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A ROSE IS A ROSE IS A MELODY: MAPPING JULIO CORTÁZAR'S MUSICAL NARRATIVES

Abstract: *In 2014, many of Julio Cortázar's ground-breaking works were re-launched over the world to commemorate the centenary of the birth of the Argentine writer. A major figure of world literature, Cortázar's fictions are known to break out of the prison of words and conventional practices. His "counternovel" *Hopscotch* (1963), a milestone in Latin American fiction writing, is nothing less than a linguistic revolution. Part of what makes this novel revolutionary is the way it explores the boundaries of language and reality. The other part are its profuse references to jazz music, making it a work of unparalleled sonority. In fact, the presence of music – jazz, classical music, and tango – is significant not only in this novel but also in at least in half of Cortázar's tremendous production. Most scholarship about Cortázar agrees that the author uses music as an alternative form of expression, one that complements and contradicts traditional language. Nevertheless, scholarship has not yet fashioned a convincing and comprehensive theoretical approach to his musically-infused production. The present article starts by examining what scholars have thus far said regarding music and, more specifically, jazz in Cortázar's work. Then the essay raises critical questions about the cultural and linguistic myopia resulting from typical approaches to music in the author's work. Finally, it points out avenues which might lead scholarship to a comprehensive vision of Cortázar's strategic use of music.*

Keywords: *Cortázar, Music, Jazz, Interdisciplinary, Latin-America*

Introduction: The crystal with the music inside

The use of music in narrative fiction is almost as old as the musical genre itself. Since erupting into the global scene, jazz has inspired numerous novels and short stories, both inside and outside the United States. Latin-American writers are not immune to its effects. Like the best jazz solos, some great jazz-inspired writings unfold in unpredictable ways. Their literary discourse hops and jumps incessantly through the pages, just like a soloist hops and jumps through a chord sequence, making it harder to pin down all the complexities behind and within this connection. Such is the case of famed Argentine author Julio

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Cortázar (1914-1984). Cortázar's interest in music, specifically jazz, is present from his very first publications. Since his 1938 collection of sonnets, music has been Cortázar's constant companion. Much has been written about the use of jazz in his fiction. To this day critics are constantly debating the explanations for the presence of music in his texts.

There's an assumption that the intrinsic relationship between music and language in Cortázar's works is due only to his idea that music is a better form of expression than words. Certainly, he believed in the pure qualities of music as language. In fact, he frequently discusses his conceptualization of music in several literary/critical and fictional writings. In the essay "Soledad de la música," for instance, he states that a listener receives the message more directly from a melodic line than from a poetic verse. Even though he refers to language in musical terms – its rhythm, its melody – he is always suspicious of its effectiveness to communicate. His work often comments on the absence of any natural connection between the meaning of a word and its sound or form.

In Cortázar's most famous novel, *Rayuela* (Hopscotch), his constant obsession with the ambiguity of language is conveyed through a writer named Morelli. As expected, one of the protagonist is in fact a writer, a writer that, is in eternal battle with his expressive tool: "Morelli condena en el lenguaje el reflejo de una óptica y de un Organum falsos o incompletos, que nos enmascaran la realidad, la humanidad."³ In chapter 93, Morelli tells us that words are "perras negras"² that bite ("te muerden") and bark, that attack and run away. In another passage of the same chapter, the act of writing is portrayed as the production of "ríos de hormigas feroces que se comerán el mundo" (rivers of fierce ants that will eat the world). Words, once put on paper, are uncontrollable voracious entities. Many passages are the expression of a single – and therefore limited – viewpoint that need to be confronted in order to push readers out of their comfort zone:

"Sacás una idea de ahí, un sentimiento del otro estante, los atás con ayuda de palabras, perras negras, y resulta que te quiero. Total parcial: te quiero. Total general: te amo. ... A Beatriz no se la elige, a Julieta no se la elige. Vos no elegís la lluvia que te va a calar hasta los huesos cuando salís de

un concierto. Pero estoy solo en mi pieza, caigo en artilugios de escriba, las perras negras se vengan cómo pueden, me mordisquean desde abajo de la mesa. ¿Se dice abajo o debajo? Lo mismo te muerden. ¿Por qué, por qué, pourquoi, why, warum, perchè este horror a las perras negras? Miralas ahí en ese poema de Nashe, convertidas em abejas. Y ahí, en dos versos de Octavio Paz, muslos del sol, recintos del verano. ... Curioso, muy curioso que Puttenham sintiera las palabras como si fueran objetos, y hasta criaturas con vida propia. También a mí, a veces, me parece estar engendrando ríos de hormigas feroces que se comerán el mundo. Concebir una raza que se expresara por el dibujo, la danza, el macramé o una mímica abstracta. ¿Evitarían las connotaciones, raíz del engaño?" (Chapter 99)³

Such passages in *Hopscotch* show two strong structural traits: an emphasis on the dangers of language as a mechanism of exclusion and manipulation of reality⁴ and an overwhelming dependence on musical elements. Given the juxtaposition of these two traits, it is understandable that critics would read Cortázar's complex use of music in the novel as intrinsically related to his fear about the limitations of words.

Indeed, elsewhere, Cortázar depicts words as the barrier between the writer's idea and the reader. In "Cristal con una rosa dentro," a short reflection on poetry published in *Ultimo Round* (1987), he reflects on the nature of words, their sound, their meaning, and their relationship with what we call reality. The word rose in the title is itself a reference to Gertrud Stein's verse "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose." Just like Stein's famous phrase, "Cristal con una rosa dentro" the essay builds on the fact that any word contains many possible meanings and associations, such that each iteration of the word could be a different meaning, or all meanings simultaneously. The one-paragraph text is a suggestive combination of poetry and ontology. Cortázar compares the futility of time with that of meaning: a word being the "articulating lighting that curdles the crystal" in a timeless existence.

On the one hand, Cortázar attributes significant meaning to language, but on the other hand, he is deeply suspicious of its expressive capabilities. No wonder, therefore, that he eventually

recorded himself reading his works on LP. It allowed him to capture fully “el sentimiento oral de la literature.” Texts like *Hopscotch* and “The Pursuer” illustrate that sound is, without doubt, a key component of his narratives, quite in the same way as it is for abstract poets. Whether consciously planned it or not, the music that permeates Cortázar’s works appears to serve as the “lighting” that magically articulates his narratives inside a timeless crystal. If we look closely, behind *Hopscotch*’s verbal discontinuity there are multiple musical lines that connect the different narrative levels of the work. *Hopscotch* is only an example of Cortázar’s inclusion of music. In truth, the musical material opens the text to the possibility of multiple layers of meaning, while releasing the reader from the distress of an intricate narrative. The omnipresence of music in Cortazarian texts proves it to be a referential code essential to his dialectic system—not just a metaphor for the limits of human language.

A review of selected criticism

The existing studies on Cortázar’s ‘musical fiction’ posit different hypotheses. These differences are based on the features and literary works that scholars examine under the light of his conceptualization of music and literature as communicative languages. Such scholarship tends to fall into two groups.

The first group typically offers more traditional readings of Cortázar’s work, explaining the presence of music through analysis of plot, character traits, autobiographical information or historical references. In this group, we find José María Guelbenzu (2007) with his article “Julio Cortázar: el jazz y la escritura.” Guelbenzu’s reading of “The Pursuer” is centered around Johnny’s character traits (his difficult childhood and how music takes him out of reality) and Bruno’s behavior (an analogy for the complexity of creative writing). The critic connects it all through the idea that time is lived and perceived by both characters in very different ways. Like many others in this first group, Guelbenzu gets caught at the fictional level, with sporadic connections to Cortázar’s biographical events and colorful anecdotes of jazz pieces and their performers. He argues that jazz can only be ‘written’ in fiction by means of analogies and metaphors, a move that he ironically mirrors in his own conclusion. Another example from this first group is “Palabras con swing. La música de jazz en la obra de Julio Cortázar” by

Patricio Goialde Palacios (2010). The article includes a long list of works where characters are commenting, playing or listening to jazz. Regarding the many musical quotations and evocations found in these Cortázar's short stories, Goialde Palacios chooses to interpret them as a musical representation of characters' emotions or as a melancholic commentary on the story. Once again, the explanation of music is limited to a strict plot discussion. Finally, Joseph Tyler (1996), in a through-composed-like⁵ piece, reads a series of musically infused short stories, critical essays, and concert reviews by Cortázar under a dichotomy established between Paris and Buenos Aires. Tyler's "Cortázar: jazz y literatura" gives an overview of some of Cortázar's writings. However, there is neither an attempt at theorization nor a deep examination of the political and cultural implications that are sporadically mentioned. Ultimately, the scholarship that constitutes the first group stops short of exploring Cortázar's use of music as more than a literary device, like allusion, that is available to all authors. As I have indicated above, Cortázar does not use music carelessly or simply.

In contrast to the first group, the second group experiments more with theoretical frameworks as explanatory mechanisms for the musical components in Cortázar's fiction. Nevertheless, the conclusions they derive often eschew critical closure. In "Subverted Claims: Cortázar, Artaud and the Problematics of Jazz," Nicholas Roberts uses Artaud and Derrida to argue that Cortázar's use of jazz is an expression of a non-intermediary model of communication. Based on this idea, Nicholas Roberts' 2011 essay on Cortázar, jazz, and Artaud's theatre of cruelty reflects on the communicative components of the musical experience. One of his conclusions is that

"Within the concern for creating an artistic form which moves away from conventional generic characteristics there is one specific trait of both Artaud's theatre and Cortázar's jazz which is particularly fundamental in the potential realization of this common goal of changing human ontology and society, and one which corresponds to Cortázar's overarching interest in a form of communication which escapes the strictures and structures of linguistic expression" (Roberts 2011, 736).

Roberts focuses on the idea that works like “The Pursurer” or “Louis, enormísimo cronopio” connect with the aesthetic of Antonin Artaud in that they contain a (jazz-inspired) “non-intermediary communicative model” that breaks down the limit between artist and audience in the same way Artaud intended for his plays. It is true that, as Roberts puts it, Cortázar has “jazz’s improvisational elements in mind” (733) when he emphasizes that this genre allows for no distancing between the work and its representation: “a diferencia de la música llamada clásica . . . en el jazz sobre un bosquejo, ... cada músico crea su obra ... no existe la mediación de un intérprete” (Gonzalez Bermejo 1978, 49-50). However, is improvisational jazz the only music capable of “breaking down of divides in humankind which Cortázar seeks in his writing”? (733). If that were the case, how would we explain stories that use other musical genres when attempting to overcome oppositions in the world? “Reunion” is the perfect example to illustrate Cortázar’s drive to surpass all dichotomies. Interestingly, the music piece he chooses as unifying thread is not improvisational jazz; it’s Mozart’s quartet “Die Jagd.” Unfortunately, Roberts’s hypothesis leaves out texts like “Reunion” or “The Gates of Heaven,” among others.

By digging into Cortázar’s claims about the limitations of words, Roberts explores how the use of music in his writings reveals jazz to be “such a vital and ‘authentic’ form of expression” (730). Next, Roberts links statements by both Artaud and Cortázar regarding the use of language⁶ and linguistic manipulation frequent in both writers, emphasizing “the potential for readings of Artaud’s of work to be turned onto Cortázar’s writings on jazz” (739). Finally, he examines Derrida’s take on repetition. This is the key component that, for this scholar, connects Artaud’s theatre with Cortázar’s jazz-inspired character Johnny Carter, who refuses to record “Amorous.” The character’s refusal

“can be understood as coming about because the improvisation was a glimpse of a beyond of language which is now gone and whose repetition would be an immediate negation or loss of that glimpse, since it would constitute its inscription within a system of *différence*, of repeated representation” (Roberts 2011, 742).

Although very promising, Roberts' article has too many "voices" playing simultaneously at different levels of the "score." He overlaps classical music-imbued narratives with jazz-infused texts, Cortázar's aesthetic essays with Cortázar's Jazz-inspired fictional characters, fictional elements dialoguing with aesthetic manifestos; Cortázar essays on music and literature, with experimental theatre. Then he somehow connects all of this through Artaud's ideas of representation and Derridean notions of repetition. Beyond his intention to include more original theoretical approaches, Roberts creates a complex web of fictional and non-fictional writings connected through characters and historical references, and his conclusion is too far from his original goal. To put in more musical terms, it modulates to multiple key signatures never returning to the original one.

Along the same, Marc Couture's 2016 close reading of "The Pursuer" focuses on its narrative organization and the way the Johnny and Bruno relate to each other and to the reader through the principles of modernist bebop.⁷ Couture's view on the construction and development of each character is centered on the idea that the story "is a tale of two texts" that underscores the "distinction between writing on jazz and jazz writing." (12) This scholar insists that the depiction of Johnny as unpredictable, irrational, and passionate⁸ – being himself the embodiment of jazz music – shows Cortázar's inability "to perceive completely the rational analysis inherent in advanced jazz playing" (ibid). Cortázar, as Couture puts it, gets "too caught up in the notion of 'passionate transcendence,'" (ibid)⁹ and therefore is incapable of portraying in his writing the intellectual processes that Couture consider part of complex improvisational jazz.

Couture's argument fails to consider some visible aspects of the "The Pursuer" while arbitrarily bringing to the table others that are absent in jazz performance practice. First, Couture assesses Cortázar's effectiveness in crafting a written equivalent for modern improvisational jazz as if that were the purpose of the narration. Yet there is no documented evidence for such assumption. Secondly, he bases his analysis on the 'passionate' and 'intellectual' components of the story, concluding that Cortázar's story is too tainted by Johnny's 'irrationality' and thus not aligned with the rational control required by intricate jazz improvisation. Unfortunately, not only does Couture make assumptions regarding the nature of improvisational jazz but also

overlooks Cortázar's depiction of Carter's (Parker's) traumatic obsession with practice and perfection. Such depiction is not present in the narrative material¹⁰ of the story but in its narrative discourse (language devices and viewpoint). In other words, the rationality and "hours and hours of [systematic] practice" (12) Couture claims an understanding of "speed-of-light" (ibid) jazz playing could be found not in the 'what' – character traits and relationships – but in the 'how' – the way in which the discourse communicates with the reader. For instance, the calculated juxtaposition of the two narrative perspectives that structure the whole short story could satisfy Couture's request that the story should "replicate the highly structured" language of jazz. Finally, his conclusion makes assumptions regarding the relationship between what he calls 'advanced jazz playing' (2016, 12) and the rational control of sound and rhythm. He pairs complex improvisation to a total intellectual control of music making. What are the cultural and social implications behind considering that elaborated improvisational jazz is exclusive to the technically accomplished performer? Is Johnny's art only the result of rationalization and technical virtuosity? Again, we find a scholar willing to explore new theoretical avenues in his approach but ultimately presenting an insufficient analysis of the elements involved. While it is encouraging to see Couture's efforts to experiment with the principles of bebop, his final remarks reveal many uninformed assumptions regarding the nature of improvisational practices. Such assumptions prevent him from elaborating a plausible critical conclusion.

A tendency among the second group is to examine Cortázar's inclusion of music under the umbrella of avant-garde theories. As stated before, Cortázar's multiple testimonies emphasize the connection between his narratives and jazz performance. Guided by Cortázar's interviews and letters dealing with his writing process, some scholars make the connection between jazz improvisation and the automatic writing characteristic of the surrealists. Such is the case of Arévalo, who finds it difficult to get past the association between so-called stream of consciousness writing with free-form jazz in his work: "Hopscotch, vacillated between a near prose poem to a stream of consciousness hypertext via music, place (Paris, Buenos Aires), the existential, and identity. (...) Cortázar was also an amateur musician, and it is jazz—the improv and scatter of linked notes of

the mind—that influences one's appreciation of Hopscotch and any of Cortázar's work. The stream of consciousness flow of the thoughts and story were in vogue at the time. (N.T. Arévalo, 2016)."

Goialde Palacios (2010) disagrees on this matter in his attempts to differentiate between those aspects in Cortázar's work that are clearly influenced by surrealist principles (the merge of genres in *La vuelta al día en ochenta mundos* o *Último round*, the search for a poetic prose half-way between lyric and narrative modes in *Teoría del túnel*) and those that are not. While such distinction is important for opening up new perspectives for analysis, Goialde's argument remains incomplete for it lacks in depth and clear examples.¹¹

Other scholars use the surrealist perspective as a starting point, but manage to take the discussion to more theoretically challenged territories. This is the case of Vaughn Anderson and Jaume Peris Blanes. Vaughn Anderson argues that through music Cortázar's surrealist aesthetics communicates the experience of the Paris he knows: "Cortázar allows music to carry him constantly back to—and through—surrealist tropes and techniques" (2013, 18). He suggests that Cortázar's use of music reunites Lefebvre's and De Certeau's approaches through and "intermedial representation of Paris" that follows the Surrealist tradition of collaboration between the literature and other arts. Likewise, Jaume Peris Blanes (2011), starts by asserting that "The Pursuer" is the most vanguardist of Cortázar's works due to the fact that Johnny symbolizes a break from the traditional code of a language and the search for formal experimentation. Then, he adds another level to his analysis by arguing that the story somehow addresses the problematics of a subjectivity that connects with the Che Guevara's revolutionary discourse about the new man: "The search for new form of expression were, then, aligned with the search for new forms of living in a multifaceted and non-automated reality" (Peris Blanes 81).¹² Like Couture, Peris Blanes sees in the narrative discourse of "The Pursuer" a literary analogy to bebop prosodic rules, taking it not as an aleatory enterprise but as a multi-dimensional mode of experiencing reality that connects with politics in a very existential way. The fact that Vaughn Anderson and Peris Blanes attempt to incorporate interesting theoretical approaches does not make up for the fact that both discussions limit themselves to

a celebration of genre hybridity. Anderson's architectonic narrativization of Paris circumvents the fact that the majority of Cortázar's musical narratives are not set in the French capital, while Peris Blanes's nostalgia for revolution ignores the crucial differences between Cortázar's and Guevara's political contexts.

Still other scholars in this group try to explain music by focusing on the linguistic traits of his writing, specially in those stories where improvisational jazz seems to have a correlation in his narrative discourse. Perhaps one of the most distinctive readings of "The Pursuer" is that by Doris Sommer (1995). Her emphasis on Bruno's insistent use of the present perfect does not end in a linguistic approach. Even though her article "Grammar Trouble" (1995) does not delve into understanding the connection of the story to the complex aesthetics of jazz, she does go beyond her grammar deconstruction of Johnny and Bruno's perpetual antagonism to open new avenues of/for analysis of Bruno's self-reflecting – although self-serving – narrative voice and the act of biography writing. Jazzuela (2000) is Peirat Lasuén's study of Cortázar's jazz-inspired and world-renowned novel *Rayuela*. She is sharply focused on demonstrating that the novel's incorporation of jazz serves as an invitation for reader to find its own individuality comparable to what jazz improvisation does. One of the most interesting analyses of Cortázar's use of music is found in Emily Hicks' *Border Thinking: The Multidimensional Text* (1991). In this chapter, Hicks argues that Cortázar's fictions display a multidimensional relationship between the two systems and not an analogical one, as claimed by Guelbenzu (2007), Goialde Palacios (2010), Peris Blanes (1995), to name some. She uses complex schemes derived from Deleuze and Guattari's *Kafka* and Barthes's *S/Z* to approach Cortázar's use of referential codes. Her discussion includes some insights on the interstices between form and content (the structural parameters of Bach's *A Musical Offering* in Cortázar's "Clone") and on questions regarding language as a shared system (the diagrams included in *A Manual for Manuel*). The major strength of Hicks' 1991 chapter on Cortázar is that it raises a critical question regarding his interest in music. This scholar underscores the fact that the jazz permeating Cortázar's texts shows "Music is an important referential code that dissolves the boundaries between 'high' art and mass culture" (54). Regardless of its possible implications, this provocative idea only in touched

on in passing. The reference to high and mass culture is, in fact, attractive but it is left aside surrounded by many questions: How does she define 'high' art and mass culture? What is music a referential code for? What are the mechanisms and consequences involved in such dissolution? Is any type of music or is it jazz the one she is referring to? Unfortunately, the whole idea remains unexplored, as well as other parts of her theorization.

These two trends in the body of scholarship on Julio Cortázar recognize the music in his texts as a mode of operation between different ways of addressing reality. While the first group chooses to stay attached to more traditional close reading strategies, the second one goes one step forward to venture beyond what is already known by exploring Cortázar's texts in the light of very diverse theoretical frameworks. However, the authors discussed above are unable to offer a totalizing/unifying vision of the inclusion of music in his works either due to the diversity of their individual theoretical design or because the lack of specificity in their contextual discussions.

Conclusion: Pursuing the cronopio

The tendency to read Cortázar's use of music through one of these two trends has produced a body of work that is limited /shortsighted in three significant ways. The first is to approach all Cortázar's use of music in his fiction based on the examination of just one of the genres that appear in his narratives. Analytical studies of jazz elements in "The Pursuer" may only partially help us understand the presence of different musical genres in all his works. It could be a starting point to theorize on his used of musical material based on only "The Pursuer." However, such analysis is unlikely to be very useful when approaching "Meeting," "Clone," or "The gates of heaven." Out of his novels, approximately thirty percent of the narrative material is intrinsically related to different musical genres. Likewise, at least forty percent of his short stories include music as a key element in the story and narrative discourse. It is unconceivable to think that we would elaborate a theory of Shakespeare use of humor only based on an analysis of "Twelfth Night."

The second problematic assumption coming out of many critical theories on Cortázar's use of music are uninformed generalizations about music as a language. Musical parameters such as rhythmic or harmonic complexity are oversimplified by

scholars that lack the training necessary to properly examine the musical aspects linked to Cortázar's short stories and novels. As a result, many approaches attempt to compare musical features with those that appear to be equivalent in the narrative discourse. For instance, both music and language have syntactic rules but chords or intervals do not function at the same level of words for they have no meaning without an appropriate context. However, there is still scholarly criticism that persists in considering stream of consciousness/automatic writing as the written analog for jazz improvisation. Another generalization is related to the idea that music is a universal language. Some authors argue that Cortázar's fiction appeals to music's universal communicative qualities to overcome the limitations of literature. What does 'universal' mean? Music is, in fact, a universal human experience. Generally speaking, some melodic and rhythmic features universally convey sadness or happiness. Something similar occurs when listening to a conversation in a language foreign to us, we can infer some pragmatic components of the situation without understanding the conversation. However, research on music perception indicate that there are many possible misinterpretations within any musical experience. In fact, studies in music processing show that Western listeners often time out when exposed to unfamiliar microtonal systems such as the one used in Chinese opera or the Javanese gamelan. Other generalizations result from discussions about the controlled vs spontaneous components of jazz, which are not properly informed by musicological approaches to jazz. Basing a critical analysis on the assumption that improvisational jazz presents no communicative problems just because there is no distance between the composer and performer sounds simplistic. Indeed, cultural studies on improvisation suggest that there are aspects of improvisational jazz that succeed even when misunderstanding and disagreements arise, and Cortázar's prolific insertion of jazz in his texts is likely to be an evidence of them.

Finally, there are assumptions regarding the relationship between Cortázar and Paris. While it is true that many of Cortázar's works set up an opposition between Latin-America and Europe, most critics read this dichotomy as a sign of Cortázar's eurocentrism and elitism. They accuse him of being anti-American in the hemispheric sense based on his devotion to

Paris. Latin-American intellectuals of his time, such as José María Arguedas, blame him for having too strong a connection with the French capital. However, there is a whole side of Cortázar's Paris that is not considered. Paris is for him more than the symbol of European whiteness. Since the Harlem Hell fighters landed in France during World War I, the City of Light had been fascinated by the African Americans. Black performers gathered to enjoy the carefree Jazz in Montmartre. While the racial turmoil in the United States never stopped, many of its black citizens had discovered in France the racial equality that was absent across the Atlantic. Most Harlem Renaissance artists had left visible traces in the French capital when, during the post-World War II era, political and intellectual exiles populated the cafés of existentialist Saint Germain des Prés.¹³ When Cortázar arrived in 1951, Paris held a vital relationship with its black community: the Paris noir. It is clear from his library that he had a deep appreciation for black music and literature. Reading Cortázar's Paris just as the center of European tradition of thought is one of the gravest myopias, because it makes assumptions about his attitude towards the African American artistic tradition. Moving to Paris may have taken Cortázar closer to European ideas but it also put him closer to African American cultural tradition.

It is no secret that Cortázar's dream was to be a musician: "If I could choose between language and music," he once wrote, "I would choose music" (Standish 2001, 72). It is also no accident then that one of the greatest jazzmen in history played a significant role in inspiring Cortázar to create the cronopios, the fictional creatures that would be so dear to him and his readers. Cronopios are one of the three types of creatures that live in the fictional universe created by Cortázar in *Historias de cronopios y famas* (1962). Cronopios are idealistic, unconventional, and sensitive creatures, contrasting with the rigid, obsessive, and judgmental famas and unimaginative and apathetic esperanzas. Cortázar first used the word cronopio ten years before the publication of the book. He included it in a 1952 article published in *Buenos Aires Literaria* when writing a poetic review for a Louis Armstrong concert given in November of that year in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris. The article was entitled *Louis, Enormísimo Cronopio* ("Louis, Enormous Cronopio").

Throughout his career, Cortázar endeavored to find a language analogous to his idea of the diversity of human

perspective, of unity in a world marked by restrictions, of dialogue beyond contradiction. His multiple aesthetic and political writings provide ample proof of his concerns. In addition, Cortázar was a musician, however informally, he did study music. Hence, we have to approach his fiction with the understanding that he knew more than the average listener. Even though scholars discussed in this essay perceive the connections between jazz performance and Cortázar's manipulation of language and form, the absence of a critical approach to socio-cultural aspects behind his musical narratives, marks a curious blind spot in their theorization. Therefore, it is imperative that we elaborate a well-informed and comprehensive theory of Cortázar's musical texts, a model that includes all the factors behind the author's emphatic use of music. If this theory is not rooted in an Atlantic understanding of 20th century music performance and its social implications, then how can we ever expect to read the "rose" and understand what he meant when he honored Louis Armstrong by giving him the same name as his beloved cronopios?

Notes

1"Morelli condemns in language the reflection of a false and incomplete viewpoint and Organun, that disguises reality ,the humanity for us." (Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Spanish to English are mine.)

2 The words perras negras have a double connotation in Spanish, they mean black female dogs or black bitches.

3"But take good note, because it is not gratuitous. Why stop? For fear of starting fabrications, they are so easy. You get an idea from there, a feeling from the other shelf, you tie them together with the help of words, black bitches and it turns out that I want you. Partial total: I want you. Overall total: I love you. ... Beatrice wasn't picked out, Juliet wasn't picked out. You don't pick out the rain that soaks you to the skin when you come out of a concert. But I am alone in my room, I am falling into tricks of writing, the black bitches get their vengeance any way they can, they chew on me from underneath the table. Do you say underneath or under? They bite you just the same. Why, why, pourquoi, por qué, warum, perchè this horror of black bitches? Look at them there in that poem by Nashe, transformed into bees. And there in two lines from Octavio Paz, thighs of the sun, enclosures of the summer. ... Interesting, very interesting that Puttenham felt words as if they were objects, and even creatures with a life o their own. It also seems to me to be generating rivers of fierce ants that will eat the world. ... To conceive a race that expressed itself through drawing, dance, macrame, or abstract mimic. Would they avoid connotations, the root of the problem?" (My translation.)

4 See chapters 66, 79, and 99 of Hopscotch.

5 Through-composed is a musical term that can be applied to a piece that includes no repetitions of themes or ideas or music that is composed in linear order. In this case, the term implies that the author does not return to any previously stated idea (only moves forward): no recapitulation or sense of closure. By definition, through-composed works can end at any time.

6 The comparison is done between "briser le langage pour toucher la vie" (Artaud, 509) and "el escritor tiene que incendiary el language" (Rayuela, 620).

7 Much has been written about Bruno and Johnny's relationship: Sosnowski (1972), Jitrik (1974), Álvarez Borland (1996), y López Martínez (1996), Goialde Palacios (2010).

8 Johnny, as most of Cortázar's protagonists, is not a monolithic character, he is made of contradictions. The irrationality in Johnny's actions does nothing but confirm that he is a creation of Cortázar. 9The notion is taken from Parkinson Zamora's essay "Art and Revolution in the Fiction of Julio Cortázar."

9 The notion is taken from Parkinson Zamora's essay "Art and Revolution in the Fiction of Julio Cortázar."

10 The distinction between narrative material and narrative discourse is taken from narratological approach to fiction. I follow Rick Altman's notions of narrative discourse (language), material (plot), and narrative drive (reader involvement) (A Theory of Narrative).

11 When discussing Cortázar's surrealist traits, Goialde confusedly places Rayuela's "Tablero de Dirección" (a very detailed map for the reader) at the same level as 62: A Model Kit's formal organization, using both as an example of the writer's freedom (486).

12 "La búsqueda de nuevas formas de expresión era, entonces solidaria de la búsqueda de nuevas formas de habitar una realidad multiforme y desautomatizada."

13 Among them Eugène Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, and James Baldwin. Later on, many Latin-American writers joined the Parisian literary circles (Carlos Fuentes, Vargas Llosa, Severo Sarduy)

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