uncanny, and photography, see Foster, *Convulsive Beauty*.
- 67 Moran points out that in Cortázar’s stories, “the return of the repressed is almost without exception destructive, even lethal” (*Questions of the Liminal*, 16). González Echevarría refers to the “juego mortal” [mortal game] and the “violento ritual” [violent ritual] implied in Cortázar’s literary strategies (“*Los reyes: Mitología*,” 204).
- 68 For Krauss, “to produce the image of what one fears, in order to protect oneself from what one fears—this is the strategic achievement of anxiety, which arms the subject, in advance, against, the onslaught of trauma, the blow that takes one by surprise” (“Corpus Delicti,” 64).
- 69 Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 285.
- 70 Through these mechanical tools, Cortázar also calls attention to the links among media devices, fictional writing, and personal

- experience. He himself was using a typewriter and a photographic camera by the time he wrote the story, and even before—since his youth in Argentina. Among the many letters containing references to his photographic practice, see *Cartas 1937-1983*, vol. 1, 105. His loyalty to the typewriter would be in full display until the end of his career, as shown in *Los autonautas de la cosmopista*.
- 71 In his essay on “Las babas del diablo,” Gutiérrez Mouat includes as an epigraph a line from the opening poem of Baudelaire’s *Les fleurs du mal*, “Au Lecteur” [“To the Reader”]: C’est le Diable qui tient les fils qui nous remuent! (183) [The Devil’s hand directs our every move! (5)]. The verse encapsulates the demonic dimension of Cortázar’s text. Meyer-Minnemann and Pérez y Effinger suggest that the transgression of ontological boundaries leads to the death of the transgressor (“Narración paradójica,” 199). Jackson points out that nineteenth-century fantastic literature was reformulating the demonic, shedding its supernatural dimension and considering it an “an aspect of personal and interpersonal life, a manifestation of unconscious desire” (*Fantasy*, 55). Cortázar, who was heir to that tradition, adds to the mid-twentieth century a layer of ambiguity by allowing a supernatural reading of the text.
- 72 McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 7; Kittler, *Grammophon, Film, Typewriter*, xxxix.
- 73 See Grenville, “The Uncanny,” 13–48.
- 74 Michel himself is aware that media devices impose their own representational bias: “Michel sabía que el fotógrafo opera siempre como una permutación de su manera personal de ver el mundo por otra que la cámara le impone insidiosamente” (216) [Michel knew that the photographer always worked as a permutation of his personal way of seeing the world as other than the camera insidiously imposed upon it (117–18)]. The camera is thus an instrument of human dispossession. Scott spells out one version of this outcome that deprives agency to man through his own inventions: “Our relationship with photography seems, at first sight, to be one of personal dispossession. . . . [W]hatever the nature of the photographer’s preparations and the viewer’s responses, the camera takes the photograph, and in so doing ousts both the photographer and the viewer. The viewer cannot intervene in the image: it is past. The viewer cannot debate the meaning of the image: it has its own pre-emptive actuality. . . . The photographer, for his part, is superseded by his own product, or cast in the role of foster parent” (*Spoken Image*, 78–79).
- 75 Kittler, *Grammophon, Film, Typewriter*, 203.

- 76 See Kittler on the typewriter as machine gun (*ibid.*, 181) and Sontag on the camera as predatory weapon (*On Photography*, 14). In “Apocalipsis de Solentiname,” the repetitive sound of the slide projector’s magazine echoes that of a machine gun.
- 77 Grossvogel explores the idea of the breakdown of telling and the frustration of seeing in Cortázar’s work (“Blow-Up”).
- 78 Schwartz, *Culture of the Copy*, 223.
- 79 For Freud, the “impression of automatic, mechanical processes at work behind the ordinary appearance of mental activity” is one of the marks of the uncanny (“The Uncanny,” 226).
- 80 The rhetoric of capturing or seizing is pervasive in theories of photography. See Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 92, and Sontag, *On Photography*, 3–4.
- 81 Michel describes her reaction in this way: “ella [estaba] irritada, resueltamente hostiles su cuerpo y su cara que se sabían robados, ignominiosamente presos en una pequeña imagen química” (220). [She was irritated, her face and body flat-footedly hostile, feeling robbed, ignominiously recorded on a small chemical image. (124)]
- 82 González Echevarría identifies the linguistic markers of this nothingness and considers them as signs of the dissolution of individuality: “la *o* juega un papel fundamental en los nombres de muchos de los personajes de Cortázar: Nora, Wong, Oliveira, Roland, Romero, Roberto. Esa *o* o cero, es el grafismo que designa la ausencia, la disolución de la individualidad, la esfera que delimita la nada” [the *o* plays a key role in the names of many of Cortázar’s characters: Nora, Wong, Oliveira, Roland, Romero, Roberto. That *o*, or zero, is the grapheme that designates an absence, a dissolution of individuality, a sphere demarcating nothingness.] (“*Los reyes*: Mitología,” 217–18). Meyer-Minnemann and Pérez y Effinger point out that the man in black who approaches Michel “lleva la máscara de la muerte” (“Narración paradójica,” 200).
- 83 The clouds may point again to Baudelaire and his short prose fiction “Les nuages,” included in his *Petit Poems en Prose*. Baudelaire himself moved in 1843 to the Hôtel de Lauzun, on the Île Saint-Louis, a residence mentioned by Michel while he walks towards the tip of the island (quoted in Gutiérrez Mouat, “Las babas del diablo,” 46).
- 84 Again, Cartier-Bresson provides a useful background. He writes in his essay “The Decisive Moment”: “the world is movement, and you cannot be stationary in your attitude toward something that is moving. . . . You must be on the alert with the brain, the eye, the heart, and have a suppleness of body” (*The Mind’s Eye*, 24).
- 85 On the notions of ekphrastic hope, fear, and indifference, see Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 152–56.
- 86 Zamora, “Movement and Stasis,” 52.

- 87 Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 156. See also Heffernan, *Museum of Words*, 7.
- 88 To sum up this paradoxical situation, it could be said that, on the one hand, the photograph of the woman and the boy points to a seduction scene where the woman (or the man waiting in the car) is meant to (sexually) merge with the teenager, though this encounter ends up in a separation caused by the very act of picture-taking. On the other hand, the photographic print, a visual sign that opened a distance between Michel and the actual events unfolding, ends up merging in fantastic fashion distinct realms of existence.
- 89 *Corporealized Observers*, 290.
- 90 Ibid.
- 91 Ibid. Marks has also developed the concept of a haptic visuality, highlighting the tactile (and multisensory) nature of visual representations (*The Skin of the Film*, 159). Nancy refers to an ingrained eroticism of images, since their seduction is “nothing other than their availability for being taken, touched by the eyes, the hands, the belly, or by reason, and penetrated” (*The Ground of the Image*, 10).
- 92 Sobchack, “Scene of the Screen,” 92.
- 93 Moran, *Questions of the Liminal*, 12.
- 94 Commenting on Freud’s “The Uncanny,” Jackson writes that what is experienced as uncanny by the protagonist of E. T. A. Hoffmann’s “The Sandman,” Nathanael, is “an objectification of the subject’s anxieties, read into shapes external to himself” (*Fantasy*, 67). The same pattern is discernible in Roberto Michel’s thoughts and reactions.
- 95 Another image folded in four that inscribes forbidden desire appears in chapter 14 of *Rayuela*, when Wong shows Oliveira a sheet that contains a series of photographs of a Chinese torture. The photographs, made famous by Bataille’s *Les larmes d’Eros*, have had a productive intertextual fate in Latin American letters. They are the topic of an extended commentary by the Cuban writer Severo Sarduy in “Escrito sobre un cuerpo” (1125–37), as well as the main leitmotif of Salvador Elizondo’s novel *Farabeuf*, which I examine below. See also Baler, *Sentidos de la distorsión*, 127–34.
- 96 Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 158.
- 97 Cortázar, *Clases de literatura*, 110. Goloboff, *Julio Cortázar*, 261; Cardenal, *Insulas extrañas*, 421; Henighan, *Sandino’s Nation*, 289.
- 98 The protagonist of “Apocalipsis de Solentiname,” modeled after Cortázar himself, meets and chats with real-life Costa Rican and Nicaraguan friends of the author before heading to Solentiname and later with his partner Claudine, in Paris, but the climax of the story unfolds while he is by himself.
- 99 Rosenblum points out that “Color positive films (transparencies) still are preferred by many professionals because they have a finer grain and are therefore sharper than corresponding color negative film”

- (*World History of Photography*, 606).
- 100 Cortázar compares erotic fulfillment to the colour green: “Un clímax erótico final es siempre verde. . . . [Y]o creo que he utilizado en poesía o en prosa la idea del orgasmo como una especie de enorme ola verde, una cosa que sube así, que crece, una cresta verde” [A final erotic climax is always green. . . . I think I have used in poetry or prose the idea of the orgasm as a kind of huge green wave, something that rises like this, that grows, a green crest] (Picón Garfield, *Cortázar por Cortázar*, 87). Opposition between colour and grey tones can be found in the introduction to “Noticias del mes de Mayo,” where Cortázar praises “el color que asalta los grises anfiteatros” [the colour that takes by storm the grey amphitheatres] (*Ultimo round*, vol. 1, 88). Explicit references to colour appear in chapters 36, 56, 64, 88, and 133 of *Rayuela*.
- 101 Leys points out that, “according to the temporal logic of what Freud called *nachträglichkeit*, ‘deferred action,’ trauma was constituted by a relationship between two events or experiences—a first event that was not necessarily traumatic because it came too early in the child development to be understood and assimilated, and a second event that also was not inherently traumatic but that triggered a memory of the first event that only then was given traumatic meaning and hence repressed” (*Trauma*, 20). Mulvey defines this deferred action as “the way the unconscious preserves a specific experience, while its traumatic effect might only be realized by another, later but associated, event” (*Death 24x a Second*, 8). In *Spectral Evidence*, Baer approaches a photograph “not as the parceling-out and preservation of time but as an access to another kind of experience that is explosive, instantaneous, distinct—a chance to see in a photograph not narrative, not history, but possibly trauma” (6).
- 102 Sanjinés, *Paseos en el horizonte*, 24; Tittler, “Dos Solentinames de Cortázar,” 112.
- 103 Invented in 1948 by Edwin Land, the Polaroid camera made instant one-step photography possible. It became popular thanks to technological improvements in the 1960s (Rosenblum, *World History of Photography*, 603–4).
- 104 A rhetoric of magic and wonder has accompanied photomechanical processes since photography was invented (Newhall, *History of Photography*, 18). In the twentieth century, critics of photography who employ this rhetoric include Bazin (“Ontology,” 11), Sontag (*On Photography*, 155) and Cavell (*The World Viewed*, 18). Writing in the late 1970s, Barthes saw photography as an “emanation of *past reality*: a magic, not an art” (*Camera Lucida*, 88). Similarly, Gunning points to a widespread phenomenon of our “enlightened”

- modernity: “new technologies on first appearance can seem somehow magical and uncanny, recalling the wish fulfillments that magical thought projected into fairy tales and rituals of magic” (“Uncanny Reflections,” 68, 79, 85). Critics such as Kracauer (“Photography,” 53), Sekula (*Photography against the Grain*, 10), and Snyder (“What Happens by Itself,” 371) argue against the interpretation of photography as a miraculous technology, stressing its cultural and ideological conditions. See also Brunet, *Photography and Literature*, 30.
- 105 Zamora, *Writing the Apocalypse*, 87.
- 106 One of the reactions of the dazed protagonist after the display of violence on the screen is to go to the bathroom and, perhaps, vomit. Claudine arrives home after the show has concluded, and the protagonist remains silent and transfixed in his shock: “sin explicarle nada porque todo era un solo nudo desde la garganta hasta las uñas de los pies, me levanté y despacio la senté en mi sillón y algo debí decir de que iba a buscarle un trago. En el baño creo que vomité, o solamente lloré y después vomité o no hice nada y solamente estuve sentado en el borde de la bañera dejando pasar el tiempo.” (159) [without explaining anything because everything was one single knot from my throat down to my toenails, I go up and slowly sat her down in my chair and I must have said something to her about going to get her a drink. In the bathroom I think I threw up or didn’t do anything and just sat on the edge of the bathtub letting time pass. (126)]. Effects on the stomach, this most sensitive of human organs, are also alluded to in “Las babas del diablo,” where anxiety is closely linked to physicality, and words are entrusted to provide catharsis (214–15).
- 107 Volek, “Las babas del diablo,” 27; Gutiérrez Mouat, “Las babas del diablo,” 37.
- 108 The idea of the mind as a photographic device where images become permanently inscribed was also developed in the short stories “El retrato” (1910) and “La cámara oscura” (1920) by the Uruguayan writer Horacio Quiroga. See chapter 2.
- 109 Elizondo points out that “la fotografía es un *leitmotiv* más reiterado en casi toda mi obra que el espejo [*sic*]” [photography is a more recurrent *leitmotiv* in most of my work than the mirror] (Glantz, *Repeticiones*, 33).
- 110 Fragmentation is a mark, as Linda Nochlin states, of the experience of the modern: “a loss of wholeness, a shattering of connection, a destruction or disintegration of permanent value” (*The Body in Pieces*, 22–23). Photography has a privileged role in this context since, as she adds, it is the “primary source of modern visual culture” (*ibid.*, 24). In her study of the fragment in contemporary Mexican literature, Clark D’Lugo points out that “One

interpretation of the prevalence of the fragmentation in twentieth-century fiction is that it serves symbolically as a representation of the world as we experience it. The control and unity associated with the world prior to World War I have crumbled” (*The Fragmented Novel*, 10). On the fragmentariness of photography see Sontag, *On Photography*, 17, and Perkowska, *Pliegues visuales*, 103.

- 111 *Cuaderno de escritura*, 423.
- 112 Sontag writes that Bataille “kept a photograph taken in China in 1910 [sic] of a prisoner undergoing ‘the death of a hundred cuts’ on his desk, where he could look at it every day. . . . ‘This photograph’ Bataille wrote, ‘had a decisive role in my life. I have never stopped being obsessed by this image of pain, at the same time ecstatic and intolerable’” (*Regarding the Pain*, 98). For the source of the photographs used by Bataille, see Romero (“Ficción e historia,” 411). The photograph was first used by Elizondo in an essay entitled “Morfeo o la decadencia del sueño,” published in October 1962 in *S.NO.B*, a literary magazine of which he was director. For a history and legal context of Chinese torture and execution, and the corresponding Western understanding, see Brook, Bourgon, and Blue, *Death by a Thousand Cuts*. Textual and iconographic materials about the Leng Tch’è, or *lingchi*, can be found online; see “Chinese Torture / Supplice Chinois: Iconographic,

Historical and Literary Approaches of an Exotic Representation,” Jérôme Bourgon, editorial director, accessed 15 August 2014, <http://turandot.chineselegalculture.org>. Elkins questions the entrenched Bataille interpretation of the photographs when he asserts that “It was widely assumed by Westerners that the *lingchi* was an operation intended to produce pain. There is no evidence for that in the Chinese texts. Rather it appears that the purpose was to ensure that the man could not take his place with the ancestors because he would be given an improper burial” (“On the Complicity,” 81). Elizondo’s novel is named after a real-life French medical doctor, Louis Herbert Farabeuf (1841–1910), an eminent surgeon who wrote a treatise on amputations entitled *Précis de manuel opératoire* (1881), illustrated with high-quality engravings, which Elizondo discovered in his thirties (Lemus, “Más allá,” 67).

- 113 In his essay “El putridero óptico,” on Gironella, Elizondo writes, “Toda obra de arte es el origen de un delirio. Si no lo es, ha fracasado.” (408) [Every work of art is the origin of a delirium. If it isn’t, it has failed.] An aphorism included in the section “La esfinge perpleja” states, “Fin de la obra de arte (quizá): expresar las fuentes del delirio.” (*Cuaderno de escritura*, 454) [Aim of the work of art (perhaps): to express the sources of delirium.] An aesthetics of

- psychological upheaval dominates Elizondo's view on the origins of art. Rimbaud's "self-conscious sensual derangement" (Jay, *Downcast Eyes*, 238) also comes to mind as one of Elizondo's literary sources.
- 114 Lemus, "Más allá," 68.
- 115 Preminger and Brogan, "Enargeia," 332. See also Webb, "Ekphrasis Ancient and Modern," 13.
- 116 Ríos, *Espectros de luz*, 72.
- 117 Guerrero argues that "Se narra desde un espejo, donde el 'nosotros' es el reflejo de todas las imágenes e instantes que se han posado en él" [Narration proceeds from a mirror, where the "we" is the reflection of the all the images and moments that have sat on it] (*Farabeuf a través del espejo*, 47). The claim is only partially supported by the text, and ultimately undecidable. Rather than trying to pin down the abstruse narrative structure of the novel, I claim that the uncertainty enveloping the events lies at the centre of the author's literary intention. As a kind of literary contagion, Elizondo's brand of literary delirium has produced some scholarly interpretations which seem no less delirious. René Jara's heavy-handed structuralist interpretation (*Farabeuf*), and Alberto Moreiras's deconstructionist essay ("Ekphrasis y signo terrible en *Farabeuf*"), rather than elucidating the novel, immerse the reader in a conceptual instability similar—but, poetically, less appealing—to the one produced by the novel. See also José, *Farabeuf y la estética del mal*.
- 118 Stephen Heath points out that in the novels of this movement "all the insistence is on the specificity of the text and the activity of its reading" (*The Nouveau Roman*, 30), as is the case with *Farabeuf*. Patricia Martínez delineates the following defining features of the *nouveau roman*, which are also shared by *Farabeuf*: emphasis on description and primacy of the visual; phenomenological description of mental processes; the literary work understood as a self-sufficient, closed system; fiction as a theme of fiction; the creation of effects of dispersion, deception, and defamiliarization through the multiplication of perspectives; and the juxtaposition of unrelated sequences (Introduction to *El mirón*, 22–39). See also McMurray, "Salvador Elizondo's 'Farabeuf,'" 597.
- 119 Quoted in Shaw, *Post-Boom*, 169–70.
- 120 For example, an unidentified narrator, addressing the woman, comments on "ese compromiso ineludible que has concertado con tu pasado, con un pasado que crees que es el tuyo pero que no te pertenece más que en el delirio, en la angustia que te invade cuando miras esa fotografía" (36) [the ineluctable compromise you have made with your past, a past you think is yours but which in fact belongs to you only in your delirium, in the anguish that invades you when you look at that

- photograph (19)]. See also pp. 20, 93, 128 and 148.
- 121 See Sarduy, "Escrito sobre un cuerpo," 1136, and Curley, *En la isla desierta*, 135. In perhaps the most cogent review of *Farabeuf*, McMurray points out that "the work could have various interpretations, but it assumes greater plausibility if one supposes that the woman is insane (that is suggested more than once) and that all the action (partly real, partly imagined and partly anticipated) takes place in her mind. The obscure question that she asks of the Ouija board and the Chinese puzzle turns out to be '¿Quién soy?' Thus the novel chronicles a deranged woman's search for identity by evoking an obsessive 'instante,' a fabulous moment of simultaneous orgasm and death or of physical love and dissection" ("Salvador Elizondo's 'Farabeuf,'" 597). Manuel Durán has suggested that the "true" instant toward which all the others converge in the novel is the moment when a tormented woman dies (*Triptico mexicano*, 153). This privileged instant echoes other moments where the extremes of sensory perception—and the limits between life and death, literally and figuratively—are at play: the death of the Chinese boxer, lovemaking, a surgical operation, and a ritual sacrifice. See Filer, "Salvador Elizondo," 216.
- 122 Elizondo re-elaborates in *Farabeuf* the topic of violence against women that stems from the writings of the Marquis de Sade and the tradition of French Romanticism leading up to the Surrealists. See Curley, *En la isla desierta*, 137, and Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, chap. 3. The topic also appears in Elizondo's semi-fictional *Autobiografía precoz* (72–73), where the narrator, in a fit of violence against his wife, cynically lends a measure of support to acts of aggression against women.
- 123 The proliferation and piling up of violent scenes leads to a traumatic onslaught, defined in psychoanalysis in economic terms: "an influx of excitations that is excessive by the standard of the subject's tolerance and capacity to master such excitations and work them out psychically" (Laplanche and Pontalis, "Trauma (Psychical)," 465)." See note 101 in this chapter and note 33 in chapter 3.
- 124 Curley, *En la isla desierta*, 104. See also Ríos, *Espectros de luz*, 76.
- 125 As the author stated in an interview with Jorge Ruffinelli, "un aspecto que para mí resulta fundamental no sólo en *Farabeuf* sino en casi todos mis libros, relatos y otras cosas que he escrito: eso es, más que el orden de la instantaneidad, el orden de la *fijeza*, que se caracteriza tangiblemente en la narración por la aparición inevitable de la noción de fotografía" [One aspect that for me is crucial not only in *Farabeuf* but in almost all of my books, stories and other writings: that is, more than the realm of instantaneity, the realm of *fixity*, which manifests

itself in the narrative by the unavoidable appearance of the notion of photography] (Ruffinelli, “Salvador Elizondo,” 155). Sobchack describes in these terms the investment of the photograph with fixity and the irretrievable past: “The photographic—unlike the cinematic and the electronic—functions neither as a coming-into-being (a presence always presently constituting itself) nor as being-in-itself (an absolute presence). Rather, it functions to fix a being-that-has-been (a presence in the present that is always past). Paradoxically, as it objectifies and preserves in its act of possession, the photographic has something to do with loss, with pastness, and with death, its meanings and value intimately bound within the structure and investments of nostalgia” (“Scene of the Screen,” 93). One of Elizondo’s favorite poetic images, from the poem “Humildemente. . .” included in the book *Zozobra* (1919) by Mexican poet Ramón López Velarde, points to a moment when continuous action is paralyzed, as if captured in a snapshot: “Mi prima, con la aguja/en alto, tras sus vidrios,/ está inmóvil con un gesto de estatua” (180) [My cousin, with the needle/up high, behind her glasses,/ keeps still with the gesture of a statue]. (Elizondo, personal communication from the author, June 15, 2002).

126 Sontag notes that “when it comes to remembering, the photographs [have] the deeper bite [compared to

the “nonstop imagery” of cinema, television, and video]. Memory freeze-frames; its basic unit is the single image” (*Regarding the Pain*, 22). As Hughes and Noble point out, photographs “perform as metaphor for the process of perception and memory” and are “analogues of memory” (“Introduction,” 5). Nonetheless, the late Roland Barthes, who acknowledges the power of photographs to arrest time, argues that photographs actually block memory (*Camera Lucida*, 91). For Kracauer, photographic and mnemonic images are at odds, in terms of the specificities of their production: “Photography grasps what is given as a spatial (or temporal) continuum; memory images retain what is given only insofar as it has significance” (“Photography,” 50).

- 127 *Power of Photography*, 218.
 128 Cioran, *Short History of Decay*, 31.
 129 Sontag, *On Photography*, 13.
 130 “Elizondo, *Cuaderno de escritura*, 404. See also *Autobiografía precoz* (56). The first edition of *Cuaderno de escritura* (1969) includes a reproduction of a painting by Gironella whose model is the photograph of the execution (“Gironella”, 70). The essay “Gironella” appears in *Obras* under the name of “El putridero óptico”.
 131 Curley acknowledges the influence of Borges, but in reference to a couple of seemingly secondary issues: “el azar y la realidad exterior” [chance and outside reality] (*En la isla desierta*, 17, 25).

- Donald Shaw writes that “A pesar de su erotismo, entonces, *Farabeuf* es una novela esencialmente metafísica, cuyo tema fundamental nos recuerda más que nada el de ‘La escritura de Dios’ de Borges” [Despite its eroticism, *Farabeuf* is essentially a metaphysical novel, whose main subject reminds us above all of “The Writing of the God” by Borges] (*Nueva narrativa hispanoamericana*, 335). As I show below, those topics and that story are not at the centre of Elizondo’s literary universe.
- 132 As Filer remarks, “The flow of anticipatory images of death attributed to this protagonist and the ‘mental drama’ of Dr. Farabeuf also echo Borges’s story ‘The Secret Miracle’: Jaromir Hladik, after living through hundreds of deaths before being executed, during one year that elapses only within his mind concluded a drama that does not take place except as ‘the circular delirium’ interminably lived and relived by the character Kubin” (“Salvador Elizondo,” 216–17).
- 133 Borges, “El milagro secreto,” 512.
- 134 See Russek, “Borges’ Photographic Fictions,” in which I analyze the role of photography in “Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius,” “La otra muerte,” “El zahir,” “El Aleph,” and “El milagro secreto.”
- 135 *Fantasy*, 72. In *The Ground of the Image*, Jean-Luc Nancy describes violence as “a stubborn will that removes itself from any set of connections and is concerned only with its own shattering intrusion” (16). This describes well the inner dynamics of delirium as deployed in the novel.
- 136 Borges, “El milagro secreto,” 511.
- 137 Borges, “El zahir,” 592.
- 138 *Ibid.*, 594. In an essay devoted to the poetry of Borges, Elizondo refers to the zahir as “la posibilidad de un tiempo capaz de conjugar un número infinito de espacios en la dimensión obsesiva de la memoria personal” [the possibility of a time capable of blending an infinite number of spaces in the obsessive dimension of personal memory] (*Cuaderno de escritura*, 389). In truth, the zahir represents not an infinite number of spaces (as is the case with its fictional twin, the aleph), but a single mental space that ends up absorbing all others.
- 139 Praz quotes a passage from Baudelaire, in reference to Edgar Allan Poe, expressing this idea: “Le caractère, la genie, le style d’un homme est formé par les circonstances en apparence vulgaires de sa première jeunesse. Si tous les hommes qui ont occupé la scène du monde avaient noté leurs impressions d’enfance, quel excellent dictionnaire psychologique nous posséderions!” (*Romantic Agony*, 184n174) [The personality, the genius, the style of a man is formed by the seemingly vulgar circumstances of his early youth. If all men who have occupied the world stage had written down their childhood impressions, what an excellent psychological dictionary we would possess!]. “Ein Heldenleben,”

- written when Elizondo was in his fifties, explores a childhood recollection involving a violent episode against a defenceless Jewish boy in Nazi Germany (*Camera Lucida*, 539–47).
- 140 *Autobiografía*, 22, 25; see also Jackson, *Fantasy*, 48; Lemus, “Más allá,” 65.
- 141 *Cuaderno de escritura*, 370.
- 142 *Ibid.*, 369.
- 143 According to Foucault, “one of the primary objects of discipline is to fix,” and discipline “arrests or regulates movements” (*Discipline and Punish*, 218, 219).
- 144 Spanish passages from *Farabeuf* are taken from the version published in *Narrativa completa* translations are from *Farabeuf*, translated by John Incledon.
- 145 The persistence of these images are for Elizondo “un ejemplo de lo que puede ser el retorno a la infancia llevado a sus extremos críticos. Un hecho es importante: el de que las imágenes que han poblado nuestras mentes infantiles jamás se borran. A ellas acudimos siempre que queremos evocar ese período de nuestra vida, y es justamente por esto por lo que la literatura de nuestra infancia puede jugar, llegado el caso, un papel tan inmensamente importante” [an example of what the return to childhood can mean when taken to its critical extreme. One fact has to be borne in mind: the images that have inhabited our mind during childhood never go away. We resort to them when we want to evoke that period of life, and it is because
- of this that the literature of our childhood can play, in some cases, such an immensely important role] (*Cuaderno de escritura*, 371).
- 146 *Ibid.*, 404.
- 147 Quoted in Curley, *En la isla desierta*, 49–50.
- 148 Sontag, *On Photography*, 20.
- 149 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 27. Linfield makes the point that photographs bring us closer to the experience of suffering than art or journalism (*Cruel Radiance*, xv).
- 150 See the essay “De la violencia,” which closely follows the later work of Georges Bataille.
- 151 Freedberg, *Power of Images*, 19. See also Brooks, *Body Work*, 9.
- 152 Sontag, *Regarding the Pain*, 96.
- 153 Freud, “The Uncanny,” 231.
- 154 Clark D’Lugo claims that the thorough disintegration deployed in the novel leads to a final synthesis: “In *Farabeuf* one sign leads to another that, in turn, reflects a third, *ad infinitum* building a totally unified whole. . . . All is one in a giant equation of equivalencies that eventually returns to the starting point” (147). On the contrary, I argue, there is no unified whole in *Farabeuf*, no final resolution to the enigmatic linkage of the recurring narrative fragments—unless, as Paz suggests, we consider death (“la respuesta definitiva y universal” [the ultimate and universal answer] as the ultimate unifier (“El signo y el garabato,” 502). The nature of *Farabeuf*’s photographic delirium implies that no ultimate stable

- framework can be found to make sense of the text as a whole.
- 155 In the context of world cinema, the scene of the cutting of the eye at the beginning of *Un chien andalou*, the short film by Dalí and Buñuel, is explicitly considered by Elizondo as one of the quintessential violent images produced in the twentieth century (*Cuaderno de escritura*, 404). For Bataille, this image shows “to what extent horror becomes fascinating” (“Eye,” 19). For more cutting blades, see Elizondo’s short fiction “Mnemothreptos.”
- 156 Gernsheim and Gernsheim, *History of Photography*, 117.
- 157 The picture is included in all the editions of the novel, signaling its paratextual importance. However central the role of the photograph is, not all critics have highlighted its presence. For example, Shaw points out the purposes of the book without even mentioning the picture (*Post-Boom*, 169–70). Clark D’Lugo acknowledges that the photograph is central to the meaning of the novel, but she refers to the image as a “photograph of a human being undergoing dissection,” when the torture would be better described as a vivisection (*The Fragmented Novel*, 145). See also Curley, *En la isla desierta*, 146; Glantz, *Repeticiones*, p.17 p.17 p.1 17; and Williams, *The Postmodern Novel*, 25.
- 158 Sarduy, “Escrito sobre un cuerpo,” 1135; Moreiras, *Tercer espacio*, 329.
- 159 Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 153.
- 160 Curley, *En la isla desierta*, 49.
- 161 Linfield, *Cruel Radiance*, 39.
- 162 See Lemus, “Más allá,” 68; Teresa, *Farabeuf*, 18.
- 163 Linfield, *Cruel Radiance*, 22.
- 164 Heffernan, *Museum of Words*, 7.
- 165 Elkins and Di Bella allude to this interpellation by the photograph when they state that “no understanding of images of pain can be complete without an interrogation of the viewer’s interests and even the viewer’s pleasure” (“Preface,” 13).
- 166 No commonplace in the theory of photography is more enduring than the notion of the photograph as a fixed and frozen image, and photography as a medium that both arrests life and deceptively preserves the perishable and vanishing. Art historian Martha Langford writes about the “provocative ambiguity” at the heart of the medium: “to be photographed is somewhat akin to dying; to photograph is an act of soft murder; to be photographed is an act of self-perpetuation” (*Suspended Conversations*, 27). On the many links between photography and death, see Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 14, 31, 92; Bazin, “Ontology,” 9–10; Cadava, *Words of Light*, 27; Linfield, *Cruel Radiance*, 65; Metz, “Photography and Fetish,” 157–58; Sobchack, “Scene of the Screen,” 93; and Sontag, *On Photography*, 70, and *Regarding the Pain*, 24. See also Linkman, *Photography and Death*, and Ruby, *Secure the Shadow*.
- 167 Elizondo, *Autobiografía precoz*, 56–57.

- 168 Regarding this sense of completion in the midst of suffering, Elaine Scarry writes that “torture aspires to the totality of pain” (*Body in Pain*, 55).
- 169 Elkins, *The Object Stares Back*, 136–37.
- 170 Even the author acknowledged a tendency to sensationalize this domain of experience (Ruffinelli, “Salvador Elizondo,” 155). He also pointed out that “El escenario de *Farabeuf* es la epidermis del cuerpo. Todo lo que pasa allí, pasa en un nivel sensible” [The stage in *Farabeuf* is the body’s epidermis. Everything that happens there, happens on a sensitive level]. (quoted in Glantz, *Repeticiones*, 28).
- 171 Benjamin, “Work of Art,” 220; Bazin, “Ontology,” 13–14.
- 172 About these theoretical positions, see, respectively, Krauss, “Photographic Conditions of Surrealism,” 110, and *Notes on the Index*, 203; Bazin, “Ontology,” 14; and Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 80.
- 173 The photograph that obsesses the woman in *Farabeuf* is not displayed on a wall, that is, it is not meant exclusively to be seen. It is a print placed between the pages of a book and stored in a drawer, a circumstance that implies a functional link with tacitly. The photograph has also been printed in a newspaper, which offers yet another instance of a medium that requires handling.
- 174 Williams, *Corporealized Observers*, 290.
- 175 Curley, *En la isla desierta*, 92.
- 176 Benjamin, “Work of Art,” 235–36; McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 3; Jay, *Downcast Eyes*, 3, 7, 133.
- 177 Brooks, *Body Work*, 96.
- 178 *Ibid.*, 100.
- 179 Edward Weston, for one, asserted that “the discriminating photographer can reveal the essence of what lies before his lens in a close-up with such clear insight that the beholder will find the recreated image more real and comprehensible than the actual object” (quoted in Frampton, “Impromptus on Edward Weston,” 68).

2 | FAMILY PORTRAITS IN QUIROGA, RULFO, OCAMPO, AND PIÑERA

- 1 See Hirsch, *Family Frames*; Spence and Holland, eds., *Family Snaps*; and Langford, *Suspended Conversations*.
- 2 Sarlo, “Horacio Quiroga,” 1285. See also Rivera, “Profesionalismo literario,” 1262, and Alonso, *Burden of Modernity*, 115.
- 3 Sarlo, “Horacio Quiroga,” 1278.
- 4 Brignole and Delgado, *Vida y obra*, 58. Biographical information is drawn from the 1939 biography of Quiroga by Alberto Brignole and José Delgado, who were friends of the writer. See also Orgambide, *Horacio Quiroga*.
- 5 Black, “Amateur Photographer,” 149–53; Gautrand, “Photography,” 233–41; Gernsheim and Gernsheim, *History of Photography*, 413–15, 422–25; Newhall, *History of Photography*, 128–29;

- Rosenblum, *World History of Photography*, 259, 442–48.
- 6 Brignole and Delgado, *Vida y obra*, 59.
 - 7 Ibid, 60. On the cultural importance of the Kodak, see references in chapter 1.
 - 8 In a journal entry dated 17 April 1900, Quiroga writes about the prospect of photographing Teide, the volcano towering over Tenerife: “Esta mañana se ve el Tenerife [*sic*], al Oeste, a distancia de 15 ó 20 lenguas. Se distingue entre brumas, su cono enorme, casqueado de nieve. La mitad inferior está oculta por montes y serranías lejanas. Veré de tomar a mediodía una instantánea.” [This morning the Tenerife [*sic*] is visible, fifteen or twenty leagues to the west. It is noticeable through the haze, its huge peak, covered with snow. The lower part is hidden by hills and distant ranges. I will see to take a snapshot by noon.] (*Diario y correspondencia*, 31) References in his *Diario* to his camera shed indirect light on his Parisian adventure, which would turn sour after a few weeks. Quiroga, dreaming of a bohemian life, found himself alone and bored after a few weeks and soon ran out of money. Unable to let his family know about his dire straits, after a month in Paris he was forced, desperate and humiliated, to pawn his bicycle and his camera to feed himself (Ibid., 58–59).
 - 9 Brignole and Delgado, *Vida y obra*, 142. See also Orgambide, *Horacio Quiroga*, 51.
 - 10 Brignole and Delgado, *Vida y obra*, 152–53; Henríquez Ureña, *Breve historia del modernismo*, 248.
 - 11 See Brennan, “‘The Contexts of Vision,’” 219–20; Wade, *Natural History of Vision*, 11–15.
 - 12 This was an important token of remembrance, at a time when modern visual culture was emerging and the symbolic and emotional value of pictures of this sort was higher than it is today. Regarding the late nineteenth century, Linkman points out that in the West, “for those denied the ‘privilege’ of attendance at the deathbed, a post-mortem portrait may have offered a form of proxy admission to the theatre of death and so provided some measure of consolation” (*Photography and Death*, 16).
 - 13 Rodríguez Monegal, *Genio y figura*, 137–38.
 - 14 Jitrik, *Horacio Quiroga*, 111–29.
 - 15 See Poe’s “The Imp of the Perverse.” On Poe’s influence on Quiroga, see Alonso, *Burden of Modernity*, 113–14; Englekirk, *Edgar Allan Poe*; and Glantz, “Poe en Quiroga.”
 - 16 Rodríguez Monegal points out that “las alucinaciones de su [Quiroga] adolescencia aparecen superadas ahora en un relato de horror que echa sus raíces en la realidad misma” [the hallucinations of Quiroga’s adolescence are now overcome in a horror story that has its roots in reality itself] (*Genio y figura*, 138). The Freudian uncanny, “that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar,” applies quite

- literally to the episode Quiroga describes (Freud, "The Uncanny," 220).
- 17 Goldberg, *Power of Photography*, 11; Linkman, *Photography and Death*, 18; Norfleet, *Looking at Death*, 12.
- 18 Quiroga's description, by pursuing a literary effect, goes against the conventional norms of portraiture of the times. Linkman remarks that "photographers were clearly expected to aim for an expression that was free of any suggestion of pain, and which could convey a reassuring sense of peace and serenity" (*Photography and Death*, 24). Against the notion of an idealized picture, Quiroga's point is precisely to highlight a crude realism.
- 19 The scene recalls another of Poe's favorite subjects, the premature burial. See Royle, *The Uncanny*, 159, and Freud, "The Uncanny," 244.
- 20 If the photographic process of soaking a glass or paper in a chemical bath can be "likened to a birth process," Quiroga is figuratively giving birth to death (Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 173).
- 21 Gunning, "Phantom Images," 52.
- 22 Cortázar, literary kin to Quiroga in his probing of the dark side of the human soul, also invokes an ominous half-open mouth (that of the man in black), at the end of "Las babas del diablo" as a graphic representation of the threshold between life and death (224).
- 23 Alonso, *Burden of Modernity*, 118.
- 24 As Canfield claims; see "Transformación del sitio," 1365.
- 25 For a critical reassessment of Rulfo as photographer, see Russek, "Rulfo, Photography." For a survey of critical literature on the subject, see Benjamin Fraser, "Problems of Photographic Criticism." Brunet writes that "The practice of photography by writers—from Giovanni Verga, G. B. Shaw, J. M. Synge or the young William Faulkner, to Jerzy Kozinsky, Richard Wright or Michel Tournier—became almost banal, though in most cases it did not come to light or prominence until the 1970s or 1980s, as in the example of Eudora Welty, long known as a storyteller before her photography of the rural American South in the 1930s was publicized" (*Photography and Literature*, 125).
- 26 For all the interest Rulfo's photography has recently generated, few critics have stopped to closely examine this passage. Commentators such as Margo Glantz ("Ojos de Juan Rulfo," 18) and Erika Billeter ("Juan Rulfo," 39) have quoted it in relation to Rulfo's photographic production without considering its significance in the broader context of the novel. An exception to this approach is the essay "Recuperación de la imagen materna a la luz de elementos fantásticos en *Pedro Páramo*" by Hedy Habra, who points out the importance of the photograph in the overall structure of the text (91–92). See my comments on this essay below.

- 27 Spanish passages from Pedro Páramo are taken from the version edited by José Carlos González Boixo; translations are from *Pedro Páramo*, translated by Margaret Sayers Peden.
- 28 In the quotation, the verb “reconocer” has a polysemic dimension, referring to visual, legal, and even emotional recognition.
- 29 Habra has also highlighted the figure of the mother in her study of the fantastic elements in the novel. By stressing the importance of female figures as doubles of the mother, she argues that the search of Juan Preciado for his true self leads him to identify with his mother, not his father (“Recuperación de la imagen maternal,” 91). Rodríguez Monegal sees in the mother the driving force behind Juan’s actions (“Relectura de Pedro Páramo,” 132). On the role of the mother in the novel, see also Franco (“Viaje al país,” 144) and Bradu (“Ecos de Páramo,” 228).
- 30 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 9.
- 31 Metz points out that “The familiar photographs that many people always carry with them obviously belong to the order of fetishes in the ordinary sense of the word” (“Photography and Fetish,” 161).
- 32 Bradu, “Ecos de Páramo,” 227; Campbell, “Prólogo,” 241; Franco, “Viaje al país,” 142, and Poniatowska, “¡Ay vida!,” 523.
- 33 Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 72.
- 34 Sontag, *On Photography*, 16.
- 35 Benítez, “Conversaciones con Juan Rulfo,” 15.
- 36 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 27.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 73. See Brunet, *Photography and Literature*, 64.
- 38 The holes in the photograph also represent the limits (and pitfalls) of memory itself. Marianne Hirsch explains thusly her use of the notion of “postmemory,” which is “connected to Henri Raczymow’s ‘mémoire trouée,’ his ‘memory shot through with holes,’ defining also the indirect and fragmentary nature of second-generation memory. Photographs in their enduring ‘umbilical’ [Barthes] connection to life are precisely the medium connecting the first- and second-generation remembrance, memory and postmemory. They are the leftovers, the fragmentary sources and building blocks, shot through with holes, of the work of postmemory. They affirm the past’s existence and, in their flat two-dimensionality, they signal its unbridgeable distance” (*Family Frames*, 23).
- 39 The first one is a childhood scene, where the young Pedro picks up some coins from “la repisa del Sagrado Corazón” (76) [the shelf where the picture of the Sacred Heart stood (27)] to run an errand at the request of his grandmother. The second is alluded to by González Boixo, editor of the novel, who explains a passage where Ana, Father Rentería’s niece, tells her uncle that many women came to look for him while he was in Contla. González Boixo points out that the reason so many women came to see the priest was because

- “el primer viernes de cada mes está dedicado al Sagrado Corazón de Jesús; son días de especial devoción” (*Pedro Páramo*, 128n80 [the first Friday of every month is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; they are days of solemn devotion]).
- 40 Sommers, “Los muertos,” 520.
- 41 Other letters refer to Clara explicitly as mother and to himself as her son. See, for example, letters 11, 71, 73, and 79. In letter 68 (dated 4 September 1948), Rulfo writes to Clara: “Madre: Pronto nos veremos, tal vez el sábado, y quiera Dios que todo salga bien y nos ayude. (. . .) Acuérdate de tu hijo que te ama mucho y te da muchos besos y toda su vida” (271) [Mother, we’ll see each other soon, maybe Saturday. God will help us and see that everything turns out fine. . . . Remember that your son loves you with all his heart, sends you kisses and will do anything for you.]. As anecdotal evidence, the orphanage “Luis Silva,” where Rulfo stayed from 1927 to 1932, was originally named “Orfanatorio del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús” (Vital, *Noticias sobre Juan Rulfo*, 48).
- 42 References to the heart appear, in some form, in forty-nine of the eighty-one published letters.
- 43 In an essay published in the catalogue for an exhibit of contemporary Mexican art, Olivier Debrouse links devotion and deviance when he points out that the traditional cult of the Sacred Heart “planteaba . . . un serio problema al dogma, puesto que la incontrolable crudeza de las representaciones de las llagas y del corazón de Cristo sugerían desbordamientos sensuales que colindaban en lo obscuro” [raised serious problems for Catholic dogma, since the out-of-control rawness of the representations of stigmata and the heart of Christ evoked a sensual overflowing that border on the obscene] (*Corazón Sangrante*, 16).
- 44 Bradu, “Ecos de Páramo,” 216.
- 45 Villoro, “Lección de arena,” 411.
- 46 Franco, “Viaje al país,” 155; Ortega, “Enigmas de Pedro Páramo,” 388.
- 47 Benítez, “Conversaciones con Juan Rulfo,” 15.
- 48 “Ecos de Páramo,” 236. Bradu goes on to say that “Cada recinto, cada fragmento es, para Rulfo, una fotografía, una instantánea cuya duración no está dada por el paso del tiempo sino por una minuciosa evocación de su contenido” [each enclosure, each fragment is, for Rulfo, a photograph, a snapshot whose duration does not depend on time’s passing, but on a detailed evocation of its content], apparently suggesting that the quality of his descriptions is as minute and precise as a photograph (*ibid.*). However, it is doubtful that Rulfo’s descriptions are in fact “minuciosas” [detailed, meticulous]. Moreover, she contradicts this photographic quality of Rulfo’s writing when she states that “sus personajes no tienen cara ni fisonomía y muy escasas características visuales” [his characters don’t have a face

- nor physiognomy and very few visual features] (ibid., 241). By contrast, Octavio Paz didn't think that Rulfo's writing was akin to photography or any other visual art, but rather expressed a mythic vision that reached a layer beyond representation: "Juan Rulfo . . . no nos ha entregado un documento fotográfico o una pintura impresionista sino que sus intuiciones y obsesiones personales han encarnado en la piedra, el polvo, el pirú. Su visión de este mundo es, en realidad, visión de *otro mundo*" [Juan Rulfo . . . has not given us a photographic document or an impressionist painting; instead, his personal obsessions and intuitions are embodied in the stone, the dust, the *pirú*. His vision of this world is really a vision of *another world*] ("Paisaje y novela," 477).
- 49 Munguía Cárdenas, "Antecedentes y datos biográficos," 479–80; Roffé, *Espejos de escritores*, 67.
- 50 Habra, "Recuperación de la imagen maternal," 102.
- 51 At the end of *El laberinto de la soledad*, Octavio Paz points out that "*orphanos* no solamente es huérfano, sino vacío. En efecto, soledad y orfandad son en último término, experiencias del vacío" (245–46) [*orphanos* means both "orphan" and "empty." Solitude and orphanhood are similar forms of emptiness] (*Labyrinth of Solitude*, translated by Lysander Kemp, 207).
- 52 Molloy, "Simplicidad inquietante," 245; Pezzoni, "Silvina Ocampo," 17.
- 53 Klingenberg, *Fantasies of the Feminine*, 14; Ulla, *Encuentros con Silvina Ocampo*, 34. Interest in the visual arts was a family affair for Ocampo. Her husband, Adolfo Bioy Casares, not only explored the realm of the visual in his novels *La invención de Morel* (1940), *Plan de evasión* (1945), and *La aventura de un fotógrafo en La Plata* (1985), but also took up photography in his forties. According to their close friend, the writer María Esther Vázquez, "por esos años, Bioy se pasaba el día con la cámara en la mano, sorprendiendo a su familia, a sus huéspedes y a todo el mundo" [in those years, Bioy spent all day with the camera in his hand, catching by surprise his family, his guests, and everybody else] (Vázquez, *Borges*, 233).
- 54 In his survey of the short story in Latin America literature, Balderston mentions these two stories in reference to photography ("Twentieth-Century Short Story," 478). They are not the only ones in which this medium appears in Ocampo's work, as I show below.
- 55 Balderston, *Cuentos crueles*, 747; Aldarondo, *El humor*, 14; Pezzoni, "Silvina Ocampo," 13; Mancini, *Silvina Ocampo*, 28, Ulla, *Encuentros con Silvina Ocampo*, 45.
- 56 D'Amico and Facio, *Retratos y autorretratos*, 119.
- 57 Ibid., 115–18.
- 58 A version of this poem appears in her book *Amarillo celeste* (1972) with the title "La cara apócrifa" [The apocryphal face] (124–29). A footnote to the poem directs the

- reader to other compositions by Ocampo that have the face as a main theme.
- 59 Facio, *Foto de escritor*, p. 26.
- 60 Mackintosh points out that “Being photographed is (. . .) a frequent symbol of initiation in Ocampo’s work” (*Childhood in the Works*, 104). Moreover, social rites of passage and celebrations turn out to be occasions for misfortune or frustration, as if the high point of an event leads inevitably to catastrophe. See, for example, the stories “Los objetos,” in *La furia y otros cuentos*, and “La boda,” in *Las invitadas*.
- 61 MacKintosh, *Childhood in the Works*, 217.
- 62 Sontag, *On Photography*, 15.
- 63 See the section on Elizondo in chapter 1.
- 64 Translations of “Las fotografías” are from “The Photographs,” translated by Daniel Balderston.
- 65 Mancini, *Silvina Ocampo*, 65.
- 66 Money, *Anna Pavlova*, 71.
- 67 Pavlova visited Buenos Aires in 1918 and 1928 (*ibid.*, 266–67, 379). The Ocampos most likely attended the latter performance.
- 68 The rhetoric of seizing or capturing is a recurring trope that describes the photographic act (Sontag, *On Photography*, 3–4; Sobchack, “Scene of the Screen,” 90). See the section on Cortázar in chapter 1.
- 69 The last sentence of the story mentions yet another winged creature, this one decidedly ambiguous: the angel. Besides pointing to a celestial Beyond, it refers in Latin America (usually used in the diminutive) to a dead child (Linkman, *Photography and Death*, 27). Says the narrator, still in the grip of rancour and not fully grasping what has just happened, “¡Qué injusta es la vida! ¡En lugar de Adriana, que era un angelito, hubiera podido morir la desgraciada de Humberta!” (222) [How unfair life is! Instead of Adriana, who was an angel, that wretch Humberta might have died! (29)].
- 70 Translations of “La revelación” are from “Revelation,” translated by Daniel Balderston.
- 71 Gunning, *Phantom Images*, 46. Commenting on the Spiritualist movement, Mulvey points out that “a technological novelty gives rise to a technological uncanny, in a collision between science and the supernatural. Thus, the intrinsic ghostliness of the black-and-white photograph elided with the sense that the machine might be able to perceive a presence invisible to the human eye” (*Death 24x a Second*, 43).
- 72 Golden, *Golden Images*, 119.
- 73 See her *nouvelle* “El impostor,” included in *Autobiografía de Irene* (1948), as well as “La cara en la palma.” In an interview with Noemi Ulla, Ocampo reflects on pattern recognition: “los caracoles de mar tienen la forma de las olas, tienen como un dibujito. Siempre me llamó la atención eso. Esos caracoles rosados parece que tuvieran las ondas del mar, que se van abriendo, hasta llegar al borde. Si fotografieras las nervaduras de

- las hojas solas, vas a ver un árbol” [seashells have the shape of waves, they have like a little drawing. I was always struck by that. Those pink seashells that seem to show sea waves, they seem to be opening till they reach the edge. If you photograph the nervations of the leaves, you are going to see a tree] (Ulla, *Encuentros con Silvina Ocampo*, 51–52). For a reference to photography as distorted representation, see Ocampo, “La última tarde.” Ocampo exploits the fantastic and sinister potential of the photographic medium in other stories, such as “La paciente y el médico.” Here, a photographic portrait is a token of an obsessive imagination, a voyeuristic desire, and a supernatural gaze. In “Los sueños de Leopoldina,” a magical realist text, photographs mediate between the elusive imagery of shamanic dreams and the petty world of material artifacts. Photographs also appear in “El novio de Sibila” and “El enigma.” See Klingenberg, *Fantasies of the Feminine*, 53–54.
- 74 Anderson, *Everything in Its Place*, 12, 121, 144; Balderston, “Lo grotesco en Piñera,” 174; Santí, “Carne y papel,” 83; C. L. Torres, *Cuentística de Virgilio Piñera*, 79, 103.
- 75 Langford points out that “showing and telling of an album” is a performance (*Suspended Conversations*, 5). Piñera, a prolific playwright and himself a theatrical person, exploited the dramatic potential of his short story and wrote a brief dramatic piece also called *El álbum*, which follows the same plot line as the short story. Though Cuban critic Rine Leal dates this piece somewhere in the 1960s (“Piñera todo teatral,” xxii), it is likely that it was written closer to the date of the story’s original publication, in the mid-1940s. The setting of both story and play in a boarding house reflects young Piñera’s biographical circumstances (Anderson, *Everything in Its Place*, 22).
- 76 Critics use different terms to characterize this condition: Ladagga calls it “apatía profunda” [deep apathy] (*Literaturas indigentes*, 99); Cristofani assigns “aturdimiento” [bewilderment] (“Cuentos fríos,” 29); and Valerio-Holguín proposes a “poética de la frialdad” [poetics of coldness] that underpins all of Piñera’s work (*Poética de la frialdad*). Anderson refers to the protagonists of Piñera’s stories as “impossibly impervious to brutal physical violence” (*Everything in Its Place*, 128).
- 77 Ladagga, *Literaturas indigentes*, 98.
- 78 In the short story “Santelices” (1961), by Chilean José Donoso—as in “El álbum”—a loner lives in a guesthouse subjected to the discipline and arbitrary wishes of an overbearing female owner. Photographs also mediate between the characters’ disparate expectations. However, the role of photographs in each story is different. While “El álbum” explores the possibility of

expanding narrative time through the recourse of talking about images, in “Santelices” the author explores a fantastic realm that allows the protagonist to enter alternative spaces. In both texts photographs are means of escaping a mediocre or banal existence, but the fate of the protagonists are different. The woman in “El álbum” relishes her moment in the spotlight and remains a master of her limited domain, while Santelices finds death triggered, or at least influenced, by the totemic images he collects.

- 79 Patrizia di Bello points out that “Whether as a highly crafted collection, as a convenient container to store and view images, or—stretching the definition—reduced to a box of prints, the photographic album has become the main medium through which photographs are used to explore, construct, and confirm identity. Acts of self-reflection, such as looking at and collecting images of personal relevance, have become an indispensable feature of a modern sensibility. Viewing, sharing, and passing around albums has become an established ritual of familial gatherings, and a crucial aspect of the construction and maintenance of personal and cultural memories” (“Albums,” n.p.). As for the future of this social practice, di Bello remarks that “digital techniques are dematerializing the album into infinite collections to be viewed on the computer or television screen and perhaps the Internet, where a

growing number of family albums and personal or institutional collections can be inspected” (ibid.; see also Scott, *Spoken Image*, 228–29). On the history and social roles of the photo album, see the work of Marianne Hirsch as well as references in the works of Helmut Gernsheim, Beaumont Newhall, and Naomi Rosenblum, among other historians of photography. For a critical take on the conventions of the family album based on cultural studies and feminist theory, see Spence and Holland, eds., *Family Snaps*.

- 80 Sobchack, “Scene of the Screen,” 91.
- 81 On this point Anderson reads the text allegorically, “as a highly exaggerated microcosm of Cuban society” (*Everything in Its Place*, 150).
- 82 Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 7.
- 83 See Langford, *Suspended Conversations*, 26–27, and Sontag, *On Photography*, 8–9. As critics have noted, the family is one of Piñera’s main targets of criticism; see Hernández Busto, “Una tragedia en el trópico,” 16; Ladagga, *Literaturas indigentes*, 13; Anderson, *Everything in Its Place*, 14, 140. In plays like *La boda* (1957) and *El No* (1965), the central motif is the refusal and impossibility of marriage. The novel *Pequeñas maniobras* (1963) is about a man who makes a point of escaping from others and refuses to engage in any social enterprise, family life included.
- 84 Bourdieu, “The Cult of Unity,” 19. See also Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 53.

- 85 Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 7.
- 86 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 6.
- 87 Balderston, "Lo grotesco en Piñera," 177.
- 88 Julia Kristeva, quoted in Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 24.
- 89 *Ibid.*, 2.

3: POLITICS OF THE IMAGE IN JULIO CORTÁZAR AND TOMÁS ELOY MARTÍNEZ

- 1 The works of Allan Sekula and John Tagg are good examples of how to read photographs politically, from Marxist and Foucauldian perspectives, respectively. My approach is different. Rather than summoning the broader socio-economic context of the production of pictures, I highlight the way photographic images are implicated in the political scenes, statements, and struggles that Cortázar and Martínez bring to the fore in their texts, and the way the photographs themselves are endowed with a power to shape political contexts.
- 2 Dávila devotes a chapter to analyzing these books in *Desembarcos en el papel*. I work with the pocket book editions, whose format differs from that of the original editions.
- 3 Benjamin, "On Some Motifs," 158–59; McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 207. See also González, *Journalism*, 103; Zamora, "Novels and Newspapers," 61; Roffé, *Espejos de escritores*, 41.

- 4 Stephens, *History of News*, 2; Varnedoe and Gopnik, *High and Low*, 27.
- 5 Roffé, *Espejos de escritores*, 41.
- 6 Cortázar, *Libro de Manuel*, 11; translation from *A Manual for Manuel*, translated by Gregory Rabassa, 4.
- 7 Picón Garfield, *Cortázar por Cortázar*, 26–27.
- 8 Dávila, *Desembarcos en el papel*, 80, 109.
- 9 Cortázar, *Ultimo round*, vol. 1, 16–39.
- 10 See chapters 62, 114, 119, 130, and 146.
- 11 Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," 275.
- 12 Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 88.
- 13 Sugano, "Beyond What Meets the Eye," 337; Dávila, *Desembarcos en el papel*, 9; Perkowska, *Pliegues visuales*, 36.
- 14 Cortázar, *Ultimo round*, vol. 1, 224–47.
- 15 Cortázar, *La vuelta al día*, vol. 2, 114–19.
- 16 Goloboff, *Julio Cortázar*, 257.
- 17 Scott addresses the symbolic dimension at work in the photographic sign, by which it overcomes the conditions of its actual production: "this is the curious thing about the documentary photograph: like all photographic images, it is necessarily taken in the past, but its power to generalize and quintessentialize gives it the capacity continually to reconstitute itself, to adapt to a changing present" (*Spoken Image*, 88).
- 18 *Ibid.*, 114.

- 19 Dávila, *Desembarcos en el papel*, 135.
- 20 See Russek, "Verbal/Visual Braids."
- 21 Cortázar, *Ultimo round*, vol. 1, 336. 156–57.
- 22 In "Las babas del diablo," the young protagonist is described as a "angel despeinado," (223) [disheveled angel (129)], alluding to his otherworldly charm. See also Ocampo's ambivalent reference to angels in chapter 2.
- 23 Jeffrey, *The Photo Book*, 468.
- 24 Sontag, *On Photography*, 20; Sontag, *Regarding the Pain*, 115; Barthes, "The Photographic Message," 21.
- 25 Linfield, *Cruel Radiance*, 22.
- 26 Cortázar, *Ultimo round*, vol. 1, 123–46.
- 27 Cortázar, *Cartas 1937–1983*, vol. 2, 1206.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 1227.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 1240.
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 Cortázar, *Ultimo round*, vol. 1, 141.
- 32 Malle's film documents daily life in the Indian city, but does not contain particularly harrowing images as conveyed by Cortázar's text. The photographs include a group of five men sitting under the sun (126–27), a close-up of an Indian girl (130–31), an old man facing the camera (134–35), a row of beggars sitting on the ground (138–39), a slim girl wearing a skirt (143), a body lying on the ground and covered by a shroud (145), and a negative take of the same photograph (147). See below for a commentary on these last two pictures.
- 33 Durand, "How to See," 147; Krauss, "Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," 109; Scott, *Spoken Image*, 17–18. For the link between photography and trauma, see notes 101 and 123 in chapter 1.
- 34 Cortázar, *Cartas 1937–1983*, vol. 1, 336.
- 35 Sontag, *On Photography*, 9; Osborne, *Travelling Light*, 82; Price and Wells, "Thinking about Photography," 36.
- 36 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 4.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 6.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 209. See also Sontag, *On Photography*, 4.
- 39 Shloss points out that "the personal drive to expropriate the world through vision, to be drawn into what one sees, to unite vision with fulfillment, is rarely satisfied, and that longing is even more rarely accompanied by insight about the experience of being the Other, the recipient of such unusual but compelling scrutiny" (*In Visible Light*, 256). Scott, referring to the documentary photographer, writes that "to take a photograph at all is to proclaim a superiority, if only an economic and technological one, and the documentary photographer makes the inbuilt assumption that its subject does not take (has not the wherewithal to take) photographs of his/her own" (*Spoken Image*, 78).
- 40 See Sanjinés, *Paseos en el horizonte*, 193. In his memoirs Ernesto Cardenal refers to "Apocalipsis de Solentiname" as "un cuento muy realista, casi como una crónica periodística" [a very

- realist short story, almost like a journalistic chronicle] in reference to Cortázar's visit to the village (*Insulas extrañas*, 421).
- 41 Dávila says that the main focus in *Ultimo round* is the present, and that Cortázar and Silva become "reporteros" [reporters] (*Desembarcos en el papel*, 164).
- 42 Roffé, *Especios de escritores*, 43; Orlof, *Representation of the Political*, 111–13.
- 43 The slide show can be read as signaling the irruption of a "political unconscious" piercing the quiet middle-class life of a European intellectual. Cortázar exploits what Durand terms photography's "implosive character," ("How to See," 150), or, as Osborne explains, its ability of "provoking rather than organizing the workings of the viewer's unconscious. The photograph causes the viewer to, as it were, dream into it, causing it to become subjectivized by the viewer's desires, memories and associations" (*Travelling Light*, 77).
- 44 Cortázar, *Clases de literatura*, 109.
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 Rosenblum, *World History of Photography*, 478; Newhall, *History of Photography*, 260; Linfield, *Cruel Radiance*, 176.
- 47 Coleman, "Documentary," 39. Goldberg notes that "Bearing witness is what photographs do best; the fact that what is represented on paper undeniably existed, if only for a moment, is the ultimate source of the medium's extraordinary powers of persuasion" (*Power of Photography*, 19). See also Rosenblum, *World History of Photography*, 483.
- 48 Cortázar had explored the issue in other works. The fate of Oliveira in *Rayuela* centres around the impossible longing for unity and transcendence (Colás, *Postmodernity in Latin America*, 31). In the essay "Del sentimiento de no estar del todo," from *La vuelta al día en ochenta mundos*, Cortázar developed the idea of the artist's failure to adapt to society, coming up with a conceptual distinction that echoes the art-and-life polarity: "entre vivir y escribir nunca admití una clara diferencia" (32) [I never admitted a clear distinction between living and writing]. Writing and ethics, as Moran points out, "were inextricable" for Cortázar (*Questions of the Liminal*, 7n17). Ferré traces the romantic heritage in Cortázar's work.
- 49 Sugano remarks that "Although the narrator of 'Apocalypse' is certainly more in touch with a determined historical reality, the extent of his horizon of engagement seems paradoxically to be limited to the quality of his vision itself" ("Beyond What Meets the Eye," 346). Linfield points out that "photography has, more than any other twentieth-century medium, exposed violence—made violence *visible*—to millions of people all over the globe. Yet the history of photography shows just how limited and inadequate such exposure is: seeing does

- not necessarily translate into believing, caring, or acting. That is the dialectic, and the failure, at the heart of the photograph of suffering” (*Cruel Radiance*, 33).
- 50 Franco, “Crisis of the Liberal Imagination,” 267.
- 51 Ritchin, “Close Witnesses,” 591. See also Orlof, *Representation of the Political*, 113.
- 52 Roffé, *Especios de escritores*, 42–43.
- 53 See Ganduglia, “Representacion de la historia”; McDuffie, “La novela de Perón”; and Parodi, “Ficción y realidad.”
- 54 Hutcheon, *Politics of Postmodernism*, 22.
- 55 See Colás, *Postmodernity in Latin America*; Halperín Donghi, “Presente transforma el pasado”; and Martin, *Journeys through the Labyrinth*. Menton, following Anderson Imbert, excludes *La novela de Perón* from the category of the new historical novel in Latin American, on the grounds that, despite its “significant historical dimension,” the novel encompasses, “at least partially, the author’s own time frame” (*Latin America’s New Historical Novel*, 14).
- 56 Diana Taylor addresses the differences between Perón’s authoritarian practices in the 1940s and the terror unleashed by the military regime in the 1970s (*Disappearing Acts*, 93).
- 57 The portrait of Isabel is referred to explicitly as a “foto de ocho metros” (36) [a twenty-five-foot portrait (28)]. Translations of *La novela de Perón* are from *The Perón Novel*, translated by Asa Zatz.
- 58 See, for example, the essay “Necrofilias argentinas.” In his collection *Requiem por un país perdido* (2003), a book that expands and updates his previous volume of essays, *El sueño argentino*, Martínez exploits, almost with dark delight, the links between social and political decadence and his personal sense of melancholia. To quote the title of another of his collection of essays (*Lugar común la muerte*), death is common in his writings.
- 59 For the French critic, photography “embalms time” (“Ontology,” 14).
- 60 Belting, “Toward an Anthropology,” 47.
- 61 Photographs are mentioned throughout: in the magazine *Horizonte* featuring Evita as a young girl (325), Perón and Evita photographed in the radio station where she worked (295), Evita photographed with Franco’s ministers (299), Evita on the cover of *Time* magazine (299), the photograph of Isabel’s deceased father (21), the melancholic postcards young Isabelita sends from Chile and Colombia to the Crestos (23), a picture of an overweight Isabelita with Perón in Caracas (24), the supposed photograph of López Rega posing as singer in the magazine *Sintonía* (28), Cipriano Tizón, Potota’s father, owner of a photography shop (172), Aurelia Tizón, Perón’s first wife, weeping with a photograph of her mother in her

- hand (215), the editor of *Horizonte* showing Zamora photographs of Perón's exile (31), chapter 3, entitled "Photographs of the witnesses," a swarm of photographers in Madrid shooting Perón just before his return to Argentina (317), reporters at Ezeiza (335), the prohibition against taking photographs at a press conference in the airport after the massacre (343), and the flash of photographic cameras when Perón exits the airplane in Morón (349).
- 62 On the link between ritual and photography, see the section on Rulfo in chapter 2.
- 63 Barnicoat, *Concise History of Posters*, 157.
- 64 Jean Franco points out that "Mass consensus was achieved in Peronist Argentina as in Fascist Germany through ritual—Benjamin would call it the aestheticization of politics—and also through the ruling elite's speedy grasp of the importance of the media in securing consent" ("Comic Stripping," 38).
- 65 A reference to the rituals of the image is made in Parodi, "Ficción y realidad," 40.
- 66 In the introduction to her seminal *La imaginación técnica*, Sarlo sketches the impact of new technologies on Argentina's collective imaginary at the beginning of the twentieth century.
- 67 Martínez, *Memorias del General*, 11.
- 68 Sarlo points toward this new historical age in her analysis of video games and televisual practices such as zapping, where she finds "esa velocidad y borramiento, que podría ser el signo de una época" [that speed and erasure that could be the sign of an era] (*Escenas de la vida posmoderna*, 55).
- 69 The novel was not yet finished when it began appearing in serial form. This may explain some of the changes in structure and style from its weekly publication to its final book form. There is no reference in the book to the fact that the text first appeared serialized in the newspaper.
- 70 Tomás Eloy Martínez, written communication with the author, 22 March 2004. I thank him and Professor Marcy Schwartz for their support during my research.
- 71 Garrels, "El *Facundo* como folletín," 419.
- 72 Martínez strives to do retroactively, or melancholically, what Doris Sommer identifies as the goal of the nineteenth-century Latin American writers: "In the epistemological gaps that the non-science of history leaves open, narrators could project an ideal future" (*Foundational Fictions*, 7). By reinterpreting history, Martínez is also guided by the belief that "literature has the capacity to intervene in history, to help construct it" (*Ibid.*, 10).
- 73 Hutcheon points out that "The photo ratifies what was there, what it represents, and does so in a way that language can never do. It is not odd that the historiographic metafictionist, grappling with the same issue of representation of

- the past, might want to turn, for analogies and inspiration, to this other medium, this 'certificate of presence' . . . , this paradoxically undermining yet authenticating representation of the past real" (*Politics of Postmodernism*, 91).
- 74 Insofar as the reader of the novel has to assemble the narrative pieces that compose each chapter, research journalism can be regarded as the organizing principle of the plot.
- 75 For an account of Martínez's last hours in Argentina, in 1975, see David Streitfeld, "The Body of a Novelist's Work," *Washington Post*, 24 December 1996, <http://www.davidstreitfeld.com/archive/writers/eloymartinez.html>.
- 76 Colás remarks that Martínez's basic literary operation consisted in re-writing history and de-mythologizing Perón: "Martínez's novel . . . attempts to renegotiate the course of history, of society. . . . [I]t does so by *respiración artificial*: resuscitating not the dead General but the petrified image that the General carefully left behind" (*Postmodernity in Latin America*, 157). Marble, indeed, seals a destiny in death. In the text, Perón chats with Cámpora and refers to his advisor Figuerola: "Cierta vez me advirtió Figuerola que los argentinos somos adictos a la muerte. Empleó una palabra extraña: tanatófilos" (318) [Figuerola once called to my attention that the Argentines are death-oriented. He used a strange word: 'thanatophiles' (316)]. As I have suggested before, that is an opinion the author certainly shares.
- 77 The word "mercurial" may also be applied here, referring to "a person having a lively, volatile, or restless nature; liable to sudden and unpredictable changes of mind or mood." Oxford English Dictionary Online, s.v. "mercurial."
- 78 The character of Tomás Eloy Martínez could agree with Baudrillard: simulacra have taken over the real Perón, and no original can be found to sustain the proliferation of replicas. After interviewing Perón, Martínez believes that the General is an empty form, a mere empty word: "Tantos rostros le ví que me decepcioné. De repente, dejé de ser un mito. Finalmente me dije: él es nadie. Apenas es Perón" (261) [I saw so many of his semblances that I became disillusioned. He was no longer a myth. At last, I said to myself, he's nobody. He's hardly even Perón (259)]. It is less likely that this reflects the position of the author, who traces almost with gusto the decadence of an all too real historical figure.
- 79 Martin writes that the novel provides not a "portrait" but a "picture" of Perón, by which he presumably means that the novel does not specifically intend to depict the man's life, but rather to contextualize it (*Journeys through the Labyrinth*, 342).
- 80 The phrase "un águila guerrera" is a reference to "Canción de la bandera" [Flag song], whose first stanza is this: "Alta en el cielo un

águila guerrera,/ audaz se eleva en vuelo triunfal,/ azul un ala del color del cielo,/ azul un ala del color del mar.” [High in the sky a warrior eagle,/ bold rises in triumphant flight,/ Blue a wing of the colour of the sky/ Blue a wing of the colour of the sea.] The song, about the Argentine flag and a staple of national culture, was originally an aria in the 1908 opera *Aurora* by Argentine composer Héctor Panizza. The song became, by a decree issued precisely during Peron’s first presidential term in the early 1950s, a mandatory song in grade and middle schools all over Argentina (Panizza, *Medio siglo de vida musical*, 73).

- 81 Barnicoat, *Concise History of Posters*, 22.
- 82 Max Gallo points out that “crowds were organized to acclaim these men [Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin], whose pictures appeared in increasing numbers on walls. . . . On posters showing these leaders, words had all but disappeared. At most the posters bore a few words—“Heil Hitler”⁶ or “Si” (the latter when inviting people to vote yes in a plebiscite). Otherwise, the image was enough. In public Hitler and Mussolini always wore the military trappings of their offices. Until early in the 1930s, Mussolini often appeared in civilian clothes, like the chiefs of foreign states he was meeting. But

after the Ethiopian war and the triumph of German Nazism, he appeared only in uniform. Posters after 1935 show him helmeted, with his jaws clamped shut and his face set in what he believed to be a heroic expression” (*The Poster in History*, 246–49). Gallo includes an illustration of one of these posters, in which Mussolini dons a black helmet adorned with a silver eagle (247).

- 83 Frizot, “States of Things,” 371.
- 84 The point is made by Sontag in these terms: “In an era of information overload, the photograph provides a quick way of apprehending something and a compact form for memorizing it” (*Regarding the Pain*, 22).
- 85 Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 6.

CONCLUSION

- 1 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 93–94.
- 2 Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second*, 18.
- 3 See Michael J. de la Merced, “Eastman Kodak Files for Bankruptcy,” *New York Times*, 12 January 2012, <http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2012/01/19/eastman-kodak-files-for-bankruptcy/>.
- 4 Brunet, *Photography and Literature*, 139.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 140.
- 6 Paz-Soldán, “La imagen fotográfica,” 768.
- 7 See Perkowska, *Pliegues visuales*, 25; Ríos, *Espectros de luz*, 34–43.
- 8 See Brunet, *Photography and Literature*, 85.
- 9 This translation from *Aura* is by Lysander Kemp.

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“The book examines the multiple ways in which photography interacts with literature and critically reflects on the photographic medium, its possibilities, and its limitations. Furthermore, the selected corpus provides a good balance between the study of canonical texts and the reevaluation of lesser studied works in its investigation of how literature appropriates the photographic image.”

– Mario Boido, Spanish and Latin
American Studies, University of Waterloo

In *Textual Exposures*, Dan Russek explores how twentieth-century Spanish American writers have registered photography’s powers and limitations, and the creative ways in which they have elaborated in fictional form the conventions and assumptions of this medium. Centring on the figure of ekphrasis (defined as the verbal representation of a visual representation), the book examines the thematic, symbolic, structural, and cultural imprints photography leaves in narrative texts and how the medium is used to powerful effect by certain authors to advance a sense of the uncanny, to probe the ambiguities of memory and immortality, or to unpack the relationships between politics, journalism, and the fixed image.

Going beyond literary criticism, Russek shows how, as early as the 1890s, fictional texts about photography have critically reflected on the media environment in which they were created, entering into a dialogue with visual technologies such as the x-ray, cinema, illustrated journalism, and television. The study examines how these technologies, historically and aesthetically linked to the photographic medium, inform the works of some of the most important writers in Latin America and will continue to do so as we enter the digital age.

Textual Exposures offers a fresh and provocative look at photography in the writings of Rubén Darío, Julio Cortázar, Salvador Elizondo, Horacio Quiroga, Juan Rulfo, Silvina Ocampo, Virgilio Piñera, and Tomás Eloy Martínez.

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