

Norah Lange's Unhomely Homes

Marta Sierra
Kenyon College

All I could do was to offer you an opinion upon one minor point—a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction; and that, as you will see, leaves the great problem of the true nature of woman and the true nature of fiction unsolved.

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (2).

Unhomely Residences: A Room of One's Own

I choose to start with Virginia Woolf's remarks, for they pose one of the most fundamental questions in Norah Lange's works: What is the relationship between a woman's space and her creativity? Woolf makes inseparable the two of them: a room of one's own is the condition for both women's financial and intellectual independence.¹ It is hard to think that those conditions were met in the early twentieth century in Argentina, when civil codes still regarded women as infants.² It was almost predictable that Norah Lange would adhere to the stylistic codes for women at the period, producing works that exclusively focused on a domestic world depicted as predominantly feminine. And although her contemporary critics read Lange along those lines—including Borges in his introduction to Lange's poetry collection *La calle de la tarde* (*The Street in the Evening*) (1925)--, her fiction deliberately, and yet subtly, subverts those codes. Her novels, *Cuadernos de infancia* (*Childhood Notebooks*) (1937), *Personas en la sala* (*People in the Room*) (1950), and *Los dos retratos* (*The Two Portraits*) (1956), show women entrapped in a realm of feelings and emotions, a complex domestic world from which they seem unable to escape. But this complex space, the home, transforms into a site of experimentation and artistic search for a refashioning of the woman writer's self. All of her narrators are young women looking for room to maneuver in increasingly intricate systems of changing social conventions. Although private, the home is a site that echoes public debates on women's role, and their challenge to men's preeminence in controlling literary culture. As such, Lange's rooms are not only of her own: they belong to a growing group of women intellectuals looking for their place in Argentina's public culture. As Vicky Unruh states, Lange's writing depicts two "disparate worlds—the lively fraternity of the literary avant-garde and a vanishing community of familial women" (Unruh 74).³

Lange adapted the strategies and the imagery of the Avant-gardes—especially *Ultraísmo*—to craft an original language for the woman writer. Her novels reflect an aesthetic search for autonomy through the deconstruction of family narratives. Lange's narrators position themselves in the margins of a scrutinized spatiality; they transform social conventions by means of an interrupted, fragmentary way of looking. The predominance of visual codes as resources for aesthetic innovation comes from the culture of modernity. Women occupied, however, a complex position within this visual rhetoric. While the Avant-gardes privileged women and the feminine, a characteristic that critics call the "putting modernity into a discourse of 'woman,'" it has been pointed out that movements such as Surrealism turned the female body into an artistic object (Suleiman 13). There is a disparity in the Avant-gardes between the idealized artistic construct, "the woman," and concrete women who remained relegated to a secondary place as cultural agents. As Suleiman states, women artists and writers affiliated with the Avant-garde were placed into a "double margin": "The avant-garde woman writer is doubly intolerable, seen from the center, because her writing escapes not one but two sets of expectations/categorizations; it corresponds neither to the 'usual revolutionary point of view' nor to the 'woman's point of view'" (Suleiman 15).

We notice in Lange's narrative some traits of detective fiction, such as the suspension of chronological time, the existence of shadowy and mysterious spatial backgrounds, and the protagonist's psychological confusions between real and fantastic perceptions. In each novel, there is a mystery at the center of the plot and a narrator searching for its solution. This is by not means coincidental, although we can hardly say that Lange's works belong to the detective genre in the traditional sense. But one thing is for sure; her narrators are trying to solve a mystery and her narrative is by all means a process of inquiry and search. The mystery is here the location the feminine occupies in the intricate puzzle of family narratives. There is narrative and visual revelation that occurs in all of her novels. The family portrait is the site that best embodies this narrative.⁴ Her narrative works are variations on the same theme: the woman writer's self-portrait or, better yet, a landscape of family portraits where she can manipulate and distort images of femininity. As her works are aesthetically akin to the visual arts, I distinguish three procedures by which Lange achieves this purpose: artistic doubling, ironic mirroring, and photomontage. Vision works as a dialogical tool that the woman writer uses to negotiate and contest traditional gender positions. Lange's narrative displays situations and settings of learning, a noticeable reference to the training of women in the domestic sphere, a trait particularly evident in *Cuadernos de infancia*. However, these learning processes are twisted and transformed into an apprenticeship of defiance of visual and linguistic conventions, for instance, by masking herself as Nora Domínguez demonstrates (32).

The strategies of artistic doubling, ironic mirroring and photomontage are examples of the innovative partnerships between photography and writing in Lange's texts. As "photo-textualities," Lange's novels recreate for the reader the "powerful recollection and sensory immediacy" characteristic of images (Mitchell 114).⁵ Photography influences her techniques of image manipulation. One of these strategies is that of the "spacing of the image." Referring to the Surrealists, Rosalind Krauss states that spacing is one of the main strategies to break the illusion of photographic reification: "the photographic image, thus 'spaced' is deprived of one of the most powerful of photography's many illusions: it is robbed of a sense of presence. It is the image of simultaneity. It is spacing that makes clear that we are not looking at reality, but at the world infested by interpretation or signification" (107). Surrealists used doubling and other techniques to stress the co-presence of the original and its photographic double in order to break the indexical character of the photographic image: the use of negative printing, the documentation of sculptural objects that have no existence apart from the photograph, which were immediately dismantled after being recorded (Hans Bellmer's dolls, for instance); the recourse to multiple exposure or sandwich printing to produce montage effects; manipulations of mirrors; and the burning of the emulsion called *brûlage*.⁶

Artistic doubling, ironic mirroring and photomontage are forms of spacing and clouding the visual field, populating it with doubles and copies. As readers, we are confronted with a phantasmagorical space in which we doubt the ontological status of images and representation. Which one is the original and which is the copy? Images appear to us as false evidence making us question the narrative frames of reference. In this regard, Lange's fiction is fantastic, for it poses challenges to our task as readers to believe in the narrator's tale. The Freudian term "Das Unheimliche"—the opposite of what is familiar—is the most suitable term to describe Lange's fiction. Lange's homes are uncanny in that they depict the recurrence of familiar objects and memories that, as the feminine, have been repressed. They are "unhomely" in for they foreground what has remained hidden in the spatial economy of the domestic; they describe spaces that are both familiar and recognizable, and yet concealing and enigmatic.

The homes depicted in these novels refer to autobiographical places. María Elena Legaz identifies two crucial houses in Lange's career: the first, the one on Tronador Street, where many

literary encounters took place, and the second in Suipacha 1444, where she lived with her husband, Oliverio Gironde (13). Leopoldo Marechal mentions them both as literary meeting places in *Adán Buenosayres*. Lange turns these sites into places for visual experimentation, her photographic aesthetic being a “catalyst for the fantastic” (Schwartz and Tierney-Tello 8). These homes are “unhomely,” uninviting places, contrary to other representations that depict the home as a site of longing and affiliation. They are examples of a “third space,” in the sense that they show the potentiality of constructing a non-fixed identity, a new sense of identity that maybe “almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha 123). And although I am not attempting to use a postcolonial frame to read Lange’s fiction, it is appropriate to say that this notion of the unhomely describing the third space of the colonial subject, can be adapted to the “estranging sense of relocation of home and the world” (Bhabha 13) that characterizes the literary locations described here.

Displacement and dislocation are two constants in Avant-garde fiction. The abandonment of national stereotypes in favor of cosmopolitan narrative settings and modes characterizes the discussion of Argentinean literature during this period. In another place, I further develop this connection of cosmopolitanism and home in Lange, reading her novels of the home at the light of the travelogue of her trip to Norway on board of a commercial cargo.⁷ The longing for an origin is, however, present in her fiction through the cult of memory. Walter Benjamin’s essays express best the tension between modernity’s fascination with visuality and the anxiety over new ways of mechanically reproduced art, and the parallel need to go back to the origins, to remember. In talking about the disappearance of the artistic aura, he uses photography as a good example of the contradiction between mechanical reproduction and nostalgia:

It is no accident that the portrait was the focal point of early photography. The cult of remembrance of loved ones, absent or dead, offers a last refuge for the cult value of the picture. For the last time the aura emanates from the early photographs in the fleeting expression of a human face. This is what constitutes their melancholy, incomparable beauty. But as a man withdraws from the photographic image, the exhibition value for the first time shows its superiority to the ritual value. (226)

Norah Lange’s works are, without a doubt, cultivating a form of visual and narrative remembrance through a creative manipulation of family photographs. In a narrative driven by the paradoxical desires to detach and belong, her novels show the process of creating a new and personal memory. Although familial, this memory is a reconstruction of literary genealogies. Memory is a battleground, a field that is fiercely contested in a war of visual struggles. As Domínguez states, such representation refers to family identity as a construct in a process of change (31). Further, as I contend here, this ongoing “visual battle” reveals Lange’s critique of the association of family and state and the arbitrary relation between nationhood and language (Masiello 156).

***Cuadernos de Infancia* and *Personas en la sala*: Photomontage and the Search for a Female Spectatorship**

The Cubist aesthetics of collage is the central strategy in *Cuadernos de Infancia*. The novel is a textual photomontage: family photographs are edited and organized in a coming of age narrative. The narration is about reconstructing a family memory but, most importantly, the beginning of a long apprenticeship that is further developed in *Personas en la sala* and *Los dos retratos*. As readers, we see images of gender roles, women and men posing for us through different narrative-“windows” in a series of family images: her father’s cosmopolitan studio, her mother’s sewing room, and the

“mysterious” room of her older sister, where Irene’s voluptuous body lies is exhibited for the contemplation of the child narrator. The intimate tone of the memories along with the use of the first person, additionally create identification between reader and narrator: we are invited to sit next to her to see a sequence of moving images of her life. There is a process of soul searching and questioning that is evident in the open structure of the chapters, many of them concluding with an open ending. There is no chronology: the time that predominates is that of the individual memory.

Some images are familiar; others, strange. The streaming of words, voices and pictures we see create a dreamlike environment where nothing seems clear, where as readers we are trapped into the fog of memory. We are invited to interact with different images, as if they were old photographs chosen and discarded from a family album. Familial images are detached from any emotional connection or involvement, the focus being placed on objects instead of psychological descriptions, a trait that María Elena Legaz associates to Robbe-Grillet’s *nouveau roman* (147). This detached narrative style is further enhanced by the creation of a gothic ambience of dark shadows, gloomy interiors, and subtle whisperings that transform the family house into an uncanny place. We encounter queer characters such as the “strongest woman in the world” working for a circus near Mendoza. The feeling of aberration posed by the portraits of a sexualized or anomalous woman’s body—the circus performer, the sister—also exhibits the narrator’s own fears and anxieties about gender roles. But most importantly, these monstrous presences confirm her desire for difference, the search of a rebellious corporality that challenges gender categories (Giorgi 323).⁸

The narrative format of *Cuadernos de infancia* disrupts temporal and spatial locations. Characters adopt a ghost-like appearance: we hear their voices but there is little characterization. We don’t see their bodies or access any personal or physical information about them. The experience of reading *Cuadernos de infancia* resembles that of approaching an *Ultraísta* poem: images, metaphors, voices and sounds but no narrative content. In fact, Jorge Luis Borges characterizes *Ultraísmo* as a bare aesthetics that focuses in images, and lacks narrative supports. In later texts, such as “El escritor argentino y la tradición” (“The Argentinean Writer and the Tradition”), he develops these ideas into a narrative theory that proposes abandoning plot, characterization, and nationalist traits in literature. Because of its fractured plot and cinematographic style, the influence of *Ultraísmo* in Lange is evident. W.J.T. Mitchell coined the term “image-texts” for this form of “contact writing” in the intersection of writing and vision. Further, in “Manifiesto del Ultra,” Borges refers to mirrors and prisms as the foundation of *Ultraísta* aesthetics.⁹ Such processes of visual manipulation are central in Norah Lange aesthetics for reflection and duplication of images is a tool for writing patterns of social and self-identity.

Cuadernos de Infancia is also a visual autobiography whereby Lange examines such processes of identity formation. The narrator mimics and manipulates images of self-representations along with representations of ideal roles for women. The fragmentary format—which Sylvia Molloy states results from Ultraist and Surrealist literary conventions (176)—exposes a complex relationship between ideologies of gender and selfhood. If the generic contract of autobiography engages the autobiographer in a doubled subjectivity,¹⁰ establishing a dialogic relationship between the narrator and the protagonist, this doubling is exasperated in *Cuadernos de Infancia* by the uses of the Avant-gardes literary conventions. As in the ubiquitous photomontages of the Avant-gardes, *Cuadernos de Infancia* assembles a female subjectivity made of bits and pieces of a visual repertoire stored in the depths of family imaginaries. The space of the home is the location where such experimentation takes place, an interactive visual landscape that the narrator learns to assemble and disassemble according to her own will. The coming of age process can be thus described according to the compositional logic of the collage, self-identity as the construction of bricolage which in much

resembles other Avant-garde novels such as Martín Adán's *La casa de cartón* (*The Cardboard house*) (1928).

In *Personas en la sala* Lange examines the role of the feminine within the domestic economy of the home through the process of artistic doubling. This novel describes the female narrator's attempts to investigate the identities and activities of three women neighbors living across the street. She spends her days spying on them through the window blinds; all of her actions are confined to "la sala," the living room, covered with family portraits that are the sole witnesses of her activities. Eventually, we realize the neighbors are only projections of the narrator's imagination who unravels imaginary settings while she visualizes them wandering busy streets and venturing out into public places. In fact, the neighbors' house is a fantastic double, a fictional world where the narrator projects different sets of family imaginaries. One of the characters, identified only as "She," is the narrator's double; she monitors her two younger sisters' activities. The story also tells how the protagonist rearranges the family portraits as she carefully crafts choreographies with the faces of her fantastic beings, her neighbors. Artistic doubling, a technique that had been introduced in *Cuadernos de Infancia* through uses of what Paul De Man calls the "autobiographical de-facement," the transformation of the self into a fictional "other," serves here the purpose of manipulating collective family memories as depicted in family portraits, a skill that the narrator of *Los dos retratos* (1956), Lange's next and last novel, masters. This process of spying and rearranging family portraits conveys notions of a visual, performing learning process that supports the questioning of the family's power dynamics, evidenced in the hierarchical disposition of her doubles. The mystery this fantastic detective fiction seeks to resolve is the construction of the symbolic order of the family embodied in the home's spatial organization. As such, her "real" relatives mistrust the narrator's new skills; after questioning her activities at the window, her family sends her outside the city for a few days. Upon her return, the three neighbors had vanished, thus ending her search.

Lange's fantastic fictions raise attention to the underlying anxiety in the production of the home's feminized metaphors; Gülsum Baydar coins the term the "architectural uncanny" to refer to such representations (41).¹¹ Lange employs a visual rhetoric to transform the familiar through visual and narrative elisions, the proliferation of image reflections and fantastic duplication, and the fragmentation and estrangement of language. She disrupts the regulations and gender constructs that regulate domesticity by mirroring and yet distorting its scenes' familiarity. Her characters trespass the symbolic markers that establish spatial hierarchies; they disturb the home as material constructs by setting in place new choreographies of gender. A central feature of the uncanny is repetition, Freud states, a trait that is at the foundation of the fantastic duplication taking place in *Personas en la sala*. Photography is closely associated with this recurrence of the uncanny. As Rosalind Krauss demonstrates, the Avant-gardes' concept of originality is based on the grounds of repetition, notions that, as Walter Benjamin states in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," come from the contact of art with new technologies, such as photography (152-53). *Personas en la sala* demonstrates the influence of these ideas from the Avant-garde on the role of the repetition and the copy as aesthetic strategies. Although a concealed reference in this novel, the manipulation of family photographs and the associated process of artistic doubling are at the core of its narrative project, a technique that is further developed in *Los dos retratos*.

***Los dos retratos*: Mirroring the Portrait**

A sheet of glass. Where Shall I put the reflexive silver? On this side or on the other: in front or behind the pane. Before. I imprison myself. I blind myself. What does it matter to me, passer by, to offer myself a mirror in which you recognize yourself, even if it is a deforming mirror and signed by my own hands.

*Behind, I am equally enclosed. I will not know anything of outside. At least I will recognize my own face—
and maybe it will suffice enough to please me.*
Claude Cahun (12)

Mirrors abound in representations of the Avant-gardes. From Vicente Huidobro's poem, "El espejo de agua" ("The water mirror") to *Ultraísmo's* references to prisms and mirrors as the foundation of a new aesthetics, mirrors are tools for artistic examination. Claude Cahun used them to distort the mirror's traditional use as *feminine vanitas*. Her portraits are about mirroring, masking, disguising the artist self as single, as double, as multiple. In the self-portrait *Untitled* (1928) she stands close against a mirror, looking at us with a serious, anxious gaze. In a photomontage made by Cahun and Moore, between 1929 and 1930 (*Untitled*), we see a woman's hand holding a mirror, pieces of a face, a pupil looking as a mirror itself, a collage of mirroring reflections.¹³ As Mary Ann Caws explains, "Claude Cahun's pictures cause us to reflect doubly, on her, on ourselves, and on our own constructional ability, which she mirrors, reflects on, and curtains off from what we used to consider the 'real world'" (112).

This novel is an excellent example of contravening spatial memories through the manipulation of family portraits. As the last stage in the narrative and visual learning process that progresses from *Cuadernos de Infancia* and *Personas en la sala*, *Los dos retratos* showcases the skills of an accomplished narrator reorganizing and manipulating family images displayed in the dining room. The novel's title refers to two family portraits hung on a dining-room wall opposite a mirror of similar proportions. Each Sunday, the family gathers at a dining table, and sits in between the portraits and the opposite mirror. The narrator, a young woman named Marta, comments:

No bien se entraba al comedor casi podía percibirse un fluir constante, como de delgados hilos, que unía los dos retratos con el espejo. Los domingos a la noche, esos hilos no se cortaban. Más bien parecían fluir con mayor rapidez hacia el espejo, aunque debieran arrastrar las caras agrupadas alrededor de la mesa.

[Upon entering the dining room, one could almost perceive a continuous flow, as of thin threads, that linked the two portraits with the mirror. On Sunday nights, those threads were not severed. Indeed, they seemed to flow even faster toward the mirror, even as they swept along the faces gathered around the table.] (18-19)

The interactions between the real faces of family members and their iconic representation in the portraits and the mirror are masterly controlled by the family matriarch, the protagonist's grandmother, who determines the shape and form of each of those Sunday "virtual portraits." In the story, Marta, as her grandmother, remains outside these visual interactions in a neutral location that grants her the power to experiment with new scenes and compositions. The story describes family rivalries trying to control the interactions between photographs and mirrors. For instance, Elena, who used to arrange shop windows during her youth--a profession that not only displays her visual skills, but that the family considers inappropriate-- contests the grandmother's power. Teresa, married to one of the youngest sons, is the grandmother's main opponent, an ambitious woman eager to occupy the role of matriarch.

In spite of Elena's and Teresa's ambitions, the grandmother designates Marta as the heiress once she occupies, after her death, her grandmother's seat. In the novel's last scene, Marta applies to her mentor the power-bound mechanism of image reflection; she transforms what she perceives as her grandmother's sacred image, and "collects it" using a hand mirror. Aware of this transgression, Marta concludes her narrative by performing what she describes as an act of love and memory

preservation: “Esa noche su rostro se quedó dentro de un espejo para siempre” [“That night her face remained inside a mirror forever”] (196). I interpret Marta’s last act as the most loving and treacherous act toward family tradition: fascinated by the power of image reflection, Marta hesitates between losing her grandmother’s image forever or congealing it into a beloved picture that she can mentally re-create at will in the future.

Los dos retratos evidences that memory is a visual space where families enact contradictory narratives. Although the novel preserves the domestic role of women as the keepers of familiar traditions, it is significant that such a role acquires modern traits in references to visual manipulation, which links this novel to the Avant-garde aesthetics of prisms and mirrors as artistic tools. Women masterfully control this visual archive; they actively mirror it and subvert it, uncovering new meanings in familial narratives. Such image manipulation is a strategy to contest the containment of women to the physical confines of the domestic world.¹⁴ If the domestic is regulated by what Elizabeth Grosz describes as an “architectural economy” that consists of architectural plans and “the production and distribution of discourses, writings ... and its divisions of space, time and movement” (118), *Los dos retratos* distorts the material and symbolic regulations of this economy by mirroring the spatial powers of the domestic.

The fictional representations in *Los dos retratos* have important links to the manipulation of life narratives that are central to the autobiographical *Cuadernos de Infancia*. As visual and linguistic performances, Lange’s novels set up a series of self-constructions composed by endless interactions between the real (the family, the autobiographical element), photographic representations, and mirrors reflections. The three novels here analyzed demonstrate a visual and narrative apprenticeship that reveals the secret powers of the woman writer in the male dominated cultural scene of the 1920s and 1930s Argentina.

Modern Homeslessness

During the same period, María Rosa Oliver wrote *Mundo, mi casa* (*World, my Home*) and Victoria Ocampo, her autobiography. Both writers chose to publish their works much later in life. In fact, Victoria Ocampo asked hers to be published only after her death. It is significant that three of the most prominent women in the Argentinean cultural scene of the early twentieth century seemed so concerned with writing a life story where the family home was so predominant. The woman writer rewriting the script of domesticity is a common thread along with a feeling of modern homelessness that speaks of the need of a new home, a room of their own, and new literary locations. Ocampo is perhaps the one who went further—no doubt because of her wealth and position allowed it. She reinvented the home as a cultural location. Famous are the literary *tertulias* she convened in her Palermo Chico residence. She transformed the family house in San Isidro by removing the Victorian wallpaper and furniture, and redecorating it according to her modernist taste. This remaking of the modern house show the shifting balance between the public and the private in women’s life and, as in the case of Ocampo, the private home is transformed into a center for intellectual activities open to a community of peers (Friedman 12).¹⁵ Most importantly, these homes highlight “the importance of spectacle, and of home as a representation” (Friedman 17).

Being homeless was then a way to reoccupy the domestic scene, and to rewrite traditional gender roles. In Buenos Aires, the modern home now includes places for women’s work; *Caras y Caretas* (*Faces and Masks*) mentions, for instance, the adding of small desks, reading lamps, suspended bookcases, radios, and accessories of abstract design (Sarlo 26). Lange’s performative domesticity directly responds to the modernization of women’s roles. Her works displace domesticity into the realm of the uncanny and engage in a process of renegotiation; her unhomely residences are

metaphors for a project of gender and literary displacement that is at the basis of a cultural genealogy for women's writing. Historical limitations most certainly explain the subtle character of her literary project's transgressions, its confinement to the realm of aesthetic production, and how it was greatly misunderstood by her contemporaries. However, as virtual habitats for a modern female subjectivity, her works tell a story about the need of a new shelter for the woman writer's modern self.

Notes

¹ Norah Lange was an Argentinean author, associated with the Buenos Aires avant-gardes of the 1920s and 1930s. She was married to Oliverio Gironde and a member of the Florida group. She published in the magazines *Prisma*, *Proa*, and *Martin Fierro*. Her poetry books include, *La calle de la tarde* (1925, with a prologue by Borges); *Los días y las noches* (1926), and *El rumbo de la rosa* (1930). Her novels are, *Voz de la vida* (1927), *45 días y 30 marineros* (1933), *Cuadernos de infancia* (1937), *Antes de que mueran* (1942), *Personas en la sala* (1950), and *Los dos retratos* (1956).

² It was not until 1926 that women were considered equals to their husbands thanks to important reforms to the civil code. Such reforms benefited married women in regard to issues of property, financial independence, and jurisdiction over children; they were allowed for the first time to practice different professions, and use their income freely without reporting it to their husbands (Carlson 167).

³ As Unruh explains, women gained recognition in their roles as writers and intellectuals; they struggle with the division of cultural labor that confined them to the domestic realm. Women “manifested an emergent feminism for its time: a distinct self-consciousness about gender, a recognition that the rhetoric or realities of modernity posed singular challenges for women, and keen attention to their own anomalous status as women writers” (23).

⁴ As Marcy Schwartz and Mary Beth Tierney-Tello state, “With a growing middle class, portrait photography in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Latin America became not only a mode of self-representation but also a way to tout a family's prosperity and fulfill class aspirations” (4). Photography was first cultivated around the 1840s in Argentina, and it had a central ethnographic role as the pictures of indigenous people and gauchos in Benito Panunzi's “albums de costumbres” (“ways of life albums”) attest. However, it also contributed significantly to the establishment of class identities; the “carte de visite,” which included different poses of the same individual or group portrait, became very popular at the end of the nineteenth century. Daguerreotypes had previously expanded the domestic uses of portraits as revealed by photo-miniatures used in personal objects, such as in jewels for medallions or rings, and jewelry boxes and porcelains (Niedermaier 36). In Argentina, many portraits also documented the histories and genealogies of literary enclaves, as a browsing of the avant-garde journal *Martin Fierro* and its series of photographs of banquets and conferences reveals.

⁵ Magdalena Perkowska defines a “photo-textuality” as the exploration of the complex dynamics between photography and narration. She distinguishes a “photo-textuality” from other formats combining photographs and text, such as collaborations between photographers and novelists, or fiction illustrated by photographs. Compared to these examples, “photo-textuality” engages in a metafictional reflection about the connections between literature and photography, a trait also present in Lange's narrative works.

⁶ Hans Bellmer was a German artist, best known for the life-sized female dolls he produced in the mid-1930s. His sculptures were considered distasteful by the Nazi Party, and he was forced to flee Germany to France in 1938. Bellmer's work was welcomed in Paris, especially around the Surrealists and Andre Breton, because of the references to female beauty and the sexualization of the youthful form. For images on Bellmer's dolls see the Museum of Modern Art in New York website, http://www.moma.org/collection/artist.php?artist_id=452.

⁷ The travelogue to which I refer here is *45 días y 30 marineros* (*45 days and 30 sailors*) (1933). For more on this topic, see the chapter on my book *Gendered Spaces in Argentine Women's Literature*.

⁸ Giorgi states that the monster is a political being for it reaffirms the power of life against the desires to control or domesticate it: “la política del monstruo explora y afirma la potencia de variación de los

cuerpos contra los imaginarios y tecnologías eugenésicas que apuntan a la construcción y reproducción normativa de lo humano” (Giorgi 324).

⁹ *Ultraísmo* is a literary movement born in Spain in 1918, in which both Jorge Luis Borges and González Lanuza participated. González Lanuza published *Prismas (Prisms)* in 1924, where he explored the traits of Ultraist poetics influenced by Vicente Huidobro’s *Creacionismo (Creationism)*. Characteristics of Ultraist poetry include evocative imagery, references to the culture of modernity, elimination of rhyme, and creative graphic treatment of the layout of poetry in print. According to Borges in “Manifiesto del Ultra:” “Existen dos estéticas: la estética pasiva de los espejos y la estética activa de los prismas. Guiado por la primera, el arte se transforma en una copia de la objetividad del medio ambiente o de la historia psíquica del individuo. Guiado por la segunda, el arte se redime, hace del mundo su instrumento, y forja—más allá de las cárceles espaciales y temporales—su visión personal.” (86)

¹⁰ Sidonie Smith examines at length the implications of this generic contract for the woman writer. In addition, Smith provides an excellent definition of this doubling by defining autobiography as “a written or verbal communication that takes the speaking ‘I’ as the subject of the narrative, rendering the ‘I’ both subject and object” (19). For a detailed discussion on the theoretical considerations around the process of the autobiographical doubling, see her chapter on “Woman’s Story and the Engenderings of Self-representation.”

¹¹ The concept of domesticity developed in Europe in the nineteenth century as a direct result of the division between work and home and the growing separation of the male and female spheres. Gradually, the home became the sphere of wife and children, which coincided with the development of the cult of motherhood, the feminization of culture and the cultivation of sentimentalism (Heynen 7). Feminist architectural studies analyze this association of the domestic and the feminine and elaborate a critique of such restrictive paradigm for women as in Baydar’s notion of the “architectural uncanny.”

¹² Quoted in Lassalle and Solomon, 14.

¹³ Images and more information about Claude Cahun (Lucy Schwob) can be found at the Museum of Modern Art (New York) website (www.moma.org).

¹⁴ In a previous essay, I study in depth the link between modern technologies of visual reproduction, such as photography and the works by Lange. See Marta Sierra, “Oblique Views: Artistic Doubling, Ironic Mirroring and Photomontage in the Works of Norah Lange and Norah Borges.”

¹⁵ Many women with a similar social status to Ocampo were involved in the “remaking of the modern house” during the period of 1880 to 1920. Using examples of homes built in Europe and the United States, Alice Friedman explains how women, aided by architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier, significantly altered nineteenth-century conventions on domesticity and created “hybrid domestic spaces,” including room for different work and leisure activities for the modern woman.

Works Cited

- Baydar, Gülsüm. “Figures of Wom/man in Contemporary Architectural Discourse.” *Negotiating Domesticity*. Ed. Hilde Heynen and Gülsüm Baydar. 30-46.
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Benjamin, Walter. “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” *Illuminations*. Hannah Arendt, introduction and edition. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 1969. 217-251.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. “Manifiesto del ultra”. *Jorge Luis Borges. Textos recobrados 1919-1929*. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1997. 86-87
- Caws, Mary Ann. *The Surrealist Look. An Erotics of Encounter*. Cambridge: MIT, 1999.
- De Man, Paul. “Autobiography as De-Facement.” *MLN* 94.5 (1979): 919-930.
- Domínguez, Nora. “Literary Constructions and Gender Performance in the Novels of Nora Lange.” *Latin American Women’s Writing: Feminist Readings in Theory and Crisis*. Eds. Anny Brooksbank Jones and Catherine Davies. New York: Oxford UP, 1996. 30-45.

- Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." *The Complete Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Trans. and Eds., James Strachey, Anna Freud, Alix Strachey y Alan Tyson. London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1971. 219-256.
- Friedman, Alice. *Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History*. New York: Abrams, 1998.
- Giorgi, Gabriel. "Política del monstruo". *Revista Iberoamericana*. LXXXV (227): 2009. 323-329.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Space, Time, and Perversion*. New York, London: Routledge, 1995.
- Heynen, Hilde. "Modernity and Domesticity. Tensions and Contradictions." *Negotiating Domesticity. Spatial Productions of Gender in Modern Architecture*. Ed. Hilde Heynen and Gülsüm Baydar. London, New York: Routledge, 2005. 1-29.
- Krauss, Rosalind. *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge: MIT, 1996.
- Lange, Norah. *45 días y 30 marineros*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Tor, 1933.
- - -. *Cuadernos de infancia*. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1956.
- - -. *Los dos retratos*. Buenos Aires: Domingo Viau, 1937.
- - -. *Personas en la sala*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1950.
- Lasalle, Honor and Abigail Solomon-Godeau. "Surrealist Confession: Claude Cahun's Photomontages." *Afterimage* 19 (1992): 10-14
- Legaz, María Elena. *Escritoras en al sala. (Norah Lange: Imagen y memoria)*. Córdoba, Argentina: Alción, 1999.
- Masiello, Francine. *Between Civilization and Barbarism. Women, Nation, and Literary Culture in Modern Argentina*. Lincoln, London: U of Nebraska P, 1992.
- Mitchell, W.J.T. *Picture Theory*. Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1994.
- Molloy, Silvia. *Acto de presencia. La escritura autobiográfica en Hispanoamérica*. Trad. José Esteban Calderón. Revisado y corregido por la autora con asistencia de Jessica Chalmers y Ernesto Grossman. México D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996.
- Niedermaier, Alejandra. *La mujer y la fotografía. Una imagen espejada de autoconstrucción y construcción de la historia*. Buenos Aires: Leviatán, 2008.
- Perkowska, Magdalena. *Pliegues visuales: narrativa y fotografía en la novela latinoamericana contemporánea*. Madrid: Iberoamericana Vervuert: 2013.
- Sarlo, Beatriz. *Buenos Aires, una modernidad periférica*. Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 1988.
- Sierra, Marta. *Gendered Spaces in Argentine Women's Literature*. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2012.
- - -. "Oblique Views: Artistic Doubling, Ironic Mirroring and Photomontage in the Works of Norah Lange and Norah Borges." *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 29.3 (2005):563-584.
- Smith, Sidonie. *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography. Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987.
- Suleiman, Susan Rubin. *Subversive Intent. Gender, Politics and the Avant-Garde*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1990.
- Unruh, Vicky. *Performing Women and Modern Literary Culture in Latin America*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2006.
- Wolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. New York: Penguin, 1945.