

SLEEPING BEAUTY MEETS COUNT DRACULA.  
INTERTEXTUALITIES IN HORACIO QUIROGA'S  
*EL ALMOHADÓN DE PLUMAS*.

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El intento de Quiroga es torpe y trivial, y la  
perversión latente en el tema se convierte en un  
mero escalofrío sin misterio<sup>1</sup>.

This essay will not deal with the issue of authorial intentionality. Instead, we propose to demonstrate that *El almohadón de plumas* is neither *torpe* nor *trivial*. Rather, it is particularly forceful piece of writing and Ruben Cotelo's critical judgment completely fails to take account of a number of elements present in the text of *El almohadón de plumas* which enhance rather than detract from its effectiveness. We shall examine Quiroga's 'doble uso del horror', though not from the same perspective as Etcheverry<sup>2</sup>, his handling of fantasy elements<sup>3</sup>, and the reader's response to all of these. However, before embarking on such a discussion, it would be useful to clarify what is understood by 'effectiveness', and Michael Riffaterre's definition offers us as useful a point of departure as any:

The effectiveness of a text may be defined as the degree of its perceptibility by the reader; the more it attracts its attention, the better it resists his manipulations and withstands the attrition of his successive readings, the more it is a

monument rather than just an ephemeral act of communication, and therefore the more literary it is<sup>4</sup>.

Quiroga's story has certainly attracted the attention of numerous critics (and 'ordinary' readers); it stands up to repeated readings; it challenges our perceptions and there is no doubt that it lends itself to more than one interpretation<sup>5</sup>. However, we do need to identify and analyse those mechanisms that render the story effective. It is manifestly inadequate to suggest that the story is well-written because it complies with Quiroga's own *Decálogo del perfecto cuentista*. Instead, we prefer to argue that the effectiveness of *El almohadón de plumas* also stems from its relationship with the intertext, both that of the writer and that of the reader. By intertext, we mean:

The corpus of texts the reader may legitimately connect with the one before his eyes, that is, the texts brought to mind by what he is reading<sup>6</sup>.

The specific reader response which we are concerned is, according to Riffaterre, the 'intertextual drive':

The urge to understand compels readers to look to the intertext to fill out the text's gaps, spell out its implications<sup>7</sup>.

Intertextuality may fulfil several functions. According to Laurent Jenny, its principal function is to transform the significance of the text<sup>8</sup>, and that is arguably the role it assumes in Quiroga's short story. At the same time, there are discernible conflicts and tensions in the intertext of *El almohadón de plumas* that enhance the horror of the story. Because of one set of elements in the intertext, the reader is led to expect one kind of dénouement; because of other intertextual constituents, he is confronted with another. This dissonance in the intertext is to some extent responsible for the shock and repugnance experienced by the reader, the 'efecto' that the author achieves<sup>9</sup>. There are other factors in play, among them the surprise ending with its 'supuesto toque científico'<sup>10</sup>, though this has been

perceived as ironic. Margo Glantz considers that the true horror of *El almohadón de plumas* derives from the locating of the monster in the midst of ordinary, everyday life:

La explicación racionalista parece hundir en el anonimato cotidiano la presencia del insecto-vampiro, pero es justamente esta coexistencia tan cercana, este simbolismo de factura tan concreta, lo que produce el terror más hondo<sup>11</sup>.

The intertext of the *El almohadón de plumas* consists of at least two distinct but related traditions: the fairy tale, notably *Sleeping Beauty*, and the gothic/vampire story, particularly Bram Stoker's *Dracula*<sup>12</sup>. The former is a genre with which we are all familiar<sup>13</sup>, and even though *Sleeping Beauty* may not be uppermost in our thoughts as we read *El almohadón de plumas*, our reading experience of this and other fairy tales is brought to bear on Quiroga's short story, conditioning our expectations (particularly of a happy ending), and serving to point up the horror of the conclusion<sup>14</sup>.

Fairy tales are the first form of the story with which many of us have our first contact, and although it would be absurdly simplistic to presume that Quiroga read *Sleeping Beauty* then decided to use it or allude to it in his work<sup>15</sup>, there is no doubt that on several occasions he makes unequivocal statements about his preference for a genre which owes much to the fairy tales and presents problems or challenges identical to those of its precursor<sup>16</sup>. Certainly, there is firm evidence that fairy tales constituted part of Quiroga's vast reading experience and are therefore as significant in his intertext as they are in the reader's<sup>17</sup>.

The first third of this story contains a series of elements which we might find in a conventional fairy tale. In fact, on examining *Sleeping Beauty*, it is possible to trace a number of apparent parallels between the two stories. However, reading Quiroga's *El almohadón de plumas* is in some ways like hearing a discordant echo of the *Sleeping Beauty*. Most of the reminiscences occur very early in Quiroga's story, but they are crucial for the reader's response later on. The omniscient

third-person narrator makes a series of observations that serve as reminders of the *Sleeping Beauty* story<sup>18</sup>, but which also create an atmosphere in which the reader will feel uncomfortable and disoriented, sensing that events are not following any safe, predictable pattern. Instead he becomes increasingly aware of what might be termed 'distorted intertextualities'. In *Sleeping Beauty*, as in so many other fairy tales, the hero/prince and heroine/princess get married and, sooner or later, depending on the version we read, live happily ever. Quiroga begins his narrative with what should be the happiest of all occasions, a marriage, but his story becomes progressively more hopeless, until it ends with the death of the 'fairy princess' Alicia. Because the story opens with such a disconcerting remark as 'Su luna de miel fue un largo escalofrío' (p. 157) the reader is bound to question what is happening<sup>19</sup>. This is not the usual way to describe a honeymoon, an event traditionally associated with joy, laughter, moments of shared happiness and socially approved sexual fulfilment. The connotations of 'escalofrío', on the other hand, are more usually fear, terror or pain. The tension set up by this antithetical relationship between noun and adjective reflects the relationship between text and intertext<sup>20</sup>.

According to one theorist, there are several forms of intertextuality, among them citation and allusion<sup>21</sup>. Here we prefer to talk in terms of correspondences between text and intertext. As far as *Sleeping Beauty* and *El almohadón de plumas* are concerned, there are a number of correlations. (For the purposes of this comparison, we shall be using Angela Carter's translation of Perrault's version. Grimm's version is simpler, less frightening, and completely omits the ogress episode, as can be seen in the comparison that follows<sup>22</sup>).

Perrault's version of  
*The Sleeping Beauty*:

King and Queen unable to have children. Go on pilgrimages to holy places, finally she has a daughter.

Grimm's version, *Briar-Rose*  
or *The Sleeping Beauty*:

The Queen is bathing when a crab comes out of the water to tell her that she will have a daughter.

Godmothers invited — all the fairies in the kingdom that they could find — 7 in number.

There are 13 fairies in the land but because the King only has 12 gold plates, only 12 are invited to the christening.

Each fairy to give the baby a gift so that she would be perfect. Old fairy not invited because she hadn't left her tower for more than 50 years — everyone thought she was dead or under a spell. Because she isn't expected, no gold plate or cutlery. Takes offence and mutters some threats. A younger fairy hides behind a wall-hanging to make good any damage the Old Fairy might do. Says the princess will pierce her hand on a spindle and die. Good fairy modifies the 'gift'; princess will not die but sleep for 100 years then be awoken by a prince. King prohibits spindles, under pain of death.

15 years later they are on holiday at a summer residence and the princess climbs up to the attic.

Finds an old woman spinning, tries for herself, pierces her hand and falls into a deep sleep.

The princess climbs up to a tower in their own castle, not a holiday home.

The Good Fairy hastens to the palace and casts a spell on everyone except her parents

Everyone goes to sleep, including the King and Queen.

so that the princess won't be lonely when she wakes up.

100 years later, there is a new king, from another family. His son is curious about the forest where he goes hunting; finds out about the princess, legends, and decides to check out the forest. Kneels in front of her and she wakes up. No kiss.

They talk, the palace awakens and they get married.

The prince returns home the next day but does not tell his parents what has happened. Spends nights with the princess but goes home. 2 years later they have two children, a girl, Dawn, and a boy, Day, who is more beautiful than his sister. The prince doesn't tell his mother because he is afraid of her — she is an ogress, and is tempted to eat children. Once his father has died he announces his marriage and brings his family to the palace. Then he goes to war and leaves his mother in charge of the kingdom. She decides to eat her

Various princes try to rescue her but get caught in the hedge and die a miserable death. A prince arrives, the hedge opens up for him, and he walks through. The princess wakes up at the moment of the kiss.

The palace awakens and carries on as if there had not an interval of a hundred years. Briar-Rose and the prince get married and 'live happily to the end of their days'.

grandchildren and daughter-in-law, but is foiled by the butler who saves them. When she eventually finds out she has been tricked, she is about to put them to death, but the king returns home in time to save them, she dies instead and the family live happily ever after.

What are the points of contact between *Sleeping Beauty* and *El almohadón de plumas*?

*Sleeping Beauty*

she would have the disposition of an angel; she was beautiful as an angel  
she will fall into a deep sleep that will last for a hundred years; she had had plenty of time to dream of what she would say to him; her good fairy had made sure she had sweet dreams during her long sleep.

fairies, spells, magic ring, palace

then he arrived at a courtyard that seemed like a place where only fear live; an awful silence filled it and the look of death was on everything; he went through a marble courtyard.

*El almohadón de plumas*

rubia, angelical

soñadas niñerías; antiguos sueños; aún vivía dormida en la casa hostil; pronto Alicia comenzó a tener alucinaciones.

producía una otoñal impresión de palacio encantado  
La casa en que vivía influía no poco en sus estremecimientos; la blancura del patio silencioso - frisos, columnas y estatuas de mármol; Dentro, el brillo glacial del estuco, sin el más leve raguño en las altas paredes, afirmaba aquella sensación de desapacible frío; espanto callado.



The reminiscences in the Quiroga text are not numerous, but they are sufficient to act as signposts for the reader, pointing him in one particular direction. One of these is *tripling*, 'the use of the patterns of three as a formulaic principle'<sup>23</sup>. See for example, the first description of Alicia, with three adjectives clustered together, "Rubia, angelical, y tímida" (p. 157). The couple spend three months together before Alicia falls ill. Quiroga singles out three elements in their home, all designed to enhance our impression that Alicia is imprisoned in an enchanted palace — "frisos, columnas y estatuas de mármol" (p. 157). And there are other features in common, among them the conscious use of a linear narrative technique<sup>24</sup>, and the isolation of the protagonist, defined by Max Lüthi as "one of the governing principles in the fairytale"<sup>25</sup>. *El almohadón de plumas* is narrated with total linearity, its temporal progression clearly delineated from the time of Alicia's marriage to Jordán in April through three months of 'dicha especial', the Autumn spent in "este extraño nido de amor" (p. 157). Then there are then the "días y días" of Alicia's influenza. It is as though Quiroga were cold-bloodedly marking off Alicia's last days on a calendar, the last day she spends out of bed, the following day when the doctor is summoned. The reader then accompanies Alicia through the "cinco días y cinco noches" it takes for the monster — somewhat reminiscent of Poe's monster in *Murder in the Rue Morgue* — to kill her. Quiroga's narrative is almost brutally spare — "Alicia murió, por fin" (p. 159). There are no digressions or superfluous details, and this approach is quite in keeping with the stylistics of the fairytale, the way in which characters are presented:

Their psychological processes are not illuminated; only their line of progress is in focus, only that which is relevant to the action — every thing else is faded out. They are bound neither to their surroundings nor to their past, and no depth of character or psychological peculiarity is indicated. They are cut off from all that — isolated<sup>26</sup>.



Sleeping Beauty could not be more isolated, asleep in her castle in the wood for a hundred years. Alicia shares her physical space with Jordán and a maid; but spends much of her time asleep and could therefore be seen as living in a self-imposed isolation. If we look at other versions of the *Sleeping Beauty*, Straparola's and Basile's for instance, we find that the princess is impregnated and conceives her children while she sleeps; this violation surely recalls the monstrous insect penetrating Alicia's body while she sleeps on her feather pillow. In both *Sleeping Beauty* and *El almohadón de plumas* there are forces at work outside the lives of the female protagonists, either supernatural forces such as the fairies, or the monster that drains Alicia's blood. The human beings who intervene in these stories lack the power to act effectively on their own; when the heroine is saved it is when the rescuer is backed up by supernatural forces. Fairy-tale heroines are not usually permitted any real control over their own destinies (at least, not in Perrault). Perhaps this is why the voice of the heroine is so rarely heard, why their speech is reported rather than direct. Alicia's voice is never heard in *El almohadón de plumas*. Sleeping Beauty's and Alicia's lives are controlled and circumscribed by other people or forces: fairies, Jordán, the parasite in the pillow. Both are dependent on others to rescue them from the (fore-ordained) consequences of their actions and it seems as if the decisions that they make for themselves inevitably lead them into the worst possible dangers. In the case of Sleeping Beauty, her problems arise when she tries to spin. Alicia's problems, so it is implied, begin with her marriage; she does not have a good fairy to protect her, and Jordán hardly qualifies as a rescuing Prince<sup>27</sup>. When Alicia falls ill Jordán is unable to save her because he does not know what is causing her illness. In fact, one of the 'minor' shocks in this story is produced by Jordán's response to the doctor on being informed that his wife cannot be treated:

— ¡Sólo eso me faltaba! — resopló Jordán. Y tamborileó bruscamente sobre la mesa (p. 158).

There have been other interpretations of *Sleeping Beauty*, some of which have interesting implications for the way we read *El*

*almohadón de plumas*. The seasonal and solar theories explained by Saintyves might account for the references to autumn and cold in Quiroga's story<sup>28</sup>. But if we extend Bettelheim's psychoanalytic interpretation of *Sleeping Beauty* to Alicia, we may arrive at a somewhat different understanding of *El almohadón de plumas*:

However great the variations in detail, the central theme of all versions of *The Sleeping Beauty* is that, despite all attempts on the part of parents to prevent their child's sexual awakening, it will take place nonetheless<sup>29</sup>.

Alicia is described in much the same way as we would expect to find the traditional princess of European folklore, "rubia, angelical y tímida". The accumulation of these adjectives could be taken as synonymous with 'virginal'. Perhaps we are to suppose that her marriage has been the rudest kind of awakening. The failure of the honeymoon, a "largo escalofrío", and Alicia's subsequent unhappiness are due to Jordán's sexual demands on a shy, inexperienced girl:

El carácter duro de su marido heló sus soñadas niñerías de novia (p. 157).

Far from rescuing Alicia, Jordán is the source of her suffering, especially since he is not able to verbalize his love for her:

La amaba profundamente, sin darlo a conocer (p. 157).

His reply to the doctor may be seen as the expression of his feelings of exasperation towards a wife whose illness will make it impossible for him to satisfy his sexual desires. Alicia is frightened, beset by "terrores crepusculares" (p. 158), perhaps because of her youth, or because she is sexually frigid. She therefore becomes an invalid, "negándose al mundo y refugiada en su enfermedad"<sup>30</sup>, but this does not save her. The 'monster' continues to penetrate her body until she finally dies.

The fairy tale intertext can nudge the reader in one interpretative direction; the vampire intertext may send him off in the opposite one:

Tal monstruo apenas si es una objetivación fantasmal del verdadero del cuento: el propio Jordán<sup>31</sup>.

As we read *El almohadón de plumas*, we are aware of the intertextual dynamic between the vampire legend and Quiroga's story. If, on the one hand, the fairy tale intertext hints at what might have transpired between Alicia and Jordán, the vampire component undermines this vision: it foreshadows Alicia's suffering and intensifies the horror of her death. It might even point to the true nature of the relationship between Alicia and Jordán. We should not underestimate the importance of the gothic horror and the vampire motifs in *El almohadón de plumas*. Quiroga's interest in writers such as Hawthorne, Poe, Maupassant, Mérimée (author of *Le Guzla*, 1825 or 1826, whose hero is a vampire), has been well-documented by a series of critics, among them Margo Glantz in her discussion of 'Poe en Quiroga':

*El almohadón de plumas* es un caso típico de vampirismo con la presencia de monstruo y todo<sup>32</sup>.

Peter Beardsell proposes a different reading, which would confirm the proposition that the intertext can change the meaning of the text:

Quiroga was deliberately encouraging his readers to spot the vampire-like qualities of this story in order to mislead them and increase the shock at the end<sup>33</sup>.

Whether or not we agree with this theory, it seems fairly evident that the vampire element plays an important role, both in the text and the intertext.

There is another way to read *El almohadón de plumas*: Alicia is in love with Jordán, marries him, but finds her relationship sexually unsatisfying. How do we arrive at this reading? By comparing passages from Stoker's *Dracula* with *El almohadón de plumas* in order to establish possible correspondences<sup>34</sup>, then exploring the implications of this relationship.

Extracts from Bram Stoker's *El almohadón de plumas*  
*Dracula*.

Lucy Westenra's Diary:  
 Hillingham, 24 Augusto ...but  
 I am full of vague fear, and I  
 feel so weak and worn out.  
 When Arthur came to lunch  
 he looked quite grieved when  
 he saw me, and I hadn't the  
 spirit to be cheerful. 25  
 August. Another bad  
 night...More bad dreams. I  
 wish I could remember them.  
 This morning I am horribly  
 weak. My face is ghastly pale,  
 and my throat pains me. It  
 must be something wrong  
 with my lungs, for I don't  
 seem ever to get air enough.  
*Letter from Dr.Seward to arthur*  
*Holmwood:* She complains of  
 difficulty in breathing  
 satisfactorily at times, and of  
 heavy, lethargic sleep, with  
 dreams that frighten her, but  
 regarding which she can  
 remember nothing. (...) She  
 was ghastly, chalkily pale; the  
 red seemed to have gone even  
 from her lips and gums, and  
 the bones of her face stood out  
 prominently; her breathing  
 was painful to see or hear. (...)  
 There on the bed, seemingly  
 in a swoon, lay poor Lucy,  
 more horribly white and  
 wan-looking than ever.

Al día siguiente amaneció  
 desvanecida. El médico de  
 Jordán la examinó con suma  
 atención, ordenándola cama y  
 descanso absoluto. (...) Alicia  
 no tuvo más desmayos, pero  
 se iba visiblemente a la  
 muerte. (...) Pronto Alicia  
 comenzó a tener  
 alucinaciones, confusas y  
 flotantes al principio. (...) Al  
 rato abrió la boca para gritar,  
 y sus narices y labios se  
 perlaron de sudor. (...) Durante el día no avanzaba su  
 enfermedad, pero cada  
 mañana amanecía lívida, en  
 síncope casi. Parecía que  
 únicamente de noche se le  
 fuera la vida en nuevas  
 oleadas de sangre. Tenía  
 siempre al despertar la  
 sensación de estar  
 desplomada en la cama con  
 un millón de kilos encima.  
 Desde el tercer día este  
 hundimiento no la abandonó  
 más. (...) Sus terrores  
 crepusculares avanzaban  
 ahora en forma de monstruos  
 que se arrastraban hasta la  
 cama, y trepaban  
 dificultosamente por la  
 colcha. (...)

Although it would be an exaggeration to speak about textual citations, there are surely correlations between *Dracula* and certain passages in *El almohadón de plumas*. Lucy and Alicia's symptoms are virtually identical, even if their sufferings are caused by different creatures. It may be, as Beardsell has argued, that Quiroga wishes to mislead his readers in order to shock them all the more when they reach the end of the story. In any case, it is quite obvious that Quiroga is incorporating gothic features in his story in order to achieve his desired 'effect':

In Gothic writing the reader is held in suspense with the characters and increasingly there is an effort to shock, alarm, and otherwise rouse him. Inducing a powerful emotional response in the reader (rather than a moral or intellectual one) was the prime object of these novelists<sup>35</sup>.

The presence of gothic elements in *El almohadón de plumas* is undeniable:

'Gothic' fiction is the fiction of the haunted castle, of heroines preyed on by unspeakable terrors, of the blackly lowering villain, of ghosts, vampires, monsters and werewolves<sup>36</sup>.

Alicia lives in a house which seems to have some of the characteristics of a castle<sup>37</sup>, she suffers all manner of fear — 'estremecimientos', 'espanto callado', 'terrores crepusculares'. Jordán answers in part the description of 'blackly lowering villain', and the story contains a monster, if not a vampire. As the next stage in this discussion, we should perhaps consider just what the vampire represents in literary terms. David Punter establishes a connection between the vampire with dream:

Both are night phenomena which fade in the light of day, both are considered in mythological systems to be physically weakening, both promise — and perhaps deliver — an unthinkable pleasure which cannot sustain the

touch of reality. Also the vampire, like the dream, can provide a representation of sexual liberation *in extremis*, indulgence to the point of death<sup>38</sup>.

*El almohadón de plumas* contains several references to dreams and physical weakness, in addition to the allusions to monsters and the draining of blood. Perhaps the underlying suggestion is that Alicia, far from being the frightened victim of a predatory husband is herself the predator, unsatisfied and frustrated in her marital relationship, and Margo Glantz is right when she suggests that:

Jordán se transfiere a un monstruoso insecto y la delectación erótica que su mujer no encuentra en la vida cotidiana se transfiere igualmente al acto de succión<sup>39</sup>.

Emir Rodríguez Monegal supports this interpretation:

Una versión completamente distinta a la anecdótica es también posible: en la impasibilidad y lejanía del marido cabe ver el motivo de los delirios eróticos de la mujer. Quiroga introduce un monstruoso insecto para no decir que el ser que ha vaciado a esta mujer es el marido: con su monstruosa indiferencia ha secado las fuentes de la vida. Sería este un caso de vampirismo al revés<sup>40</sup>.

Those readers familiar with *Dracula* will remember that when Lucy Westenra is about to die (or become one of the un-dead), she undergoes a change of personality. No longer a 'model of femininity and passivity'<sup>41</sup>, Lucy seems to undergo a loss of purity and innocence, becoming instead sensual and passionate:

Her breathing grew stertorous, the mouth opened, and the pale gums, drawn back, made the teeth look longer and sharper than ever. In a sort of sleep-waking, vague, unconscious way she opened her eyes, which were now dull and



hard at once, and said in a soft voluptuous voice,  
such as I had never heard from her lips:  
— Arthur! Oh, my love, I am so glad you have  
come! Kiss me!<sup>42</sup>

Since Alicia never speaks, we must necessarily rely on the disclosures of the narrator to explain her feelings and behaviour, but because his information is not always complete, the reader is left wondering why Alicia should willingly collude in her own death:

No quiso que le tocaran la cama, ni aunque le  
arrelaran el almohadón (p. 158).

It is only when we resort to the vampire intertext that we find a possible explanation: that Alicia welcomes the depredations of the monster, obtaining some profoundly sensual pleasure from the experience of having her blood drained.

Quiroga's *El almohadón de plumas* may speak to us in several ways. It may strike us as a fairy tale that (contrary to conventional reader expectations) goes horribly wrong and ends in tragedy<sup>43</sup>; we may regard it as a horror story in the manner of Poe and others, and it may remind us of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and other gothic stories with haunted heroines and vampires. But manifestly beyond dispute is the 'effectiveness' of *El almohadón de plumas*. The deliberately dispassionate linear narrative, when combined with its multiple intertexts, somehow succeeds in manipulating the reader's response through a gamut of reactions ranging from curiosity and puzzlement to shock and revulsion. The one emotion not inspired by this story is compassion, because Quiroga did not wish to dilute the effects of his writing with surplus emotions or sentiments.

## Notas

- 1 Ruben Cutelo, "Horacio Quiroga: Vida y Obra", Capítulo Oriental 17. *La historia de la literatura uruguaya*, Montevideo, 1968, p. 263.
- 2 José E. Etcheverry, "El almohadón de plumas. La retórica del almohadón", in *Aproximaciones a Horacio Quiroga*, edited by Ángel Flores, Caracas: Monte vila, 1976, p. 218.



- 3 Alfredo Veiravé, "El almohadón de plumas. Lo ficticio y lo real", in *Aproximaciones*, p. 213: "La atmósfera de sombras parnasianas en la que está envuelta la muerte de Alicia ('rubia, angelical y tímida'), coloca a la protagonista desde su aparición en un marco de irrealidad y fantasía firmemente trazado".
- 4 Michael Riffaterre, "Towards a Formal Approach to Literary History", in *Text Production*, translated by Terese Lyons, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 99.
- 5 One of the most recent commentaries on *El almohadón de plumas* appears in Peter Beardsell's *Critical Guide, Quiroga. Cuentos de amor de locura y de muerte*, London: Grant & Cutler, 1986. María E. Rodés de Clérico and Ramón Bordolo Dolci published a detailed textual analysis of *El almohadón de plumas*, in Horacio Quiroga. *Antología y estudio crítica*, Montevideo: Arca, 1977, pp. 37-54.
- 6 Michael Riffaterre, "Syllepsis", *Critical Inquiry*, VI, nº4 (1980), p. 626. See Worton and Still's comment in their introduction to *Intertextuality: Theory and Practices*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990, p. 1: "The writer is a reader of texts (in the broadest sense) before s/he is a creator of texts, and therefore the work of art is inevitably shot through with references, quotations and influences of every kind".
- 7 Michael Riffaterre, "Compulsory Reader Response: The Intertextual Drive", in Worton and Still, p. 57.
- 8 Laurent Jenny, "La Stratégie de la forme", *Poétique*, 27 (1976), p. 279.
- 9 Quiroga himself describes *El almohadón de plumas* as a 'cuento de efecto', in his letter to José María Delgado of 8 June 1917: "Un buen día me he convencido de que el efecto no deja de ser efecto (salvo cuando la historia lo pide), y que es bastante más difícil meter un final que el lector ha adivinado ya" (*Cartas inéditas*. Volume II, Montevideo: Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones y Archivos Literarios, 1959, p. 62). For Rodés de Clérico and Bordolo Dolci, the *cuento de efecto* "combina los distintos elementos y acaeceres teniendo en cuenta el efecto final que, como resultado de un desencadenamiento minucioso y eficaz, es rápido y directo", op. cit., p. 54.
- 10 Emir Rodríguez Monegal, *Genio y figura de Horacio Quiroga*, Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1967, pp. 58-59: "El supuesto toque científico final no hace sino subrayar irónicamente hasta qué punto Quiroga está tratando temas suprarreales".
- 11 Margo Glantz, "Poe en Quiroga", in *Aproximaciones*, p. 107.
- 12 See Elliott B.J. Gose, *Imagination indulged: The Irrational in the Nineteenth-Century Novel*, Montréal and London: McGill-Queens University Press, 1972, p. 42: "Like the gothic novel, the fairy tale often deals in adventures that are literally impossible in the actual world,

and manages quite well with a setting remote from the experience of its readers. Because they share so many of the characteristics attributed to romance by Chase, both the fairy tale and the gothic novel require Coleridge's romantic suspension of disbelief". There is a general agreement that *Sleeping Beauty* is a literary work, taken not from folklore but from earlier literary sources. Perrault first published *La Belle au bois dormant* in February 1696 in *Le Mercure galant*, and several scholars (for instance, P. Saintyves, *Les Contes de Perrault et les récits parallèles*, Paris: Librairie Critique, 1923), have revealed how it is based on earlier tales. Jacques Barchilon maintains that Perrault's tales are part of the literary canon, in *Le conte merveilleux français de 1690 à 1790*, Paris: Honoré Champion, 1975, p. 27: "Le conte de fées est un art d'imagination, un art dont le secret est sa profonde résonance psychologique: les personnages de Perrault ne cesseront jamais de faire rêver. Il suffit d'énumérer la liste prestigieuse des personnages de Perrault pour constater que sa Belle au bois dormant, sa Cendrillon (...) appartiennent à cette vivante galerie des personnages de tous les temps et tous les pays, aux côtés de Don Quichotte, Don Juan, Hamlet ou Faust". The Grimm version of the same fairy tale, *Dornröschen*, is equally 'literary', owing little to peasant lore.

- 13 We should not discount the impact of two other elements that feed into our intertext, firstly the ballet *Sleeping Beauty*, and secondly Disney's cinematographic production of 1959. Ballet and film may be as much a part of the intertext as a novel, poem or play. See, for example, Keith A. Reader's article on filmic intertextuality, *Literature/cinema/television: intertextuality in Jean Renoir's Le Testament du Docteur Cordelier*, in Worton and Still, pp. 176-189.
- 14 See Jacques Barchilon's remarks, op. cit., p. 27: "Des millions de lecteurs ou d'auditeurs de tous âges et de tout acabit ont fait une place aux personnages de Perrault dans leur mythologie personnelle". Ruth B. Bottigheimer makes an extremely valid point in her book *Grimm's Bad Girls and Bold Boys. The Moral and Social Vision of the Tales*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987, p. 35, when she points out: "Different social or geographical environments harbor vastly different social views and tend to amend popular tales in accordance with familiar social codes. Basile's *Pentamerone* and Perrault's *Contes* both retain the same or very similar constituents to tell a Cinderella story, but motivations and outcomes differ profoundly from the Grimm's version, illustrating quite neatly how contemporary mores, audience expectations, narrative voice, and authorial intentions color tale elements". This kind of difference is arrestingly exemplified when we compare Basile's *Sun, Moon and Talia* with *La Belle au bois dormant* and read that in the former, the King does not wait for Talia to awaken before making love to her, fathers two children, then forgets all about her for the next nine months. As far as the importance of the happy

ending is concerned, see Bruno Bettelheim's discussion of the happy ending as a feature of the fairy tale, in *The Uses of Enchantment*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978, p230: "The happy ending requires that the evil principle be appropriately punished and done away with; only then can the good, and with it happiness, prevail. In Perrault, as in Basile, the evil principle is done away with, and thus fairy-story justice is done". This is linked to the invulnerability of characters, who escape from danger at the last minute. Heroines (with the exception of Little Red Riding Hood), are always rescued (Barchilon, op. cit., p. 29). Citing J. R.R. Tolkien, Bettelheim writes: "Tolkien describes the facets which are necessary in a good fairy tale as fantasy, recovery, escape, and consolation — recovery from deep despair, escape from some great danger, but, most of all, consolation. Speaking of the happy ending, Tolkien stresses that all complete fairy stories must have it" (*Tree and Leaf*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1964, pp. 50-61, cited on p. 143). Bettelheim then continues: "Maybe it would be appropriate to add one more element to the four Tolkien enumerates. I believe that an element of threat is crucial to the fairy tale — a threat to the hero's physical existence or to his moral existence" (p. 144).

15 See John Frow, "Intertextuality and Ontology" in Worton and Still, p. 46: "Intertextual analysis is distinguished from source criticism both by this stress on interpretation rather than on the establishment of particular facts, and by its rejection of a unilinear causality (the concept of 'influence') in favour of an account of the work performed on intertextual material and its functional integration in the later text".

16 See José Luis Martínez Morales, *Horacio Quiroga: Teoría y práctica del cuento*, Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana, 1982, p. 76: "No hay que olvidar que el éxito de la producción y difusión del cuento literario finca sus bases en el siglo diecinueve por la difusión y recopilación de los cuentos populares". Compare Quiroga's comments on the short story with those of Jacques Barchilon, op. cit., p. XV: "Le conteur de fictions merveilleuses, qui dispose d'un espace plus bref que le romancier pour captiver son lecteur, doit intéresser vite et bien. S'il n'écrit pas avec esprit et concision, il le perd". Quiroga writes, in "La crisis del cuento nacional", in *Sobre literatura. Tomo VII. Obras inéditas y desconocidas*, Montevideo: Arca, 1970, pp. 92-96: "El cuentista nace y se hace. Sin innatas en él la energía y la brevedad de la expresión; y adquiere con el transcurso del tiempo la habilidad para sacar el mayor partido posible de ella en la composición de sus cuentos (...) El cuentista tiene la capacidad de sugerir más que lo que dice. El novelista, para un efecto igual, requiere mucho más espacio". In "La retórica del cuento", *loc. cit.*, Quiroga reiterates his views: "El cuento literario (...) consta de los mismos elementos sucintos que el cuento oral, y es como éste el relato de una historia bastante interesante y suficientemente breve para que absorba toda nuestra atención". Quiroga's story is designed to

inspire fear in the reader, and so, in many cases, is the fairy tale. See also Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic. A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, translated by Richard Howard, Cleveland and London: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973, p. 35: "Fear often linked to the fantastic".

- 17 See Quiroga's comment in *La retórica del cuento*, pp. 115-116: "Los cuentos chinos y persas, los grecolatinos, los árabes de las *Mil y una noches*, los del Renacimiento italiano, los de Perrault, de Hoffmann, de Poe, de Mérimée, de Bret Harte, de Verga, de Chekov, de Maupassant, de Kipling, todos ellos son una sola y misma cosa en su realización. Pueden diferenciarse unos de otros como el sol y la luna. Pero el concepto, el coraje para contar, la intensidad, la brevedad, son los mismos en todos los cuentistas de todas las edades". Quiroga published a short story entitled *La Bella y la Bestia* in the collection *El má allá*. The story has nothing to do with the original fairy tale and the title is used as an ironic comment on the female protagonist (heroine). There are also the stories that Quiroga wrote specifically for children, *Cuentos de la selva*. Additionally, we might also take note of Alfred Melon's observations in his article "Reflexions sur les ambiguïtés constitutives du conte latino-américain moderne", in *Techniques narratives et représentatives du monde dans le conte latino-américain. América. Cahiers du Criccal*, n.º 2, 2ème semestre, 1986. Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris III, p. 56: "De la même manière, s'il est évident que les contes de Quiroga (...) sont étrangers aux structures codifiées de la littérature de tradition orale, *strictu sensu*; s'il est certain qu'aucun de leurs récits ne pourrait être raconté, transmis oralement, altéré dans les aléas de sa transmission (comme le romance, par exemple, ou le conte créole), il n'empêche que le lecteur reconnaît des croyances, des légendes, les aphorismes, les simulations rituelles, les modèles archétypiques de la tradition populaire (...) qui créent l'illusion de reconstitutions ponctuelles des traces d'une littérature orale". Fernando Ainsa seems to share this feeling that a whole series of elements feed into Quiroga's work in his study "La estructura abierta del cuento latinoamericano", pp. 69-70 of the same journal: "La recuperación a través de nuevas formulaciones estéticas, de las raíces anteriores del cuento, tales como la oralidad, el imaginario popular y colectivo presente en mitos y tradiciones y las formas arcaicas de sub-géneros que estaban en el origen del género (parábolas, Crónicas, Baladas leyendas, 'caracteres', etc.), la mayoría de las cuales no habían tenido en su momento histórico una expresión americana. En esta deliberada recuperación se recrean formas y se reactualiza lo mejor de géneros ya olvidados".
- 18 According to Todorov, op. cit., p. 83: "It is no accident that tales of the marvelous rarely employ the first person (...). They have no need of it; their supernatural universe is not intended to awaken doubts".



- 19 All quotation are taken from *Cuentos Completos*. Volumen 2, second edition, Montevideo: Ediciones de la Plaza, 1987, pp. 157-159.
- 20 See Michael Riffaterre's explanation of intertextuality, in "Compulsory Reader Response", p. 76: "Intertextuality enables the text to represent, at one and the same time, the following pairs of opposites (within each of which the first item corresponds to the intertext): convention and departures from it, tradition and novelty, sociolect and idiolect, the already said and its negation or transformation".
- 21 Marc Eidgeling, *Mythologie et intertextualité*, Geneva: Slatkine, 1987, pp. 12-13.
- 22 *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*, translated by Angela Carter, London: Victor Gollancz, 1977, pp. 55-71. *The Brothers Grimm. Popular Folk Tales*, translated by Brian Alderson, London: Victor Gollancz, 1978, pp. 39-42. See also Max Lüthi's stylistic comparison of the two versions, in *The Fairytale as Art Form and Portrait of Man*, translated by Jon Erickson, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984, pp. 60-61.
- 23 Max Lüthi, op. cit., p. 170.
- 24 Max Lüthi, op. cit., p. 40: "Both the representational and narrative techniques of the European fairytale, in particular, tend to be linear. Objects and figures are seen as linear shapes, and the development of the plot and the ordering of episodes, sentences, and words can also be called linear".
- 25 Max Lüthi, op. cit., p. 42.
- 26 Max Lüthi, op. cit., p. 42-43.
- 27 See Ruth B. Rottigheimer's comment in her chapter "Towers, Forests, and Trees", op. cit., p. 101: "The single most pervasive image evoked in the popular mind by the word fairy tale is probably that of a maiden in distress leaning from a tower window and searching the horizon for a rescuer".
- 28 P. Saintyves, pp. 71-101.
- 29 Bruno Bettelheim, op. cit., p. 230.
- 30 Alfredo Veiravé, op. cit., p. 213.
- 31 José E. Etcheverry, op. cit., p. 217.
- 32 Margo Glantz, op. cit., p. 104. Glantz goes on to point out a further dimension to the story: "antes que nada es el planteamiento de esa sinrazón, de ese caos que debe legitimarse en frases explicativas y serenas, en el que dos seres humanos se aman, pero se destruyen".
- 33 Beardsell, op. cit., p. 39.
- 34 For Margo Glantz, there is no question about Quiroga's use of the vampire theme, op. cit., pp. 104-105: "La herencia es clara en Quiroga.

Lo importante no es detectarla porque a fuerza de existir es obvia, sino definir su sentido”.

- 35 Robert D. Hume, “Gothic versus Romantic”, *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 84 (1969), pp. 282-290.
- 36 David Punter, *The Literature of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*, London: Longmann, 1980, p. 1.
- 37 Rodés de Clérico and Bordoli Dolci, op. cit., p. 42: “La casa tiene algo de adusta mansión que la aproxima — aunque lejanamente — a la atmósfera gótica existente en los cuentos de E.A.Poe”.
- 38 David Punter, op. cit., pp. 118-119.
- 39 Margo Glantz, op. cit., p. 106.
- 40 Emir Rodríguez Monegal, *El desterrado. Vida y obra de Horacio Quiroga*, Buenos Aires: Losada, 1968, p. 116.
- 41 David Punter, op. cit., p. 262.
- 42 *Dracula*, p. 147.
- 43 See Max Lüthi’s views on the usual endings of fairy tales, op. cit., pp. 56-57.