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INTERACTIVE ARTICLE COVER




About the Journal

Journal DOI	https://dx.doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha
Journal Home	www.rupkatha.com 
Indexed by	Scopus  Web of Science: Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI)  DOAJ 
Journal Metrics	CiteScore 2020: 0.2 SJR 2020: 0.162 SNIP 2020: 0.193 JCI 2020: 0.50

About the Issue

Issue	Volume 14, Number 3, 2022 Across Cultures: Ibero-America and India
Guest Editors	Ranjeeva Ranjan ¹ & Mala Shikha ²
Affiliation	¹ Universidad Católica del Maule, Talca, Chile, ² Doon University, Dehradun, India.
Issue DOI	https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v14n3
TOC	https://rupkatha.com/v14n3.php 

About the Article

Title	From the observatory in India: Julio Cortázar's kaleidoscopic gaze	
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Author ID	0000-0002-5477-8219 	
Funding	No funding received. Published free of any charge.	
Article DOI	https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v14n3.10	Pages: 1-13
Abstract	https://rupkatha.com/v14n310 	
Full-text PDF	https://rupkatha.com/V14/n3/v14n310.pdf 	
Article History	First Published: 08 October 2022	
Article Impact	Check Dynamic Impact 	
Copyright	Aesthetics Media Services 	
Licensing	Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 	

From the Observatory in India: Julio Cortázar's Kaleidoscopic Gazeⁱ

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Abstract

This article investigates two texts that the Argentine writer Julio Cortázar produced in relation to his experience and trips to India: *Prose of the observatory* (1972) and the text *Turismo aconsejable* [Advisable tourism] included in *Último round* (1969). Both texts contain photographs, which generate a kaleidoscopic gaze characterized by cultural distance and closeness, as well as aesthetic experience. The hypothesis is that a kind of observatory is generated from which the writer observes, perceives and interprets the sensitivity of Latin American and Indian cultures in dialogue. The objective of this study is to identify the Cortazarian kaleidoscopic gaze that permanently generates both an approach and a distance, through the reading of these hybrid texts whose photographs and words produce a playful and experimental space.

Keywords: Julio Cortázar, Prose of the Observatory, India, kaleidoscopic gaze, photography

Introduction

Argentine writer Julio Cortázar was born in Belgium in 1914 and died in Paris in 1984, where he lived the last 35 years of his life. From this and other biographical data, we can induce that travel, displacement and polyglottism are part of his life. As might be known to many Indian readers, his greatest literary achievement is identified in his narrative, especially the short story that deals with the fantastic (both in experimentations with the rules of genre and in the use of language). As regards the novelistic genre, *Hopscotch* (1963) is the work that places him among the most important Latin American writers of the so-called -by the edition market- *Latin-American boom*, and this is due to the formal renewal that revolutionizes the notion of the novel. It is quite reasonable to state that there are several reasons that bring Cortázar closer to India: his trip to the country (he was a great traveler), his experience with Indian culture, his friendship with the Mexican Octavio Paz who was the ambassador for a while there and his study on Orientalism. While in India, Cortázar gives priority to the gaze and observation as a source of empirical knowledge and proposes a kaleidoscopic give-off in the writing of each text.

Therefore, the interest of this article is to study the construction of the idea of the observatory - paraphrasing the title of his work- to refer to Cortázar's narratives constructed from a visual perspective related to experience. Through a particular kaleidoscopic gaze, we will study two texts of the writer: the short story "*Advisable tourism*" and the short novel *Prose of the Observatory*. Starting from there, we are interested in analyzing how the experience and the perception are connected with the optical sense.

It is important to remember that the first title of *Rayuela (Hopscotch)* was *Mandala*, precisely for his studies and interest that kept relation to this Indian universe, the circularity, and his interest in the spherical and fragmentary. After considering it a far-fetched title, Cortázar prefers to get it right to a playful title that does not involve mystical meanings. On the other hand, in his correspondence, some statements refer to the criticism of the "spiritual search" which he does not believe exists, nor things like personal salvation. Unlike his friend Octavio Paz who resided as the ambassador of Mexico in India or the Cuban writer Severo Sarduy, Cortázar keeps his distance from the spiritual path of certain oriental practices (such as Buddhism, yoga, meditation, etc.).

In a letter to his friend Eduardo Hugo Castagnino, before traveling to India, he writes: "Try to see with my poor Western eyes a little of that India that my "Vedantist" friends propose to me as an example"ⁱⁱⁱ (2012a: 104-5). Cortázar's first trip to India leaves in his work and biography an imprint of exoticism and mysticism, an image between curiosity and the idealized perspective of the East as a land of peace.

On his second trip in 1968, Cortázar traveled to India to attend a conference given by Indira Gandhi on topics about countries with social and economic inequalities and extremely harsh living conditions. As a consequence of this trip, he writes "Advisable tourism" (Turismo aconsejable), which is included in his hybrid book *Last round (Último round)* published in 1969. It is a kind of story-booklet, extremely sarcastic about tourism in India, which was written after he visited the Howrah Station in Calcutta. This original story format also includes photographs, precisely from the documentary *Calcutta* (1969) by French filmmaker Louis Malle. In this sort of photo essay (Alazraki, 1987), the images dialogue with the ironic voice of the narrator who severely criticizes the "poor" western tourists, in search of "enjoying the landscape" of bloody realities and precarious lives in order to rejoice their spirits. Cortázar assumed this critical position by associating the Indian reality with the Latin American one, both plagued by injustice, misery and poverty. In a letter sent to his friend Julio Silva on 9 March 1968, he added:

India shows me horribly what is the third world, and I feel very bad and with constant tension in my stomach; I am not, of course, the aesthete that I was in 1956, when I limited myself attentively to see the beauty of India without worrying too much about the rest, which is pretty much everythingⁱⁱⁱ (Cortázar, 2012b, p. 1237).

In this regard, it is significant that this second trip was made just during the birth of the so-called "French May" of 1968, whose epicenter was Paris. This event impacted radically Western culture and afterwards, globally; its purpose was a revolution of ideas against conservatism and in favor of more inclusive ideas and diversity of thought. Being a resident in the French capital, Cortázar will be one of the spokespersons of this socio-political event in Argentina and in general in Latin America, translating some facts, recounting experiences and adhering to leftist revolts in general.

In connection with this, it is important to observe that the writer participated in 1975 in Belgium as an Argentine intellectual representing the Russell II Tribunal in favor of peace and against the repression that was then developing in Latin America. During this second trip to India, Cortázar's political position and consciousness as a Latin American intellectual are evidenced in his travels, acts, letters and in many of his literary writings of this period.

Cortázar's narrative between art and literature: the kaleidoscopic vision

Thanks to his multiple and dispersed interests outside the merely intellectual and literary sphere, Julio Cortázar wrote several books in which he uses the resource of the visual image provided by photography, drawings and art reproductions. These works by Cortázar are characterized by a knowledge of surrealism and are notably influenced by collage, the practice of collecting, automatic writing and the deep admiration of Cortázar for artists and writers of the movement.

Some books were written and designed as art books as *Territorios* (1978) [Territories], *Prosa del Observatorio* (1972) [Prose of the observatory], *Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires* (1968), *La vuelta al día en ochenta mundos* (1967) [Around the Day in Eighty Worlds], *Último Round* (1969) [Last round], among many others, which are included in a minor edition area in relation to his immense production, considered today as one of the most representative of the Latin American literature.

Cortázar, in these books and despite being a canonical writer shows the fissures and borders between the image and the text, the reader and the spectator and between literature and art, which provokes the following questioning: how do the image and the word interact in texts linked to India? What particular traits do these aesthetics and writing have? As we mentioned before, most of his books that include the image are characterized by the aesthetics of collage, the inclusion of poems, pamphlets, essays and micro stories (in their original versions) as an object to play with and see and also to read. In a different way, *the prose of the observatory* is limited to the activity of creating a map of the observatories of India and making an incursion into Jai Singh's architecture, in which the photograph is the driving force of experimentation with the text. Hence, *Turismo aconsejable* works as a critical and experimental photo essay on the social reality of India, through the otherness gaze, which observes Indian reality, people and scenarios as if they were ornamental objects of an open museum.

Now, along this literary map through territories of India seen under the Cortazarian kaleidoscope, we point towards the construction of the gaze with a double fold, functioning as a fervent connotation of the senses, "like a volcano that springs from the sea and looks at the sky for the first time with its cyclops pupil"^{iv}.

From this logic, optical perception creates a kaleidoscopic model that in *Proses of the observatory* is translated into an overlapping temporality and open spatialities, which acquire anachronistic senses. In *Rayuela*, on the other hand, the kaleidoscope territory is affirmed, "where a lucid eye could peek into the kaleidoscope and understand the large polychrome rose"^v. In *Territorios*, we read that:

No one could be surprised that this persistence of elementary contacts condemned him to look at his surroundings as through a kaleidoscope, forgetting the most important thing to choose the games of light in the faceted bottoms of perfume bottles or prisms in the drops of water, placing each glass of the screen separating the courtyards of childhood^{vi}.
(Cortázar, 2002, p.108)

The photographic territory expands to other flexible universes without borders: lithographs, sculptures, drawings, collages, etc. These multiple visual devices invite a playful reading and stimulate visual perception:

Ah, how to tear off this thick slime of simile figures show you on another level, on other mirrors, on screens and kaleidoscopes and different projections, the double journey of the traveler and the traveled, the ebb and flow in which a desert of golden sands and sandals ceased to be different or complementary, how to give you to breathe of a country in which each milestone is a different fragrance, dry and rough in the woods or rocky ridges, soft and mossy, there where thirst and waters seek and confuse before a new high, of a new slumber in the phosphorescent night of the closed eyelids, of the lost mouth in a source of trembling fishes^{vii} (Cortázar, 2002, p.140)

From this perspective, we agree with the author's idea that in "this finished and perfect world, where the ruptures and the tensions close even more in the circuit of each painting, there is a way to look at what reveals on another level, that actually makes open work to show, in-between, what the Indian poet calls the Reality"^{viii}. The gaze penetrating both the image and the text also plays with space and time. We can also identify this mismatch timing in *Prose of the Observatory*.

That hour that can ever come out of every hour, hole in the network of time, that way of being between, not above or behind but between, that time hole to which one accesses the lee of other hours, of the countless life with its hours of front and side, the time for everything, things in the right time, being in a hotel room or on a platform^{ix}

Prose of the observatory is clear literary experimentation based on photographic suggestion; photography in this case functions as an inherent part of the scriptural process. This book points out the question of experimentation with the word, starting from the image as a source of contrast: literature and photography alternate in a narrative between the surrealist and the experimental routed in dense metaphysical content. The photographs of the observatory of Jaipur, in India, with their geometries and textures, are expressed in writing that at first seems to be automatic, then mystical; finally, it is shaped as the image read and seen as a literary creation.

To observe, to perceive, to write

It is important to note that *Prose from the observatory* is a "rare" book in the Cortazarian narrative. As mentioned above, it was published in 1972 and contains photographs that Cortázar himself made during his trip to India. Upon returning to Paris, he asked his friend Antonio Gálvez to help him with the development of these photographic films and maximize their visual quality. The photographs are of the eccentric architectural works of the Indian Jai Singh from the observatories of Jaipur and Delhi. The circulation characteristics of the work are limited-both at the time of publication and at present-and, the complexity of the literary style in conjunction with the visual geometry of the observatory creates a hybrid and fragmentary aesthetic. The mechanism would operate in this way: from the prose, we observe, fixing the view on the black and white photographs of the geometric observatory.

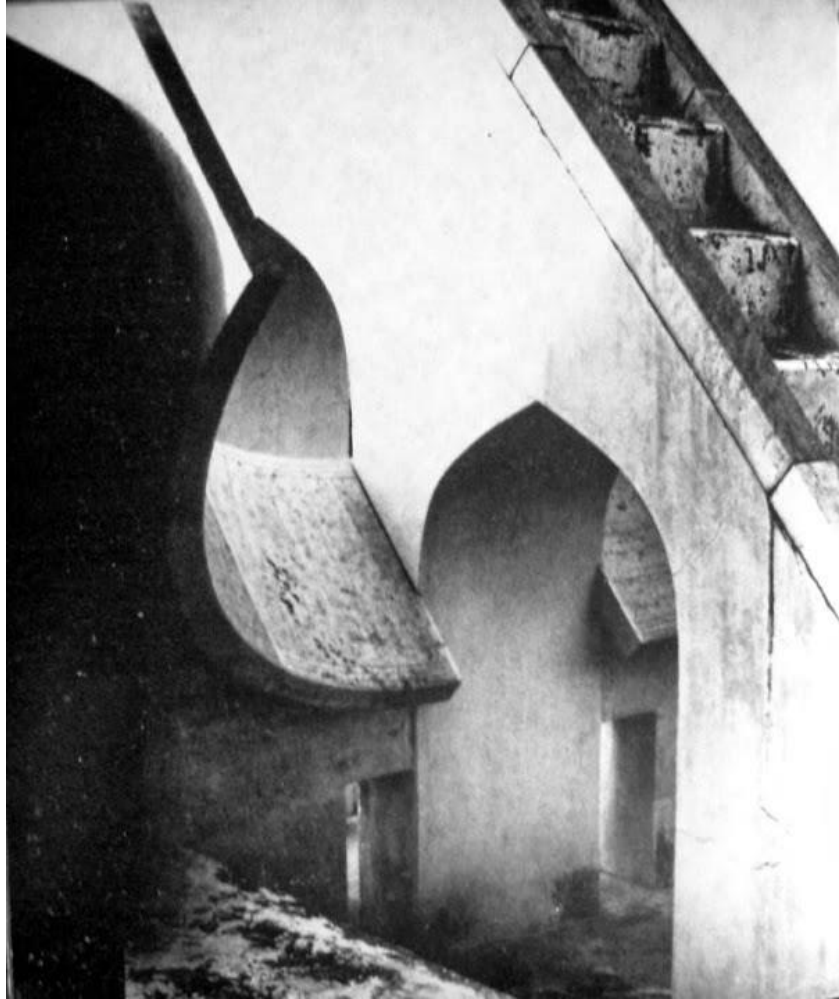


Figure 1. Prosa del Observatorio, Julio Cortázar

This book also pays tribute to Novalis romantic book *Hymns to the night*. A series of mystical elements compose a narrative whose territory between heaven and earth is written between poetry and prose. As part of the result of his traveling spirit, some photographs testify Cortázar's displacements as they also reveal literature written from experience. This experience is born as much from traveling to other places -that is, from moving- as from art aesthetics, which also converge in a literary dislocation.

The dislocation occurs in the oscillating gaze between the images interacting with the text, which observation goes towards a permanent entry and exit of the visual and verbal scenarios, that is entry and exit of what is seen and read, of the invisible and the visible, functioning within a spiral mechanism. This mechanism is set in motion by eels, which are the initial protagonists of the story, and are configured around a vortex. The speed is generated by the automatic writing (surreal technique) that is experienced at the beginning of the text.

By considering this narrative as a reflection that leans towards introspection and written philosophy in a literary way, we notice the eagerness to combine surrealism with existentialism in a cosmic manifesto of the condition of being. The observatory functions as an autonomous city that combines the celestial and the terrestrial, the aquatic where the eels live with the cosmic of

the sky where the stars dwell (Figure 1). The horizontally and vertically crossed planes converge in the narrative creating an urban manifesto of the astral: "nothing more material and dialectical and tangible than the pure image that is not tied to the eve, that seeks beyond to attend better, to fight against the rampant matter of the closed, of nations against nations and blocks against blocks" ^x(Cortázar, 1999, p.77).

Architecture, astronomy and photography are part of the experimentation of this prose that traces spatial cartographies articulated with thought (Figure 2). The figure of Jai Singh plays an important role in the diagram of this narrative, as Singh devised his architectural system based on the structure of the Hindu Vedas, articulating the urban with the celestial. The monument in Jaipur (Jantar Mantar, which refers to an instrument that serves to calculate) is a type of construction whose objective, as an observatory, was to establish itself as an astronomical table and predict both the time and the movements of the sun, the moon and the planets.



Figure 2. Prosa del Observatorio, Julio Cortázar

The monument combines the idea of different religions and ideas of Indian society of eighteenth-century Indian society, as reflected in architectural innovations. The elements present in the book are closely linked to the light and shadows of the photograph, joining those of water and air. Aware of modernity, Cortázar returns to the mythical past and reflects on the position from where he contemplates the observatory:

Everything is answered, they thought with a century interval Jai Singh and Baudelaire, from the viewpoint of the highest tower of the observatory the sultan must have looked for the system, the encrypted network that gave him the keys to the contact: how could I have ignored that the animal Earth would suffocate in slow immobility if it were not forever in

the astral steel lung, the stealthy traction of the moon and the sun attracting and rejecting the green breast of the waters ^{xi}(Cortázar,1999, p.19)

Contemplated from Cortázar's kaleidoscope, Jai Singh and Baudelaire are on the same metaphysical level. From the apparent sculptural immobility, a mobile city is built where time and space flow and they turn to their sources to renew themselves. The mobility that particularized the gaze also shapes cities, characters, minds and bodies. Protagonists or figures move in and out of a picture, a photograph or a portrait, as Baudelaire did when he saw the masses, he penetrated them, and then walked away to contemplate them from outside. These little *flâneurs*, *cronopios* or eels that inhabit the stories, experience a kind of perceptual sensibility beyond the story, that is, beyond time and space. Another peculiar contribution of *Prose of the observatory* is that it is composed as a cosmogonic poem, which alternates mystical eroticism with corporality at a carnal level, characterized as sacred.

May the red-haired night see you walk face to face in the air, assisting the appearance of the figures of sleep and insomnia, that a hand descends slowly on naked backs until tear that wail of love that comes from the fire and the cave, first sweet truce of fear of the species^{xii} (1999, p.75)

From seduction as a ritual of the conquest of the body, desire emanates on the one hand, from the sexual referred to the organs and the incitement of instinct, and on the other hand, is homologated to a high level of spirituality unreached or as vertigo for possessing a knowledge of the cosmos: "the fangs will once again sink into your thighs, into your sex, into your throat; we have not yet found the rhythm of the black serpent, we are in the mere skin of the world and man"^{xiii} (1999, p.73).

Between seduction and desire, contemplation and stalking, lucidity and confusion, corporality is configured on an impulse of literary creation that founds a myth of vision. The sacred occupies much of the literary space that is, the sacredness of the bodily as part of knowledge rituals.

Cages of light, gynaecium of stars possessed one by one, stripped by an algebra of oiled phalanges, by an alchemy of wet knees, despondent and rhythmic of an Endymion that turns the fortunes and launches against Selene a network of spasms of marble, a swarm of parameters that will descend it to deliver it to that lover who awaits it at the top of the mathematical labyrinth, a man of skin of sky, sultan of quivering favorites who surrender from an endless midnight bee rain ^{xiv}(1999, p.49).

Body writing is then the coordinates that emerge from these readings since the body itself is writing. The photography presents certain characteristics such as black and white, blurred quality, geometric shapes and shadow games, all contributing to the creation of this peculiar corporality. This way, the body is exposed as its own photography, in the play between the space of clarity and that of darkness. Consequently, a tempo-spatial anachrony is produced by photography and the body is represented as a place of existence and as an open space, operating through the writing as a gesture that touches and disrupts the senses.

Turismo aconsejable

The photo-essay *Turismo aconsejable* is part of the book *Último Round*, published one year after the second trip of Cortázar to India, in 1969. Originally, this book-object was designed by the author himself as a huge atlas containing a first floor and a lower part. This was due to the conformation and arrangement of the images and the writing in the book: the ground floor was composed of a fraction smaller than the first floor and between both parts, neither corresponding, just one story, "The broken dolls"

The way the book was designed makes it peculiar since it proposed a form of dislocated reading, playful and non-linear. Each fragment, poem or story is presented without the logic of continuation, but rather they are overlapping fragments in a disorderly manner. *Turismo aconsejable* is then located on the first floor of the book in which are shown frames of the film *Calcutta*, by Louis Malle.

It is important to clarify that in the *Último Round* reedition, this previous structure was not continued but, on the contrary, no care was taken to continue with the original proposal of Cortazarian reading. Instead, it was published in two small volumes, whose image quality (especially the photographs) is really poor often they are between two pages. Or the representation is barely understandable. This significantly alters the quality of the book, of course, but above all, the intention of Cortázar to present a hybrid book with an interactive reading proposal between the image and the text is negated.



Figure 3 . Último Round, 2004, p. 135

Turismo aconsejable, as mentioned before, is presented as a story related to the experience of Cortázar's trip to Calcutta. Written in the form of a tourist brochure, it is addressed to a typical Western traveler of the consumer market "if you want to know India you have to look out for a while at Howrah Station, then you put on the lightest clothes possible, wait until it is ten in the morning or seven in the afternoon, and get a taxi" ^{xv}(2004, p.124)

Regarding the tourist experience, it's important to point out that it is a way of changing habits and daily life routines. To travel means also to confront otherness and difference which also means that receptivity, curiosity, attention and interest are the focus. This way "tourist mobility can lead to various bifurcations. Through the temporary autonomization from the place of domicile, it allows one to distance oneself from the roles one usually plays (...) the tourist's condition turns him into an outsider to the destination he visits" (Bachimon et al., 2016, p.219).

It is very interesting, you arrive in Calcutta by plane because no one thinks to arrive by train with that heat and those delays, you stay in a luxury hotel downtown, the only ones prepared to receive a European or a rich Indian (...) you arrive in Calcutta by plane and rest for a while in the hotel before going out to see the city (125; 128)^{xvi}

The ironic and sarcastic tone is part of the criticism that Cortázar makes and that goes hand in hand with his awareness and his political role as a Latin American intellectual who aimed at vindicating justice and denouncing social inequalities. His second trip to India exposed him to realities similar to those living in Latin America, expanding the visual and perceptive universe that includes many colonized countries. It is interesting to note that the headline of the story presents a poem by the American writer Gary Snyder, part of the famous Beat Generation, thus confirming this tone between critical and ironic. The poem title is "The Market":

They eat feces
 in the dark
 in the stone floors
 one-legged animals, hoppings cows
 limping dogs blind cats
 crunching garbage in the market
 broken fingers
 cabbage
 head on the ground
 who has young face open pit eyes
 between the bullock carts and people
 head pivot with the footsteps passing by
 dark scrotum spilled on the street penis laid b this thigh torso
 turns with the sun
 I came to buy a few bananas by the Ganges

As an open market, the experience of visiting as if it were a tourist place, the train station, allows you to ironize the marketing of misery, a frequent event in the tourist market of Third World countries.

... make their way through the endless labyrinth of families rooted in the ground, the fires of rice pots, the pieces of filthy mats that mark a possession, a territory, and where pots, combs, pieces of mirrors are piled, cans with nails or wires, sometimes sharply a flower found on the street and put there because it is beautiful or sacred or simply a flower"(2004, p.131)^{xvii}

The description of the station contrasts with images of people sleeping, objects accumulation, of sad and dirty faces, which are part of the documentary (Figure 3). Cortázar's text tells in a crude and detailed way the great community that daily inhabits the Howrah Station, which could be compared to hell "You have entered hell for nothing more than five rupees" and to misery "Now he suspects that woman was dead and that the children who played, throwing mango pieces, knew that the woman was dead and misery". These descriptions dialogue with the photographs that also represent the scenario of hunger and the horror of extreme poverty "their bodies are skeletal, appearing between rags that have already known so many bodies'^{xviii} .

Conclusion

Throughout this literary mapping of Indian territories seen under the Cortazarian kaleidoscope, we point towards the construction of the gaze when it acquires a double fold, functioning as a fervent connotation of senses "like a volcano that springs from the sea and looks at the sky for the first time with its cyclops pupil" (Cortázar, 2002: 139). The gaze is practically transformed into a pose, in an inevitable way to reverse the visual perception and at the same time is molded as an open hole, both visual and verbal.

All along this article, it was possible to study how Cortázar, after his second trip to India, is positioning himself, through photographs in the face of certain writing policies that come up from his kaleidoscopic gaze, characterized by a playful and open narrative. In this way, the gaze is perceived as an observatory itself and as a mutant kaleidoscope where the senses flow as the forms change and distort. The texts that emerge from the trips to India possess this kind of writing identity given by the photographs and by the literary experimentation.

The prose emerges from the observatory formed by Cortázar's gaze in front of the culture, society and imagination of India, seen as strange; conceiving the observatory as a place from which to watch, observe and perceive the otherness, the strange and the unusual, is, from my perspective, a point from which the gaze seeks its place.

This gaze, which in *Prose of the observatory* functions as a fold, interferes in the reading of this kind of "extended prose poem", in which it is in turn, experienced from photography. This image merges into the experience of observing and writing. Hence, the novel attempts to verbalize his kaleidoscopic vision of reality through the flow that emerges from contact and photographic interpretation. In *Turismo aconsejable*, the complicit gaze homologates the diverse to the own, and from there a criticism is generated towards the otherness (that would be the tourists) who consume that diversity as a hobby, as to delight their vision with places of misery. It is interesting to note that although Cortázar was also a tourist, in his text, this distance is removed in order to link his vision of Latin American experiences to those of India.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest.

Funding Disclosure/Acknowledgement

No funding received to publish this article.

Notes

ⁱ In this paper, when not alternately noted, translations from Spanish texts are done by the author.

ⁱⁱ Tratar de ver con mis pobres ojos occidentales un poco de esa India que mis amigos “vedantistas” me proponen como ejemplo”.

ⁱⁱⁱ La India me muestra horriblemente lo que es el tercer mundo, y me siento muy mal y con una constante crispación de estómago; no soy, desde luego, el esteta que era en 1956, cuando me limitaba atentamente a ver lo bello de la India sin preocuparme demasiado por el resto, que es casi todo

^{iv} como un volcán que brota del mar y mira por primera vez el cielo con su pupila de cílope

^v donde un ojo lúcido pudiese asomarse al calidoscopio y entender la gran rosa policroma

^{vi} A nadie podría extrañarle que esa persistencia de los contactos elementales lo condenara a mirar su entorno como a través de un calidoscopio, olvidándose de lo más importante para escoger los juegos de la luz en los tapones facetados de los frascos de perfume o prismándose en las gotas de agua, la colocación de cada vidrio de la mampara que separaba los patios de casa de la infancia.

^{vii} Ah, cómo arrancar este espeso limo de figuras símiles mostrarte en otro nivel, en otros espejos, en pantallas y calidoscopios y proyecciones diferentes, el doble viaje del viajero y lo viajado, el flujo y el reflujo en los que un desierto de arenas doradas y unas sandalias cesaban de ser diferentes o complementarios, cómo darte a respirar el país en el que cada jalón es una fragancia diferente, seca y áspera en los bosques o las crestas rocosas, blanda y musgosa, allí donde la sed y las aguas buscan y confunden antes de un nuevo alto, de un nuevo adormecerse en la fosforescente noche de los párpados cerrados, de la boca perdida en una fuente de temblorosos peces.

^{viii} “este mundo concluido y perfecto, donde las rupturas y las tensiones cierran aún más en el circuito de cada pintura, hay una manera de mirar lo que revela en otro plano, que hace de verdad obra abierta para mostrar, en el intervalo, lo que el poeta indio llama la Realidad” .

^{ix} Esa hora que puede llegar alguna vez fuera de toda hora, agujero en la red del tiempo, esa manera de estar entre, no por encima o detrás sino entre, esa hora orificio a la que se accede al socaire de las otras horas, de la incontable vida con sus horas de frente y de lado, su tiempo para cada cosa, sus cosas en el preciso tiempo, estar en una pieza de hotel o de un andén.

^x nada más material y dialéctico y tangible que la pura imagen que no se ata a la víspera, que busca más allá para atender mejor, para batirse contra la materia rampante de lo cerrado, de naciones contra naciones y bloques contra bloques (Cortázar, 1999, p.77).

^{xi} Todo se responde, pensaron con un siglo de intervalo Jai Singh y Baudelaire, desde el mirador de la más alta torre del observatorio el sultán debió buscar el sistema, la red cifrada que le diera las claves del contacto: cómo hubiera podido ignorar que el animal Tierra se asfixiaría en una lenta inmovilidad si no estuviera desde siempre en el pulmón de acero astral, la tracción sigilosa de la luna y del sol atrayendo y rechazando el pecho verde de las aguas (Cortázar, 1999, p.19)

^{xii} Que la noche pelirroja os vea andar de cara al aire, favorecer la aparición de las figuras del sueño y del insomnio, que una mano baje lentamente por espaldas desnudas hasta arrancar ese quejido de amor que viene del fuego y la caverna, primera dulce tregua del miedo de la especie.

^{xiii} "los colmillos volverán a clavarse en tus muslos, en tu sexo, en tu garganta; todavía no hemos hallado el ritmo de la serpiente negra, estamos en la mera piel del mundo y del hombre."

^{xiv} Jaulas de luz, gineceo de estrellas poseídas una a una, desnudadas por un álgebra de aceitadas falanges, por una alquimia de húmedas rodillas, desquite maniático y cadencioso de un Endimión que vuelve las suertes y lanza contra Selene una red de espasmos de mármol, un enjambre de parámetros que la desceñirán hasta entregarla a ese amante que la espera en lo más alto del laberinto matemático, hombre de piel de cielo, sultán de estremecidas favoritas que se rinden desde una interminable lluvia de abejas de medianoche.

^{xv} "si quiere conocer la India tiene que asomarse un rato a la Howrah Station , entonces usted se pone la ropa más liviana posible, espera a que sean las diez de la mañana o las siete de la tarde, y se hace llevar en taxi".

^{xvi} Es muy interesante, usted llega a Calcuta en avión porque ya a nadie se le ocurre llegar en tren con ese calor y esas demoras, usted se aloja en un gran hotel del centro, los únicos preparados para recibir a un europeo o a un indio adinerado (...) usted llega a Calcuta en avión y descansa un rato en el hotel antes de salir a conocer la ciudad.

^{xvii} ... abrirse paso en el interminable laberinto de las familias arracimadas en el suelo, los fuegos de las ollas del arroz, los pedazos de esteras mugrientas y que señalan una posesión, un territorio, y donde se amontonan cacerolas, peines, pedazos de espejos, latas con clavos o alambres, a veces bruscamente una flor encontrada en la calle y puesta allí porque es hermosa o sagrada o simplemente una flor" (131).

^{xviii} sus cuerpos se dibujan esqueléticos asomando entre harapos que han conocido ya tantos cuerpos.

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