



Cosmic Pessimism in “The Dead Man”

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Abstract

This article proposes a reading of “El hombre muerto” (1907) by Leopoldo Lugones that shifts interpretations away from psychological fantasy toward an ontological and cosmological problem. In conceptual dialogue with Eugene Thacker’s notion of the world-without-us, it argues that the story configures an impersonal space in which life persists as a biological residue, stripped of symbolic and affective inscription. Within this framework, the well-known “thirst for nothingness” does not express a desire for death, but rather the impossibility of consummating it: the failure of death as a definitive limit. The pessimism that runs through the text is not psychological but cosmological, insofar as the universe appears indifferent not only to human life but also incapable of guaranteeing its annihilation. Thus, the story figures a central intuition of contemporary cosmic pessimism; the most radical experience is not death, but the persistence of a world less consciousness.

Keywords: Cosmic Pessimism, “The Dead Man”, Leopoldo Lugones, Eugene Thacker, Annihilation.