

CORTAZAR, DERRIDA AND RAYUELA
AS A PARABLE-PARODY OF WRITING

by

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ABSTRACT

Cortázar, Derrida and Rayuela as a Parable-Parody of Writing

interprets the novel Rayuela as a metaphorical representation of the forces which engender the movement of signification in writing. As Julio Cortázar is not a philosopher but a novelist, I have utilized some of Jacques Derrida's theories concerning the origin, force and movement of signification of writing (as outlined in De la Grammatologie, L'Ecriture et la Différance and "La Différance") in order to clarify the thesis that Rayuela is a metaphorical delineation of a philosophy of writing.

The Introduction to the thesis explains how the hopscotch chart, whose graphic design serves as a pattern for Rayuela's structure, movement and plot, embraces the same counterpository tension between the outside and the inside, the physical and the metaphysical which writing entails.

Chapter one analyzes changes in Rayuela's structure, character relationships and milieus as parallelisms of the changing perception of the sign of writing, as writing progressed from being understood within the logocentricism of the metaphysics of presence, to being comprehended as a non-centered totality whose movement of signification is one of infinite reflection on itself.

Chapter two interprets Rayuela as a parable-parody of the rupture of writing with the concept of a center and the consequent opening of the freeplay of the text, which assumes the form of a movement of supplementarity as a result of the need to supplant the lack of a center.

Chapter three examines the possibility of the exit of sense from writing, comparing Derrida's postulates on the above subject with those of Cortázar expressed directly through Moreilli, or inferred by the ultimate

outcome of Oliveira's futile attempt to reach a metaphysical center beyond language.

The Conclusion of the thesis synthesizes the concepts explained in chapters one, two and three by interpreting the string labyrinth which Oliveira constructs in the mental asylum as a symbolic model of the accomplistic-antagonistic relationship of writing to speech or a full presence, which is responsible for engendering the labyrinth of significations which the book or writing sketches as the novel unfolds itself. The Conclusion posits Rayuela as the incarnation of differences within which sense realizes itself as an inexpressible differing from itself.

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INTRODUCTION

RAYUELA AS A PARABLE-PARODY OF WRITING

Moreilli, Cortázar's double in Rayuela, likens writing to sketching his mandala at the same time that he goes through it, lowering himself into the volcano, approaching the mothers, connecting with the center:

Así por la escritura bajo al volcán, me acerco a
las Madres, me conecto con el Centro - sea lo que
sea. Escribir es dibujar mi mandala y a la vez
recorrerlo, inventar la purificación purificándose....¹

In a similar vein, Jacques Derrida describes writing as the outlet of the descent of meaning outside of itself within itself.... the moment of the original valley of the other within being:

L'écriture est l'issue comme descente hors de soi
en soi du sens.... L'écriture est le moment de
cette Vallée originaire de l'autre dans l'être.
Moment de la profondeur aussi comme déchéance.
Instance et insistance du grave.²

Both of the above definitions of writing imply the friction of subject and object, outside and inside, existence and essence, other and being inherent in writing, which is responsible for the movement of signification of the text. The hopscotch chart, whose graphic design serves as a pattern for Rayuela's construction, movement and plot, embraces the same counterpository tension between the outside and the inside, the physical and the metaphysical which writing entails.

Cortázar utilizes the rules and movement of the game of hopscotch as a metaphor for the play of writing. In "Linguistique et Grammatologie", Derrida comments that certain American linguists, who refuse to bind linguistics to semantics and expell the problem of meaning outside of their

researches, refer constantly to the model of a game when describing writing. Derrida classifies play (or the game of writing) as the absence of a transcendental signified giving rise to the limitlessness of the movement of signification, which constitutes the destruction of onto-theology and the metaphysics of presence. In view of the undermining of metaphysics, Derrida explains that it is necessary to think of writing as a game within language:

On pourrait appeler jeu l'absence du signifié transcendental comme illimitation du jeu, c'est-à-dire, comme ébranlement de l'onto-théologie et de la métaphysique de la présence.... expulsant le problème du meaning hors de leurs recherches, certains linguistes américains se réfèrent sans cesse au modèle du jeu. Il faudra ici penser que l'écriture est le jeu dans le langage. (Le Phèdre (277e) condamnait précisément l'écriture comme jeu - paidia - et opposait cet enfantillage à la gravité sérieuse et adulte (spoudè) de la parole.)³

In the above quotation, Derrida comments that Plato in the Phaedrus opposes the childish play of writing to the adult gravity of speech. The game of writing is the child of, or a fall from, the seriousness of a speech that was immediately related to the logos of a creator or central presence. In like manner, the game of hopscotch is the child of a former mystic ceremony whose object was to effect a joining with a transcendental presence. In an interview, Cortázar explains that the hopscotch chart was originally regarded as the graphic representation of a spiritual process:

A mandala...is a sort of mystic labyrinth - "a design, like a hopscotch chart, divided into sections of compartments, on which the Buddhists concentrate their attention and in the course of which they perform a series of spiritual exercises. It's the graphic projection of a spiritual process. Hopscotch, as almost all children's games, is a ceremony with a mystic and religious origin. Its sacred value has been lost. But not entirely. Unconsciously

some of it remains. For instance, the hopscotch played in Argentina - and in France - has compartments for Heaven and Earth at opposite ends of the chart."⁴

Hopscotch became a game at the moment that it ceased to be the representation of a series of spiritual steps toward a transcendental presence, and became instead the indicator of a progression of physical jumps toward a heaven which has no reality other than its name sketched at the top of a chart drawn on the ground. In like manner, writing was born as a language or a pure functioning when it ceased being a sign signal indicating a presence outside of itself. Derrida comments:

C'est quand l'écrit est défunt comme signe-signal qu'il naît comme langage; alors il dit ce qui est, par la même ne renvoyant qu'à soi, signe sans signification, jeu ou pure fonctionnement, car il cesse d'être utilisé comme information naturelle, biologique ou technique, comme passage d'un étant à l'autre ou d'un signifiant à un signifié.⁵

Derrida explains that in order to think play radically, the ontological and transcendental problematics must first be seriously exhausted: the critical movements of the Husserlian and Heideggerean question must be followed to the end, conserving their efficacy and legibility. Even under the erasure of the above movements, however, Derrida postulates that the concepts of play and writing will remain within regional limits, and within an empiric, positivistic or metaphysical discourse. From the very beginning of the game, writing is understood as the becoming-unmotivated of the symbol :

Pour penser radicalement le jeu, il faut donc d'abord épuiser sérieusement la problématique ontologique et transcendente, traverser patiemment et rigoureusement la question du sens de l'être, de l'être de l'étant et de l'origine transcendente du monde - de la mondanité du monde - suivre effectivement et

jusqu'au bout le mouvement critique des questions husserlienne et heideggerienne, leur conserver leur efficace et leur lisibilité. Fût -ce sous rature, et faute de quoi les concepts du jeu et de l'écriture auxquels on aura recours resteront pris dans des limites régionales et dans un discours empiriste, positiviste ou métaphysique.... Nous sommes donc d'entrée du jeu dans le devenir-immotivé du symbole.⁶

In Rayuela, Cortázar explores the exhaustion of the transcendental problematic, the becoming-unmotivated of the symbol and the establishment of writing as infinite freeplay within finite boundaries designated by its former association with a metaphysical discourse. He accomplishes the latter by way of the Club de la Serpiente's intra-novel analysis of Moreilli's attempted reduction of matter into spirit - an investigation which has some affinities with Heidegger's deconstruction of metaphysics; by means of his portrayal of Oliveira's futile attempt to rejoin with a metaphysical center, which results in his irrevocable separation from that center and his consequent suspension in a state of infinite self-reflection engendered from the contradictory physical-metaphysical forces which meet in him; and through his repeated utilization of the symbol of the hopscotch chart, which Oliveira attempts to restore to its former function as a diagrammatic signifier of a transcendental presence, but which remains being a pure game. Writing, for both Cortázar and Derrida, is a game or pure functioning which drags along with it its metaphysical roots, in the same manner that hopscotch is a game which manifests evidence of its original metaphysical significance.

Cortázar and Derrida conclude that writing is born at the cross-roads of the way of logos (writing understood as the graphic indicator of a central presence) and the way of the labyrinth (writing comprehended as

a finite ensemble of infinite reflection on itself whose movement of signification obscures irrevocably the way out of itself).

Rayuela may be regarded as an expansion or sequel to Los reyes, a short play published by Cortázar in 1951, which depicts the confrontation of Theseus and the Minotaur in the labyrinth. Roberto González Echevarría suggests that Los reyes is an allegory of the birth of writing:

This confrontation of the monster and the hero constitutes the primal scene in Cortázar's mythology of writing: a hegemonic struggle for the center that resolves itself in a mutual cancellation and in the superimposition of beginnings and ends. The very image of man unborn, the Minotaur is the possessor of the immediate but naive knowledge of man before the Fall. His speech is the incoherent, symbolic language of a savage god. Theseus, on the other hand, is not only a dealer in death, but is the very image of death. His linear cogent language is temporal, discursive -it is discourse....If in other versions of the myth the birth of reason, morals or politics is at stake, what we have in Los reyes is the violent birth of writing. The catalogue of herbs that the Minotaur "tastes" is a series of disconnected words, without syntactical and therefore temporal structure, linked to their individual origin through their "stems". By killing the Minotaur, Theseus attempts to replace the perishable sounds of individual words with the linear, durable cogency of discourse, a cogency predicated not on the stems of words but on their declensions, on the particles that link them in a structure whose mode of representation would not be sonorous but spatial - writing. The irony, of course, is that once writing is instituted, Theseus does not gain control of the labyrinth but becomes superfluous and flees. Because writing cannot be dimmed like the stars with each dawn, because it is not a memory whose traces can be erased, Theseus is not needed to reinvent it, as the Minotaur re-invented his nomenclatures every day. Writing is the empty labyrinth from which both the Minotaur and Theseus have been banished.⁷

In Los reyes, Cortázar allegorizes the death of a center to which discourse referred and the consequent emergence of the empty labyrinth of writing.

In Rayuela, Cortázar continues his analysis of the confrontation between an intuitive and a reasoned discourse which is responsible for engendering the labyrinth of signification of writing, and simultaneously writes the labyrinth itself, brought about by the absence of a metaphysical center.

In my thesis, Rayuela as a Parable-Parody of Writing, I will interpret Cortázar's allegorical analysis of the movement of signification of writing as described in Rayuela, and compare it with Jacques Derrida's theories about the origin, force and movement of signification in writing as outlined in De la Grammatologie, L'Ecriture et la Différence, and "La Différence". The movement of Rayuela parallels metaphorically Derrida's method of deconstruction. David B. Allison, the translator of La Voix et le Phénomène (Speech and Phenomena) defines the term deconstruction as "a project of critical thought whose task is to locate and take apart those concepts which serve as the axioms or rules for a period of thought, these concepts which command the unfolding of an entire epoch of metaphysics."⁸ Cortázar conducts his deconstruction of the forces which constitute writing through his portrayal of Oliveira's metaphysical-physical search for the center or origin of thought. Cortázar verbalizes his theories of deconstruction through his character-double Moreilli, a writer within the novel. Cortázar establishes Moreilli as his double by attributing to him a sentence taken from the short story Axolotl (a work published by Cortázar in 1956): Oliveira comments, "Pero larva también quiere decir máscara, Moreilli lo ha escrito en alguna parte."⁹ Through his surrogate Moreilli, Cortázar declares that his purpose in writing Rayuela is to deconstruct writing itself. Oliveira comments that Moreilli destroys literature and thereby shows them a way out of it: "por la práctica el viejo se muestra y nos muestra la salida. ¿Para qué sirve un escritor si no para destruir la

literatura?"¹⁰ Oliveira also mentions that a part of Moreilli's work is a reflection on the problem of writing it:

Su problema previo era siempre el resecamiento,
un horror mallarmeano frente a la página en
blanco.....Inevitable que una parte de su obra
fuese una reflexión sobre el problema de
escribirla.¹¹

In this thesis, changes in Rayuela's structure, character relationships and milieus will be analyzed as parallelisms of the changing perception of the sign, as writing progressed from being understood within the logocentricism of the metaphysics of presence, to being comprehended as a non-centered totality whose movement of signification is one of infinite reflection on itself. The changing perception of the sign is integrally related to the rupture of writing with the concept of a center. Rayuela allegorizes the above concept, and also demonstrates the consequent opening of the freeplay of the text, which assumes the form of a movement of supplementarity brought about by the need to supplant the lack of a center. The possibility of the exit of sense from writing is also examined in Rayuela. Derrida's postulates on the above subject will be compared with those of Cortázar expressed directly through Moreilli, or inferred by the ultimate outcome of Oliveira's futile attempt to reach a metaphysical center beyond language.

Why is Rayuela both a parable and a parody of writing? It is a parable of writing for the reasons mentioned above: its characterization, milieus and technical construction function as an allegorical mirror for Cortázar's theories of writing expounded directly through Moreilli. Rayuela is also a parody of writing, however, as Cortázar constantly ridicules Oliveira's and Moreilli's attempts to realize an authentic expression while describing their movement toward it. Irony, or the "joke",

results from the lack of real coincidence between Oliveira's intellectual, metaphysical objectives, and the physical reality of the situation which he envisions as incarnations of these objectives. In Chapter forty-three, for example, reaching the metaphysical center is ludicrously compared to reaching the center of a bridge of boards strung between two hotel windows. Although the event is very significant from the point of view of establishing Rayuela as a parable of writing, Cortázar reduces the parable to the level of parody by contrasting a child's observations about the event with those of Oliveira. The child's remarks underline the lack of correspondence between Oliveira's metaphysical interpretation of Talita's approach to the center of the bridge, and the physical reality of the occurrence. One witness comments: "Las criaturas dicen lo que ven, pobres inocentes."¹² Oliveira, by contrast, sees what he wants to see by projecting his intellectual vision onto the incident, thereby causing it to become more than what it really is. Reducing the parable to the level of parody does not constitute a loss of significance on the parabolic level, however, as the parody is an essential part of Cortázar's parable of writing. Rayuela has an affinity with Derrida's Glas, which Geoffrey Hartman describes as "a jest in earnest":

Every pun in Derrida is philosophically accountable, every sottie or sortie must contribute further to the denaisement of the European mind.¹³

Cortázar's Rayuela is also "a jest in earnest" in so far as that he perceives the joke and irony as the only means of escape from the unsurmountable tension between the physical and the metaphysical, the outside and the inside which writing entails.

FOOTNOTES

¹Julio Cortázar, Rayuela, Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 1963, p.458.

²Jacques Derrida, "Force et Signification", L'Ecriture et la Différence, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1967, p.49.

³Jacques Derrida, "Linguistique et Grammatologie", De la Grammatologie, Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1967, p.73.

⁴Luis Harss and Barbara Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, Harper and Row Publishers, New York, Evanston and London, 1966, p. 218.

⁵Derrida, "Force et Signification", L'Ecriture et la Différence, pp.23-24.

⁶Derrida, "Linguistique et Grammatologie", De la Grammatologie, pp.73-74.

⁷Roberto González Echevarría, "Los reyes: Cortázar's Mythology of Writing", Books Abroad, 50, 1976, p.551. This article is also included in The Final Island, Ed. Jaime Alazraki and Ivar Ivask, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1978.

⁸David B. Allison, "Translator's Introduction to Speech and Phenomena", Speech and Phenomena by Jacques Derrida, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1973, p.xxxii.

⁹Cortázar, Rayuela, p.541.

¹⁰Ibid, p. 503.

¹¹Ibid, p.501.

¹²Ibid, p.541

¹³Geoffrey Hartman, "Monsieur Texte: On Jacques Derrida and his Glas" The Georgia Review, 29, 1975, p.781.

CHAPTER I

RAYUELA, THE SIGN, AND WRITING

Jacques Derrida, in "La fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture" (De la Grammatologie) explains that the idea of the book, as the idea of the totality of the signified which pre-exists it, is profoundly alien to the disruptive energy of writing whose sense is derived from the play of differences.

L'idée du livre, c'est l'idée d'une totalité, finie ou infinie, du signifiant; cette totalité du signifiant ne peut être ce qu'elle est, une totalité, que si une totalité constituée du signifié lui préexiste, surveille son inscription et ses signes, en est indépendante dans son idéalité. L'idée du livre, qui renvoie toujours à une totalité naturelle, est profondément étrangère au sens de l'écriture. Elle est la protection encyclopédique de la théologie et du logocentrisme contre la disruption de l'écriture, contre son énergie aphoristique et, nous le préciserons plus loin, contre la différence en général. Si nous distinguons le texte du livre, nous dirons que la destruction du livre, telle qu'elle s'annonce aujourd'hui dans tous les domaines, dénude la surface du texte.¹

Moreilli, Cortázar's writer-double within Rayuela, expresses thoughts about his book which parallel many of Derrida's opinions. Moreilli denounces the novel as a closed order, and desires to provoke or assume a text that is "untied", which would allow for an opening. He aspires to a narrative that will not be the pretext for the transmission of a message, but will instead be the messenger.

Provocar, asumir un texto desaliñado, desanudado, incongruente, minuciosamente antinovélistico (aunque no antinovelesco)....Como todas las criaturas de elección del Occidente, la novela se contenta con un orden cerrado. Resueltamente

en contra, buscar también aquí la apertura....
 Una tentativa de este orden parte de una repulsa de la literatura; repulsa parcial puesto que se apoya en la palabra....Así, usar la novela como se usa un revólver para defender la paz, cambiando su signo. Tomar de la literatura eso que es puente vivo de hombre a hombre....Una narrativa que no sea pretexto para la transmisión de un mensaje, (no hay mensaje, hay mensajeros y eso es el mensaje, así como el amor es el que ama).²

Derrida's and Cortázar-Moreilli's dissatisfaction with the totality of the book as it relates to writing springs from the book's dependency upon the totality of a signified which preceeded it. Derrida the philosopher and Cortázar the writer both perceive the necessity of the book "changing its sign" if it is to be an authentic writing.

Derrida's philosophy of writing is integrally related to his perception of the sign and how it relates to writing. Therefore, before we can compare Cortázar's philosophy of writing, as depicted in Rayuela, with Derrida's philosophy of writing as expressed in L'Ecriture et la Différence, De la Grammatologie, and "La Différence", it is necessary to examine the novel as an allegory of a changing perception toward the sign.

Derrida describes the changing relationship of signifier to signified which the sign entails, as the sign evolves from its function as a deferred presence comprehended within logocentrism, as defined by Plato and Aristotle; to a self-referring entity which questions the authority of presence, replacing presence with differences in a non-centered system.

For classical semiology, the substitution of the sign for the thing itself is both secondary and provisional, being second in order from an original or lost presence from which the sign would be derived.³ Saussure questions the secondary and provisional character of the sign, and on the basis of Saussure's concept of the sign, Derrida questions the metaphysics

of presence.

Derrida, in "La Différance" explains that the arbitrary and differential are inseparable for Saussure; arbitrariness occurring because the system of signs is constituted by the differences between the terms signifier and signified, and not by their fullness. The elements of signification function not by virtue of the compact force of their cores, but by the network of oppositions that distinguish and relate them to one another. Saussure postulates that there are only differences in language without positive terms:

...dans la langue il n'y a que des différences.
 Bien plus, une différence suppose en général des termes positifs entre lesquels elle s'établit: mais dans la langue il n'y a que des différences sans termes positifs. Qu'on prenne le signifié ou le signifiant, la langue ne comporte ni des idées ni des sons qui préexistaient au système linguistique, mais seulement des différences phoniques issues de ce système.⁴

The first consequence that Derrida draws from the above premise is that the signified concept is never present in itself, in an adequate presence that would only refer to itself. Every concept is necessarily a chain or system of differences within which it refers to other concepts. For Saussure, language (consisting only of differences) is not a function of the speaking subject. This implies, for Derrida, that the subject is inscribed in the language as a function of the language. The subject function becomes a speaking subject only by conforming its speech to the system of differences; by conforming to the law of language which Saussure calls "language without speech".⁵

Derrida suggests that a possible objection to Saussure's postulation of a language without speech would be the existence of an intuitive consciousness before speech or signs to which language would refer :

On pourra être tenté par une objection: certes, le sujet ne devient parlant qu'en commerçant avec le système des différences linguistiques; ou encore le sujet ne devient signifiant (en général, par parole ou autre signe) qu'en s'inscrivant dans le système des différences. En ce sens, certes, le sujet parlant ou signifiant ne serait pas présent à soi, en tant que parlant ou signifiant, sans le jeu de la différence linguistique ou sémiologique. Mais ne peut-on concevoir une présence ou une présence à soi du sujet dans une conscience silencieuse et intuitive?

Une telle question suppose donc qu'avant le signe et hors de lui, à l'exclusion de toute trace et de toute différence, quelque chose de tel que la conscience est possible.⁶

The silent, intuitive consciousness which Derrida proposes as a possible objection to Saussure's object without subject is a presence which precedes the differentiation of the sign. It parallels, therefore, the "conciencia analógica" which Oliveira and Moreilli attempt to reach behind binary reasoning.

Derrida tells us that the privilege of consciousness as a self-presence, is the other of metaphysics, the very element of our thought in so far as it is caught up in the language of metaphysics.⁷ In most of his work, however, Derrida deconstructs the metaphysics of presence in order to leave the texts bare, unburdened by the need to represent a subject which preceded them. In "Ce Dangereux Supplément" (De la Grammatologie), he tells us that there is no text outside of the text:

Et pourtant, si la lecture ne doit pas se contenter de redoubler le texte, elle ne peut légitimement transgresser le texte vers autre chose que lui, vers un référent (réalité métaphysique, historique, psycho-biographique, etc.) ou vers un signifié hors texte dont le contenu pourrait avoir lieu, aurait pu avoir lieu hors de la langue, c'est-à-dire, au sens que nous donnons ici à ce mot, hors de l'écriture en général. C'est pourquoi les considérations méthodologiques que nous risquons ici sur un exemple sont étroitement dépendantes des

propositions générales que nous avons élaborées plus haut, quant à l'absence du référent ou du signifié transcendantal. Il n'y a pas de hors-texte.⁸

In like manner, Oliveira and Moreilli become disillusioned with the concept of an analagous consciousness beyond or preceeding language, and become reconciled with the play of differences within the text as an expansion of consciousness.

Derrida effects the reconciliation of the privileged presence of metaphysics with the apparently paradoxical proposition of the text referring to nothing outside of itself by proving that one cannot retain the difference between signifier and signified (which is the very idea of the sign) without bringing with it its metaphysical roots. To these roots adhere not only the difference between the sensible and the intelligible, but also the reference to a signified which exists before its fall, before its expulsion into the exteriority of the sensible below:

La "science" sémiologique ou, plus étroitement, linguistique, ne peut donc retenir la différence entre signifiant et signifié - l'idée même du signe - sans la différence entre le sensible et l'intelligible, certes, mais sans retenir aussi du même coup, plus profondément et plus implicitement la référence à un signifié pouvant "avoir lieu" dans son intelligibilité, avant sa "chute", avant toute expulsion dans l'exteriorité de l'ici-bas sensible.⁹

The paradoxical reconciliation of the presence of metaphysics, or a transcendental signified as the primacy of meaning in language, with the non-referring text occurs through the concept of difference.¹⁰ Derrida regards the transcendental signified as a past of language that has never been present which exists within language as a trace. In "La Différance", Derrida defines the trace as a simulacrum of a presence that dislocates, displaces and refers beyond itself. The trace has no place, for effacement

is the essence of the trace.¹⁰ Trace is the absolute origin of sense, the other, the enigma of absolute alterity, which is present in *différance*:

La trace est en effet l'origine absolue du sens en général. Ce qui revient à dire, encore une fois, qu'il n'y a pas d'origine absolue du sens en général. La trace est la *différance* qui ouvre l'apparaître et la signification. Articulant le vivant sur le non-vivant en général, origine de toute répétition, origine de l'ideâlité, elle n'est pas plus idéale que réelle, pas plus intelligible que sensible, pas plus une signification transparente qu'une énergie opaque et aucun concept de la métaphysique ne peut la décrire.¹¹

Différance is the movement that resists the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible (the signifier and the signified); resists it while it sustains it, taking place between speech and writing.¹² *Différance* is a trace that no longer belongs to the horizon of being, but whose play carries and borders the sense of being.¹³ Derrida's concepts of trace and *différance* allow him to get out of the closure of an object without a subject (which would give rise to no object) without resorting to the subject as origin, as understood in the logocentric system.

Moreilli-Cortázar, like Derrida, acknowledges the metaphysical roots of writing, yet comprehends writing as a primary process which creates itself within a rhythm which preceeds or bypasses thought, and therefore, has no definitive subject. The force Moreilli describes as "rhythm" has an affinity with the force Derrida calls "*différance*":

¿Por qué escribo esto? No tengo ideas claras, ni siquiera tengo ideas. Hay jirones, impulsos, bloques, y todo busca una forma, entonces entra en juego el ritmo y yo escribo dentro de ese ritmo, escribo por él, movido por él y no por eso que llaman el pensamiento y que hace la prosa, literatura u otra.¹⁴

Moreilli-Cortázar-Oliveira's quest for authenticity in language and expression follows the progression of writing from Platonian logocentrism,

comprehending a present presence, to Derrida's non-centered system ordered by *différance*. Moreilli-Cortázar-Oliveira begins his search for "una vida sentida, creida" utilizing "being" or the "other" as the authentic point of perspective for the distorted physical foreground governed by the laws of binary reason. Moreilli-Cortázar condemns language and thought as an incomplete optic, incapable of expressing the internal existence of things:

"El lenguaje, al igual que el pensamiento, procede del funcionamiento aritmético binario de nuestro cerebro. Clasificamos en sí y no, en positivo y negativo....¿Pero qué decir de la insuficiencia de la inteligencia binaria en sí misma? la existencia interna, la esencia de las cosas se le escapa.... Para conseguirlo, debería cambiar de estado, sería necesario que otras máquinas que las usuales se pusieran a funcionar en el cerebro, que el razonamiento binario fuese sustituido por una conciencia analógica que asumiera las formas y asimilara los ritmos inconcebibles de esas estructuras profundas..."

(Le matin des magiciens)¹⁵

Even while he is extolling the authenticity of essence, the other, being, or an analagous consciousness as the origin of sense, however, Moreilli is experiencing doubts about the "other" which find expression in his crossed out phrase at the end of the passage:

Ese cuerpo que soy yo tiene la presencia de un estado en que al negarse a sí mismo como tal, y al negar simultáneamente el correlato objetivo como tal, su conciencia accedería a un estado fuera del cuerpo y fuera del mundo que sería el verdadero acceso al ser....mi cuerpo será porque detrás de la puerta de luz....el ser será otra cosa que cuerpos y, que cuerpos y almas y, que yo y lo otro, que ayer y mañana. Todo depende de...(una frase tachada).¹⁶

Moreilli's crossed out phrase at the end of his reflection on the "other" recalls Heidegger's habit of writing the word "being" crossed out, as an indication of a move toward the transformation of language and a trans-

formed relationship of being to the essence of language.

In order to give language back its rights ("devolverle al lenguaje sus derechas")¹⁷ Moreilli wishes to replace the binary reasoning machines which produce language in the brain with other machines governed by an analagous consciousness which would be capable of expressing the internal existence or essence of things which escape expression in a language governed by binary reasoning. Moreilli is attempting the reconciliation of the Platonian writing of truth in the soul to bad writing (writing in the literal and ordinary sense).¹⁸ I have previously postulated that the state of analagous consciousness which Moreilli-Cortázar-Oliveira wish to regain in language has many affinities with the silent, intuitive consciousness or self presence which Derrida suggests as a possible presence which preceeds the differentiation of language.¹⁹ Derrida questions the absolute privilege of presence or consciousness as meaning, however, and repositions presence -no longer the absolutely matrical form of being - as an effect which is no longer that of presence but that of *différance*;²⁰ leaving the text unburdened by the need to represent a truth which preceeded it. In like manner, Moreilli-Cortázar-Oliveira's quest for an analagous consciousness leads him to the conclusion that an analagous consciousness functions within the system of differences in language. Moreilli argues the necessity of digging one's own tunnel in the earth, instead of obstinately connecting with a non-existant tunnel, "como es el caso de tantos poetas asomados con más de medio cuerpo a la ventana de la sala de estar, a altas horas de la noche"²¹ (obviously alluding to Oliveira leaning out of the window in the mental asylum, and to the incongruity of writing attempting to derive its sense from its relationship to a metaphysical being outside of itself).

Moreilli, like Derrida, acknowledges that writing has an inside, or an essence, but an essence that is created, generated by the outside which co-exists and is inseparable from the inside, in the manner in which water exists in hydrogen; that is, the inside is the outside in so far as that it is the synthesis of the component parts which are the outside which come together to create the inside.

Puede ser que haya otro mundo dentro de éste,
pero no lo encontraremos recortando su silueta
en el tumulto fabuloso de los días y las vidas,
no lo encontraremos ni en la atrofia ni en la
hipertrofia. Este mundo no existe, hay que
crearlo como el fénix. Este mundo existe en
éste, pero como el agua existe en el oxígeno
y el hidrógeno....Digamos que el mundo es una figura,
hay que leerla. Por leerla entendemos generarla.²²

Derrida deconstructs the metaphysics of presence which is the key-stone for language as previously thought within a logocentrism, yet escapes Saussure's double bind of an object without a subject by proposing the trace - as a past that has never been present - as the origin of writing. Similarly, Moreilli allows himself the pleasure of undermining and ridiculing a literature at its very base, yet acknowledges a thread coming out of the book that would always be stretched out to a beyond, causing any petrified vision of the work to be left in suspense, and, consequently, allowing the text to open up.

Moreilli se daba el gusto de seguir fingiendo
una literatura que en el fuero interno miraba,
contraminaba y escarnecía....al final había
siempre un hilo tendido más allá, saliéndose
del volumen, apuntando a un tal vez, a un a
lo mejor, a un quién sabe, que dejaba en suspenso
toda vision petrificante de la obra.²³

In the preceeding pages, some of the parallels between Jacques Derrida's theory of signs in relation to writing and those of Cortázar voiced by Moreilli in Rayuela have been examined. We shall now examine

the complex interrelationship of the structure of the novel, its milieus, characters and language as allegorical studies of the systems of oppositions on which the concept of the sign is based. The changing structure, imagery, milieus and character relationships within Rayuela reflect the evolution of the relationship of the sign to writing from its position within a classical logocentricism in which the sign represents a presence in its absence or a truth deferred outside of itself, to its present status as a self-referring entity based on oppositions whose point of origin is no longer definable, the origin of the speculation being a difference.

The novel's binary construction, binary milieus, binary language and binary character relationships are an analogue of the bi-partite construction of the sign, and of the inside and outside of writing, which incorporates the interactions of logos and the labyrinth, reason and non-reason (madness), the other and being, meaning and non-meaning which shall be examined in chapter two in relation to the movement of significations in writing.

R. Jakobsen, whom Derrida quotes in "La fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture" (De la Grammatologie), tells us that the constitutive mark of any sign is its two-fold character involving two aspects - one sensible and the other intelligible - which necessarily suppose and require each other:

La pensée structuraliste moderne l'a clairement établi: le langage est un système de signes, la linguistique est partie intégrante de la science des signes, la sémiotique (ou dans les termes de Saussure, la sémiologie). La définition médiévale - *aliquid stat pro aliquo* - que notre époque a ressuscitée, s'est montrée toujours valable et féconde. C'est ainsi que la marque constitutive de tout signe en général, du signe linguistique en particulier, réside dans son caractère double:

chaque unité linguistique est bipartite et comporte deux aspects; l'un sensible et l'autre intelligible - d'une part le signans (le signifiant de Saussure), d'autre part le signatum (le signifié). Ces deux éléments constitutifs du signe linguistique (et du signe en général) se supposent et s'appellent nécessairement l'un l'autre.²⁴

Rayuela's binary structure parodies the bi-partite construction of the sign. The novel is constructed (or deconstructed) in units of two. There are two suggested books contained within one book, evocative of the exteriority and the interiority of writing, or of the sensible and the intelligible. The first book allegorizes the classical view of writing governed by the laws of logocentrism, in which the totality of the book is hostile to the disruption of writing itself. The first reading, being a linear representation of reality and a passive experience for the reader, evokes the exteriority of the signifier. The second book allegorizes writing as a system of spatial differences, and invites the reader to participate actively in the temporal-spatial past-present, logos-labyrinth crisis which the sign and writing entails, thus evoking the signified's more immediate relationship with essence.

The first reading of the book is in turn divisible into two units - Del Lado de Allá and Del Lado de Acá - which reflect the movement of writing away from a metaphysics of presence towards a phenomenology of differences. Buenos Aires (Del Lado de Acá) has often been called the Paris of the new world. Thus, Paris (Del Lado de Allá) may be regarded as the "original" city, and Buenos Aires as its "copy" or "representation". The "original" city appears to be a gathering place for metaphysical thinkers who are so lost in abstract searches for essence that they are rendered incapable of perceiving essence by virtue of the blinds their reasoning constructs in front of it, whereas the "representation", Buenos Aires, appears to be a

haven for existentialists who enjoy living more than thinking. Del Lado de Acá is the more physical, pragmatic world - in spite of its close affinity with circuses and mental asylums - and thus parallels some of Saussure's and Derrida's conclusions about the essence of writing as the text itself, rather than a deferred truth which pre-existed the text. Oliveira's move from Paris to Buenos Aires parallels the displacement of the sign from a logocentric system in which the signifier refers to a deferred presence; to a non-centric system in which the point of reference of the signifier is a difference.

At first glance, it appears possible to equate Del Lado de Allá (Paris) with the exteriority of writing - the signifier - in so far as that Paris, as an intellectual center, is the place of abstraction and removal from truth, whereas Del Lado de Acá (Buenos Aires) evokes the interiority of writing referred to by the signified, being the place of a more authentic existence. The complexities of the analogy become evident, however, when one takes into account the subsequent division of the Paris and Buenos Aires sections into two parts each, each side incorporating within itself the analogy of the signifier and the signified, or the exteriority and the interiority of writing; effecting that "En París, todo le era Buenos Aires y viseversa."²⁵

Del Lado de Allá is divisible into Oliveira's experiences with la Maga, and Oliveira's experiences apart from la Maga. La Maga and Moreilli are the inside or signified of Del Lado de Allá who indicate an analagous consciousness which Oliveira and the other members of the Club de la Serpiente - the signifiers - aspire to. Oliveira's attempts to reach a stage of analagous consciousness through the intercession of la Maga allegorizes the signifier referring to the signified as a truth present. Oliveira's

movement away from la Maga and her implied death symbolize the movement of writing away from a central signified toward the re-establishment of the origin of sense in writing as a difference.

Del Lado de Acá is divided into two sections also: Oliveira's experiences in the circus and his exploits in the mental asylum. The circus parodies the exteriority of the signifier which acts as a bridge to the interiority of the signified, symbolized by the mental asylum.

The circus evokes the exteriority of the signifier and writing, which alludes to the possibility of a meeting with the signified or inside, although it exists, by virtue of its imitative nature, in opposition to it. Oliveira describes the circus as a spangled fraud where everything was perfect - an imitation based on tricks and deception. He reveals the secret of the calculating cat who responds to cardboard cards treated previously with valerian. The cat is a ludicrous parody of the emptiness of the signifier. The symbolic significance of the cat deepens if one takes into account that cats have the historical-mythological import of animals who are in touch with the mysteries of life. Like writing, therefore, the contrived deception of the calculating cat brings along with it its metaphysical roots. The circus and the cat are not only symbolic of the empty exteriority of the signifier, but also of the signifier's function as a bridge to the interiority of the signified. Oliveira describes the central hole at the top of the circus tent as the escape hatch to a maybe contact, a bridge between the eye and liberated space: "ese escape hacía un quizá contacto, ese centro, ese ojo como un puente del suelo al espacio liberado...." 26

The mental asylum evokes the interiority of the signified as the haven of non-reason (madness) which preceeds and transcends reasoned

discourse. The slogan of the asylum, "matar al perro", appears to signify death to exterior laws and conventions (such as those imposed by logocentrism on writing), in favour of "abrir puertas y ventanas al espíritu"²⁷, (evocative of the open movement of significations of writing in a non-centric system).

The first reading of Rayuela, whose bi-partite structure is a dual mirror reflection of a series of self-bisecting unities which finally terminate in death - "paf se acabó"²⁸ - parodies Heidegger's premise that in the last instance, the difference between the signifier and signified is nothing.²⁹

The second reading of the book, in so far as that it still follows the linear progression of chapters one to fifty-six, interspersed by excursions into the "Capítulos prescindibles", embraces the above structure, but allows for an opening at the end of chapter fifty-six, rather than ending in nothing or death through the total reduction of the signifier into the signified. The labyrinthine structure which distinguishes the second book from the first book of Rayuela, and the allegorical significance of this difference will be examined in chapters two and three.

There is one remarkable difference between the structures of the first and second books which support the hypothesis that the first reading of the novel parodies writing as a logocentric totality, in which the object refers directly to a subject; whereas the second reading of the book allegorizes writing as a non-centered totality in which subject and object are reflected doubles whose origin is lost in the play of differences. In chapter fifty-five of the first book, Talita and Traveler discuss the event of Oliveira's kiss with Talita in the mortuary of the asylum. In the second book, chapter fifty-five is omitted, and instead

appears verbatim as the second half of chapter one hundred and thirty-three; the first half of the chapter consisting of Traveler's reflections on "La Luz de la Paz del Mundo" by Cerefino Paz - a treatise which can only be interpreted as an illustration of the madness of pure reason. In the first book, chapter fifty-five refers directly back to its "origin" - the actual event of the kiss as described in chapter fifty-four. In the second book, however, Talita's description of the kiss is separated from the actual "event" in chapter fifty-four by the intercalation of three "Capítulos prescindibles" which parody the play of differences in which the originary signified is obscured or lost. Cerefino Paz's treatise of reasonable madness has many affinities with Oliveira, who is approaching a state of madness through reason. The "origin" of chapter one hundred and thirty-three becomes lost in the play of difference, therefore, as the totally unrelated treatise of Cerefino Paz appears to have as much input into Traveler's and the reader's interpretations of Oliveira's action in the mortuary as the description of the original event did.

The analogy of the second reading of the book with the differential and arbitrary character of signs is mirrored in Moreilli's concept of "la figura". Moreilli defines the condition of "figura" as that in which everything has value as a sign and not as a theme of description; a sign, that is, that refers to interspatial differences rather than to an absolute historical time or event.

Moreilli añade: "Acostumbrarse a emplear la expresión figura en vez de imagen, para evitar confusiones. Sí, todo coincide. Pero no se trata de una vuelta a la Edad Media ni cosa parecida. Error de postular un tiempo histórico absoluto: Hay tiempos diferentes aunque paralelos. En ese sentido, uno de los tiempos de la llamada Edad Media puede coincidir con

uno de los tiempos de la llamada Edad Moderna. Y ese tiempo es el percibido y habitado por pintores y escritores que rehusan apoyarse en la circunstancia, ser 'modernos' en el sentido en que lo entienden los contemporáneos, lo que no significa que opten por ser anacrónicos; sencillamente están al margen del tiempo superficial de su época, y desde ese otro tiempo donde todo accede a la condición de figura, donde todo vale como signo y no como tema de descripción, intentan una obra que puede parecer ajena o antagónica a su tiempo y a su historia circundantes, y que sin embargo los incluye, los explica, y en último término los orienta hacia una transcendencia en cuyo término está esperando el hombre."³⁰

Robert Brody cites the above passage as an excellent starting point in a discussion of the expansion of consciousness:

We see here a denial of linear, chronological time. Moreilli proposes a parallelism of different times that may be perceived by those artists and writers who are capable of seeing beyond the superficial (eg., historical time), those who can see the figura to be formed by the fusion of analagous concepts, persons, and acts existing in historically different categories (Middle Ages, Modern Age).³¹

Cortázar, in the second book, attempts to incarnate interspacial differences which give rise to the movement of significations or an expansion of consciousness of the text by superimposing thematically related extracts from poetry, novels, documentaries, philosophy, or just other viewpoints on the event already related, on the event itself.

The spatial-physical relationships that unite the four principle characters of Rayuela - La Maga, Oliveira, Talita and Traveler - parody the changing relationship of signifier to signified when writing evolves from being comprehended within a classical logocentrism, to being interpreted within a non-centric system founded on differences.

The relationship of La Maga and Oliveira in *Del Lado de Allá* (Paris) is the personification of the binary-opposition relationship of the written

sign referring to a deferred presence or truth as classically determined. The evolution of the concept of the sign from its function as a deferred presence referring to an original presence; to its differential character in which the point of its origin is lost in the differences, and presence is present only in erasure, is parodied in the labyrinth of spatial and temporal bonds which unite la Maga, Oliveira, Talita and Traveler.

The first book of Rayuela commences with the half-doubtful question, "¿Encontraría a la Maga?" - la Maga symbolizing an essence of life or an intuitive consciousness that Oliveira is incapable of perceiving, describing or reaching on his own terms.

The second reading of the book, by contrast, commences with the phrase, "pero quién nos curará del fuego sordo"³³ - "fuego" or fire symbolizing the inner life or essence that Oliveira, at the beginning of the first reading aspired to through the intercession of la Maga.

The totality of the book, therefore, including both the first and second readings, embraces a paradoxical search for essence which is at the same time a moving away or cure from the limitation of essence; a move from truth as the center, to truth as writing: "Todo es escritura....Nuestra verdad posible tiene que ser invención, es decir, escritura...."³⁴ The first reading of the novel describes Oliveira's hopeful-hopeless search for a truth present (analogous consciousness) indicated by la Maga. The second reading of the book, however, commences with the proposition that originary truth is not obtainable through a dialectic, as the dialectic itself transforms truth into something else than what it originally was:

Que sí, que no, que en ésta está...Parecería
que una elección no puede ser dialéctica, que su
planteo la empobrece, es decir la fãlsea, es decir
la transforma en otra cosa.³⁵

The ending of the first book indicates that there was some meeting between la Maga and Oliveira if only for that one terrible, sweet instant before death: "al fin y al cabo algún encuentro había, aunque no podía durar más que ese instante terriblemente dulce...paf se acabó."³⁶ The ending of the second book, by contrast, reveals that the meeting did not take place, and Oliveira survives, continuing his search for a truth attainable here on earth whose origin is writing; as indicated by his desire to become a monk of "la corporación nacional de los monjes de la oración del santi-guamiento" - an order whose origin is the treatise of Cerefino Paz - dedicated to praying for and sanctifying "lugares de parajes" (sites of places). The expression "lugares de parajes" evokes the sameness-yet-difference of the double, and also appears to be a mirror-play on the expression "lugares de parejas" (sites of couples), inferring doubles-as-a-joining. At the end of the second book, therefore, Oliveira's search for la Maga, or the originary essence of being, is abandoned in favour of his newfound dedication to the sanctity of differences.

Before beginning to forge the analogy between the opposition-unity of Oliveira and la Maga, and the antagonistic-double relationship of the signifier and the signified which the notion of the sign implies, it is necessary to clarify the relationship between truth, logos, mind, voice, writing, signifier, signified and sign as determined by Aristotle, and as understood within the heritage of logocentrism. Jacques Derrida, in "La fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture" (De la Grammatologie) explains that all metaphysical determinations of truth are inseparable from logos, or reason. Within logos, the original link to the voice has an immediate relationship to the mind. Spoken words are the symbols or signifiers of mental experience, and written words are the symbols or signi-

fiers of spoken words. All signifiers, therefore are derivative. Because of its proximity to the mind, the voice as a signifier is derivative, yet at the same time has a direct rapport with meaning. The written signifier, by contrast, has no constitutive meaning and is always technical and representative. Logocentrism, inferring a system in which the written signifier refers to the voice, which in turn is the signifier of the mind, is thus a phonocentrism. Phonocentrism merges with the historical determination of the meaning of being as presence (presence as substance, essence, existence). Logocentrism thus supports the determination of the being of the entity as presence, and debases writing - considered as a mediation of a mediation - as a fall into the exteriority of meaning. The difference between signifier and signified - or the separation of their parallelism - belongs, therefore, to the epoch of logos; an epoch covered by the history of metaphysics. Saussure has reminded us that language is a system of signs, and the constitutive mark of any sign is its bi-partite character - one part sensible and the other part intelligible - the signifier and the signified. Derrida reminds us that one cannot retain the opposition between the signifier and signified without bringing with it its metaphysical roots. To these roots adhere not only the difference between the sensible and the intelligible, but also the reference to a signified which exists before its expulsion into the exteriority of the sensible. As the face of pure intelligibility, the transcendental signified refers to an absolute logos to which it is immediately united.³⁷

Derrida does not reject the above notions of the sign, - as nothing is conceivable in the history of metaphysics without these notions- but he does question the historical closure of the philosophy of presence that governs the sign. Recalling Moreilli's allusion to writing as a wall of

words with a missing brick, Derrida says that a philosophy of writing must designate the crevice through which the yet unnameable glimmer beyond the closure can be glimpsed. Through his deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence, Derrida tries to show that there is no linguistic sign before writing.

....il faut entourer les concepts critiques d'un discours prudent et minutieux, marquer les conditions, le milieu et les limites de leur efficacité, designer rigoureusement leur appartenance à la machine qu'ils permettent de deconstituer; et du même coup la faille par laquelle se laisse entrevoir, encore innommable, la lueur de l'outre-clôture. Le concept de signe est ici exemplaire.... En suspectant, comme nous venons de le faire, la différence entre signifié ou signifiant ou l'idée de signe en général, nous devons préciser aussitôt qu'il ne s'agit pas de le faire depuis une instance de la vérité présente, antérieure, extérieure ou supérieure au signe, depuis le lieu de la différence effacée. Bien au contraire. Nous nous inquiétons de ce qui, dans le concept de signe - qui n'a jamais existé ni fonctionné hors de l'histoire de la philosophie (de la présence) - reste systématiquement et généalogiquement déterminé par cette histoire .

....
L'extériorité du signifiant est l'extériorité de l'écriture en général et nous tenterons de montrer qu'il n'y a pas de signe linguistique avant l'écriture.³⁸

The original, physical relationship of La Maga and Oliveira , as described in Del Lado de Allá (Paris), is an allegory of the Aristotelian relationship of writing to voice to mind. La Maga, the being who lives intuitively, is comparable to the voice, signifier of the soul which bears the closest relationship to the signified, as feelings of the soul, which constitutes a sort of universal language which effaces itself through speech. La Maga, as the personification of voice, is also the signified of written discourse. Oliveira, the man of reason who is spiritually barren, barred by reason and discourse from interpreting essence intuitively, is the personification of the written signifier, the dead letter,

the exteriority of writing; which, according to the classical definition of writing, carries no constitutive meaning itself, but only indicates a truth constituted by and within the element of *logos*.

Oliveira realizes that *la Maga* has a personal life, whereas he is empty, an enormous liberty:

En el fondo *la Maga* tiene una vida personal....
En cambio yo estoy vacío, una libertad enorme,
para soñar y andar por ahí, todos los juguetes
rotos, ningún problema. Dame fuego.³⁹

With the phrase "all the toys broken", Oliveira admits his total separation from childhood and innocence, comparable to the fall of language from voice to writing. His request for a light or fire has promethean overtones: Prometheus brought fire from the gods to man to make him more god-like and thus free him from his subjugation to the gods. In his desire for fire or a light, Oliveira - like writing comprehended in a logocentric totality - desires the possibility for evolution which he presently lacks. Plato perceives the voice as having a natural relationship to the feelings of the soul that precede language. In like manner, Oliveira describes *la Maga* as pointing toward the ray capable of shattering the mirror of language and reason: "*La Maga* no sabrá nunca cómo su dedo apuntaba hacia la fina raya que triza el espejo."⁴⁰ Oliveira realizes that he is not capable of seeing through the mirror, or of even having feelings: "Buscar a través de", pensó confusamente. "Sí, es una de las cosas que no sé hacer, eso y llorar y compadecerme."⁴¹ Whereas Oliveira has faith in definitions, intelligence, seeing with his eyes open - the way of discourse; *la Maga* believes in touch, instinct, seeing blind: the magic route of the soul:

"¿Tan ciego me crees?" (Oliveira)

"Al contrario, te haría tanto bien quedarte un

poco ciego." (la Maga)

"Ah,sí; el tacto que reemplaza las definiciones, el instinto que va más allá de la inteligencia. La vía mágica, la noche oscura del alma." (Oliveira)⁴²

La Maga and Oliveira's relationship, like the co-existence of the signifier and signified within the concept of the sign, is determined by opposition: "...nos queríamos en una dialéctica de imán y limadura, de ataque y defensa, de pelota y pared."⁴³ The sensible-intelligible opposition of Oliveira to la Maga is reflected in the imagery of opposition Oliveira frequently utilizes in Paris. Oliveira attempts to erase the difference between the signifier and signified in language by putting into question the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible. He attempts the destruction of dualistic categories or reduction of difference by frequently combining words whose meanings are diametrically opposed; - his object being to express the essence or analogous consciousness which preceded the opposition of binary reasoning on which language is based. Oliveira describes his life with la Maga as a disorder which was a discipline: "El desorden en que vivíamos...me parecía una disciplina necesaria."⁴⁴ He likens Moreilli to "un vidente ciego, paradoja estimulante."⁴⁵ He describes la Maga's life experience as a lie that was true: "...aquello que parecía tan mentira era verdadero."⁴⁶ Through his close association with la Maga, Oliveira begins to understand that "...para verte como yo quería, era necesario empezar por cerrar los ojos."⁴⁷ Oliveira identifies the hateful tenderness he feels while watching la Maga as something so contradictory that it must be truth; "Sintió una especie de ternura rencorosa, algo tan contradictorio que debía ser la verdad misma."⁴⁸

Oliveira realizes, however, that the ultimate synthesis between

opposites - which he equates with truth - is inexpressible in this world, because "the great Logos is watching": "Pero en este mundo las síntesis últimas están por descubrirse. Perico tiene razón, el gran Logos vela."⁴⁹ Oliveira's inability to abrogate the difference between opposites and perceive being is comparable to the inability of philosophers to transcend the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible because the concept of the sign, on which the history of metaphysics rests, is determined by this opposition. Jacques Derrida, in "La Structure, le Signe, et le Jeu dans le Discours des Sciences Humaines" explains that western philosophy cannot do without the concept of the sign - this metaphysical complicity - without the risk of erasing difference in the process of a signified reducing itself into its signifier. Oliveira's hopeful-hopeless quest to reduce difference by means of the imagery of opposites parodies Heidegger's attempt to get out of the tradition of metaphysics and emerge into a clearing lighted by being. Oliveira also parodies Derrida's attempt to get out of Heidegger's double bind through word games. We can see Oliveira doubly reflected in Richard Rorty's description of Heidegger's dilemma and Derrida's way out of the dilemma:

The idea is that any attempt to do what Heidegger wanted to do - to get out from under the tradition, to emerge into a clearing lighted by being - will fail, because every statement of the attempt can only be in terms which the tradition created for us. So, Derrida thinks, maybe all that will help are verbal tricks, fake etymologies, typographical gimmicks, puns, allusions, dirty jokes, what Kierkegaard called "a certain nimble dancing in the service of thought."⁵⁰

Oliveira's drifting away from la Maga is a temporal, physical displacement which parallels his intellectual progression from an attempt to deconstruct binary reasoning and reach the origin of meaning in being,

over "there" (Del Lado de Allá), towards an attempt to live (rather than think) a more authentic, physical existence "here" (Del Lado de Acá) through his acceptance of the mirror of differences. These parallel movements allegorize the evolution of the philosophy of writing from Heidegger's hopeful-hopeless attempt to get out from under the thumb of presence and into the clearing of being - which, we have seen, would constitute a collapse of meaning, rather than its liberation - to Derrida's consequent deconstruction of presence which displaces the origin of writing from the Aristotelian presence as voice - a presence governing a logocentric totality hostile to the disruptive movement of writing itself - to its re-establishment as an origin lost in the play of differences, or a function in a system whose origin is a difference, which allows for an infinite expansion of consciousness arising from the text itself, rather than a closure of textual meaning through its referral to an exterior presence.

The evolution of a philosophy of writing from the confinement of a logocentrism to the openness of a non-centric system necessarily constitutes a changing perception of the roles of the signifier and the signified in relation to presence. Earlier in this chapter, we noted that Saussure re-defines the determination of signs from the point of view of their arbitrariness and differential character, rather than their fullness (their previous fullness residing in their reference to the deferred presence of voice). Writing in its "full" sense refers to difference rather than presence. The movement of significations of writing is engendered from differences. Difference, which rests in the arbitrariness between the signifier and signified, is comparable to a reflection or double.

Derrida, in "Linguistique et Grammatologie" describes writing as a

dangerous promiscuity and nefarious complicity of the reflection and the reflected: the reflection of the origin - the double - redoubling itself until the origin of the speculation becomes a difference:

Promiscuité dangereuse, néfaste complicité entre le reflet et le réflété qui se laisse narcissiquement séduire. Dans ce jeu de la représentation, le point d'origine devient insaisissable. Il y a des choses, des eaux et des images, un renvoi infini des unes aux autres, mais plus de source. Il n'y a plus d'origine simple. Car ce qui est réflété se dédouble en soi-même, et non seulement comme addition à soi de son image. Le reflet, l'image, le double dédouble ce qu'il redouble. L'origine de la spéculation devient une différence.⁵¹

Oliveira's physical separation from la Maga, and his spatial superimposition of her image on Talita, effecting the phenomena that two women are now la Maga instead of one, allegorizes the separation of writing from the logocentrism of voice-presence, and the consequent redoubling of the origin through writing. The original relationship of Oliveira to la Maga in *Del Lado de Allá* is reflected in four spatial-physical relationships in *Del Lado de Acá*: Talita (la Maga) / Traveler (Oliveira); Oliveira / Talita (la Maga) / Traveler; Oliveira / Talita (la Maga); Oliveira / Traveler (la Maga). We have previously compared la Maga to the signified, and Oliveira to the signifier. Therefore, the original direct relationship of signifier to signified is lost in the play of reflected doubles, which constitutes a difference. In order to examine the la Maga - Oliveira - Talita - Traveler relationship as a personification of the changing relationship of the signifier to signified as the concept of the sign evolves from its position within a logocentric totality, to its repositioning in a non-centered totality where the center is a function within a chain of differences; it is necessary to examine the allegorical significance of the four relationships listed above.

In Del Lado de Acá, the reader of Rayuela is introduced to Talita and Traveler who appear, at first glance, to be a mirror reflection of Oliveira and la Maga. Oliveira, however, by his own definition, is empty, incapable of feeling, an observer rather than a participant. Talita and Traveler, by contrast, both resemble la Maga in so far as that they are intuitively in touch with life and each other. The symbolic value of Traveler and Talita in relation to the allegory of the sign and writing which we are trying to clarify is derived not only from how they relate to each other, but more significantly, how they relate spatially or physically to Oliveira, the personification of the signifier. Talita and Traveler - as paired facets of la Maga's intuitive consciousness - constitute a double reflection over "here" of la Maga over "there".

Talita becomes la Maga's spatial double when Oliveira superimposes la Maga's physical image on her, and recognizes in her the same intuitive sense that la Maga possessed. Like la Maga, Talita is capable of lighting other's paths: "da la impresión de andar llevando una vela encendida en la mano, mostrando un camino."⁵² Like la Maga, Talita is capable of expressing contradictory concepts that precede the differentiation of thought:

Soy yo, soy él, lo había dicho sin pensarlo, es decir que estaba más que pensando, venía de un territorio donde las palabras eran como los locos en la clínica, entes amenazadores o absurdos, viviendo una vida propia y aislada.⁵³

The difference between la Maga and Talita, and the consequent symbolic value of Talita as an evolution from la Maga, is integrally related to Talita's ability to cope with a physical existence. Though la Maga possesses an intuitive consciousness, she proves herself incompetent in the game of physical life down here. There are many allusions in the novel to the possibility of her death by suicide after her baby dies through

her own negligence, and Oliveira leaves her. Talita, by contrast, is a well-educated woman who has managed, in spite of her education and reasoning ability, to maintain an intuitive sense of life, and still live a competent, physical existence. Writing, as classically defined, is a descent into the exteriority of meaning from voice, which signifies the feelings of the mind or soul. The classically determined origin of sense in writing is an ideal, rather than a physical reality. Derrida's philosophy of writing, however, proposes that there is nothing outside of the text. The consequence we draw from Derrida's premise is that the signified, as the ideal sense or the concept referred to by the signifier, co-exists with the signifier within the physical text. A philosophy of writing which displaces writing from its comprehension within a logocentric totality referring to a voice-presence outside of writing, to its re-establishment within a non-centered totality in which presence is present only as a function in a chain of differences - necessarily designates the movement of the signified from the ideal realm of the mind to the physical realm of the text. Talita, who is more physically competent and "exterior" than la Maga - even though possessing the same intuitive sense - is Cortázar's personification of the signified of a writing comprehended as a non-centered totality.

Oliveira and Talita-la Maga's embrace in the mortuary of the mental asylum is a parody of the signifier meeting with the spatial image of the central signified through the medium of the signified of the written sign. Talita realizes that the kiss was not for her, but for la Maga. For the first time, however, she sees Oliveira smiling openly - without the usual irony - accepting something that must have come to him from the center of life. Talita describes their embrace as a coming together from somewhere

else; as if she and Oliveira were the golems of an impossible meeting between their masters. During the kiss the spatial presence of la Maga is acceptable for Oliveira, but not for Talita. Talita realizes that the spatial presence of la Maga deprives her of life, rendering her a golem or an automaton. Talita refuses to be anybody's zombie: "...me empezó a mirar y era a la otra que miraba. Yo no soy el zombie de nadie, Manú, no quiero ser el zombie de nadie."⁵⁴ The polaric tension engendered from the contradictory images of Talita as the zombie of la Maga, and Talita refusing to be the zombie of la Maga is compatible with the contradictory origin of sense in writing: writing as the "dead letter" which is the zombie of life, yet which paradoxically engenders a life within itself independent of any life outside of itself. Talita, as "nobody's zombie", evokes Derrida's interpretation of writing as a surrogate which does not substitute itself for anything which pre-existed it,⁵⁵ a concept which parallels the existential paradox of existence preceeding essence, existence giving rise to its own essence.

In the previous pages, I have attempted to illustrate that the symbolic significance of la Maga's relationship to Oliveira (the signifier) evolves from her role as the personification of the signified as a voice-presence that is present, to her spatial role as the personification of the formal essence of the signified as a presence that is effaced and no longer present. I have also previously established the parallel between la Maga and Traveler as they relate to Oliveira: both have a direct link with an essence of life which Oliveira lacks. The symbolic import of Traveler's and la Maga's relationship to Oliveira is explainable in terms of their symbolic relationship to metaphysics. La Maga, personifying a presence indicating being, symbolizes that part of the sign and writing that is de-

finied by and bound up with the history of metaphysics. Traveler personifies the history of metaphysics as it adheres to the signifier or the exteriority of writing. Robert Brody suggests that Traveler is a characterization based on Oliveira's past: Traveler is what Oliveira would have been had he not gone travelling.⁵⁶ After his physical separation from la Maga, Oliveira personifies the characteristics of the signifier or the exteriority of writing which refers to a previous presence (la Maga) only as a function in a chain of differences; the non-center permitting the freeplay of the text, and the consequent movement of significations. Traveler, by contrast, personifies the signifier as comprehended within a logocentrism whose movement is limited, defined by a center.

Oliveira compares Traveler and himself to two twins playing on a see-saw, or a mirror reflection:

- Pero siempre en posiciones simétricas, - dijo Oliveira. - Como dos mellizos que juegan un sube y baja, o simplemente como cualquiera delante del espejo. ¿No te llama la atención, doppelgänger?⁵⁷

Oliveira and Traveler are physical doubles, in so far as that they have the same colouring and build. They are not psychological doubles, however, as Traveler, being more intuitively in touch with life than Oliveira, has a "fullness" which Oliveira lacks. Even Traveler's lack of travelling is likened to a substance: "Pero de todas maneras no había viajado, y era como una piedra negra en el medio de su alma."⁵⁸ Traveler's "black stone" which is a "fullness" that is really a "lack" is comparable to the center as the metaphysics of presence, which gives the sign (signifier to signified) its fullness, yet at the same time limits its movement of signification. Although Traveler senses that the black stone in his soul is the

weight of his ineffectuality, it is also the weight which links him to an essence of life. Oliveira denounces Traveler for being corralled, whereas Traveler denounces Oliveira for being something disembodied, a will in the form of a weather-vane who wants everything without making any commitment; just because he mixes up memories and realities "to such a non-euclidean extent":

-Yo no te odio - dijo Traveler - Solamente que me has acorralado a un punto en que ya no sé que hacer.

...Yo tampoco te odio, hermano, pero te denuncio, y eso es lo que vos llameis acorralar.

-Yo estoy vivo - dijo Traveler mirándolo en los ojos -. Estar vivo parece siempre el precio de algo. Y vos no querés pagar nada. Nunca lo quisiste. Una especie de cátaro existencial, un puro.....El verdadero doppelgänger sos vos, porque estás como desencarnado, sos una voluntad en forma de veleta, ahí arriba. Quiero esto, quiero aquello, quiero el norte, y el sur. Y todo al mismo tiempo, quiero a la Maga, quiero a Talita... Todo porque se le mezclan las realidades y los recuerdos de una manera sumamente no-euclidiana.⁵⁹

The difference between Oliveira and Traveler is the difference between the fullness of the sign as classically defined and the arbitrariness of the sign as defined by Saussure.

Oliveira compares Traveler to a five thousand year old man with whom he no longer feels in harmony, but from whom he can never completely escape; - who causes him to vascillate between his past and his present, preventing him from reaching being at the very moment that he approaches it:

Hablando de sustituciones, nada me extrañaría que vos y yo fuéramos el mismo, uno de cada lado... Una sola cosa sé y es que de tu lado ya no puedo estar, todo se me rompe entre las manos, hago cada barbaridad que es para volverse loco suponiendo que

fuera tan fácil. Pero vos que estás en armonía con el territorio no querés entender este ir y venir, doy un empujón y me pasa algo, entonces cinco mil años de genes echados a perder me tiran para atrás y recaigo en el territorio.... En fin, cinco mil años me tiran otra vez para atrás y hay que volver a empezar. Por eso siento que sos mi doppelgänger, porque todo el tiempo estoy yendo y viniendo de tu territorio al mío, y en esos pasajes lastimosos me parece que vos sos mi forma que se queda ahí mirándome con lástima, sos los cinco mil años de hombre amontonados en un metro setenta, mirando a ese payaso que quiere salirse de su casillo.⁶⁰

In the above passage, Traveler personifies the five thousand year old history of metaphysics from which writing, personified by Oliveira, tries to escape but can't. The dilemma of writing which Cortázar expresses metaphorically through the relationship of Traveler to Oliveira is explained by Derrida in "La Structure, le Signe, et le Jeu dans le Discours des Sciences Humaines". Derrida stresses that a total rupture between language and metaphysics is impossible, because philosophers cannot utter a single destructive proposition which does not slip into the form and language of exactly what it seeks to contest:

Or tous ces discours destructeurs et tous leurs analogues sont pris dans une sorte de cercle. Ce cercle est unique et il décrit la forme du rapport entre l'histoire de la métaphysique et la destruction de l'histoire de la métaphysique: il n'y a aucun sens à se passer des concepts de la métaphysique pour ébranler la métaphysique; nous ne disposons d'aucun langage - d'aucune syntaxe et d'aucun lexique - qui soit étranger à cette histoire; nous ne pouvons énoncer aucune proposition destructrice qui n'aît déjà dû se glisser dans la forme, dans la logique et les postulations implicites de cela même qu'elle voudrait contester.⁶¹

The inability of writing to separate itself completely from its metaphysical roots is parodied in Traveler's and Oliveira's confrontation in the string labyrinth Oliveira constructed, evocative of the labyrinth

writing constructs. Traveler reminds Oliveira of the impossibility of escaping from his past, even if it is on the other side of his "damned threads":

¿Hablabas de un doppelgänger, no? Ya ves que
alguien te sigue, que alguien es como vos aunque
esté del otro lado de tus condenados piolines.⁶²

Seconds before his death or accident, Oliveira and Traveler meet in reconciliation.

Traveler's and Oliveira's meeting in space parodies the abolishment-reconciliation of speech and writing in each other, which constitutes "différance". The first reading of the novel commences with Oliveira's doubtful question, "¿Encontraría a la Maga?" - la Maga personifying the signified as voice-presence to which the signifier as writing directly referred. Oliveira realizes at the end of the first book that some meeting with la Maga was possible, but only with la Maga present within a chain of reflected doubles: Talita - Traveler - la Maga - Manú (Traveler):

Talita estaba parada sin darse cuenta en la
casilla tres, y Traveler tenía un pie metido
en la seis, de manera que lo único que él
podía hacer era mover un poco la mano derecha
en un saludo tímido y quedarse mirando a la
Maga, a Manú, diciéndose que al fin y al cabo
algún encuentro había....⁶³

The second reading of the novel commenced with Oliveira's open question, "Sí, pero quién nos curará del fuego sordo, del fuego sin color....? - fire traditionally having the symbolic significance of the fundamental substance, the agent of transmutation which all things are derived from and return to; - a mediator between forms which vanish and forms in creation - a symbol of transformation and regeneration.⁶⁴ Cortázar answers his second question in the sentence which follows it, and also in the "open" ending of the second book: there is no cure for the deaf,

colourless fire, but only a burning without surcease:

Ardiendo así sin tréguia, soportando la quemadura central que avanza como la madurez paulatina en el fruto, ser el pulso de una hoguera en esta maraña de piedra interminable, caminar por las noches de nuestra vida con la obediencia de la sangre en su circuito ciego.⁶⁵

Oliveira likens the burning without surcease to writing: "¿Cuántas veces me pregunto si esto no es más que escritura?"⁶⁶ The parallel between Cortázar's philosophy of writing and signs, as expressed metaphorically in Rayuela, and that of Derrida as expressed in L'Ecriture et la Différence, De la Grammatologie and "La Différance" becomes very clear if one substitutes Cortázar's image of the "fuego sordo, del fuego sin color" for Derrida's concept of "différance". In "La Différance", Derrida explains that in a language, there are only differences which on the one hand, play a role in language and speech, and on the other hand are themselves effects. Derrida defines "différance" as the movement of play that produces differences as effects, but effects produced that do not have as their cause a subject, substance or a being present that escapes the play of difference. Derrida explains that the concept of differences as effects-without-a-cause resides in the interchangeable historicity of language and speech. Derrida extends what Saussure writes about signs to language in general:

Comme il n'y a pas de présence avant la différence sémiologique et hors d'elle, on peut étendre au signe en général ce que Saussure écrit de la langue: "La langue est nécessaire pour que la parole soit intelligible, et produise tous ses effets; mais celle-ci est nécessaire pour que la langue s'établisse; historiquement, le fait de parole précède toujours."

Retenant au moins le schéma sinon le contenu de l'exigence formulée par Saussure, nous désignerons par différence le mouvement selon lequel la langue, ou tout code, tout système de renvois en

général se constitue "historiquement" comme tissu de différences.⁶⁷

Derrida explains that "différance" is the order that resists philosophy's founding opposition between the sensible and the intelligible because it sustains it; resisting and sustaining it because différence takes place between speech and writing.⁶⁸ Cortázar's "deaf, colourless fire" is the fundamental substance or origin, but an origin as transformation and regeneration. Similarly, Derrida's "différance" is the origin of difference, but an origin as the difference between differences that allows them to be differences: "L'un n'est que l'autre différencié, l'un différenciant de l'autre. L'un est l'autre en différence, l'un est la différence de l'autre."⁶⁹ Différance - as the origin of difference which makes possible the movement of significations of the text - is equatable to "el fuego sordo, del fuego sin color" as the origin or fundamental substance which is also the agent of transformation and regeneration. Oliveira proposes the incarnation of "différance" when he advocates the necessity of he and Traveler - as antagonistic doubles - remaining abolished in themselves in each other: "Digamos dos maneras, necesidades de que la una quede abolida en la otra y viseversa."⁷⁰ The analogy assumes its full significance when it is interpreted in relation to the previously established analogy that Traveler is the personification of the signifier referring to the full presence of speech, whereas Oliveira is the signifier as writing referring to the arbitrariness of difference. The sustained abolishment of Oliveira and Traveler in each other personifies the sustaining and abolishment of the difference between speech and writing in "différance":

...en el silencio extraordinario que siguió a su

admonición, el encuentro de las miradas de Traveler y Oliveira fue como si dos pájaros chocaron en pleno vuelo y cayeron enredados en la casilla nueve, o por lo menos así lo disfrutaron los interesados.⁷¹

The metaphorical meeting-abolishment of the antagonistic doubles of speech and writing in each other occurs at the moment that Talita - the personification of the signified of writing - refuses to allow Oliveira's search for signification in the labyrinth of his own creation to be terminated and reduced to the level of coffee and croissants - the latter being symbolic of a center as "substance" which closes and limits the movement of significations originating in "différance".

The establishment of différance - as personified by the sustained abolishment/meeting of Traveler and Oliveira - allows writing to function as a system of differences which makes the movement of signification of the text possible, without incorporating positive terms or a center which would limit play; yet allowing for the condition of possibility of the sign.

Oliveira's meeting with the signified (la Maga) is not a meeting with a single entity, but a meeting with a chain of differences (la Maga - Talita - Traveler - la Maga - Manú) who all refer to each other and to other concepts, with the result that the originary signified of presence (la Maga) is no longer present in itself, but only as a function in a chain of differences. Cortázar's portrayal of the changes that occur within the spatial and physical doubles relationship that connect la Maga, Oliveira, Talita and Traveler is an allegory of the changes that occur within the concept of the sign as it evolves from its function as a mediator referring to presence as speech, to its function as an indication of difference, in which the signified concept is not present in itself,

but only in a system of differences.

After the failure of Talita's attempt to bridge the gap between Oliveira and Traveler by means of two boards across the open space between their windows, Traveler remarked that the boards were no longer there; there was no way across. The boards, however, are symbolic of the direct bridge which existed between speech and writing, when writing was comprehended as a sign signifying the signifier of voice. Writing, as interpreted by Derrida and Cortázar, no longer needs the physical bridge between object and subject, and in fact, is alien to it. During Oliveira's and Traveler's confrontation across the alley, Talita notices that Traveler and Oliveira have another bridge between them - a spatial bridge that renders extraneous a bridge of two boards tied together by a rope. Oliveira and Traveler meet in "différance" rather than through the mediation of a signified (Talita) referring to voice.

The concept of *différance* allows the sign of writing to function as a system of oppositions that are accomplices to each other, rather than as an indicator of a presence outside of itself.

FOOTNOTES

¹Jacques Derrida, "La fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture", De la Grammatologie, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1967, pp.30-31.

²Julio Cortázar, Rayuela, Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 1973, pp.452-453.

³Jacques Derrida, "La Différance", Marges de la Philosophie, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1972, C.F. p.9,10.

⁴Ibid., p. 11. The quotation of Saussure is originally from his book Cours de linguistique générale.

⁵Ibid., C.F. p. 12.

⁶Ibid., pp. 16-17.

⁷Ibid., C.F. p. 17.

⁸Derrida, "Ce Dangereux Supplément", De la Grammatologie, p.227.

⁹Derrida, "La fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture", De la Grammatologie, p. 25.

¹⁰Derrida, "La Différance", p.25.

¹¹Derrida, "Linguistique et Grammatologie", De la Grammatologie, p. 95.

¹²Derrida, "La Différance", p. 5.

¹³Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁴Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 458.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 466-467.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 413-414.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 500

¹⁸Derrida, "La fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture", De la Grammatologie, p. 27.

¹⁹Derrida, "La Différance", C.F. p. 17.

²⁰Ibid., p. 17.

²¹Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 434.

²²Ibid., pp. 434-435.

²³Ibid., pp. 602-603.

²⁴Derrida, "La fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture", pp. 24-25. The quotation of Jakobsen is originally from his book Essais de linguistique générale.

²⁵Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 32.

²⁶Ibid., p. 310.

²⁷Ibid., p. 352.

²⁸Ibid., p. 404.

²⁹Derrida, "La fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture", C.F. p. 36.

³⁰Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 545.

³¹Robert Brody, Julio Cortázar: Rayuela (Critical Guides to Spanish Texts), Grant and Cutler Ltd., London, 1976, p.53.

³²Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 15.

³³Ibid., p. 438.

³⁴Ibid., p. 439.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 438-439

³⁶Ibid., p. 404.

³⁷Derrida, "La fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture" De la Grammatologie, C.F. pp. 21-25

³⁸Ibid., pp. 25-26

³⁹Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 635.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 499.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 105

⁴²Ibid., p. 106.

⁴³Ibid., p. 26

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 25.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 19.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 52.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 52.

⁵⁰Richard Rorty, "Derrida on Language, Being and Abnormal Philosophy", The Journal of Philosophy, 74, 1977, p. 677.

⁵¹Derrida, "Linguistique et Grammatologie", De la Grammatologie, p. 55.

⁵²Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 449.

⁵³Ibid., p. 334.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 377.

⁵⁵Derrida, "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu dans le Discours des Sciences Humaines", L'Ecriture et la Différence, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1967, p. 411.

⁵⁶R. Brody, Julio Cortázar: Rayuela, p. 39.

⁵⁷Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 393.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 258.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 394.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 400.

⁶¹Derrida, "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu dans le Discours des Sciences Humaines", p. 412.

⁶²Cortázar, Rayuela, pp. 398-399.

⁶³Ibid., p. 404.

⁶⁴J.E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, trans. Jack Sage, Philosophical Library, New York, 1962, p. 100.

⁶⁵Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 438.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 438.

⁶⁷Derrida, "La Différance", p. 12.

⁶⁸Ibid., C.F. p. 5.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁷⁰Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 393.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 403.

CHAPTER II

CORTÁZAR, DERRIDA, AND THE ENGENDERING OF THE MOVEMENT OF SIGNIFICATION IN WRITING

In one of the chapters of Rayuela entitled Moreilliani, Cortázar alludes to the new vision towards which science seems to be heading - that of renouncing mortality:

Basta mirar un momento con los ojos de todos los días el comportamiento de un gato o de una mosca para sentir que esa nueva visión a que tiende la ciencia...no es otra cosa que la remota, aislada, insistente voz con que ciertas líneas del budismo, del vedanta, del sufismo, de la mística occidental, nos instan a renunciar de una vez por todas a la mortalidad.¹

Moreilli - Cortázar's double in Rayuela - is dedicated to searching for an opening in the closed order of the novel; an opening that would permit the immortality of the text through the infinite freeplay of significations of the text: "Un ajedrez, infinito, tan fácil postularlo."²

Jacques Derrida, in "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu dans le Discours des Sciences Humaines" explains that the concept of totalization of a text no longer has any meaning because the nature of language excludes totalization. The field of language is that of freeplay, or a field of infinite substitutions in the closure of a finite ensemble. Derrida postulates that the field of language permits these substitutions only because it is finite: instead of being too large as is the case in the classical hypothesis, there is a center missing from it - a center which classically arrests and founds the freeplay of significations:

Si la totalisation alors n'a plus de sens, ce n'est pas parce que l'infinité d'un champ ne peut être

couverte par un regard ou un discours finis, mais parce que la nature du champ - à savoir le langage et un langage fini - exclut la totalisation: ce champ est en effet celui d'un jeu, c'est-à-dire de substitutions infinies dans la clôture d'un ensemble fini. Ce champ ne permet ces substitutions infinies que parce qu'il est fini, c'est-à-dire parce qu'au lieu d'être un champ inépuisable, comme dans l'hypothèse classique, au lieu d'être trop grand, il lui manque quelque chose, à savoir un centre qui arrête et fonde le jeu des substitutions.³

Derrida describes a changing perception of structure and writing after an event or moment in the history of structure which he classifies as a rupture or redoubling.

Cortázar, in Rayuela, expounds many ideas about the structure and movement of signification in writing which parallel those of Derrida. Cortázar expresses his philosophy of writing directly through Moreilli - his spokesman within the novel, and also metaphorically through the structure, characterization and movement of the book itself.

For both Cortázar and Derrida, the rupture of writing with the concept of a center is directly responsible for the opening of the movement of signification or freeplay of the text, which assumes the form of a movement of supplementarity. The movement of signification occurs as a result of the tension of freeplay with history and with presence - freeplay being a play of absence and presence.

Derrida and Cortázar both conclude that there are two interpretations of interpretation: one turning toward a lost, impossible origin, and the other affirming the freeplay of a world of signs without truth or an origin present.

Derrida commences his article "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu dans le Discours des Sciences Humaines" with the postulate that there was an event in the history of the concept of structure that took the exterior

form of a rupture and redoubling: rupture being a break with a center or present presence as the origin of writing, and redoubling being the result of the structurality of structure being thought or repeated, causing the origin of speculation to become a difference rather than a presence. In the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse.⁴ In like manner, Cortázar commences the first book of Rayuela with the conditional question, "¿Encontraría a la Maga?"⁵ - la Maga signifying a presence or center that may or may not be present, and begins the second book with the postulate that the dialectical method utilized to establish a truth present falsifies and transforms that truth at the very moment that it attempts to determine it, with the result that there is no originary truth. In the absence of truth, everything is writing:

El solo hecho de interrogarse sobre la posible elección vicia y enturbia lo eligible....Parecería que una elección no puede ser dialéctica, que su planteo la empobrece, es decir la falsea, es decir la transforma en otra cosa....Todo es escritura.⁶

In chapter one of this thesis, Oliveira was compared to the signifier as writing, and la Maga was likened to the signified, voice-presence or center to which Oliveira referred. Oliveira's separation from la Maga after the death of Rocamadour parodies the rupture of writing and structure with the concept of a center. The binary structure of the novel parodies the event as redoubling: Del Lado de Acá being a redoubling of Del Lado de Allá.

Derrida explains that structure always found itself neutralized, reduced and limited by its reference to a fixed origin or point of presence, until the moment of the "event". The center closes the play that it originally opens and makes possible:

Ce centre avait pour fonction non seulement d'orienter et d'équilibrer, d'organiser la structure...mais de faire surtout que le principe d'organisation de la structure limite ce que nous pourrions appeler le jeu de la structure. Sans doute le centre d'une structure, en orientant et en organisant la cohérence du système, permet-il le jeu des éléments à l'intérieur de la forme totale....

Pourtant le centre ferme aussi le jeu qu'il ouvre et rend possible.⁷

Oliveira, in Del Lado de Allá, personifies a signifier which has its movements defined and governed by its reference to a center. Oliveira's entire existence in Paris is ordered around a desire to connect with a metaphysical center, which he likens to the heaven of the hopscotch chart, the center of the Yin-Yang symbol, the center of a chess board, Yonder, the Kibbutz of desire. Oliveira relates to la Maga as a being capable of reaching the center intuitively.

"Cierra los ojos y da en el blanco," pensaba Oliveira. "Exactamente el sistema Zen de tirar al arco. Pero da en el blanco simplemente porque no sabe que ése es el sistema. Yo en cambio..."⁸

Oliveira attempts to reach center by making love with la Maga and by attempting a more intuitive existence governed by chance, rather than logic, which mirrors la Maga's way of life. La Maga, as Oliveira's center, inspires his movement toward herself and a more authentic existence. Like the center of a classical structure, however, la Maga is also responsible for closing off Oliveira's movement of signification - her memory inciting him to jump to his death in order to meet with her:

...mirándolo a la Maga, a Manú, diciéndose que al fin y al cabo algún encuentro había, aunque no pudiera durar más que ese instante terriblemente dulce en el que lo mejor sin lugar a dudas hubiera sido inclinarse apenas hacia afuera y dejarse ir, paf se acabó.⁹

Derrida explains that the center, for classical thought about struc-

ture, is paradoxically both within the structure and outside of it. The center, therefore, is not the center:

On a donc toujours pensé que le centre, qui par définition est unique, constituait, dans une structure, cela même qui, commandant la structure, échappe à la structuralité. C'est pourquoi, pour une pensée classique de la structure, le centre peut être dit, paradoxalement, dans la structure et hors de la structure.¹⁰

Like the classical concept of a center, la Maga is both inside and outside her social circle. Although la Maga feels that she is an outsider in the Club de la Serpiente, and would like to enter into the chalk circle that surrounds Oliveira and Etienne, Oliveira realizes that la Maga is the only member of the club who is inside the circle: "Oliveira se daba cuenta de que la Maga se asomaba a cada rato a esas grandes terrazas sin tiempo que todos ellos buscaban dialécticamente."¹¹

Derrida interprets the entire history of the concept of structure, before the rupture he refers to, as a series of substitutions of center for center.¹² The above concept is allegorized in Rayuela when Oliveira substitutes Moreilli, Pola, Emmanuel and Talita for la Maga.

Derrida explains that the event of rupture takes place at the moment that the structurality of structure begins to be thought: at this moment, the surrogate of the center does not substitute itself for anything which pre-existed it. Henceforth, there is no center; the center cannot be thought of as a being present or a fixed locus, but as a function - a non-locus in which an infinite number of sign substitutions come into play.¹³

The events of Rayuela metaphorize the above premise. Just before commencing his construction of the bridge of boards across the alley, Oliveira begins to realize that there is no center, but just a continuous

ondulation of material:

No hay centro, hay una especie de confluencia
continua, de ondulación de la materia.¹⁴

Oliveira persist in his hopeless search for a center, however, and attempts to make Talita his new indicator of the center by superimposing la Maga's image upon her. Talita, like writing after the deconstruction of metaphysics, refuses to be a surrogate for la Maga: "...me empezó a mirar y era a la otra que miraba. Yo no soy el zombie de nadie, Manú, no quiero ser el zombie de nadie."¹⁵ Talita's refusal to be a substitute for la Maga marks the establishment of Cortázar's parable of writing as a non-centered system.

Derrida establishes the historical causes of the event of rupture, redoubling and decentering as the Nietzschean critique of metaphysics, in which the concepts of play, interpretation and sign (without truth present) were substituted for being and truth; the Freudian critique of self-presence, consciousness, the subject and self-identity; and the Heideggerean destruction of metaphysics.¹⁶

Derrida elucidates the circular paradox in which the above destructive discourses are caught: philosophers cannot utter a single destructive proposition that does not have its roots in exactly what it seeks to contest. He provides the paradoxical example of the metaphysics of presence being attacked with the help of the concept of the sign: as soon as one totally negates the possibility of a transcendental or privileged signified, one also refuses the concept of the sign: the metaphysical reduction of the sign needs the opposition it is reducing. The opposition is part of the system along with the reduction.¹⁷

Cortázar, like Derrida, implies that deconstructive discourses

need the opposition they are reducing. The circular paradox of deconstructive discourse is explained by Cortázar through Moreilli. Moreilli attempts to escape the confines of a transcendental ethic and discover an axial or threshold which would allow a direct contact with reality without the interposition of myths, religions, systems or reticula. In place of the former dualism, Moreilli advocates a common reduction of matter and spirit to notions of energy. Consequently, the characters of his novel retreat more and more into themselves; nullifying on one hand the fabrications of a controlled reality, but also nullifying their own mythopoetic force to the point that they are reduced to nothing; a situation which constitutes a total loss of meaning and signification. Moreilli's writing cannot divorce itself totally from dualism, as it needs the opposition in order to signify.

Era curiosa que Moreilli abrazaba con entusiasmo las hipótesis de trabajo más recientes de la ciencia física y la biología, se mostraba convencido de que el viejo dualismo se había agrietado ante la evidencia de una común reducción de la materia y el espíritu a nociones de energía. En consecuencia, sus monos sabios parecían querer retroceder cada vez más hacia sí mismos, anulando por una parte las quimeras de una realidad mediatizada y traicionada por los supuestos instrumentos cognoscitivos, y anulando a la vez su propia fuerza mitopoética, su "alma" para acabar en una especie de encuentro ab ovo, de encogimiento al máximo, a ese punto en que va a perderse la última chispa de (falsa) humanidad. Parecía proponer - aunque no llegaba a formularlo nunca - un camino que empezaba a partir de esa liquidación externa e interna. Pero había quedado casi sin palabras, sin gente, sin cosas, y potencialmente, claro, sin lectores.¹⁸

In "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu dans le Discours des Sciences Humaines" Derrida interprets Levi-Strauss' search for a new status of discourse - an inquiry which rests on the abandonment of all reference to a center, subject, privileged reference, origin or absolute archè.¹⁹

Levi-Strauss postulates that there is no absolute source of the myth, but only shadows or virtualities which are elusive, unactualizable and non-existent:

Les thèmes se dédoublent à l'infini. Quand on croit les avoir démêlés les uns des autres et les tenir séparés, c'est seulement pour constater qu'ils se réssoudent, en réponse aux sollicitations d'affinités imprévues....Mais, à la différence de la réflexion philosophique, qui prétend remonter jusqu'à sa source, le réflexions dont il s'agit ici s'intéressent des rayons privés de tout autre foyer que virtuel...²⁰

Cortázar also envisions the origin of writing as a virtual focus. Some members of the Club de la Serpiente imagine Moreilli facing Charon - a situation comparable to two myths facing each other: "Moreilli mirará a Caronte. Un mito frente al otro."²¹ Two myths facing each other resemble two mirrors facing each other, each mirror reflecting the other mirror image, resulting in no focus for either image other than a virtual focus.

The binary division of the first book of Rayuela into Del Lado de Allá and Del Lado de Acá parodies the origin of writing as two myths or mirrors facing each other. Oliveira's real point of origin becomes ungraspable - Paris being Buenos Aires and Buenos Aires being Paris: "En París, todo le era Buenos Aires y viseversa."²² Oliveira's inability to relate to either Paris or Buenos Aires as an authentic point of reference parodies the lack of a real focus or origin for discourse.

Derrida explains that due to the lack of an origin or center for writing, the concept of totalization as classically defined has no meaning when applied to discourse. Instead, the field of writing is that of freeplay, or a field of infinite substitutions in the closure of a finite ensemble:

Si la totalisation n'a plus de sens, ce n'est pas parce que l'infinité d'un champ ne peut être couverte

par un regard ou un discours fini, mais parce que la nature du champ - à savoir le langage et un langage fini - exclut la totalisation: ce champ est en effet celui d'un jeu, c'est-à-dire, de substitutions infinies dans la clôture d'un ensemble fini. Ce champ ne permet ces substitutions infinies que parce qu'il est fini, c'est-à-dire parce qu'au lieu d'être un champ inépuisable, comme dans l'hypothèse classique, au lieu d'être trop grand, il lui manque quelque chose, à savoir un centre qui arrête et fonde le jeu des substitutions.²³

Derrida defines the movement of freeplay permitted by the absence of a center or origin as supplementarity. He explains that one cannot determine the center or the sign which supplements it, or takes its place in its absence because this sign adds itself, occurs as a supplement. The movement of signification adds something, which results in the fact that there is always one more, but this addition is a floating one because it adds something, supplements a lack on the part of the signified.²⁴ The superabundant nature of the signifier occurs as a result of a lack (the absence of a center) which must be supplemented.²⁵

The dispute which occurs between Oliveira and Traveler during Talita's attempted crossing of the bridge of boards marks the establishment of discourse as a field of freeplay rather than a centered totality. Traveler, whom Oliveira accuses of coming right up to the edge of things and retreating, personifies the signifier of writing as previously thought within a logocentrism, whose movement of signification or freeplay was limited by its referral to a present presence or center. Traveler tells Oliveira that he does not feel obligated to play his game. In fact, Traveler - being more committed to life than Oliveira - is incapable of playing Oliveira's game. Oliveira replies that games play themselves, a statement which evokes the freeplay of writing. Oliveira accuses Traveler of throwing a stick in the spokes of his wheel, to slow down the movement

of the game. In the same manner, a center or presence closes or limits the movement of signification of discourse. Just as the game is of Oliveira's making and must be played clean (without interference from an external referent), the play of signification is engendered from writing itself, instead of arising from the relationship of writing to an exterior truth. Talita remarks that no matter what Oliveira and Traveler discuss, they only talk about her. In chapter one of this thesis, Talita was compared to the signified. The fundamental question of a philosophy of writing is its relationship to a presence or truth signified; whether the latter pre-exists writing, or is inscribed by it. In discussing Talita's future relationship to themselves - whether she should complete the crossing and hand the package (symbolizing the sense of writing) to Oliveira, or whether she should throw it and return to Traveler - Oliveira and Traveler debate the difference between writing as a photocentricism referring to a full presence, and writing as thought after the rupture with the concept of a center, whereby the signified is no longer a full presence, but only a function in a chain of differences; a lack which the superabundant nature of the signifier must supplement. Talita does not manage to cross the bridge and deliver the package to Oliveira intact. Instead, she throws it, causing it to break apart, scatter, and become mingled with dirt. Talita's inability to bridge the gap between Oliveira and Traveler is comparable to a lack of fullness on the part of the signified. Oliveira's and Traveler's confrontation - which Talita compares to a trial or ceremony - evokes the tension which engenders the repetitive, ritualistic movement of supplementarity of the text.

- Ahí está - dijo Oliveira -. Tenía que suceder a vos no te cambia nadie. Llegás al borde de las cosas y uno piensa que por fin vas a entender, pero es inútil, che, empezás a darles la vuelta

a leerles las etiquetas. Te quedás en el prospecto, pibe.

-¿Y qué? - dijo Traveler. - ¿Por qué te tengo que hacer el juego, hermano?

- Los juegos se hacen solos, sos vos el que mete un palito para frenar la rueda.

- La rueda que vos fabricaste, si vamos a eso.

- No creo - dijo Oliveira -. Yo no hice más que suscitar las circunstancias, como dicen los entendidos. El juego había que jugarlo limpio.

....
Talita sabía que de alguna manera estaban hablando de ella...."Hablen lo que hablen, en el fondo es siempre de mí, pero tampoco es eso, aunque es casi eso"...."Es como un juicio," pensó Talita. "Como una ceremonia."²⁶

Oliveira's unresolved, unending search for authenticity within the book parodies the supplementary, superabundant nature of the signifier, whose movement of signification results from its lack of a center as a point of reference - a lack which must be supplemented. Oliveira is in constant movement; from Buenos Aires to Paris, from Paris to Buenos Aires, from la Maga to Pola to Emmanuel to Talita, from one hotel to another hotel, from one diversion - intellectual debate, musical concerts, making love, word games, building board bridges and labyrinths - to the next, from one job - working as a salesman, circus labourer, mental asylum attendant - to the next. Oliveira realizes that behind every one of his actions, there is a protest, an admission of a lack that he feels he must supplant:

Pero detrás de toda acción había una protesta, porque todo hacer significaba salir de para llegar a, o mover algo para que estuviera aquí o no allí, o entrar en esa casa en vez de no entrar o entrar en la de al lado, es decir que en todo acto había la admisión de una carencia, de algo no hecho todavía y que era posible hacer, la protesta tácita frente a la continua evidencia de la falta, de la merma, de la parvedad del presente.²⁷

Oliveira is condemned to an infinite search for signification because the sum of all his acts can never add up to a whole life:

Creer que la acción podía colmar, o que la suma de las acciones podía realmente equivaler a una vida digna de este nombre, era una ilusión de moralista.²⁸

Oliveira's incessant movements through the labyrinths of Parisian streets, the circus and the corridors of the mental asylum trace a temporal labyrinth which parallels the spatial labyrinth traced by the reader of Rayuela as he jumps from one chapter to the next. If numbers one to one hundred and fifty-five were evenly placed in order on the circumference of a circle, and if the points were joined together in the order of the chapter sequence of Book two of Rayuela, the result would be a graphic labyrinth which would mimic the labyrinth of significations engendered by the movement of supplementarity of the book.

Two of the "Capítulos prescindibles" mirror the labyrinth of significations engendered by the text. Moreilli's unfinished book is described as the "repetición obsesiva de una espiral temblorosa".²⁹ Chapter one hundred and ten consists on an excerpt from Anais Nin's Winter of Artifice in which she describes the movement of a dream as a tower of infinite layers which spiral endlessly upon themselves. The movement of the dream parallels the movement of writing:

El sueño estaba compuesto como una torre formada por capas sin fin que se alzarán y se perdieran en el infinito, o bajarán en círculos perdiéndose en las entrañas de la tierra. Cuando me arrastró en sus ondas, la espiral comenzó y esa espiral era un laberinto. No había ni techo, ni fondo, ni paredes, ni regreso. Pero había temas que se repetían con exactitud.³⁰

The graphic design of the hopscotch chart - which manifests itself in the book's construction, imagery and character relationships - parodies the movement of supplementarity of the text. The hopscotch progression of one

to two units, which together form a group of three, which gives rise to another repetition of the previous pattern parallels the pattern traced by the redoubling of the origin through writing, and the consequent movement of supplementarity of the text engendered from the loss of an origin through repetition. Derrida explains that at the moment that the center or origin repeats itself, the double does not simply add itself to the simple origin, but it divides and supplements it, creating a double origin, plus its repetition; three thus becoming the first number of representation, but also the last; the abyss of representation remaining dominated by its rhythm, to infinity:

Dès lors que le centre ou l'origine ont commencé par se répéter, par se redoubler, le double ne s'ajoutait pas seulement au simple. Il le divisait et le suppléait. Il y avait aussitôt une double origine plus sa répétition. Trois est le premier chiffre de la représentation. Le dernier aussi car l'abîme de la représentation reste toujours dominé par son rythme, à l'infini.³¹

The character relationships of Rayuela mirror the supplementary hopscotch-like pattern described above. The solitary Oliveira is joined by la Maga. The couple is joined by Gregorovius, effecting a unity of three. The same pattern repeats itself in the following relationships: Oliveira-la Maga-Pola, Traveler-Talita-Oliveira, Oliveira-Talita-la Maga, and Oliveira-Moreilli-Cortázar. The descending movement of the character groupings from a group of three physical entities, to a physical triad containing a physical double (Oliveira and Traveler), to a triad containing a spatial double (Talita and la Maga) with only two physical entities present, to a triad containing two spatial doubles (Oliveira-Moreilli-Cortázar) with only one physical entity present parodies the triad as the first and last number of repetition - the abyss of repetition remaining dominated by its rhythm. Robert Brody notes that the

triple patterns of the character relationships contribute a cyclic rhythm to the novel. He also equates the ubiquitous patterns of two's which become three's to an expansion of consciousness which transcends the dualistic tradition of western philosophy.³²

Just as the movement of supplementarity results from a lack on the part of the signified, the originary binary relationships in the novel evolve to triads because of a lack felt by one of the partners in the binary group. In the la Maga-Oliveira-Gregorovius triad, Gregorovius has a human understanding which Oliveira lacks. In the la Maga-Oliveira-Pola triad, Pola has the education and reasoning ability which la Maga lacks. In the Talita-Traveler-Oliveira triad, Talita and Traveler have a fullness or attachment to life which Oliveira lacks. Oliveira, by contrast, has a freedom of movement which they lack. In the Oliveira-Talita-la Maga triad, Oliveira attempts to supplant la Maga's absence by superimposing her image on Talita.

In the first chapter of the second book of Rayuela, Cortázar allegorizes the movement of supplementarity of the text: Oliveira relates the story of a neopolitain who spent years looking at a screw. Moreilli thought that the screw was possibly a god. Oliveira rejects this solution, and suggests that possibly the error was in accepting that the object was a screw just because it looked like one. Instead, Oliveira perceives the screw as a symbol of transformation, in the manner that Picasso could take a toy car and turn it into the chin of a baboon:

Moreilli pensaba que el tornillo debía ser otra cosa, un dios o algo así. Solución demasiado fácil. Quizá el error estuviera en aceptar que ese objeto era un tornillo por el hecho de que tenía la forma de un tornillo. Picaaso toma un auto de juguete y lo convierte en el mentón de un cinocéfalo. A lo mejor el neopolitano era un idiota pero también pudo ser el inventor de un mundo. Del tornillo a un ojo,

de un ojo a una estrella...³³

Oliveira compares the screw to an invented fire, a phoenix that burns without surcease within the work. The fire symbolizes the infinite free-play of the text which assumes the form and movement of the great screw or supplementarity: succeeding levels of signification which build upon and are derived from each other.

There are many examples of enumerative description in the text which parody the movement of supplementarity. The multiple layers of clothing which camouflage the original bodily shape of the clocharde Emmanuelle parody the accumulative movements of supplementarity which obscure the origin of writing:

Sobre un fondo indescifrable donde se acumularían camisones pegados a la piel, blusas regaladas y algún corpiño capaz de contener unos senos ominosos, se iban sumando, dos, tres, quizá cuatro vestidos, el guardarropas completo, y por encima un saco de hombre con una manga casi arrancada, una bufanda sostenida por un broche de latón con una piedra verde y otra roja, y en el pelo increíblemente teñido de rubio una especie de vincha verde de gasa, colgando de un lado.³⁴

The contradictory enumerative opinions about the cause of Moreilli's accident parody both the tension which engenders the movement of supplementarity, and the consequent movement of signification itself:

Las opiniones eran que el viejo se había resbalado, que el auto había "quemado" la luz roja, que el viejo había querido suicidarse, que todo estaba cada vez peor en París, que el tráfico era monstruoso, que el viejo tenía la culpa, que los frenos del auto no andaban bien, que el viejo era de una imprudencia temeraria, que la vida estaba cada vez más cara, que en París había demasiados extranjeros que no entendían las leyes del tráfico y les quitaban el trabajo a los franceses.³⁵

Oliveira's inability to communicate with Traveler is compared to pulling at a ball of yarn, with the result that one gets a long thread of wool,

but never the ball of yarn. The interminable thread issuing from the ball of yarn parodies the movement of supplementarity resulting from the tension of freeplay (Oliveira) with history and presence (Traveler):

Porque en realidad él no le podía contar nada a Traveler. Se empezaba a tirar del ovillo iba a salir una hebra de lana, metros de lana, lanagnórosis, lanatúrner, lannapurna, lanatomía, lanata, lanatalidad, lanacionalidad, lanaturalidad, la lana hasta lanausea pero nunca el ovillo.³⁶

Derrida, interpreting Levi-Strauss, explains that any reference to the freeplay of signification in discourse is always caught up in tension: the tension of freeplay with history, and the tension of freeplay with presence.³⁷ The tension of freeplay originates in a rupture or catastrophe. Levi-Strauss, like Rousseau, always conceives of the origin of a new structure on the basis of catastrophe - an overturning of nature in nature - which results in the neutralization of time and history.³⁸ For Derrida, the event of rupture occurs as an inversion. In an interview with Diacritics, Derrida explains that a strategy of deconstruction should avoid simply neutralizing the binary opposition of metaphysics, and simply residing in the closed sphere of these oppositions. Instead, it is necessary to put forward a double gesture: to pass through a phase of inversion which brings down the superior position of one of the terms of an opposition, and then to mark the gap between the inversion and the emergence of a new system which no longer allows itself to be understood in the previous regime.³⁹

Oliveira explains the process and effects of inversion metaphorically, when he compares the opening of the movement of signification to turning around a kaleidoscope and looking out from the other side; a move which brings down the previously superior position of a transcendental signified, and allows the movement of signification to open up in a world

where "earth is on the same level as heaven", evoking Saussure's concept of the signifier and signified functioning as a network of oppositions or system of differences within writing, rather than the signifier as writing deriving its sense from its relationship to a signified outside of itself.

....tal vez el único camino al kibbutz, eso no podía ser el mundo, la gente agarraba el calidoscopio por el mal lado, entonces había que darlo vuelta....y desde ahí empezar a mirar desde la montaña de bosta, mirar el mundo a través del ojo del culo, and you'll see patterns pretty as can be, la piedrita tenía que pasar por el ojo del culo, metido a patadas por la punta del zapato, y de la Tierra al Cielo las casillas estarían abiertas, el laberinto se desplegaría como una cuerda de reloj rota haciendo saltar el mil pedazos el tiempo de los empleados, y por los mocos y el semen y el olor de Emmanuèle, y la bosta del oscuro se entraría al camino que llevaba al kibbutz del deseo, no ya subir al Cielo (subir, palabra hipócrita, Cielo, flatus vocis), sino caminar con pasos de hombre por una tierra de hombres hacia el kibbutz allá lejos pero en el mismo plano, como el Cielo estaba en el mismo plano que la Tierra...⁴⁰

The event of rupture and the consequent movement of signification in Rayuela is frequently metaphorized as a phoenix-like resurrection from death. The paradoxical complicity of death and the opening of signification is explained by Derrida in "La fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture" (De la Grammatologie) : the death of the book is a death of speech, and therefore a new mutation in the history of writing:

Malgré les apparences, cette mort du livre n'annonce sans doute (et d'une certaine manière depuis toujours) qu'une mort de la parole (d'une parole soi-disant pleine) et une nouvelle mutation dans l'histoire de l'écriture, dans l'histoire comme écriture.⁴¹

The death of speech and the death of the book as classically defined is metaphorized in Rayuela through the death or disappearance of la Maga at the end of Del Lado de Allá, and the death of Oliveira at the end of Del

Lado de Acá; - Oliveira's death resulting from his final attempt to reconnect himself with his lost center or point of reference, la Maga.

Derrida explains, however, that the death of the living presence is the dawn of writing because everything begins with repetition: "La mort est à l'aube parce que tout a commencé par la répétition."⁴² As explained earlier in this chapter, the signifying potential of discourse was previously limited by its direct referral to the full presence of voice. At the moment that the structurality of structure began to be thought, the central signified was transmitted outside of itself in its surrogate - which effected the metaphorical death or absence of a center. The lack of a central signified permits the superabundant, supplementary nature of the signifier whose infinite movement of freeplay is the result of a need to supplant the lack of a center. Cortázar's allusions to the phoenix mirror Derrida's concept of death as the dawn of repetition; and therefore, writing. La Maga desires a phoenix-like death from Oliveira when he makes love to her:

Se llegó así a saber que la Maga esperaba verdaderamente que Horacio la matara, y que esa muerte debía ser de fénix, el ingreso al concilio de los filósofos.⁴³

After her disappearance or death by drowning, la Maga experiences a spatial phoenix-like resurrection at the moment that Oliveira superimposes her image on Talita. The spatial resurrection of la Maga, however, is also the termination of the originary real experience of la Maga: there are now two la Maga's, effecting that the original la Maga no longer exists as such, but is only a function in a chain of differences.

Cortázar, like Derrida, recognizes the complicity of death and writing. Moreilli's writings are described as "una frase hueca...pequeño ataúd".⁴⁴ Moreilli is pictured as looking at Charon, the carrier of dead

souls: their confrontation resembling two myths facing each other. We have previously noted that the occurrence of two myths face to face constitutes the doubling of a virtual focus, which amounts to saying that there is no real origin. Writing is Charon or the carrier of death in so far as that writing begins with the death of, or rupture with a central presence.. Writing is a phoenix death, however, as the movement of signification of discourse arises from the death of a center.

The metaphorical superimposition of the hole in the circus tent onto the hole of the elevator shaft in the asylum illustrates the relationship between inversion, death (or the debasement of the superior position of one term of an opposition) and the consequent freeplay of signification in the absence of a referent. Oliveira compares the hole at the top of the circus tent to a center or opening: "ese escape hacia un quizá contacto, ese centro, ese ojo como un puente del suelo al espacio liberado."⁴⁵ He perceives the elevator shaft going down to the mortuary in the asylum as the inversion or reverse image of the hole at the top of the tent: "En el circo había sido al revés, un agujero en lo alto, la apertura comunicando con el espacio abierto, figura de consumación, ahora estaba al borde del pozo, agujero de Eleusis."⁴⁶ Oliveira's inversed superimposition of the image of the metaphysical center (the hole at the top of the tent) onto the metaphor of the hole of Eleusis (the elevator shaft terminating in the basement next to the mortuary) signifies a neutralization or death of the metaphysical center. Cortázar explains allegorically, however, that the absence of a center is not the ending of discourse. Just as the hole of Eleusis signifies both death and resurrection - Eleusis being the site where the ancient Greeks celebrated the phoenix-like death and resurrection of vegetation - Oliveira discovers that the

death of a referent does not terminate the signifying power of discourse when he descends the elevator and discovers the man with the dove talking to his dead friend in the freezer. Oliveira comments that in such pseudo-dialogues, it does not matter what is opposite to the speaker: it may be feet sticking out of the ice.⁴⁷ In like manner, writing does not have to refer to a full presence in order to signify.

A linear reading of chapters fifty-six to fifty-eight illustrates the paradox of death as a phoenix or an opening onto an infinite movement of signification, and elucidates allegorically the reason for the infinite freeplay of the text in the absence of a central presence. At the end of chapter fifty-six, Oliveira falls out of the window and dies because of a final desperate attempt to reunite himself with his previous center, la Maga. Two chapters later, however, the reader discovers Oliveira miraculously resurrected, with cold compresses on his head. Chapter fifty-seven - consisting of Oliveira's interpretation of his one-line poem, "Yo entresueño, buzo de lavabos"⁴⁸ - explains metaphorically the reason for his survival, which is also the cause of the infinite movement of signification in discourse. Oliveira describes the sensations he experiences while in a transitory state between sleep and wakefulness: he lets himself go, hoping to return to the other thing - to what he was before he woke up. He falls inward for a moment until the defenses of wakefulness - words, language - stop him:

...te vas dejando ir con la esperanza de quizá volver a lo otro, a eso que eras antes de despertar y que todavía flota, todavía está en vos, es vos mismo, pero empieza a irse... Sí, te caes por un momento hacia adentro, hasta que las defensas de la vigilia, oh la bonita expresión, oh lenguaje, se encargan de detener.⁴⁹

Oliviera, suspended in a state of tension between sleep and wakefulness,

personifies the sense of writing held in the cross tension of absence and presence. Oliveira's asleep state signifies the subconscious or originary experience which preceeds writing. Oliveira's awake state represents discourse. Oliveira cannot fall inward and regain full presence or his originary experience because the primary experience is no longer present as such. Language has duplicated and obscured the originary, subconscious experience at the moment that it was thought, causing it to become ungraspable. In like manner, Oliveira can never reunite himself with la Maga by falling out of the window because la Maga is no longer there. Her death was the "dawn of repetition" - a redoubling brought about when Oliveira attempted to resurrect her or relive their real experience together by superimposing her image on Talita - a repetition which only served to obscure the original la Maga, causing her to be irrevocably lost in a chain of differences. The absence of la Maga launches Oliveira into a never-ending search for signification, as indicated by the non-ending of the second reading of the book: Cortázar does not indicate that the book is finished at the end of chapter one hundred and thirty-one. Instead, the reader is referred back to chapter fifty-eight, which refers the reader back to chapter one hundred and thirty-one, ad infinitum. We may say that Oliveira falls out of the window but never hits the ground. The reality of the book becomes invention, or a truth engendered by writing itself, rather than an external presence. Oliveira becomes a phoenix-like consciousness who evolves incessantly within the work. Oliveira and the book elect the "great screw" or the movement of supplementarity as their possible truth: "Ardemos en nuestra obra...alto desafío del fénix....elegimos por tura el Gran Tornillo."⁵⁰

The tension of freeplay of the text within history and with pre-

sence is responsible for engendering the infinite movement of signification of the book.⁵¹ The last two chapters of the second book of Rayuela allude metaphorically to these two counterpository tensions. Chapter fifty-eight terminates with the slogan of the mental asylum, "muera el perro" - an expression which evokes the tension of the freeplay of writing with its history, the metaphysics of presence, in so far as that it signifies a defiance of imposed systems and conventions. Chapter one hundred and thirty-one ends with Oliveira's resolution to become a monk of an order whose origin is the treatise of Cerefino Paz and whose purpose is to eternally combat spiritual ills on earth - a vocation which evokes the tension of freeplay with presence in so far as that it springs from reasoned madness and its duties suggest the arbitrariness or difference between matter and spirit co-existing on the same level.

The tension of the freeplay of the text with history is the irreducible difference between writing as a logocentrism comprehended within the history of metaphysics, and writing as a non-centered system where the central signified is never present outside of a chain of differences. Tension arises from the paradoxical fact that the second interpretation of writing is never able to entirely divorce itself from the first interpretation, as writing is irrevocably bound up with the history of metaphysics: Derrida explains that there is no language, no syntax, no lexicon which does not have its roots in this history.⁵² The disruption of writing is alien to the limitations imposed by the metaphysics of presence, yet its roots spring from a full presence. In Rayuela, the counterpository tension engendered from Oliveira's willful rejection of Traveler (symbolizing the incompatibility of the movement and sense of writing from its past, the history of metaphysics), and his paradoxical inability to escape from him (symbolizing the inescapable complicity of

writing with the metaphysics of presence) parodies the tension of freeplay with history in writing.⁵³

Derrida explains that the tension of freeplay with presence is the disruption of presence: presence being a signifying and substitutive reference inscribed in a system of differences and the movement of a chain. Freeplay is an interplay of absence and presence.⁵⁴ Presence implies the meaning of being in general, the originary truth in representation, a transcendental signified which is effaced while making visible the very idea of the sign.⁵⁵ Absence is the non-presence of a transcendental signified, full presence or referent, which allows the field of writing to function as a field of infinite freeplay.⁵⁶ Derrida, interpreting Edmond Jabès, explains that absence is that which gives letters permission to signify as signs, but it is also that which allows letters their own life independent of any referent - a life of movement of signification engendered from the turning of writing on itself. Absence, as the giver of life to the letter, is the breath of the letter:

L'absence est la permission donnée aux lettres de s'épeler et de signifier, mais c'est aussi, dans la torsion sur soi de langage, ce que disent les lettres: elles disent la liberté et la vancance accordée, ce qu'elles "forment" en l'enfermant dans leur filet.

Absence enfin comme souffle de la lettre, car la lettre vit....Signifiant l'absence et la séparation, la lettre vit comme aphorisme.⁵⁷

Michel Foucault, whom Derrida interprets in "Cogito et Histoire de la Folie" likens the absence of work, or what cannot be said, to madness: "Or la folie, c'est par essence ce qui ne se dit pas; c'est "l'absence de l'oeuvre" dit profondément Foucault."⁵⁸

The play of absence and presence in Rayuela is integrally linked to the play of reason and madness - presence being the point of perspective

for reason and the history of metaphysics, and absence being synonymous with madness. The freeplay of absence and presence, reason and madness in Rayuela is engendered from Oliveira's desire to reach a center or liberated space free from the distortion and incompleteness of binary reasoning. Oliveira's quest for authenticity evokes the philosophical objectives of Michel Foucault and Antonin Artaud. Foucault wishes to reach the point of Decision, or the point at which reason and madness became differentiated:

Il s'agit donc d'accéder au point où le dialogue a été rompu, s'est partagé en deux soliloques: à ce que Foucault appelle d'un mot très fort la Décision. La Décision lie et sépare du même coup raison et folie; elle doit s'entendre ici à la fois comme l'acte originaire d'un ordre, d'un fiat, d'un décret, et comme une déchirure, une césure, une séparation, une discession.⁵⁹

Antonin Artaud, whom Derrida elucidates in "La Parole Soufflée" attempts to realize through theatrical heiroglyphics a writing of the body itself, which would constitute a system of signs no longer controlled by the institution of voice. Artaud wishes a writing which would prevent his breath being spirited from his body in the act of referring to something outside of itself.⁶⁰ Artaud's project is an attempt to prevent absence, and thereby annihilate the double and the play of differences. Derrida describes Artaud's project as the very essence of madness.⁶¹ Having previously mentioned Foucault's premise that madness is absence, we may extend Derrida's argument and say that Artaud's project is the essence of absence, in so far as that it is the annihilation of absence. Artaud desires full-presence, or non-difference, which is madness.

Moreilli and Oliveira, like Foucault, wish to reach the point of Decision which preceded the split of reason and madness - the point of

Decision being analogous with Oliveira's concept of a center, and Moreilli's concept of an analogous consciousness capable of embracing both binary reasoning and the internal essence of things (non-reason) which escapes reason. Like Artaud, Moreilli and Oliveira wish to prevent difference, the double, or the play of absence and presence by creating a language that does not refer to anything outside of itself.

Derrida explains, however, that Artaud's project of deconstruction - in which he closes himself in presence and annuls difference - is caught up in the metaphysical structure he hopes to abolish: Artaud destroys metaphysics at the same time that he constructs and preserves it within the movement of deconstruction.⁶² Similarly, Foucault tells us that there are crises of reason in strange complicity with what the world calls crises of madness.⁶³ Madness is inseparable from reason, in the same manner that absence is integrally linked to presence. Like Artaud and Foucault, Moreilli and Oliveira fail to realize madness, and instead, are caught up in the cross tension of absence and presence, reason and non-reason.

Cortázar's philosophy of writing, as expressed metaphorically in Rayuela, founds the movement of signification of the text on the polaric tension between absence and presence, reason and madness; rather than a displacement of writing to either one pole or the other which would effect a loss of all signification through the total reduction of absence into presence, or reason into madness.

The play of absence and presence, reason and madness in Rayuela is a movement of inversion or reverse polarization which brings down the previously superior position of one of the terms of opposition. Oliveira's search for a center is ultimately a movement away from the center, rather

than toward it. After his separation from la Maga (symbolic of the separation of writing from a full presence), Oliveira attempts to rediscover la Maga (his previous center) by superimposing her image on Talita and Traveler. Oliveira's interactions with the multiple reflections of la Maga do not affect his reunion with her, but only serve to remove him farther from her, her real presence becoming lost in the play of reflected doubles. Oliveira's paradoxical movement toward a center which is really a movement away from a center is mirrored in his inability to re-integrate himself in his place of origin - Buenos Aires - after visiting Paris: "Se dio cuenta de que la vuelta era realmente la ida en más de un sentido."⁶⁴

Oliveira's movement away from presence (la Maga) and reason (the intellectual center of Paris, the Club de la Serpiente) is also the establishment of his overt complicity with absence (the absence of la Maga) and madness (the mental asylum and circus of Buenos Aires).

The inversion of reason and madness, presence and absence in Rayuela is not a simple displacement from the pole of presence and reason to the pole of absence and madness, however, as the play of absence and presence, reason and madness manifests itself on both sides of the book. The side of reason and Oliveira's identification with a full presence (Del Lado de Allá) shelters the essence of madness and absence in the form of la Maga, who functions as the presence to which Oliveira refers, but who is also the epitome of madness, absence or what cannot be said; being the one who lives intuitively and doesn't believe in names. The presence to which Oliveira (writing) refers is the essence of absence. Conversely, the side of madness and absence (Del Lado de Acá) - although manifestly the irrational world of the circus and the mental asylum - is governed by a natural logic which transcends the exterior, logical con-

ventions of Del Lado de Allá: reason is the essence of madness. The construction of the second reading of the book mirrors the cross-counterbalancing of reason and madness, absence and presence in so far as that a chapter describing Traveler and Buenos Aires (chapter 143) is intercalated into Del Lado de Allá, and a chapter dealing with la Maga and Paris (chapter 138) is inserted into Del Lado de Acá. Madness and absence are within reason and presence, and conversely, reason and presence are within madness and absence. The counterpository interior-exterior relationship of reason and madness, absence and presence in Rayuela recalls Foucault's observation that madness is confined to the interior of the exterior, and the exterior of the interior.⁶⁵

The crisis of the book and writing is mirrored in Moreilli's desire to reach a threshold or axial by turning inside out like a glove: "Se deducía una incitación a algo como darse vuelta al modo de un guante."⁶⁶ For Cortázar, Foucault or Derrida, however, the threshold or point of Decision which marks the separation between reason and madness is never realizable, as the two exist in each other. The closest one comes to realizing the point of Decision is through writing: Derrida explains that language, being the break with madness, adheres more closely to its essence. The more it is separated from madness, the closer it approaches it, until it is only separated from madness by the transparent sheet alluded to by Joyce, which is language and sense itself.⁶⁷

Oliveira's progression from a state of reason to a condition of madness metaphorizes the break of language with madness, which paradoxically becomes a movement toward madness. Oliveira, like writing, exists in a sustained state of tension between reason and madness. On the side of reason (Paris), Oliveira is caught between the pull of his formal education

in methods of reason, and his present desire to throw off the imposed conventions of logic and live intuitively. On the side of madness (Buenos Aires), the labyrinth which Oliveira constructs while one degree away from madness embodies his own state of tension and that of language; being an irrational structure born of a rational method, produced by a rationally mad person who has reached a state of irrationality through reason. The movement of Oliveira and writing toward the point of Decision is infinite and the axial is unreachable because reason and madness exist back to back, convoluting on each other.

Oliveira's movement from reason to madness - which is also the displacement of his point of reference from a present presence to an absence or lost presence - is marked by his increasing tendency to enact or render into a physical symbol his desire to reach a metaphysical center; a project that recalls Artaud's attempt to create a language that would not decline into a sign through the medium of theatrical heiroglyphics. Oliveira directs Talita to the "center" by having her straddle a bridge of boards suspended across an alley between two hotel windows. Oliveira imagines the hole at the top of the circus tent to be an opening onto the liberated space of a metaphysical center, and contemplates climbing up the central pole to reach it. He attempts to reach the center by playing hopscotch in the tiled hallways of the mental asylum. Oliveira's attempts to incarnate the metaphysical center, however, only serve to render ludicrous his search for authenticity, effecting a loss of signification rather than a gain. Like Artaud, Oliveira is never capable of annihilating absence and achieving full presence through theatrical heiroglyphics, as the restoration of breath to the body is the annihilation of breath from the body; the absence of presence being the breath of the letter or

that which allows it to signify.

In an interview with Diacritics, Derrida explains that the gramme is neither a signifier nor a signified, neither a sign nor a thing, neither a position nor a negation; escaping inclusion in the philosophical opposition at the same time that it inhabits it, without ever constituting a third term or solution.⁶⁸ The gramme, the supplement, writing exists as tension. In Rayuela, Cortázar illustrates that writing, personified by Oliveira, resides in the counterpository tension of presence and absence, reason and madness, the physical and the metaphysical. After his irrevocable separation from la Maga and his consequent acceptance of his interminable search for authenticity without la Maga present, Oliveira experiences a sort of electricity - all sorts of phosphorescences.⁶⁹ The phenomena seen by Oliveira can be explained by means of Nietzsche's and Derrida's definition of a force as the difference between forces.⁷⁰ Oliveira's energy field parodies the force field of significations of writing which exists as the difference between the forces of absence and presence, reason and madness.

Derrida explains that there are two possible interpretations of structure, sign and freeplay: the first turning toward a truth or origin which is free from freeplay, and the second - being no longer turned toward the origin - affirming freeplay:

Tournée vers la présence, perdue ou impossible, de l'origine absente, cette thématique structuraliste de l'immediate rompie est donc la face triste, négative, nostalgique, coupable, rousseauiste, de la pensée du jeu dont l'affirmation nietzscheenne, l'affirmation joyeuse du jeu du monde et de l'innocence du devenir, l'affirmation d'un monde de signes sans faute, sans vérité, sans origine, offert à une interprétation active, serait l'autre face.⁷¹

Rayuela as a parable of writing allegorizes both of the above interpre-

tations. The first book of Rayuela parodies the Rousseauist definition of freeplay, alluding constantly to the possibility of a meeting with a lost presence, as indicated by the conditional tense of the first sentence: "¿Encontraría a la Maga?"⁷² The second book of Rayuela commences with the proposition that truth is an invention, engendered and inscribed in writing rather than preceeding it: "Todo es escritura, es decir fábula. ¿Pero de qué nos sirve la verdad que tranquiliza al propietario honesto? Nuestra verdad posible tiene que ser invención, es decir escritura..."⁷³ The second book, therefore, allegorizes the Nietzschean affirmation of freeplay without truth present.

Derrida emphasizes that it is not a question of choosing one interpretation of sign or freeplay over the other, but of conceiving of the common ground and the irreducible difference between the two interpretations:

Je ne crois pas pour ma part, bien que ces deux interprétations doivent accuser leur différence et aiguïser leur irréductibilité, qu'il y ait aujourd'hui à choisir....parce qu'il faut essayer d'abord de penser le sol commun, et la différence de cette différence irréductible.⁷⁴

Cortázar's interpretation of writing, like Derrida's, comprehends two different, irreconcilable worlds entering into discourse. Unlike Derrida, however, Cortázar does not attempt to mark the common ground between the two worlds, but simply likens their irreconciliability to a joke:

Dos mundos distantes, ajenos, casi siempre inconciliables, entran en nuestras palabras, y como de común acuerdo, nace la burla.⁷⁵

Cortázar envisions the two worlds interacting with each other in a manner comparable to the shadow of a dove (evoking the joyous, Nietzschean

affirmation of freeplay without truth present) rubbing up against dog's excrement (signifying writing as a debasement or fall from an absolute truth.)

-Un ajedrez infinito, tan fácil postularlo. Pero el frío entra por una suela rota, en la ventana de ese hotel una cara como de payaso hace muecas detrás del vidrio. La sombra de una paloma roza un excremento de perro.⁷⁶

FOOTNOTES

¹Julio Cortázar, Rayuela, Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 1973, p. 620.

²Ibid., p. 540.

³Jacques Derrida, "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu dans le Discours des Sciences Humaines", L'Écriture et la Différence, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1967, p. 423.

⁴Ibid., C. F. p. 409.

⁵Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 15.

⁶Ibid., p. 438.

⁷Derrida, "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu", p. 409.

⁸Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 40.

⁹Ibid., p. 404.

¹⁰Derrida, "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu", p. 410.

¹¹Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 41.

¹²Derrida, "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu", C.F. p. 410.

¹³Ibid., C.F. p. 411.

¹⁴Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 284.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 377.

¹⁶Derrida, "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu", C.F. pp. 412-413.

¹⁷Ibid., C.F. pp. 412-413.

¹⁸Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 558.

¹⁹Derrida, "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu", C. F. pp. 412-413.

²⁰Ibid., p. 420.

²¹Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 540.

²²Ibid., p. 32.

²³Derrida, "La Structure le Signe et le Jeu", p. 423.

²⁴Ibid., C.F. p. 423.

²⁵Ibid., C.F. p. 425.

²⁶Cortázar, Rayuela, pp. 291-292.

²⁷Ibid., p. 31.

²⁸Ibid., p. 31.

²⁹Ibid., p. 425.

³⁰Ibid., p. 534.

³¹Jacques Derrida, "Ellipse", L'Ecriture et la Différence, p. 435.

³²Robert Brody, Julio Cortázar: Rayuela (Critical Guide to Spanish Texts), Grant and Cutler Limited, in ass'n with Tamesis Books Ltd., London, 1976, C. F. pp. 53-54.

³³Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 439.

³⁴Ibid., p. 528.

³⁵Ibid., p. 118.

³⁶Ibid., p. 358.

³⁷Derrida, "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu", C. F. p. 425.

³⁸Ibid., C. F. p. 426.

³⁹Interview with Jacques Derrida, "Positions", Diacritics, 2, no. 4, (Winter 1972), pp. 35-36.

⁴⁰Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 253.

⁴¹Derrida, "La fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture" De la Grammatologie, p. 18.

⁴²Derrida, "Ellipse", p. 435.

⁴³Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 45.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 540.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 310.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 367.

⁴⁷Ibid., C.F. p. 371.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 407.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 408.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 440

⁵¹Derrida, "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu", C. F. p. 426.

⁵²Ibid., p. 412

⁵³I have already mentioned the paradoxical rejection-complicity relationship of writing with the history of metaphysics in chapter one pp. 40-41. of this thesis. Please check the above reference if you wish a more complete development of the above argument.

⁵⁴Derrida, "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu", p. 426.

⁵⁵These definitions of presence are derived from Jacques Derrida's De la Grammatologie and L'Ecriture et la Différence.

⁵⁶This definition of absence is derived from Jacques Derrida's "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu dans le Discours des Sciences Humaines".

⁵⁷Jacques Derrida, "Edmond Jabès et la Question du Livre", L'Ecriture et la Différence, p. 108.

⁵⁸Jacques Derrida, "Cogito et Histoire de la Folie", L'Ecriture et la Différence, p. 68.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 62

⁶⁰Jacques Derrida, "La Parole Soufflée", L'Ecriture et la Différence, C.F. p. 261.

⁶¹Ibid., C.F. p. 290.

⁶²Ibid., p. 291.

⁶³Derrida, "Cogito et Histoire de la Folie", p. 97.

⁶⁴Cortázar, Rayuela, p.268.

⁶⁵Derrida, "Cogito et Histoire de la Folie", C. F. p. 80.

⁶⁶Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 558.

⁶⁷Derrida, "Cogito et Histoire de la Folie", C.F. p. 85.

⁶⁸J.L. Houbedine and Guy Scarpetta, "Positions: Interview with Derrida," Diacritics, 2, No. 4. (Winter 1972), p.36.

⁶⁹Cortázar, Rayuela, C.F. p.419.

⁷⁰Jacques Derrida, "La Différance", Marges de la Philosophie, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1972, p.18.

⁷¹Derrida, "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu", p. 427.

⁷²Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 15.

⁷³Ibid., p. 439.

⁷⁴Derrida, "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu", pp. 427-428.

⁷⁵Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 596.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 540.

CHAPTER III

CORTAZAR, DERRIDA AND THE EXIT FROM THE TEXT

As a parable of writing, Rayuela questions the meaning of meaning, the engendering of meaning, or the conditions which render possible the exit of sense from the text.

Rayuela is based upon Oliveira-Moreilli-Cortázar's desire to find a way out of the confines of binary reasoning or language, into a clearing or analagous consciousness capable of embracing the internal essence of things which elude language. We saw in chapters one and two that Oliveira's journey toward authenticity or self-discovery parodies the conditions which permit the infinite movement of signification of the text within the closure of a finite ensemble. Oliveira appears to remain suspended in a labyrinth of his own creation, or a never-ending search for authenticity which paraodies the inescapable labyrinth of significations engendered by the movement of the book, described by Derrida in "Ellipse":

"Le livre est le labyrinthe. Tu crois en sortir, tu t'y enfonces. Tu n'a aucune chance de te sauver. Il te faut détruire l'ouvrage. Tu ne peux t'y résoudre. Je note la lente, mais sûre montée de ton angoisse. Mur après mur. Au bout qui t'attend? - Personne...Ton nom s'est replié sur soi-même..."¹

Although escape from the labyrinth of the book appears to be impossible, Cortázar and Derrida both designate an opening or exit from the text.

Chapter sixty-six of Rayuela describes the conclusion of Moreilli's unfinished book, consisting of a single sentence repeated the length of the page: "En el fondo sabía que no se puede ir más allá porque no lo hay."² Cortázar explains that the repeated sentence appears to signify

a wall of words behind which there is nothing. An attentive observer, however, would be capable of noticing that one word is missing, and through this hole, the light from beyond passes:

Proyecta uno de los muchos finales de su libro inconcluso, y deja una maqueta. La página contiene una sola frase: "en el fondo sabía que no se puede ir más allá porque no lo hay." La frase se repite a lo largo de toda la página, dando la impresión de un muro, de un impedimento. No hay puntos ni comas ni márgenes. De hecho un muro de palabras ilustrando el sentido de la frase, el choque contra una barrera detrás de lo cual no hay nada. Pero hacia abajo, y a la derecha, en una de las frases falta la palabra lo. Un ojo sensible descubre el hueco entre los ladrillos, la luz que pasa.³

In this manner, Cortázar suggests that writing is a seemingly closed system which has an opening within itself onto another reality possibly beyond itself. Similarly, Derrida - elucidating Edmond Jabès - comments that the exit from the book has its threshold in the book: "On dit la sortie hors du livre, on dit l'autre et le seuil dans le livre."⁴ Derrida explains that writing is both an opening and a closing: a non-symmetrical division designating on the one hand the closure of the book, and on the other hand, the opening of the text:

Ici ou là, nous avons discerné l'écriture: un partage sans symétrie dessinait d'un côté la clôture du livre, de l'autre l'ouverture du texte. D'un côté l'encyclopédie théologique et sur son modèle, le livre de l'homme. De l'autre un tissu de traces marquant la disparition d'un Dieu excédé ou d'un homme effacé. La question de l'écriture ne pouvait s'ouvrir qu'à livre fermé.⁵

The one book of Rayuela containing two books within itself parodies writing as both an opening and a closing: the first book - terminating in Oliveira's death - evokes the closure of the book; whereas the second book - ending with Oliveira's pledge to dedicate himself to a new career founded on writing - represents the opening of the text. For both

Cortázar and Derrida, the closure is an opening: as explained in chapters one and two of this thesis, the closing of the book as the death of speech or the rupture with a central signified effects the opening of the freeplay of the text.⁶

Derrida explains that the exit from the book is through difference, which occurs as a result of repetition. The return to the book through redoubling pronounces nonclosure, as repetition effects a loss of origin which allows the book to become a movement of infinite reflection on itself. The repetition of the book doubles the closure of the book, and between the imperceptible difference between the two closures, meaning emerges from the text:

Dès lors que le cercle tourne, que le volume s'enroule sur lui-même, que le livre se répète, son identité à soi accueille une imperceptible différence qui nous permet de sortir efficacement, rigoureusement, c'est-à-dire discrètement de la clôture. En redoublant la clôture du livre, on la dédouble. On lui échappe alors furtivement entre deux passages par le même livre, par la même ligne, selon la même boucle....Le retour au livre est l'abandon du livre, il s'est glissé entre Dieu et Dieu, le Livre et le Livre, dans l'espace neutre de la succession, dans le suspens de l'intervalle. Le retour alors ne reprend pas possession. Il ne se réapproprie pas l'origine. Celle-ci n'est plus en elle-même....

Ainsi entendu, le retour au livre est d'essence elliptique. Quelquechose d'invisible manque dans la grammaire de cette répétition....Et pourtant tout le sens est altéré par ce manque.⁷

Cortázar illustrates the above premise metaphorically through the dual construction of the book. As explained in chapter two of this thesis, *Del Lado de Acá* may be regarded as a redoubling or repetition of *Del Lado de Allá*, in so far as that the same themes - the reverse polarity of reason and madness, the outside and the inside, the same pattern of character relationships (groups of two which evolve to a unity of three), and some of the same characters (la Maga and Oliveira) or others who

resemble psychologically another character on the opposite side of the book - occur on both sides of the book. The redoubling of the book also effects the redoubling of the closure of the book: Oliveira is separated from his original experience of la Maga at the end of *Del Lado de Allá*, and this separation repeats itself with la Maga's spatial image at the end of *Del Lado de Acá*. After chapter fifty-six, la Maga is no longer present in the book.

The difference between Oliveira's original experience of la Maga in Paris, and his secondary experience of her through her surrogate Talita in Buenos Aires is that which allows Oliveira to escape from the enclosure of her influence. Through repetition, the originary la Maga is lost in the play of reflected doubles, and Oliveira is able to embark on his open movement of self-reflection through the gap created by la Maga's absence.

Derrida reminds us that the opening of the book as reflection is an opening without exit - the book infinitely reflecting on itself. The labyrinth of the book encloses within itself a way out of itself, which opens onto itself:

Comme il devait l'être, en restant ouvert, en disant la non-clôture, à la fois infiniment ouvert et se réfléchissant infiniment sur lui-même...livre sans cesse entamé et repris depuis un lieu qui n'est ni dans le livre ni hors du livre, se disant comme l'ouverture même qui est reflet sans issue, renvoi, retour et détour du labyrinthe. Celui-ci est un chemin qui enferme en soi les sorties hors de soi, qui comprend ses propres issues, qui ouvre lui-même ses portes, c'est-à-dire, les ouvrant sur lui-même, se clôt de penser sa propre ouverture.⁸

Similarly, Oliveira's way out of the physical labyrinth of string in the mental asylum is his way into the spatial labyrinth of writing, as the book once again folds over on itself in the *Capítulos prescindibles*. In the Table of Instructions that preceeds *Rayuela*, Cortázar alludes to

the book as infinite reflection on itself when he tells the reader that his book consists of many books: "A su manera este libro es muchos libros..."

Oliveira's desperate plunge out of the window into darkness, followed by his serene return to life parodies the writing of the hole, the chance of the book - which is meaning - allegorized by Edmond Jabès in Le retour au livre and interpreted by Derrida in "Ellipse":

"Ce n'était qu'un trou
dans le mur
si étroit que tu n'a jamais
pu t'y introduire
pour fuir.
Méfiez-vous des demeures. Elles ne sont pas
toujours hospitalières."

Etrange sérénité d'un tel retour. Désespérée par la répétition, et joyeuse pourtant d'affirmer l'abîme, d'habiter le labyrinthe en poète, d'écrire le trou, "la chance du livre" dans lequel on ne peut que s'enfoncer, qu'on doit garder en le détruisant. Affirmation dansante et cruelle d'une économie désespérée.⁹

For both Cortázar and Derrida, the chance of the book as the writing of the hole (which is the conception of meaning) occurs as the descent of the other in being. In "Force et Signification", Derrida postulates that "L'écriture est le moment de cette Vallée originaire de l'autre dans l'être. Moment de la profondeur aussi comme déchéance."¹⁰ The meetings between la Maga and Oliveira in Rayuela parody the descent of the other in being. As explained in chapter one, la Maga personifies being as presence. In Del Lado de Acá, Oliveira becomes the "other" in so far that he manifests the characteristics of madness, which is the inner reality of discourse and reason.¹¹ When Oliveira makes love with la Maga, and when he jumps out of the window of the mental asylum in order to meet with her spatial image on the hopscotch chart below, his actions parody

ludicrously the descent of the other in being. The heightened state of awareness and the electrical phosphorescences Oliveira experiences after his fall symbolize meaning as the product of the friction of the other in being.

Derrida explains that meaning becomes what it is by differing from itself: "Le sens doit attendre d'être dit ou écrit pour s'habiter lui-même et devenir ce qu'à différer de soi il est: le sens."¹² In his heightened state of consciousness after his fall, Oliveira personifies the sense of writing as differing from itself in so far as that he now manifests a human warmth totally different from his previously cold, rational, emotional state.

Derrida proposes that meaning or the secondary experience of the text presents itself as such at the moment that the other is there; the other who maintains both the vigil and the back and forth motion, the irreducible work between reading and writing:

...l'expérience de secondarité ne tient-elle pas à ce redoublement étrange par lequel le sens constitué - écrit - se donne comme lu, préalablement ou simultanément, où l'autre est là qui veille et rend irréductible l'aller et retour, le travail entre l'écriture et la lecture?¹³

Like the "other" alluded to by Derrida, Oliveira has maintained both the vigil (the never-ending quest for authenticity) and the back and forth motion between his past history and pure surface (writing).¹⁴ Oliveira's realization of genuine human emotions in Del Lado de Acá (especially after his fall out of the window) parodies the other as there, or the presentation of meaning, in so far as that his irrational emotional interior surfaces, and counterbalances his former over-reliance on reason; a situation which evokes the movement of signification of writing away

from the external conventions of logos towards an inner reality (the other) which preceeded logos; meaning occurring at the moment that these two forces interact.

Derrida postulates that sense realizes itself in the interval between absence and presence, history and pure surface, self-knowledge and self-discovery: "Le sens n'est ni avant ni après l'acte."¹⁵ In "Ontological Fabulation", Sara Castro-Klarens suggests that the objective of Cortázar's writing is "to 'see' or live the text as the interval in which meaning becomes manifest."¹⁶ She notes that in Ultimo Round, Cortázar acknowledges Mallarmé's work on the theory that meaning resides in the articulations of what is between the signs, in the gaps and intervals created by them.¹⁷ In Rayuela, the sustained suspension of Oliveira between absence and presence, history and pure surface, self-knowledge and self-discovery demonstrates metaphorically the position of sense in writing.¹⁸

In Rayuela, Cortázar is concerned not only with the engendering of meaning or the exit of sense from the text itself, but also with how the reader participates in the meaning of the text, and consequently, how the reader exits from the text. Cortázar attempts to involve the reader actively in the book and make him a writer-accomplice, and consequently, a protagonist-accomplice:

Posibilidad tercera: la de hacer del lector un cómplice, un camarada de camino. Simultaneizarlo, puesto que la lectura abolirá el tiempo del lector y lo trasladará al del autor. Así, el lector podría llegar a ser copartícipe y copadiciente de la experiencia por la que pasa el novelista, en el mismo momento y en la misma forma....da (al lector) como una fachada, con puertas y ventanas detrás de las cuales se está operando un misterio que el lector cómplice deberá buscar (de ahí la complicidad) y quizá no encontrará (de ahí el copadicimiento). Lo que el autor de esa novela haya

logrado para sí mismo, se repetirá (agigantándose, quizá, y eso sería maravilloso) en el lector cómplice.¹⁹

Derrida suggests that because its forethought (or the input of the reader) cannot be predicted, the act of reading makes a hole in the act of writing, and it is through this hole that the reader escapes: "Parce qu'on ne peut prévenir sa prévenance, l'acte de lecture troue l'acte de parole ou d'écriture. Par ce trou, je m'échappe à moi-même."²⁰ Although Cortázar's attempt to induce the reader into a state of complicity and co-suffering with the writer appears to advocate entrapping the reader in the text rather than allowing him to escape through his own experience, a more careful examination of Cortázar's theories on writing reveals that Cortázar's reader escapes from the text by a route very similar to that suggested by Derrida above. Moreilli-Cortázar explains that he attempts to induce the reader into the writer's state in order that the reader can experience what the writer succeeded in for himself. Moreilli suggests that writing sketches a mandala (or labyrinth) at the same time that it allows the writer to escape from it:

Así por la escritura bajo al volcán, me acerco
a las Madres, me conecto con el Centro - sea lo
que sea. Escribir es dibujar mi mandala y a la vez
recorrerlo.²¹

In like manner, Cortázar explains in "Del cuento breve y sus alrededores" that the author exorcises himself from his obsession - which is the work - through the act of writing:

....en cualquier cuento breve memorable se percibe esa polarización, como si el autor hubiera querido desprenderse lo antes posible y la manera más absoluta de su criatura exorcisándola en la única forma que le era dado hacerlo: escribiéndolo....de su capacidad de transvasar la obsesión dependía el regreso a condiciones más tolerables.²²

Assuming that Cortázar does succeed in inducing the reader to become his accomplice in Rayuela, then Cortázar's exorcism from the book is also the reader's exit from the book.

On the level of meaning itself, Cortázar-Moreilli proposes opening up the closed order of the novel through irony, ceaseless self-criticism, incongruency, and imagination in the service of no-one:

Como todas las criaturas de elección del Occidente,
la novela se contenta con un orden cerrado.
Resueltamente en contra, buscar también aquí la
apertura y para eso cortar de raíz toda construcción
sistemática de caracteres y situaciones. Método:
la ironía, la autocrítica incesante, la incongruencia,
la imaginación al servicio de nadie.²³

For the reader and writer, Cortázar perceives laughter or the joke as a means of tunneling out of, or escaping from the labyrinth of the book:

"...la risa ella sola ha cavado más túneles útiles que todas las lágrimas de la tierra."²⁴ Harss and Dohmann suggest that "laughter, in all its

dimensions is the key to Rayuela. Its aim is to catch the reader off guard, penetrate his defenses, and set off uncontrollable reflexes....

Part of the effect (Cortázar) achieves in his best scenes is the result of the enormous distance that exists between the narrative surface, and the underlying reality it encloses and encompasses. At moments, a meeting occurs: parallel lines intersect. There is a burst of light."²⁵ We

already noted in chapter two that Cortázar compares the irreconciliability of the two worlds which enter discourse - that of joyous freeplay and that of a nostalgic turning toward a lost center - to a joke: "Dos mundos distantes, ajenos, casi siempre inconciliables, entran en nuestras palabras, y como de común acuerdo, nace la burla."²⁶ In Rayuela, laughter is the eruption of the incompatibility of two levels of consciousness. In an interview

recorded by Harss and Dohmann, Cortázar explains that "There's a terrible

paradox in being a writer, a man of words, and fighting against words. It's a kind of suicide."²⁷ Cortázar escapes from the insurmountable task he sets himself by laughing at himself. Cortázar acknowledges the joke which pervades Rayuela when he points out the ridiculousness of Moreilli's attempts to realize an authentic language that would do away with the logical articulations of discourse (the latter being self-criticism on the part of Cortázar, as Moreilli is Cortázar): "Para algunos de sus lectores (y para él mismo) resultaba irrisoria la intención de escribir una especie de novela prescindiendo de las articulaciones lógicas del discurso."²⁸ Derrida explains that even though the highest objective of literary criticism is to embrace the force and movement which displaces the lines of the text, criticism is not able to exceed itself to this point, as comprehending the structure of a force is to lose meaning by finding it:

Comprendre la structure d'un devenir, la forme d'une force, c'est perdre le sens en le gagnant. Le sens du devenir et de la force, dans leur pure et propre qualité, c'est le repos du commencement et de la fin, la paix d'un spectacle, horizon ou visage. En ce repos et en cette paix, la qualité du devenir et de la force est offusquée par le sens même.²⁹

By attempting a literature that will comprehend both the binary reasoning of language and the essence of things that eludes it, Cortázar-Moreilli-Oliveira attempts to express the force of the work within the work itself. In order to release himself from this insuperable, paradoxical problem, Cortázar bursts out laughing. In turn, the reader escapes from the book by laughing at the writer - and also at himself for taking the writer seriously - and the critic laughs at the futility of his own attempt to find an exit from the problem for both the writer and the reader. In an interview, Cortázar comments:

...I want to stress that at bottom I don't fight against words as a whole or in essence. I fight against a certain usage, a language that I think has been falsified, debased, made to serve ignoble ends. It's a bit like the accusation - a mistaken accusation, it turned out to be finally - that was brought up against the sophists in their day. Of course, I have to fight by means of words themselves. That's why Rayuela, from a stylistic point of view, is very badly written. There's even a part (chapter 75) where the language starts to become very elegant. Oliveira remembers his past life in Buenos Aires and does so in a polished, highly chiseled language. It's an episode that's written fussing over every word, until, after about half a page, suddenly Oliveira breaks out laughing. He's really been watching himself all the time in the mirror. So then he takes his shaving cream and starts to draw lines and shapes on the mirror, making fun of himself. I think this scene fairly well sums up what the book is trying to do.³⁰

Just as Oliveira bursts out laughing at the pretentious, "written" style he uses to describe his past life, Cortázar laughs at his own contrived attempts to produce an authentic expression: many of the devices Cortázar-Oliveira utilizes in Rayuela to evoke the essence which eludes language - word games, etymologies, invented words, the combination of opposites, the superimposition of characters and events on one another, stream of consciousness passages, an invitation to the reader to jump from chapter to chapter in order to experience second-hand the creative leap of the author from vision to words - reveal themselves to be as deliberate, pondered (and hence counterfeit) as the traditional novelistic techniques which Cortázar purports to disdain as falsified and debased.

The exorcism of the writer and the reader from the book occurs through language itself. Harss and Dohmann suggest that "language has a specific function in Rayuela: to talk the problem out until it has been exhausted, or annulled - or exorcised."³¹ Every hypothesis of Oliveira-Moreilli-Cortázar concerning an authentic language is tested, and then

discarded as a failure: as previously explained in chapter two, Oliveira's attempts to reach a center effect his irrevocable separation from a center; Moreilli's attempts to negate the falsity of external logic by reducing matter into spirit constitute the total loss of meaning and signification, rather than its opening.

Like Derrida, Oliveira-Cortázar concludes that the writer is unable to describe the force of the work, or the interval in which meaning resides, because there are no words for a material between word and pure vision:

y en ese instante sé lo que soy porque estoy exactamente sabiendo lo que no soy (eso que ignoraré luego astutamente). Pero no hay palabras para una materia entre palabra y visión pura, como un bloque de evidencia. Imposible objectivar, precisar esa defectividad que aprendí en el instante y que era clara ausencia o claro error o clara insuficiencia...³²

In "Force et Signification", Derrida explains that only pure absence can inspire, and it is for this reason that one must turn oneself toward the invisible interior of poetic freedom that is absence, if one is to grasp the operation of creative imagination at its closest possible proximity. Upon this consciousness of nothing, all consciousness of something enriches itself, takes on meaning and shape by differing from it.³³ Meaning as pure absence becomes tangible only by differing from itself. In Rayuela, Oliveira personifies the writer, the reader and the text itself who turn themselves toward absence in order to experience meaning. Moreilli-Cortázar explains that sometimes the missing lines are the most important ones, as the reader must complete the figure with his own imagination:

El libro debía ser como esos dibujos que proponen los psicólogos de la Gestalt, y así ciertas líneas inducirían al observador a trazar imaginativamente las que cerraban la figura. Pero a veces las líneas ausentes eran las más importantes, las únicas que

realmente contaban.³⁴

Although Cortázar does not explain why the missing lines are the most important ones, we may complete his argument with some of Derrida's postulates, and suggest that it is the reader's completion of the missing lines - his complicity with absence - that precipitates meaning as absence differing from itself, at the same time that the reader's input pierces the act of writing itself, and allows him to exit from the text through the opening of his own creation.

In this chapter we summarized the conditions which permit the exit of sense from the text, and then analyzed Rayuela as an allegorical expression of these conditions. We also examined the possibility of an exit for the writer and reader from the labyrinth of signification of the text.

The text, for both Cortázar and Derrida, comprehends a closing which is also an opening of infinite reflection on itself: the repetition of writing effects the closing of the book as the death of speech or the loss of an origin, while it simultaneously allows the text - in the absence of a center - to open and reflect infinitely on itself. The exit of sense or meaning from the apparently closed labyrinth of signification of the text occurs through the interval of difference, created in the moment of repetition or redoubling when the book folds over on itself in the act of writing and reading.

The exorcism of the writer and the reader from Rayuela occurs through the gap created by the difference between the writer's goals and expectations, and the ultimate reality of his achievement. This gap parodies the interval which separates the two irreconcilable worlds which enter discourse: the joyous affirmation of freeplay with no truth present

versus the hopeless, nostalgic turning towards a lost presence to which writing previously referred. The reader and the writer of Rayuela are expelled from the text through their recognition of the joke inherent in Cortázar's stated objectives in writing the novel - laughter being the eruption of the excessive counterpository tension engendered from Cortázar-Moreilli-Oliveira's attempt to force language to exceed its own boundaries, and the innate nature of language to pull back toward the confines of logos and the history of metaphysics, which must be recognized in order for language to be meaningful.

Derrida explains that the reader exits from the text through his complicity with the text: the individual input of the reader perforates the act of writing, and through this perforation, the reader escapes. Cortázar attempted to construct Rayuela in such a manner that the reader was obligated to become a writer-accomplice. The doors opening onto the text which Cortázar attempted to unlock for the reader by forcing him to project himself into the text are the same doors which allow him to escape from the book and into himself.

FOOTNOTES

¹Jacques Derrida, "Ellipse", L'Ecriture et la Différence, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1967, p.434. This quotation was originally from Le Livre des Questions by Edmond Jabès.

²Julio Cortázar, Rayuela, Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 1963, p. 425.

³Ibid., p. 425.

⁴Jacques Derrida, "Edmond Jabès et la Question du Livre", L'Ecriture et la Différence, p. 113.

⁵Derrida, "Ellipse", p. 429.

⁶Derrida explains the postulate set forth in this sentence most succinctly in "La fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture" (De la Grammatologie) and in "La Structure, le Signe et le Jeu dans le Discours des Sciences Humaines" (L'Ecriture et la Différence)

⁷Derrida, "Ellipse", pp. 430-431.

⁸Ibid., pp. 433-434.

⁹Ibid., p. 434.

¹⁰Derrida, "Force et Signification", L'Ecriture et la Différence, p. 49.

¹¹In his book, Julio Cortázar:Rayuela, Robert Brody suggests that Oliveira becomes the other in the second reading of the novel, in so far as that he experiences a profoundly human reality, or a full range of human situations and emotions, which Cortázar perceives as part of the second inner human reality. See Robert Brody, Julio Cortázar:Rayuela, (Critical Guides to Spanish Texts) , Grant and Cutler Ltd. London, 1976, p. 24.

¹²Derrida, "Force et Signification", p. 22.

¹³Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁴See chapter one, p. 39 of this thesis for a more complete development of the theme of Oliveira's (and writing's) vascillation between the past and the present.

¹⁵Derrida, "Force et Signification", p. 22.

¹⁶Sara Castro-Klaren, "Ontological Fabulation". The Final Island, ed. Jaime Alazraki and Ivar Ivask, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1979, p.149.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 142.

¹⁸For a more complete development of the theme of Oliveira's sustained state of suspension between absence and presence, history and freeplay, see chapter two of this thesis, especially p. 78.

¹⁹Cortázar, Rayuela, pp. 453-454.

²⁰Derrida, "La Parole Soufflée", p. 265.

²¹Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 458.

²²Julio Cortázar, "Del cuento breve y sus alrededores", La Casilla de los Moreilli, Tusquets Editor, Barcelona, 1973, pp.108-109.

²³Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 452. This topic was explored in chapter one of this thesis.

²⁴Ibid., p. 434.

²⁵Luis Harss and Barbara Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, Harper and Row, Publishers, New York, Evanston and London, 1966, p.232.

²⁶Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 596.

²⁷Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 234.

²⁸Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 490.

²⁹Derrida, "Force et Signification", p. 44.

³⁰Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 234.

³¹Ibid., p. 233.

³²Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 462.

³³Derrida, "Force et Signification", C.F. p. 17.

³⁴Cortázar, Rayuela, p. 533.

CONCLUSION

In "Edmond Jabès et la Question du Livre", Jacques Derrida suggests that writing simultaneously sketches and recognizes an invisible labyrinth, a city in the sand:

Sans le savoir, l'écriture dessine à la fois
et reconnaît dans le désert, un labyrinthe
invisible, une ville dans le sable."¹

In this thesis, I examined how Cortázar's Rayuela, like writing itself, engenders a labyrinth of significations as it simultaneously explains metaphorically or recognizes the forces which give rise to it. Although Cortázar is not a philosopher, I attempted to prove that Rayuela is an allegorical expression of a philosophy of writing which parallels that of Jacques Derrida.

The labyrinth of strings and washbasins which Oliveira constructs in the final chapter of the first reading of the book parodies the labyrinth of significations which the book or writing has sketched as the novel unfolded itself, and also provides a symbolic synopsis of the main problems about writing which Cortázar-Oliveira-Moreilli attempt to resolve in Rayuela. Oliveira finds it "bastante divertido" that the washbasins and strings should come together at the end of his reasoning, and not at the beginning. He also asks himself which came first: the waterbasins or the strings:

....todo acababa por encontrarse, era bastante divertido que la palangana con agua y los piolines se encontraron al final del razonamiento y no al principio, pero aquí Horacio se permitía conjeturar que el orden de los razonamientos no tenía a) que seguir el tiempo físico, el antes y el después, y b) que a lo mejor el razonamiento se había cumplido inconscientemente para llevarlo de la noción de

piolín a la de la palangana acuosa)....De todas maneras, ¿qué venía primero, el piolín o la palangana? Como ejecución, la palangana, pero el piolín había sido decidido antes. No valía la pena seguir preocupándose cuando estaba en juego la vida...²

J.E. Cirlot, in A Dictionary of Symbols, defines water as the "preserver of life....the beginning and end of all things on earth....the "fons et origo" which preceeds all form and all creation."³ In fact, water is the origin. A waterbasin is a receptacle of water; or, if we substitute for water its symbolic significance, then the waterbasin is the carrier of the origin. Speech, as defined by Plato in the Phaedrus, is also the carrier of the origin, as it is the living memory which has a direct connection with the mind or the feelings of the soul.⁴ Therefore, the waterbasins which border Oliveira's string labyrinth represent speech. Threads, according to Cirlot's definition, denote "the essential connection between any of the different planes - the spiritual, the biological, the social, etc."⁵ Like the symbolic significance of threads, writing is the connection between two planes. In chapters one and two of this thesis, I explained that Derrida and Cortázar posit writing in the interval between the physical and the metaphysical. We may deduce, therefore, that the strings or threads Oliveira uses to construct his labyrinth symbolize writing. When Oliveira asks himself whether the strings or the waterbasins came first, he is questioning metaphorically the historical relationship of speech to writing; a question also posed by Saussure in Cours de Linguistique Générale, and utilized by Jacques Derrida to explain the origin of the concept of *différance*. Saussure concludes that language is necessary in order for speech to be intelligible, but speech is necessary for language to be established:

La langue est nécessaire pour que la parole soit intelligible, et produise tous ses effets; mais celle-ci est nécessaire pour que la langue s'établisse; historiquement, le fait de parole précède toujours.⁶

In like manner, Oliveira concludes that from the point of view of execution, the waterbasins (speech) came first, but the strings (writing) had been decided previously. After commencing construction of the labyrinth, however, Oliveira no longer preoccupies himself with the temporal distinction between the waterbasins and the strings, but regards the game, in which his life is at stake, as the priority which transcends all previous preoccupations. In opting for a position which situates the unresolvable question of the historical reciprocity of speech and writing in opposition to the game or freeplay of the text which has arisen from that unresolved confrontation of speech and writing, Oliveira duplicates the point of perspective of many contemporary philosophies of writing - one of them being that of Jacques Derrida - which postulate that the movement of signification of writing arises from the freeplay of the text itself, rather than from its relationship to a speech outside itself.

Oliveira expresses surprise that the strings (writing) and the waterbasins (speech) came together at the end of his reasoning, and not at the beginning; an assertion which constitutes a metaphorical conclusion for one of the main problems explored by Cortázar in Rayuela - that of the necessity of the book "changing its sign" if it is to be compatible with the disruptive energy of writing itself. Derrida and Saussure explain that writing and speech were separated within the history of metaphysics (which is the history of reason) as writing was regarded as the "dead letter" which referred to a living speech which preceeded it. Writing and speech come together at the end of reasoning, however, as Derrida's concept of

différance breaks down the binary oppositions between speech and writing, and allow them to function as accomplices of each other: the one becomes the other in différance. Whereas the movement of signification of writing was previously dependent upon the totality of a signifier which preceeded it in accordance with the classical conceptual oppositions of metaphysics (signifier-signified, sensible-intelligible, writing-speech) the concept of différance allows writing to refer to difference itself without incorporating positive terms that would limit the freeplay of the text.

In "La Différance", Derrida explains that within a language there are only differences. The point of reference of the movement of signification of language becomes difference itself: every concept in a language is inscribed in a chain within which it refers to other concepts by the play of differences. Cortázar's Rayuela incarnates difference or the dialectical forces which writing brings into play by means of its binary construction, binary character relationships, binary imagery, binary milieus, and binary themes which all illustrate that each term of an opposition has its origin in the other: reason is the interiority of madness and madness is the interiority of reason, the past is in the present and the present is in the past, death is engendered from life and life is engendered from death, absence as madness is a presence in reason, and presence becomes absence in madness. The antagonistic-complistic relationship resulting from the reverse polarity of all structural and conceptual oppositions in Rayuela breaks down the opposition between the terms of the dialectic which limits their movement of signification, and allows the sense of the book to refer to "différance" itself. The plot of Rayuela is based on Oliveira's search for a center, origin or ultimate meaning that transcends the limitations of binary reasoning. Although

Oliveira does not succeed in reaching the center or the unvarying meaning free from difference, he does succeed in realizing *différance*, or a state of sustained abolishment of himself in his antagonist Traveler, thereby annihilating the state of opposition between them, at the very moment that the state of *différance* itself which they have created in each other sustains it. In the same manner that the concept of *différance* allows writing to refer to difference itself without incorporating positive terms or a center that would limit the freeplay of the text, Oliveira's sustained abolishment of himself in Traveler allows him to continue his infinite movement of signification without la Maga - his indicator of the center - present. Oliveira's unending search for signification within the "Capítulos prescindibles" of the book parodies the supplementary, superabundant nature of the signifier whose infinite, unresolved movement of signification results from its lack of a center or a point of reference - a lack which must be supplemented.

I attempted to illustrate in this thesis that for both Cortázar and Derrida, the comprehension of writing as a non-centered system is based on a paradox: although the disruptive energy of the field of freeplay of writing is hostile to the limitations imposed by a center, it can never divorce itself entirely from the concept of a full presence, as it has its roots in the metaphysical opposition of signifier to signified. The string labyrinth which Oliveira constructs in the mental asylum is a symbolic model of the accomplistic-antagonistic relationship of writing to speech or a full presence: the circumference of the string labyrinth (writing) is defined by the waterbasins (speech); thereby implying that even though the field of freeplay of writing is a labyrinth of infinite reflection on itself within itself, its finite boundaries are still de-

terminated by its former relationship to speech and the history of metaphysics. Derrida explains that in order to maintain both its signifying power derived from its place within a metaphysical opposition, and also its aphoristic energy which is hostile to this metaphysical opposition, writing must exist in a state of unresolved tension between its former relationship to the metaphysics of presence, and its present reality as a sign without signification, a game or a pure functioning. The sense of writing resides in the inexpressible difference between these two irreducible differences.

In chapter two of this thesis, I explained that Cortázar and Derrida recognize two irreconcilable interpretations of writing and interpretation: one turning toward a lost, impossible origin - the interpretation of writing metaphorized by the first book of Rayuela - and the other affirming the freeplay of a world of signs without truth or an origin present - the rendition of writing which the second reading of Rayuela evokes. Cortázar and Derrida both imply that the ever elusive possibility of sense itself resides in the interval between these two irreconcilable worlds. The book of Rayuela, like writing itself, embraces a turning toward an origin at the same time that it comprises the turning away from the origin. The reader who reads consecutively books one and two of Rayuela experiences within himself the unresolvable tension existing between these two irreconcilable interpretations of writing, which is the origin of writing as *différance* itself. In accordance with Derrida's philosophy of writing, Cortázar implies in Rayuela that the sense of writing is neither a regained presence nor a pure absence; neither a reaffirmation of history nor a play of pure surface; neither reason nor absence; but the tension which is born from the reverse polaric interaction

of these opposing poles. The plot of Rayuela is based on Oliveira's search for the center, which I interpreted in this thesis as an allegory of the movement of writing toward the realization of meaning. Oliveira never succeeds in reaching a center or origin, but accepts the play of differences as his ultimate reality. In like manner, the sense of writing is never present in itself as such, but only as the difference between differences. The reader of Rayuela never succeeds in discovering an ultimate meaning of the book itself, but becomes swept up in the play of differences which is the book itself. Rayuela is the incarnation of differences, within which sense realizes itself as an inexpressible differing from itself.

Whereas Derrida the philosopher accepts the intangible inexpressibility of sense, Cortázar the writer bursts into laughter when overwhelmed by his inability to express the inexpressible. Like the sense of writing itself, however, laughter is a manifestation of the incompatibility or difference between two levels of consciousness. Consequently, the interpretation of Rayuela as a parody of writing is congruous with the explication of Rayuela as a parable of writing, as the "joke" inherent in Cortázar's attempts to realize an authentic expression is only one more manifestation in Rayuela of the tension between irreconcilable differences which is the field of freeplay of writing itself.

FOOTNOTES

¹Jacques Derrida, "Force et Signification", L'Ecriture et la Différence, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1967, p. 105.

²Julio Cortázar, Rayuela, Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 1963, p. 380.

³J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, trans. Jack Sage, Philosophical Library, New York, 1962, p. 345.

⁴Jacques Derrida, De la Grammatologie, Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1967, p. 55.

⁵Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, p. 323.

⁶Jacques Derrida, "La Différance", Marges de la Philosophie, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1972, p. 12.

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