

READING OVER HER SHOULDER: GALDÓS/CORTÁZAR

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PRETEXT

En setiembre de 80, pocos meses después del fallecimiento

Y las cosas que lee, una novela, mal escrita, para coimo de mi padre, resolví apartarme de los negocios, cediéndolos una edición infecta, uno se pregunta como puede interesarle a otra casa extractora de Jerez tan acreditada como la mfa; algo así. Pensar que se ha pasado horas enteras devorando realicé los créditos que pude, arrendé los predios, traspasé esta sopa fría y desabrída, tantas otras lecturas increíbles, las bodegas y sus existencias, y me fui a vivir a Madrid.

Elle y France Soir, los tristes magazines que le prestaba Mi tío (primo carnal de mi padre), don Rafael Bueno de Babs. Y *me fui a vivir a Madrid*, me imagino que después Guzmán y Ataíde, quiso albergarme en su casa; mas yo me de tragarse cinco o seis páginas uno se acaba por engranar y ya resistí a ello por no perder mi independencia. Por fin supe no puede dejar de leer, un poco como no se puede dejar hallar un término de conciliación, combinando mi cómoda de dormir o de mear, servidumbres o látigos o babas. Por libertad con el hospitalario deseo de mi pariente; y aquí-*fin supe hallar un término de conciliación*, una lengua hecha lando de un cuarto próximo a su vivienda, me puse en la situa- de frases precauñadas para transmitir ideas archipodridas, ción más propia para estar solo cuando quisiese o gozar del las monedas de mano en mano, de generación degeneración, calor de la familia cuando lo hubiese menester. Vivía el te voilà en pleine écholalie. *Gozar del calor de la familia*, buen señor, quiero decir, vivíamos en el barrio que se ha esa es buena, joder si es buena. Ah Maga, cómo podías tragar construido donde antes estuvo el Pósito. El cuarto de mi esta sopa fría, y qué diablos es el Pósito, che. Cuántas horas tío era un principal de dieciocho mil reales, hermoso y alegre, leyendo estas cosas, probablemente convencida de que eran si bien no muy holgado para tanta familia. Yo tomé el bajo, la vida, y tenías razón, son la vida, por eso habría que acabar poco menos grande que el principal, pero sobradamente con ellas. (El principal, qué es eso.) Y algunas tardes cuando espacioso para mí solo, y lo decoré con lujo y puse en él me había dado por recorrer vitrina por vitrina toda la todas las comodidades a que estaba acostumbrado. Mi for- sección egipcia del Louvre, y volvía deseoso de mate y de tuna, gracias a Dios, me lo permitía con exceso. pan con dulce, te encontraba pegada a la ventana...

(Cortázar 227-28)

TEXT (1): *El lado de acá*

In Julio Cortázar's *Rayuela*, Horacio, reading over the shoulder of la Maga, the woman he desires, the woman he cannot master even in sexual possession, the woman who represents for him the other, the infernal heaven, «lo prohibido,» comments on the limitations of the realistic mode of fiction as represented by Galdós's novel, *Lo prohibido*. The game in this chapter, an alternation of texts, has a very serious purpose. Horacio's interruption of Galdós's text with his voice and his dispersion of the novel by his interlinear commentaries imply not only a critique of la Maga's retrograde reading habits but, implicitly, a deconstruction of the Galdosian artifact as well. Cortázar's narrator excludes himself from the comfortable world of Bueno de Guzmán, from the vision of a stable, ordered reality established by the first paragraph of the novel. Through these exclusionary tactics, he seeks a radical break with the traditional nineteenth-century concept of reality and realism, asserting that reality cannot be defined epistemologically in relation to societal forces but only within the individual artistic vision. According to Saúl Yurkievich: «the game, a rupture in the normal continuum, being exempt from external constraint, fractures the order of pragmatic realism. A festive interregnum, it transports one to an exceptional zone in which free will is recovered» (99). This fractured, discontinuous interregnum is contrasted, interlineally, to Galdós's effort (which belongs not to the interregnum but, as we recall, to the Restoration) to reduce history, society, and reality to a recognizable form.

Galdós's goal, in opposition to the modern impulse to fragment, is to inscribe reality in the novelistic form; the mission of the novel is, in effect, to provide the «expresión de la sociedad coetánea en sus diversos aspectos... desarrollados en el estudio de la realidad» (Galdós, qtd. Shoemaker 179). The novelist is an arbiter revealing the essential core of contemporary reality («Imagen de la vida es la novela,» says Galdós [Shoemaker 177]). It should be noted, in addition, that Galdós's nineteenth-century literary aesthetic, the aesthetic Cortázar rejects, is in some sense predicated upon and faithful to the neoclassical concept of the double role of art as being both aesthetically pleasing and morally useful. Galdós in this sense is reading over the shoulder of the previous generations when he notes that the highest order of novelistic creation is present in «ficciones que nos instruyen y embelesan» (Shoemaker 177). Cortázar, of course, accepts neither the eighteenth-century goals nor the «scientific» techniques of nineteenth-century realistic (or naturalistic) fiction;¹ his purpose is to explore precisely that terrain left undiscovered by his predecessor. For the Argentinian novelist, to reduce reality to a single communicable form, to express that conviction in a recognizable style, is a trap he must try to elude in his pursuit of the fragmentary perceptions of reality as a «coup de dés» (Mallarmé) or as the skipping of a stone on the hop-scotch board.

INTERTEXT: *Runrunes de voces*

The banalization of these themes in mass literature accounts for the reaction of the avant-garde which, from the end of the nineteenth century, began to turn against an aesthetic based on

mimesis and representation. Cortázar's own flirtation with abstraction is reflected in... Morell's attempt to write a novel... «sin palabras, sin gente, sin cosas, y potencialmente claro, sin lectores.» (Franco 111)

...in one work after another, there seems to exist an observable struggle to destroy the linear, stable, enclosed structures of traditional narration... (Zamora 45)

...the unsaid, the unwritten has as much significance as what has been articulated, perhaps even more, and the page of *blens* in Cabrera Infante's *Three Trapped Tigers* has more extensive meaning than can be found in the whole of *Fortunata y Jacinta*. (Rabassa 62)

In Chapter 34... Oliveira is criticizing the worn out ideas and outmoded language of the classic Spanish novel that la Maga is reading... (Garfield, JC 112)

Cortázar tampoco quiere esclavizarse a la tradición. Se burla de clásicos literarios como Pérez Galdós en *Rayuela*... (Garfield, *Surrealista* 239)

I consider *Rayuela* to be a parody of 19th century realism in Spain and Spanish America... Chapter 34 is one of a number of textual manipulations which irritate some but interest most readers. (Valdés 84-85)

This is exactly the reversal that Nietzsche effects on his arch-scapegoat Kant, by taking all his categories, antithetical values, not as the base to reality, but as «foreground variations,» «provisional perspectives,» whereas life itself with all its contradictions becomes the prime reality. (Boldy 58)

TEXT (2): *El lado de allá*

Cortázar's critics, so brilliantly perceptive in their discussions of other aspects of *Rayuela*, seem strangely satisfied to dismiss the troubling game of chapter 34 with a single sentence as an irritating or mildly interesting juxtaposition of mimetic and antimimetic aesthetics. Like Garfield, who slips smoothly from «Oliveira is criticizing» to «Cortázar... se burla» in her books, other critics tend to accept the character's reading at face value and to neglect consideration of the significance of a «parody of 19th century realism» presented through an exact, word-for-word citation of the «parodied» text. The reversal of position and Nietzschean transvaluation of values referred to by Boldy is operative in these preliminary critical approximations, but the first transvaluation suggests, even requires, a second in which the reader is allowed to glimpse the abyssally problematic side of Cortázar's enterprise. In his struggle against the organizing modes of nineteenth-century realism, asks the student of parody, can the modern revisionary novelist avoid reproducing the structure of that which he revises? The question is implicit in Cortázar's reproduction of Galdós's text in the context of his work and is complicated by Cortázar's anticipation of the critical commentary to follow the publication of his own novel, now also «una edición infecta.» The present critical effort is constrained, therefore, to peep over the shoulders of Cortázar's critics looking over the shoulder of Horacio Oliveira who reads over the shoulder of la Maga and is confronted with the imperfect text, a Galdós novel lacquered over by the negative assessments of Galdós as well as Cortázar critics. The problem of how to approach such a layered text is a delicate one.

Cortázar's Nietzschean reversal of position is first of all a rehearsal of the site of an element that has been elided or traduced; in spatial terms, the

search for the «cielo» of the hopscotch board is also a fall into the abyss: «se cae en las novelas... en la especulación de otro Cielo al que también hay que aprender a llegar» (252). By reproducing the forbidden («prohibido» now in a double sense) text of Galdós in his own text, Cortázar precipitates this fall into the other heaven, the heaven of the nineteenth-century vision of reality. The enterprise is not dissimilar in form and function to that of Borges's Pierre Menard, who also generates-regenerates an earlier text within the text of the story. Cortázar's protagonist, like Borges's, displaces the attribution of authorship from character to character, from «Cortázar» to Horacio and finally onto Bueno de Guzmán's authorial «I»: a narrative projection which, as Cortázar must have been aware, is itself called into question in the final pages of Galdós's novel with the introduction of the mediating pen of the untrustworthy novelist, Ido del Sagrario.

This vertiginous fall into the abyss is exactly what Horacio, despite his ostensible fragmentation of reality, wishes to avoid. In this chapter, as elsewhere in the novel (most notably in his eternal hesitation on the window-sill as he contemplates a suicidal jump down onto the hopscotch board in the courtyard of the Buenos Aires madhouse), Horacio brackets the prohibited element, changing the rules of the game so as to be able to retain an element of continuity and stability. Thus, Horacio, re-reading the text of Galdós's novel over the shoulder of la Maga, also, like Pierre Menard, rewrites that novel in a modern form. In this literary exchange, the reader of Cortázar, reading over Horacio's shoulder, finds that as the narrative «I» shifts from Bueno de Guzmán to Horacio Oliveira the oscillation between two forms of discourse which are initially projected as absolutely foreign to each other is resolved: at first as dialogue, finally as a fusion of the two autobiographies into one. As Pierre Menard is Cervantes (or Cide Hamete Benengeli, or the editor of the Moor's papers), so too Horacio Oliveira is Galdós (or Bueno de Guzmán, or Ido del Sagrario). There is no break with the past, no absolute abandonment of the nineteenth-century realistic form as epitomized in the works of Galdós; instead, the narrator engages in a vigorous recirculation of discourse within a single, continuous literary tradition. By juxtaposing the two novels, Cortázar indicates the degree to which both accounts occupy a parallel space in the Western tradition of literary realism; the attempt to speak the truth about reality remains as paradoxical in 1963 as in 1884.

Galdós himself was no stranger to the transvaluation of literary forms which he saw «pasar ante nuestros ojos, fugaz y antojadiza, como las modas de vestir. Y así, en brevísimo tiempo, saltamos del idealismo nebuloso a los extremos de la naturalidad: hoy amamos el detalle menudo, mañana las líneas amplias y vigorosas...» (Shoemaker 178). His statements on art are, however, like Cortázar's, tinged with ambiguity. For while he recognizes the fugacity of literary fads, he cannot resist the influence of the past and he cannot forget the dream of a stable form for the future. Like the intertext of Horacio's comments, like the adulators of Cortázar who scorn nineteenth-century realistic fiction, Galdós also, in his scant critical work, suggests: «burlémonos de clasificaciones absurdas y convencionales... de la antigua escuela» (Shoemaker 130). He rejects (ineffectually) for his work the influence of the generation

before his as Cortázar, with equal ineffectuality, rejects the implicit canons of Galdós's day.

In Cortázar's novel, despite its surface fragmentation, narrative consciousness is focussed in one central character—that of Horacio Oliveira—just as in Galdós's novel the reader's perception of Madrid and its society is mediated by the eyes and voice of Bueno de Guzmán. Indeed, as Boldy notes: «Though often called an anti-novel, *Rayuela* has a more coherent and classical story than it is sometimes credited with» (30). In a certain sense, Horacio's condemnation of Galdós's novel is a product of pique; Bueno de Guzmán, a phantom presence, has robbed him temporarily of the attention of the woman he regards as his. Further, Horacio's diatribes against the efficiency of control exercised by Galdós over his text may reflect less of an aesthetic difference than a sense of frustration over his own inability to tell his story smoothly and efficiently, to write a novel that would engage the attention of la Maga. Horacio, then, is attracted to the orders of reason and to the traditional forms he superficially decries; at the same time, he attempts to reverse the traditional categories, to commit a kind of intellectual or spiritual suicide, to reveal the unreason at the core of the epistemological and ontological assumptions of reason. Poised on the edge of flight or a fall into the abyss, Horacio can decide for neither alternative. Thus, he resurrects the past (Galdós) to vilify it, but at the same time, in his resurrection of «lo prohibido» he uncovers an uncanny presence, a repressed element that must and will return to haunt his own endeavors.

Unable to resolve this tension, Horacio takes refuge in the static hesitations of his madness; first, as Boldy notes, in the superficial madness of the circus, and later in the fully accepted status of inmate in a lunatic asylum (90-92). Only in madness can the opposition between the two orders of reality be held in abeyance; only in madness can the unbridgeable gap between «I» (Oliveira) and the absolute other (la Maga) be bridged:

—Yo sé que es Talita, pero hace un rato era la Maga. Es las dos, como nosotros.

—Eso se llama locura —dijo Traveler.

—Todo se llama de alguna manera, vos elegís y dale que va. (401)

Through his madness, real or feigned, Oliveira can balance both sides: «El lado de allá» and «el lado de acá,» Paris and Buenos Aires, «I» and the other. Curiously, this struggle with madness on various levels is also a prominent feature in Galdós's text, where «lo prohibido,» an implicit but hidden presence in Cortázar, is made explicit as a motivating force. From the opening of *Lo prohibido* insanity appears as a central factor in the development of the narrative. Horacio (or the narrator behind Horacio) chooses to quote part I, 1, i of Galdós; immediately following the end of the passage quoted, however, is the curious family history of the Buenos de Guzmán, with which the narrator's uncle Rafael regales his ailing nephew during recovery from a neurotic attack. This «mal de familia» (229) is only superficially a pathological genealogy of the family in the mode of the naturalistic novels of Zola; the reader is warned from the outset that this realistic-naturalistic account is itself undercut by the untrustworthy nature of its teller, now triply refracted

in Ido del Sagrario (insane novelist), Bueno de Guzmán (whose neurotic/psychotic tendencies attest to his unreliability), and Bueno de Guzmán's cheerfully crazy uncle Rafael whose manifestation of the family illness takes more than one form:

Parecíame algo fantástico lo que me contaba aquel hablador sempiterno, que, por lucir el ingenio, era capaz de alimentar su fecundia con materiales de invención.

—Usted hubiera sido un gran novelador —le dije... (229)

After his uncle finishes detailing the psychological illnesses that afflict his family—all the members of which appear to be perfect candidates for the insane asylum—Bueno de Guzmán finds his own depression miraculously relieved by this «historia o pliego de aleruyas de la calamidad que te aflige joh perñclita raza de los Buenos de Guzmán!» (232).

Thus, just as Horacio struggles to repeat and subvert the realistic form of the Galdós novel, so too Bueno de Guzmán, perhaps with greater success, is able to parody and subvert the remorseless trajectory of the typical naturalistic novel. In both novels, then, one constant preoccupation is the development of the fictional form itself, of the struggle of mind (insane or reasoning) to enact itself in words, only to find that the life of the mind is displaced continuously in the refraction of *this* story into other stories, in the insertion of the character's reality into the Babel-like reality of literary allusion.² It is highly significant that, in Galdós, the narrator's own manifestation of the family illness takes the form of a vague paranoia (228-29) frequently accompanied by «runrunes de... voces humanas, a veces un extraño coro...; a veces un solo acento... , que llegaba a producirme alucinación de la realidad» (247); the narrator's hypersensitive state allows him to hear the voices of those other texts that support his own, to hear the voices of the readers of his text whose critical commentaries superimpose another layer of fictional revaluation of values upon that already accomplished in the novel.

This fiction, which mimics «reality» in its purported nature as the memoirs of a rich «señorito,» is, then, filled from the very beginning with hints that will clue a perceptive reader to its play of fictional form. In Kronik's words, «If reality is one text and the novel another, then at best fiction is the rewriting of another text. The artist is caught between *Dichtung* and *Wahrheit*, but truth in art is always fable» (285). This is a statement as applicable to the fragmentary, oblique tale of Horacio's quest as it is to the less fragmentary but equally oblique tale of Bueno de Guzmán's. Like Horacio Oliveira, Bueno de Guzmán is unregenerately literary: literary not only in his very literary illness or his naturalistic roots but literary as well in his conflict with his amanuensis. Engler notes that «this novel is full of literary, classical, historical and Biblical allusions which do not fit the 'estilo llano' the narrator proposed» (166); the fantasia of the library, presumably supplied by Ido del Sagrario, is in direct confrontation with the fantasia of the memoir form. It is unsurprising, then, that Bueno de Guzmán, doubling back on this fictional creation which has slipped out of his control, is «authentically concerned with his own human inauthenticity» (Gilman 144). He has reason to be suspicious of that inauthenticity on various levels. Ido has

reminded his employer that «él era del oficio» and with Bueno de Guzmán's permission «añadiría a mi relato algunos perfiles y toques de maestro que él sabía dar muy bien.» The sick man vehemently declines the offer, but since he is (presumably) dead at the time the manuscript reaches the printer, it is by no means clear that Ido's sense of duty overcame his desire to «meter su cucharada» (439) after all—if only to give the story what his pride in his art would consider a proper form and perspective.

This reduplication of narrators and subsequent dismantling of both «real» world and «fictional» self is a significant feature of Cortázar's novel as well. Horacio, the ostensible guiding consciousness of the novel and the implicit narrator of the «artificial autobiography» (MacAdam 99) of his quest and of his flight into madness, is, like Bueno de Guzmán, mediated for the reader by the presence of a disguised novelist. As is the case with *Lo prohibido*, this hidden amanuensis allows his own concerns to filter into the novel's implicit decorum, layering the fiction with another level of fictionality, shaping the narrative to fit his theories. Morelli, the old writer, is far more than a resource for Horacio's presentation of theoretical material. Since *Rayuela* is, as many critics have observed, the novel of the writing of a novel, it reflects implicitly not only the theory of the old novelist, but also Morelli's application of that theory to Horacio's biographical material. This authorial presence, like the presence of Ido in Galdós's work, is smoothly effaced in the bulk of the novel, and his guiding presence is felt only in indirect traces attesting to Morelli's private obsessions.

As in Galdós's text, references to the fictionality of the enterprise at hand are frequent. Horacio finds that «para la autobiografía sentimental sos [Maga] de una franqueza admirable» (101); yet he suggests the proposed «autobiografía sentimental» will never be written: «Abrazando a la Maga... pienso que tanto sentido tiene hacer un muñequito con miga de pan como escribir la novela que nunca escribiré...» (28-29). By denying the obvious motivating factor in the narrative development of his (or Morelli's) work, the narrator of *Rayuela* throws a Galdosian veil over the literature he is in the process of writing. As in Galdós, ironic references to the novel form attempt both to mislead the reader into seeing reality for fiction and to display prominently the fictionality of the text he/she is reading. Despite Horacio's cavilations, *Rayuela* is a sustained artistic creation, a symbiosis of the realistic text Horacio will never write and Morelli's impossible metatext that cannot be written. The text we are reading is, then, as infiltrated by Morelli's dream as *Lo prohibido* is infiltrated by that of Ido del Sagrario.

The question remains, however, as to the nature of the «prohibido» in Galdós and in Cortázar. Surprisingly (or perhaps, unsurprisingly), the answer is the same. Galdós, recognizing perhaps the trace of Ido del Sagrario in all Spanish authors, says that «la novela de verdad y de caracteres, espejo fiel de la sociedad en que vivimos, nos está vedada... Somos en todo unos soñadores...» (*Revista* 163), and in *Tormento* he states: «El estilo es la mentira. La verdad mira y calla» (44). Like Oliveira, Galdós, that prolific novelist, is aware of the impossibility of writing, of a prohibition he cannot overcome. In both novels, the nature of this prohibition, this paralyzing separation from truth, takes a similar form. *Rayuela* opens with the question: «¿Encontraría

a la Maga?» (15), the question that gives form to the quest-theme of the entire novel. This woman—lost through death or disappearance—is figured in Galdós's novel by the lost fiancée, Kitty, distanced now through death. In the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche makes the connection clear: «Supposing that Truth is a woman,» he asks, «what then?» (1). In *The Gay Science* he adds: «The magic and the most powerful effect of women is, in philosophical language, action at a distance, *actio in distans*; but this requires first of all and above all—*distance*» (124). Both novels are predicated upon this presence/absence of truth figured in the play of character around the missing woman whose absence is essential to the construction of the text but whose phantom presence permeates it throughout the narration. In Bueno de Guzmán's substitution of his cousins for his lost fiancée, as in Horacio's substitution of the lost Maga by the wife of his friend Traveler, the same basic pattern obtains—of stories that are purposely left incomplete, of relationships thwarted, of the repetition of moments of intimacy which are not moments of truth. Thus, early in Cortázar's novel, in Paris,

Aburrido, Oliveira pasó el brazo por la cintura de la Maga. También eso podía ser una explicación... una Berlitz obstinada, te quiero te quiero te quiero. No una explicación: verbo puro. ...«Y después siempre, la cópula,» pensó gramaticalmente Oliveira. (51)

From this moment to the moment in Buenos Aires, where Horacio's double, Traveler, repeats the same action with la Maga's double, Talita, there is no accession to truth:

...vio que Traveler estaba al lado de Talita y que le había pasado el brazo por la cintura... [E]n el fondo Traveler era lo que él hubiera debido ser con un poco menos de maldita imaginación..., pero cuánta hermosura en el error..., cuánto amor en ese brazo que apretaba la cintura de una mujer. (402)

From the grammatical copula to the existential error, Oliveira projects a wishful dream of progress. There is motion of a sort—the sterile oscillation between the heaven above and the heaven below—but no real evolution of the man towards truth; the woman remains acted upon, an object, distanced from the dreamed of «kibbutz del deseo» (384).

For Oliveira, as for Bueno de Guzmán, this search for Truth (or an acceptable truth) is marked by the quester's bad faith. La Maga is lost—or destroyed—because Oliveira cannot accept the closing of distance, the revelation of the truth. At the same time, her resuscitation in Talita points to the ongoing nature of the quest, a pseudo-quest, an escape from rather than a search for. In this sense, Oliveira reflects the self-dissimulations described by Nietzsche in the distancing of the woman loved and destroyed more clearly than does Galdós's protagonist. Oliveira, an «intelectual aficionado» (160), cannot forgive la Maga for revealing to him this essential truth about his own nature. Gregorovius tells her that Oliveira «busca la luz negra, la llave, y empieza a darse cuenta de que las cosas así no están en la biblioteca. En realidad usted le ha enseñado eso, y si él se va es porque no se lo va a perdonar jamás» (161). La Maga herself has premonitions of her fate as a literary

or literal sacrifice: «la Maga esperaba verdaderamente que Horacio la matara, y que esa muerte debía ser de fénix...» (45). For Horacio, then, to possess the woman is to stand revealed in his dilettantism and bad faith; to lose her, to kill her, allows him to distance himself from her truth-saying effect and to pretend that his love for her has a sublimating and inspirational quality. «Tal vez el amor fuera el enriquecimiento más alto,» says Oliveira, «...pero sólo malográndolo se podía evitar su efecto bumerang... Matar el objeto amado... era el precio de no detenerse en la escala...» (339). The movement of desire *must* fall short of the object; la Maga must absent herself into a merely fictional presence, for it is only as a symbol of the text, of «la luz negra» of its discourse, that she is constituted as an object of desire which neither fiction nor reality can either equal or expel.³

Horacio, in a moment of boredom, puts his arm around a woman and dissects the sounds of love into a grammatical copula. In a later chapter, it is la Maga, through her invented language, *glíglico*, who gives voice to the inaccessible world of the truth of sexual possession. Again, Oliveira is bored: «Me aburre mucho el glíglico. Además vos no tenés imaginación, siempre decís las mismas cosas» (105). His rejection of the traditional language of love, as of the *glíglico* of passion, has a common root; Oliveira's grammatical turn of mind provides the key. Cortázar's protagonist is not searching for a muse to provide him with the words; rather, he wishes to objectify language as an artifact under his exclusive control.

Oliveira's deployment of language as an offensive weapon is so prominent in his relationship with la Maga (present or absent) because she is the implicit reading public to his unwritten novel, the despised and desired «lector-hembra» (452, 533), the reader of Galdós. Clearly, Oliveira's attraction to la Maga is part of his desire to destroy her—but not only her. Through his drive to destroy the woman reader, Oliveira also demonstrates his determination to destroy the literature she reads and her reading of that literature: «¿Para qué sirve un escritor si no para destruir la literatura? Y nosotros, que no queremos ser lectores-hembra, ¿para qué servimos si no para ayudar en lo posible en esa destrucción?» (503). The passive reader, the female reader, cannot be so easily dismissed; for when Horacio resurrects his lost love in Talita, he also resurrects the female reader, her reading matter, her *glíglico*. Oliveira's search, which led him from Buenos Aires to Paris and back again, from la Maga and back to her, from the nineteenth-century novel and back to «lo prohibido,» is a search in bad faith, a search for the restitution of something he has willfully destroyed. The copula, grammatical or sexual, which offers the most significant substantiating feature of the female reader, is split by the «intelectual aficionado» into pure body and pure soul. In Galdós, as we shall see, this same division of insubstantiality and extreme objectification obtains.

For Bueno de Guzmán the locus of attraction, the symbolic home of the woman he loved and lost, is not Paris but London. London, bracketed now by distance and death, is recalled to mind as a force to repress the antirational influences of Madrid—a repression and a return of the repressed similar in form to Oliveira's insertion of Paris into Buenos Aires, though exactly the reverse in function. If for Oliveira Paris represents a spiritual home, the

reader is far more apt to see it as the realm of the body. In *Lo prohibido*, «el lado de allá» (Cortázar's phrase), London, is another forbidden zone, seen only indirectly and in brief escapist dreams, already distanced and spiritualized by memories.

The most potent of these memories is, of course, that of Kitty, the half-English woman from Gibraltar who was to have been his bride. Like the Maga in *Rayuela*, Kitty is a talismanic presence, her fading image serving (cynically) Bueno de Guzmán well as an excuse for or as a displacement of his present vacillation about the responsibilities of family life. Indeed, as in Cortázar's book, the reader is tempted to suspect Bueno de Guzmán's unconscious complicity in the death of his beloved fiancée; her death preserves the idyllic nature of their relationship and seals her mysterious power by inserting her into a prohibited zone where she is forever beyond his reach. Further, her death provides the occasion for writing this novel; as Galdós says of Juanito's visit to Estupiñá's sickbed in *Fortunata y Jacinta*, if not for this apparently insignificant occurrence, «esta historia no se habría escrito. Se hubiera escrito otra, eso sí, ...pero ésta no» (474).

Significantly, Bueno de Guzmán's relationship with Eloísa begins by establishing the tacit barrier of Kitty: «Diferentes veces había contado a mi prima lo de Kitty, y cada vez lo hacía en términos más patéticos...» Only then does he feel free to admit to her «sinceridades que la hicieron palidecer» (257). Eloísa, distanced through the appeal to Kitty, is at the same time converted *into* Kitty, thus becoming a doubly prohibited, doubly tantalizing object: «yo había dado en creer que el alma de Kitty se había colado en el cuerpo de Eloísa... [A]somada a la expresión de aquel semblante y de aquellos ojos, me decía: "Aquí estoy otra vez: soy yo, tu pobrecita Kitty. Pero ahora tampoco me tendrás. Antes te lo vedó la muerte; ahora la Ley"» (256-57).

The protagonist, of course, remains ignorant of the implications of this association, but the hallucinatory «runrunes... de voces humanas» must increase tenfold. Kitty is stabilized in memory, prevented from growth and change through death. A parallel process is applied in life to Eloísa, who in Bueno de Guzmán's hands and under his influence is reduced to the static condition of an artifact, an art object. The protagonist's material gifts, which parallel his sexual advances, come to dominate the reader's conception of Eloísa. As the affair progresses, the woman is gradually lost, converted into another object in the collections that are so closely identified with her way of life and her very being. In their trip to Paris relatively early in the affair, for example, the world of objects is so intensely perceived that already the reader notes that there is barely any space left for human agents:

Los grandes almacenes y los establecimientos más de moda recibían nuestra visita. También solía llevarme a casa de los célebres anticuarios de la calle Real, y a los depósitos de artículos de China, Persia, Japón y Siam. Lo japonés abundaba poco en Madrid todavía... ¿Cómo no apresurarse a llevar un surtido de telas, vasos, estantillos, dos o tres biombos, lacas, y hasta las infimas baratijas de papel y cartón que declaran el maravilloso sentimiento artístico de aquella gente asiática...? Al propio tiempo, la señora de Carrillo no podía... dejar de equiparse para el próximo invierno... Pronto perdí la cuenta de las cajas que mi primita expidió para Irún en los últimos días de septiembre. (269)

As Eloísa is increasingly objectivized by her mania for collecting, paradoxically the dazzling appearance she presents signals the beginning of the fickle «señorito's» disenchantment. In her famous «Thursdays,» the objects that become the center of attention also become emblems of her lover's growing detachment. These objects, as Engler observes, «have such power that they may even seem more real than the characters themselves» (173), and the transition from «las cosas que parecían personas» to the «personas que parecían cosas» (278) is frightfully easy. The novel within a novel of Ido's retelling of a fictional biography is lacquered with yet another layer of artistic chinoiserie in this description of a woman distanced by art, converted into a lifeless artistic representation.

The reader, of course, has long suspected that this representation of Eloísa is a misrepresentation, refracted not only through the remembrance of Kitty and the actual and metaphorical mirrors of Eloísa's collection (cf. O'Neil) but also through the distorting prisms of its double (triple?) narrative voice. Thus, the reader is rightly suspicious when the myth of Camila appears to supplant, in part 2 of the novel, the myth of Eloísa established in part 1. The vision of Eloísa, mediated by her mirrors and her objects, is replaced by the image of Camila, mediated by her irreducible corporality. Yet Camila, no less than her sister, represents for Bueno de Guzmán an idealization and an objectification of the archetypal forbidden fruit.⁴ Camila's practical-minded acceptance of her cousin's inheritance—«¿No estamos bien tranquilos en nuestra conciencia?... Pues si hay algún necio que crea otra cosa, déjalo y con su pan se lo coma» (434)—indicates the degree to which this ideal, too, has been corrupted. The only untouched, untouchable ideal is, obviously, that of Kitty.

It is only fitting that Bueno de Guzmán be drawn to such an insubstantial figure as Kitty; he is, as we are reminded by the compelling end to the novel, a forbidden figure himself, a fictional character whose existence is confirmed only in the tears of la Maga and the anger of Oliveira, reading over her shoulder. This reading over the shoulder of the woman is intensified in what Cortázar chooses *not* to quote, the ending of *Lo prohibido*, which is both the crux of Galdós's novel and what the female reader would most typically ignore because of its problematic nature. For both Ido del Sagrario and Morelli are marginal figures in their respective novels: Ido because he appears almost as an afterthought in the final chapter of the Galdós novel, Morelli because his major theories are expounded in the so-called «capítulos prescindibles.» The reader who is looking over Horacio's shoulder must confront the double presence la Maga and Cortázar avoid, must come to terms with the ambiguous pair of señorito-flaneurs (Bueno de Guzmán, Horacio Oliveira) whose novels come into being with their deaths (of the body, of the soul) through the point of view of a narrator which the reader knows «está ido» (Gullón 219) or whose theories are discredited in advance when they are labelled «pedantísima» (Cortázar 452) or when the reader is reminded that «la coquetería y la petulancia [note that they are *female* traits!] de Morelli en este terreno no tenían límite» (533). Like Galdós, the reader must realize that the romantic or naturalistic literature which shapes Ido's novelistic practice is inadequate to express the complexity of ordinary

life. Like Cortázar, the reader must come to terms with the double inadequacy of both reality—assertively ordinary in the subtext of Galdós's novel—and the fictional dream of control over reality, however constituted, by a self-conscious narrator and his reader-accomplice. In both cases, self-consciousness about the fictionality of the work serves as a buffer to stave off the threatened regression into the unbearable, unattainable quiddity of reality. As Galdós notes, «cuando vemos un acontecimiento extraordinariamente anómalo y singular, decimos que *parece cosa de novela*... En cambio, cuando leemos las admirables obras de arte que produjo Cervantes y hoy hace Carlos Dickens, decimos: '¡Qué verdadero es esto! Parece cosa de la vida...» (*Revista* 164). A similar wish fulfillment is expressed in another age by Cortázar's critic, Robert Valentine: «Cortázar directs the reader to forget that the novel is an object to be admired... in order to subject himself to the experience or situation through which the narrator is going or has gone. The true *lector-cómplice* will say, "This is real and I believe"» (215). Gone in this appreciation is Morelli's careful theorization about a novel form which would prevent just such identification; in its place, Valentine's reading of the *lector-cómplice* is merged with that of the *lector-hembra*; novelistic «reality» becomes truth, the only truth, the anticipatory truth described by poor, insane Ido del Sagrario in *Tormento*: «¿Ves cómo por mucho que invente la fantasía, mucho más inventa la realidad?... ¿Ves, ves? La realidad nos persigue. Yo escribo maravillas; la realidad me las plagia» (13-14).

TEXT (3): *Otros lados*

¿Sabes... cuál es uno de los principales síntomas del reblandecimiento? Escribo muy mal, pero algo pasa a través. El «estilo» de antes era un Raimundo's tongue twister, invented to test the progress of his aphasia, miento? La afasia, o sea, pérdida de la palabra... Y con la seriedad espejo para lectores-alondra: se miraban, se solazaban, se reconocían, como is paralleled in Rayuela by Morelli's intentional stuttering of the pen—más cómica del mundo, con asombrosa rapidez y seguridad de dicción, me lanzó ese público que espera, reconoce y goza las réplicas de los personajes de un «describir.» To write is to practice aphasia, to unwrite the self and the de un tirón, de un resuello, este incalificable trozo literario: Sobre el Salacrou o un Anouilh. Es mucho más fácil escribir así que escribir («desliterary past, to release the writer from the prison of syntax imposed by the triple trapecio de Trípoli trabajaban trigonométricamente trastocados tres cribir,» casi) como quisiera hacerlo ahora, porque ya no hay diálogo o encuen-solipsism of literary and linguistic fads. To reject the Muse, to free him-tristes triunviro trogloditas tropezando atribulados contra trípodes triclitró con el lector, hay solamente esperanza de un cierto diálogo con un cierto self from the clinging presence of the female reader, the author deconstructs nios y otros trastos triturados por el tremendo Tetrarca trapense. (243) y remoto lector. Por supuesto el problema se sitúa en un plano moral. (539) the authorial tradition to take a stand as the writerly self.

NOTES

¹ A significant proportion of the scant critical attention dedicated to *Lo prohibido* has been conditioned by the perceived naturalistic tendencies of the work. Ricard notes, as have others, that the novel was published during the height of contemporary discussions of Zola, shortly after the appearance of Pardo Bazán's *La cuestión palpante* (89). *Lo prohibido* is, suggests Ricard, «le roman de Galdós le plus marqué par l'influence de Zola» (95). Stephen Gilman concurs. «Here we detect the influence of Zola at its most pervasive» (146), he finds, and he places the blame for what he considers the novel's failure squarely on «the dead-end of Naturalism» (148). Arthur Terry's study, which shows the degree to which the novel escapes from a strictly naturalistic formulation, is nevertheless focussed by his refutation of this issue; naturalism remains the structuring principle of analysis. I acknowledge the critical tendency that has given form to these discussions, but, as will be readily apparent in the pages that follow, my own reading of the novel diverges considerably.

² One recalls in this context Galdós's comment that while others find in libraries a «manantial de luz, de vida, de verdad, yo he de encontrar tan sólo confusión y desaliento, quizás el error y la duda» (*Ensayos* 174). The statement is strikingly parallel to Nietzsche's denunciation of «the Alexandrian man who is at bottom a librarian and a scholiast, blinding himself miserably over dusty books and typographical errors» (*Tragedy* 112).

³ The reference to the «luz negra» calls to mind the famous Nietzschean dictum that «the poet's entire conception was nothing more nor less than the luminous afterimage which kind nature provides our eyes after a look into the abyss» (*Tragedy* 61), another example of Cortázar's textual game playing at the edge of the heavenly abyss. The textual transvaluation involves another level, however; Galdós, Nietzsche's contemporary, has also pointed to a similar phenomenon: «Cuando veis el aspecto oscuro de las cosas, es que vuestros ojos están llenos de claridad» (*Obras inéditas* 188).

⁴ Bueno de Guzmán frequently envisions his love affairs in terms of a Garden of Eden. Thus, in his relation with Eloísa, he imagines her «hecha una señora Eva... Pero un día la señora Eva alcanza a ver un ser extraño y desconocido que se aparece en aquel delicioso rincón del mundo donde sólo habitamos ella y yo. Esta tercera persona es el demonio, la tentación, el elemento dramático...» (272). Likewise, his interest in Camila causes him to project himself into the role of the demonic dramatist: «y me pasé allí la tarde, encantado, embelesado, respirando a todo pulmón el delicioso ambiente de aquel paraíso terrestre y casero, en el cual yo quería hacer el papel de culebra» (332-33). It is unnecessary to dwell on this point, which has already been well established in Correa's study of the religious symbolism in the novel (see especially 85-95).

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