






**Octavio Paz Meets Malay Roychoudhury: The History of El Corno Emplumado and the Evolution of a Poetics**

**INTERACTIVE ARTICLE COVER**









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# Octavio Paz Meets Malay Roychoudhury: The History of El Corno Emplumado and the Evolution of a Poetics

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## Abstract

In this article, we explore how the destinies of some poets were intertwined in the history of publications of El Corno emplumado, a Spanish-English bilingual literary journal that was edited by Octavio Paz among others and published in Mexico from 1962 to 1969. The epistolary relationships that El Corno emplumado engendered contributed to the writing ethic of an entire generation. The poets developed the flipped metaphor as a descriptive fall for differential semantics, as a rhetorical figure or strategy which endows words with sensations that differ from the immediately embodied or corporeal moments they represent. El Corno thus unites Allen Ginsberg, Octavio Paz, Ernesto Cardenal, Malay Roychoudhury, Shakti Chattopadhyay, and others in the recognition of a global style or poetics. We discuss epistolary contents from within the orbit of El Corno Emplumado to understand how the dialogue between Paz and Malay offers hermeneutical insights into the surreal, Hungry poetics born in the middle of the last century. Above all the history of Malay Roychoudhury's poetic rebellion, his incarceration, and the bitter protest against this incident in USA and Latin America strikes a chord of union in the dialogic narrative of the two vast continents of America and India.

**Keywords:** *El Corno Emplumado*, Eroticism, Interior experience, Hungryalist, Surrealism

## INTRODUCTION

*"El amor no nos preserva de los riesgos y desgracias de la existencia"*

Octavio Paz, *La llama doble*.

In Mexico, the history of literary magazines offers a catalog view of not only extensive literary activity in the last one hundred years but, above all, varied approaches and a wider sensitivity towards different kinds and colors of literary phenomenon: poetic experiments, socially sensitive genres, and narrative art of cultural dimensions. Some of the most significant examples of this tectonics of production and distribution of the country's literary and cultural achievements are visible in the historical manifest of such journals as *Pegaso* (founded on 1917), *Mexico Modernó* (founded in 1920), *Taller poetico* (1936), *El Hijo Pródigo* (1943), *Ulises*, *La falange* (which had a short life of no more than one year between 1922 and 1923), *Contemporáneos* (1920), *Contemporáneos: Revista Mexicana de Literatura* (which was started in 1928), etc. This gamut of magazines is often associated with group intentions; little magazines have been viewed as expressive of a logic of generations. Enrique Krauze thus defines the literary generation as a "magnetic field" that creates an ideological predilection for the writings of authors linked to a

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group (Krauze 1981). Now, if we approach *El Corno emplumado*, which was founded in 1962, with this idea, it is possible to see that this ethos corresponds to a more multicultural panorama of similar, even subversive, criteria. The *El Corno emplumado* or 'The Plumed Horn' began as a small poetry journal. Sergio Mondragon, journalist and poet born in Mexico, and Margaret Randall, author of North American origin and exile in Mexico, decided to publish a humble journal of poems written by colleagues and contemporaries. The most compelling aspect that make us think of the exceptional nature of *El Corno Emplumado* (*El Corno* in short) is associated with the literary expression of a certain political positioning of its catalog of authors. Among the writers who participated in *El Corno* are, in addition to its editors and founders Sergio Mondragon and Margaret Randall, authors such as Allen Ginsberg, Henry Miller, Roque Dalton, Ernesto Cardenal, and the great Octavio Paz among others. The independent voice of the magazine and its peculiarly inclusive, global, and yet overlappingly Latin Americanist vision constitute a striking difference and accent for this journal out of so many others.

In 2011, Juan Nicolas Padron writes for the Blog *La historia del día* (History of the Day) an important essay of *El corno* titled: "El Corno Emplumado: a true project of globalization of culture". In his text, Padron points out that there was a deeply spiritual activity in the publication that served as a mechanism for distributing the work of authors such as Malcolm Lowry, Antonin Artaud, Laurette Sejourné, D. J. Egerton, Paul Westheim, André Breton, León Trotski...those displaced by the Spanish Civil War or those who escaped from the Nazi concentration camps, such as the photographer Walter Reuter. What is most striking in Padrón's text is the perspective with which he characterizes *El Corno* as a platform of unique significance in the history of Latin America and the cultural spaces invading the contemporary dialogic exchange between Latin America and India, and as attracting therefore "a constellation...of creators of different origins and nationalities, forms of writing or literary genres, aesthetic orientations, political opinions, religious affiliations, cosmogonic or philosophical conceptions" (2011). In the first volume of the magazine, Sergio Mondragón, Margarette Randall and Harvey Wollin together outlined the ideology and established the characteristics that would give *El Corno* its identity. In the "Note from the Editors" that appears in Spanish and English on page 4 of the first issue we see:

EL CORNO EMPLUMADO — THE PLUMED HORN is a journal of poetry, prose, letters, and art from the Continent . . . edited in Spanish and English and published in Mexico City. . . this is a magazine whose pages are dedicated to serving the word with which to create a publication that is needed... today when relations between the countries of America are worse than ever, we hope that EL CORNO EMPLUMADO (provides) the best proof (not politics) that WE ARE ALL BROTHERS. Manuscripts (also send stamp and envelope) and money (of any amount) shall be well received. We will publish quarterly, and we hope soon that we could publish every month. We want our Magazine to be the beginning of a plan to establish a publishing house and then, later, MUCH MORE THAN THAT (Mondragón, Randall, & Wollin, 1962, p. 4).

In 2015, *La Gaceta de Cuba*, the Cuban Gazette on Literatures, draws attention to some Sergio Mondragón who created *El Corno*. In an article published in the Gazette it was stated that *El Corno* was linked to the Beat aesthetic and the creation of what was then characterized as: "a truly liberated language, and of a human being that is also free but also sacred, beatific, and one who

had a right to be considered and treated with respect, and with having the potential to build and inhabit a nirvanized world" (2015:24). Indeed according to Mondragón, *El Corno* was a seminal space which manifested a "blood circulation of poetry". Two dissimilar and equal worlds cohabited in that "blood circulation" which, in Mondragón's opinion, were united by a language that circulated from legacy to *avant-garde*. In this sense, the intention of *El Corno* fits very well with what Octavio Paz would refer to a few years later in his conversation with Claude Fell, one which was published in *The Philanthropic Ogre: History and Politics 1971-1972* under the title "Return to The Labyrinth of Solitude". According to the Nobel Prize winner, "the creator's attitude towards language must be the attitude of a lover, an attitude of fidelity and, at the same time, of disrespect for the loved object. Veneration and transgression. The writer must love language, but he must have the courage to transgress it" (1979: 35).

It is important to point out that initially, the magazine did not have a political agenda but a solely poetic motif. However, the historical context led the editors to take sides on the Vietnam War; US interventionism in Latin America; the role of the Cuban Revolution in the world, and the consciousness of Latin American poets. It is well known that the Beat aesthetic had two defining features. The first feature is the counter-cultural dimension that characterizes the poet's attitude within that movement and, the second, is the spirit of experimentation that accompanies it. Two examples that characterize these features are the affiliation of poetry with Jazz and the cover illustrations that allude to or directly refer to a desire for struggle and social reaction. These secondary preoccupations appear from the publication of issue Number 15 of the *El Corno*. For the spiritual leaders of this group, Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, Beat literature was meant to take up the themes of travel, the use of narcotics, exoticism, oriental spirituality and a reactionary attitude to the morality of the time in forms such as of sexual liberation and affirmation. About the beliefs of the Beat generation however, Allen Ginsberg, in the interview given to Jean-François Duval, denies the generational consideration and affirms that he assumes that his literature arises from his experiences, his use of marijuana and a personal assumption of Buddhist practices.

Yet as Gabriela Silva Ibargüen notes, that although it did not seem to be the initial intention of Mondragón and Randall, the magazine did eventually come to have a political standpoint:

The *Corno Emplumado* was a means of communication, and artistic and political expression. We could well affirm that it is a voice amid the silence promoted by governments to maintain social order. The notes of the *Corno* gave voice to the silenced. In other words, it gave voice to the protesters against the Vietnam War, and to those who were in favor of the Civil Rights Movement, and to those who supported the Cuban Revolution, and, in general, those who dared to criticize an oppressive regime. Its voice had a range that were not marked in history books. However, the proof that its voice was always latent translated into the forced demise of the magazine when, in October 1968, the editors tried to raise their voices against the Mexican government (2017: 23).

In his work, Silva Ibargüen highlights the socio-political dimension of *El Corno* and points towards the actual harassment of its editor. Besides, over and above the threats faced within an inquisitorial climate that existed in those years in Mexico, Margaret Randall was also targeted by the CIA and, due to this, she took refuge in Cuba in mid-1969. In "What's Past is Prologue: *El corno emplumado* at SITE Santa Fe" (2016), Elaine Ritchel takes up Randall's words to say that *El Corno*:

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The magazine was forced to give up its project when, after the massacre of Tlatelolco in October 2, 1968, it spoke out against the actions of the government of President Díaz Ordaz. According to Randall, five more issues of the magazine were published with the support of co-editor Robert Cohen; however, the fate of *El Corno Emplumado* was sealed forever.

In the portal of the Encyclopedia of Literature in Mexico, published and circulated by the Foundation for Mexican Letters and Mexico's Ministry of Culture, a succinct description of *El Corno Emplumado* can be seen. It is recognized as a "bilingual publication in Spanish and English, separated in its beginnings, from any ideological or political bond ...it rather spoke of the spiritual problems of our time" (2019). The Encyclopedia also mentions that in addition to the literary texts published by *El Corno*, that there is also a section called "Letters". In Number 19 of *El Corno emplumado* dated July 1966, Margaret Randall states that this section on letters is aimed at answering the concerns of the life of an artist. This reference also provides a clue towards the historical understanding of a phase of experience in the life of Octavio Paz, especially during his stay in India. The story also brings forward a feature of the works of Bengali poet Malay Roychoudhury, and a story of experiments, transgressions, and global transformation of the poetic idiom. Roychoudhury's poetry was inspired by the culture of the city of Calcutta (now Kolkata), and the emergence of an ethic, just as the *El Corno* constellation always prioritized. *El Corno* thus encapsulated the story of Malay Roychoudhury as much as it did, of Octavio Paz, as a saga of experiments and incarceration, and the struggles and creative joy of the poets' lives.

### **HUNGRYALISTS**

*El Corno Emplumado* served as a platform for many writers, but we especially become aware of the existence of Hungryalist poets in the West and far south and Latin America, especially only through the volumes of the aforementioned journal. The so-called 'hunger' poets or 'hungry' poets, and, especially Malay Roychoudhury, a post-Tagorean Bengali poet, who developed a poetics of corporeality were promoted by the journal. Malay Roychoudhury's participation in *El Corno* is identified in issues 9 published in January 1964; in 10 with an appearance date in April of the same year and in number 13 published in January 1965. The most striking aspect of Malay Roychoudhury's participation is the publication of 'the Hungryalists Manifesto on Poetry' written by Roychoudhury himself in 1961 and published in issue number 10 of *El Corno*. Malay Roychoudhury himself translated the Manifesto from Bengali to English; he narrates how he met Allen Ginsberg at his ancestral house at Patna, and that the relationship with Beat poetry was not an isolated event. Ginsberg visited the Roychoudhury brothers, but especially connected by the Bengali poet's elder brother. Ginsberg visited their house. We know that Samir Roychoudhury. Malay's elder brother came to draw Allen Ginsberg's attention between 1962 and 1963. In March 1962 Ginsberg and Peter Orlovsky arrived in India and lived there for fourteen months. In one of his long and detailed letters to Lawrence Ferlinghetti, owner of City Lights Books based in San Francisco and the publisher of *Howl and Other Poems* (1956), Ginsberg mentions how he discovered a copy of "The Hungryalist Manifesto on Poetry," on a sidebar by Roy Choudhury full of bold pronouncements on poetry and culture. It is important to say that thanks to the *City Lights Journal* we know that the manifesto of this literary movement was published for the first time in

1961. Yet much later, in an interview to *Rupkatha Journal*, Malay Roychoudhury says that there were no discussions of poets or on poetry and that Ginsberg was taking photos -to the extent that Malay never liked Ginsberg's approach to themes of Ginsberg's photography. The Ginsberg visit should be taken with a pinch of salt as Malay felt a strangely orientaling or exotic visualization – a kind of distorting gaze through which India was being viewed. Malay Roychoudhury's censure of the photographer Ginsberg is not necessarily related to the poet Ginsberg, Malay Roychoudhury's early readings at the local library of such works as Ginsberg's, poetry which radically plays itself through the poetics of Paz in his maturity, as well as Malay Roychoudhury's own poetic style since its grand inception in a poem like *Stark Electric Jesus*.

Ginsberg's Occidentalism does not preclude the question of an early influence of the Beat style on Malay Roychoudhury; so it does not for Paz. Thus, we have the connected history of the three great poems of the twentieth century: namely *Howl*, which was written in English, *Stark Electric Jesus*, which was a Bengali poem and *Nocturne upon San Ildefonso*, which was written in Spanish. In number 9 of *El Corno* the "Letter" with which Malay Roychoudhury initiates his contacts with Mondragón and Randall, was published. In that letter we see the gestation of a dialogue interrupted by censorship:

Allen Ginsberg, who came to India and stayed with us for about a year or more (he stayed at my house for a few days and wrote some beautiful poems in this very room where I am now sitting and writing this letter to you) introduced us to his fellow Beats, reprinting and publishing our Manifestos and poems etc. in American magazines (1964: 153).

This note allows us to believe that the poetics of the hungry poets is associated with Beat poetry. Malay Roychoudhury states:

Poetry is not the cage of belches within the form. It should convey the brutal sound of broken values and startling tremors of the artist's rebellious soul, with words stripped of their usual meanings and used to counterpoint all. It must invent a new language that incorporates everything at once, speaking to all the senses in one. Poetry should be able to follow music in its power to evoke a state of mind, and present images not as wrappers but as ravish grams (Roychoudhury, 1964, p. 130).

It is striking that the Bengali poet points out towards the need to create a new language. This language must adapt to the expressive needs that poetry identifies in the face of changing reality. The language proposed by Malay Roychoudhury is a language of transformation, of inclusion. When Jean-François Duval describes Beat poetry as the language of "progressive liberation" he is saying what Malay Roychoudhury was saying about language in *El Corno*.

## **MIGUEL GRINBERG**

Malay Roychoudhury got connected to South America and of course to Octavio Paz through the Argentine poet Miguel Grinberg. In the early sixties, Grinberg was something of an icon who shared the same ideas of trance, hallucination, sex, creativity, and above all, the dream of a reformed world as was also propounded by the Beat poets. Moreover, Miguel Grinberg was the Spanish translator of Allen Ginsberg and regularly wrote to him and *vice versa*. In the correspondence between Allen Ginsberg and Miguel Grinberg, there are references to Malay

Roychoudhury and his verse style. In some of these letters, it is possible to acquire information about the arrest of the Bengali poet because of the apparently obscene language of his poetry. Yet thanks to this, Grinberg considers Malay Roychoudhury to be a kindred spirit. Although there is no evidence of the inclusion of Malay Roychoudhury's poems, translated or otherwise, in the magazine that Grinberg edited from Buenos Aires, namely the *Eco Contemporáneo*, there is no doubt that Grinberg was aware of Roychoudhury's style and the calm and intrepid spirits of the poets of the hungry generation in India. Grinberg inaugurated the new American poetry in Latin America, a movement that, in his own words, does not have to exclude the United States, but only by virtue of its intervention in Vietnam. Evidence of letters between Roychoudhury and Grinberg may not survive: however, Malay Roychoudhury acknowledges this phase of exchange of letters in his interview with the authors of this article. On the other hand, Miguel Grinberg considered that *El Corno Emplumado* was a magazine with claims and beliefs similar to this idea of a new America and Beat poetry. In number 5 of *Eco Contemporáneo*, Mondragon and Randall write:

America is here, in every gesture, in every silence. Ours is a mission of love, difficult to be accepted by those who only know hate. With the magazine *El Corno Emplumado* from Mexico, we have concretized an Axis, the first step of Integration, and the opening of Inter-American Action. We invite the magazines of the Continent to come closer, we hope that tender, peaceful, and incorruptible beings release their voices (4).

It is important that Miguel Grinberg was an important agent in the connection between Malay Roychoudhury and Margaret Randall. It is remarkably interesting to see the epigraph that opens number 10 of *El Corno*. The issue opens with a quote from Albert Camus and marks the perspective from which the magazine was launched and how as such it fit so well with the desires of Beat poetry and the Hungarialist Manifesto:

Forget all the teachers, forget the outdated ideologies, the dying concepts, the ancient slogans with which they want to continue feeding you. Do not let yourselves be intimidated by any of the blackmails, whether they come from the right or the left. Now it is about creating a new man within us. It is that men of action are also men of ideals and industrious poets. It's about living your dreams and putting them into action. Before, one renounced them or lost one in them. And neither of these things should be done (Mondragón & Randall, 1964).

Camus's slogan matches the intentions of *El Corno* as much as the Hungry generation's. In both cases the rebellion was foreshadowed in the logic of the appearance of a new human. In *El Corno emplumado*, Malay Roychoudhury defines the Hungry poets by saying: "We have started a literary rebellion here, calling ourselves HUNGRYALISTS, mainly fighting for a change, along with some crazy conceptions" (1961: 153). The work of these poets is associated with erotic or sexualized language and borders on aspects considered culturally inappropriate. For example, for Malay Roychoudhury, poetry must function like an orgasm. This line of thinking earned him a 35-month jail sentence for a charge of obscenity. In number 13 of *El Corno emplumado*, the reference to the censorship suffered by Roychoudhury appears:

I suppose you must already know that I and four other HUNGRYALISTS (Deb Roy, Shaikshwar Ghose, Samir Roychowdry, and Sulhash Ghose) were recently arrested for what the Calcutta police authorities called obscenity in literature (1965: 184).

The poem for which the Bengali poet was denounced and imprisoned was *Stark Electric Jesus* (1964). In this poem, the erotic references he uses are undeniable and yet the allusions are inscribed not like how they mean literally on the surface, but like what Georges Bataille identifies with inner experience. According to Bataille: "the inner experience of eroticism requires from the person who performs it an equivalent sensitivity both for the anguish that grounds the prohibition and for the desire that leads to infringing it. It is a religious sensibility, which always strongly associates desire and horror, intense pleasure and anguish" (2008: 349). Roychoudhury was also alluding to all this euphoria of sex through his association with the Dadaists and Surrealists whom he had been reading in English. In addition, he studied Spanish poetry after his encounters with Argentinian poetry in Miguel Grinberg's *Eco contemporáneo* and the writings of editors of *El Corno*. Meanwhile, he had a deeper interest in the possibility of the reception of his own verse in Latin America. The Bengali must have been aware of the deep erotic mythology that has inspired some of the traditional poetic conventions of art and culture. This seems to be one aspect of the ideas that led Octavio Paz to Roychoudhury in the same way that Allen Ginsberg was attracted to the candor of the poems of Malay Roychoudhury's circle and to the poetry of other contemporaries in Kolkata.

That same perception of a liberated language is what the Bengali poet expresses in *Stark Electric Jesus*. This is a poem that reverses the language of taboo to get to the story of creative life. It is one of the greatest Indian poems written in the 20th century. In *Stark Electric Jesus*, Roychoudhury was able to simulate the same ideas in the physiological metaphors of sex, and it was this aspect of the poem that led to the poet's arrest in 1965. Along with Allen Ginsberg's frantic defense of Roychoudhury in the presentation of his case in Time Magazine in New York, *El Corno* was one of the most prominent platforms of protest for the Bengali. In *Stark Electric Jesus* we see a reflection of everything that we said about the language of this condition. In one line Roychoudhury creates an image - one which unfortunately is quite untranslatable and does not even appear correspondingly in his own English translation. Roychoudhury speaks of the vaginal cilia: a correct translation would render the image of "a drop of fresh sweat on the vaginal cilia". The speaker of the poem is watching, presumably imaging the drop of fresh sweat on the beloved's vaginal cilia. Indeed mentally for the reader, that is the phenomenal idea that the image conveys, including the sense of life at an edge, potent, fresh and creative - and contained for the moment in a globular and transparent object (the sweat drop). The term "vaginal cilia" thus becomes a flipped metaphor, a surreal pasture. A "drop" of sweat is the metaphorical equivalent of a drop of dew and suggests that pristine freshness, yet it is not in any way realistic. Its perception is mental, imaginative, tacitly felt, intangible. The line prefigures the potency of nature in a kind of inverted way. This is also exactly how Octavio Paz achieved effects in his poem *Nocturne upon Il Defonso*, creating the same spiritual equivalents in images of a half decrepit city. Meaning is downloaded from an inverted picture, a mental picture. Such flipped metaphors may be trivial, distorted, or obscene in contexts in which they are found yet they also metaphorize and re-instantiate a new kind of discourse, a new way of speaking and feeling.



## ROYCHOUDHURY AND OCTAVIO PAZ

What was the actual context for Malay Roychoudhury's arrest? Who was behind this event? Roychoudhury was one of the most radical Indian poets of the 20th century, especially as far as his complete subversion of the language of poetry was concerned. Roychoudhury enjoyed international recognition and was one of the most notable Indian authors of the millennium. His arrest for obscenity made him world-famous, especially when *Time* magazine published a report on the incident. Octavio Paz read this report and was straight away inspired to visit the Bengali in Patna. Later, Paz and other intellectuals, among whom the figure of Ernesto Cardenal stands out, sought out the Hungry poets when they visited India. Margarete Randall, one of the editors of *El Corno* however was already acquainted with this paradoxical fame that Malay Roychoudhury came to acquire after his arrest. Randall wrote to Paz long before the correspondence between Paz and Roychoudhury the author of *Stark Electric Jesus* began. Furthermore, it is possible to see that these letters constitute a sequence of how *El Corno Emplumado* helped spread Roychoudhury's poetic message. In this regard, Randall writes in a letter dated June 15, 1965:

Dear Malay,

Please excuse me for so long without typing, and now that I can finally sit down to type, this typewriter is driving me crazy. The man promised to come this week to fix it, but this is Mexico ("tomorrow's" land), etc. ! How are things going? --- the trial; your case, the things that were taken from you and your friends, etc. All over the world, through THE HORN (*El Corno*), people write asking for you and wishing you the best, it caused an international scandal among people in the arts, at least. I hope good news, please write!!!  
.... (Mexico City, June 15, 1965)

Once the intellectual community was aware of the situation of Malay Roychoudhury, it became widely possible for this community of litterateurs, artists and poets to appreciate the fact that none other than Octavio Paz had mentioned and celebrated the proximity of Miguel Ginsberg and *vis a vis* Latin America and the Bengali poet of the "Hungry" generation. The news of Roychoudhury's arrest reached Paz through the editor of a journal *Salted Feathers* (1967), whose name was Dick Bakken who was in contact with Karl Weissner another editor who published poetry of the Hungryalists. Although there is no direct evidence of epistolary exchanges between Paz and the Beat poets in the early 1960s, it is certain that after the publication of the arrest of the poet in Kolkata in *Time*, Paz contacted him from New Delhi, where he was the ambassador of Mexico to India. In a letter dated July 16, 1966, we find:

Dear Mr. Malay Roychoudhury,

The last time I was in Calcutta, I met some of your friends who told me about you. I hope to find the opportunity to meet you when I visit your city or when I have the opportunity to come to Delhi. In the meantime, please accept my best regards.

Cordially,

Octavio Paz (New Delhi. July 16, 1966)

Octavio Paz got to know about the poetic movement led by Malay Roychoudhury and traveled to Kolkata to meet those who created that a stir in the Indian literary world. Today, Malay

Roychoudhury refers to the meeting with Paz as an episode from the distant past of almost fifty years: Paz, then the ambassador to India, was in Patna for the sole purpose of visiting Malay Roychoudhury. The Mexican appeared to have signed up for a tour of the famous Imlitala neighborhood with an entourage of security police and government officials routinely following him. The brief reunion was probably more important for Pazian mythology in India than for a real bonding of souls that these two poets could achieve. Malay, as Octavio Paz points out in *The Double Flame*, believed that "the carnal embrace is the apogee of the body. It is also the experience of the loss of identity: dispersion of forms in sensations and visions, falling into an oceanic substance and the evaporation of essence" (1993: 205). According to Octavio Paz, only when we are immersed in the erotic experience that: "We can only perceive the woman we love as a form that hides an irreducible reality or as a substance that annuls itself and annuls us" (205). The erotic experience is an inner experience that, in Bataille's words: "reveals nothing, and can neither found belief nor start from it" (1993: 14). In "Octavio Paz: India as a Palimpsest" Eunice Hernández, notes that this paradoxical condition is an aspect that describes life in the subcontinent, which the Mexican describes again as:

[...] a palimpsest made up of numerous layers that, when uncovered, reveal the coexistence of apparently irreconcilable opposites: the overwhelming diversity of the Hindu pantheon with the iron monotheism of Islam; industrialization with the Vedic, Muslim, and Mongolian past; "stark realism" with "delusional fantasy"; eroticism with the life of the ascetic; the overflowing luxury with the country of starvation". (2011: 84-85).

This paradox into which India places us, is important to say the least. In *La llama doble*, or *The Double Flame*, Paz defines this properly Hindu condition: "The central rite of Tantrism is copulation. Possessing a body and going through all the stages of the erotic embrace in it and with it, without excluding any of its deviations or aberrations, is ritually repeating the historical process of the creation, destruction, and recreation of the worlds" (208). According to Eunice Hernández, in Blanco:

The idea of sexual union as a path to liberation, typical of Hindu and Buddhist Tantrism, is present throughout the verses in the left column, but they find their sensory translation in the right column, and even if we decide to read the text as a unit we can see that these verses not only speak of carnal love but are part of a more complex philosophical reflection related to "otherness" and the ancient texts of India (2011: 78).

For Octavio Paz, love has a double dimension: "it is the supreme fortune and the supreme misfortune" (1993: 210). It is important to point out that, if one reviews the poetry of Malay Roychoudhury and that of Octavio Paz, the coincidences are highly significant. Due to this, it is possible to register both poets in the same conditions of experience. For Paz and Roychoudhury, the poem is a transgression that finds its highest expression in erotic inscription. In both the poetry of Roychoudhury and that of Paz, what we witness is the most intense manifestation of the mystical condition of poetic expression. The erotic gesture, as in *Stark Electric Jesus*, is the expression of ecstasy, the unhesitant language that embodies deep, amoral life, and a confession of pain through which union is achieved.

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