PARISIAN FLANERIE: BAUDELAIRE, BENJAMIN, AND CORTAZAR

by

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(Under the Direction of RONALD BOGUE)

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to trace the idea of the *flâneur*, developed in Nineteenth-century Paris. The following chapters examine the inception of this idea with French poet Charles Baudelaire in the mid-nineteenth century, its implementation in the writings of German essayist and literary critic Walter Benjamin, and finally its manifestation in the writings of Argentine expatriate Julio Cortázar. With special attention to Cortázar's work, *Rayuela* and its use of *flânerie* in both characters and form. The analyses examine the use of *flânerie* in the works of Baudelaire, Benjamin, and Cortázar and how these have evolved from the nineteenth to the twentieth century.

INDEX WORDS: Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin, Julio Cortázar, Paris, *flâneur*, Postcolonial studies.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1848, Charles Baudelaire, having a passing interest in politics, participated in the Revolutions of 1848 that established the French Second Republic under Napoleon III. However, he later admitted that his political interests were fleeting and continued to dedicate his life to literature. However, Baudelaire, famed *flâneur*-poet of the nineteenth century, crafted astute observations of the effects of modernism on his home city of Paris. While Baudelaire's poetry found a small contemporary audience for their literary value, greater attention was paid to their subject matter, which is largely the idea of the *flâneur* in Nineteenth-century Paris.

Baudelaire's Nineteenth-century *flâneur* walked the city of Paris in order to experience it, creating a persona specific to his time. During the nineteenth century the Parisian *flâneur* played two roles: he acted as the observer of street life in the city as well as its documenter in the form of art and literature. Baudelaire himself functioned as a *flâneur*, writing lyric poetry in response to the changed city he observed as modernity took hold of Paris in the nineteenth century. Baudelaire's poetry highlights the changes the city underwent as a result of modern industrialization as well as the changes that ensued from the reorganization of Paris under Baron Georg-Eugene Haussmann during the Second Empire of Napoleon III. Due to a reorganization of peoples throughout the city, the *flâneur* became a character on the margins of society, a kind of in-between character. The interstitial nature of the *flâneur* allowed him to play this double role as both observer and documenter as he passed time in the Parisian arcades.

The *flâneur* was born in the nineteenth century and began to pass his time in interstitial spaces in the city such as the arcades that spanned the spaces between buildings and were filled with shops of all kinds. In the twentieth century Walter Benjamin declared the arcades to be the most important space to the Nineteenth-century *flâneur* because they were worlds in miniature, containing everything the walking observer might want. Beginning in the 1920s, Benjamin attempted to create an enormous project detailing life in Nineteenth-century Paris, with a particular focus on the interstitial spaces of the *passages couverts de Paris*, or, the arcades that found themselves filled with a new capitalist consumerism created by modernism in the city.

Walter Benjamin was a German-Jewish intellectual who functioned as a literary critic, essayist, philosopher, translator, and sociologist. Much like the *flâneur* to which he devoted much of his studies, Benjamin found himself acting as an interstitial character in his life and work. Consequently, an in-depth study of *flânerie* in Nineteenth-century Paris allowed Benjamin to participate in the practice he was studing.

In his efforts to create a document detailing the Nineteenth-century, Benjamin too found himself practicing *flânerie* just as Baudelaire had before him. In his role as Twentieth-century observer-documenter, Walter Benjamin created what has come to be called the *Arcades Project*, an unfinished project created over the course of his life that did not appear in print until 1980. In spite of its importance in Twentieth-century literary criticism and critical theory, the *Arcades Project* is surrounded by controversy in the manner in which its fragments have been organized by its editors; much like Paris of the nineteenth century, Benjamin's tome has undergone its own version of reconstruction.

Benjamin's *Arcades Project* is nothing if not fragmented. Reconstructed by editors following the Second World War and Benjamin's death, the work gives the reader no indication

of the manner in which it is meant to be read. No directions are provided; the reader is simply allowed to wander from section to section in a contemporary form of literary *flânerie*. The reader of Benjamin's work is thus provided with an idea of how the Nineteenth-century *flâneur* wandered aimlessly through the streets of Paris.

Over the past two centuries Paris has held a high place in international arts and culture, and Latin America in particular has had a continued love affair with the city even after the end of the colonial era. This Latin American love affair persists not just because of Paris's position as beacon of the Old World but for its continued and understated appreciation of Latin America and its works. "After the colonial era, which ended in the early decades of the nineteenth century for most countries, Latin America was naturally drawn toward France. The ideals of the French Revolution, the efforts to establish a democratic republic, as well as its rich intellectual tradition, ensured that France represented the best of modern Europe…" (Weiss 1). Latin Americans turned their attention to Europe for guidance, and France in particular largely because of linguistic, educational, and religious similarities; however, because of colonialism Spain was not a desirable location in spite of their shared language. As Paris grew to become the international seat of arts and culture it became a kind of home away from home for the Latin Americans who took up residence there after their newfound independence from Spanish rule in the nineteenth century.

In recent history the French capital has been an example of urban modernity, the erotic, metaphysical exploration, and the problems associated with both colonialism and the postcolonial cultural identity that rests in Europe and Latin America; ideas that are highly visible in Julio Cortázar's novel *Rayuela*. "[This text] stretch[es] beyond the self-reflexive mode to position Paris in transnational juxtaposition to its former colonies and to Latin America"

(Schwartz, *Writing* Paris 33). In this text, the city is caught in the middle of playing two roles for Cortázar's Third World expatriates in Europe: the perpetuation of postcolonial cultural hegemony and the seat of the defeat of colonialism. In this double role Paris is home to a host of Latin American expatriates desiring to experience the Old World while living a life of exile in Cortázar's work.

Of course, Paris has long been a city of exiles, Cortázar being one of them. Although he was born in Europe, Julio Cortázar was raised in Argentina, spending the majority of his childhood outside of Buenos Aires. Cortázar studied at the University of Buenos Aires, and although he never completed his degree, he went on to teach in local high schools and ultimately accepted a position teaching French at the National University of Cuyo in Argentina. In early 1950 Cortázar made his first visit to Paris. On his transatlantic journey he met a young woman who became his inspiration for the character of La Maga in *Rayuela*, and whom he ran into repeatedly in the streets throughout his time in Paris (Weiss 82). Opposed to the Argentine government of Juan Domingo Perón, Julio Cortázar officially emigrated to France in 1951, and lived and worked there for the remainder of his life. "That first decade in Paris worked a gradual transformation in Cortázar…As the protagonist Oliveira saw it in *Rayuela*, Paris was 'a mandala through which one must pass without dialectics, a labyrinth where pragmatic formulas are of no use except to get lost in'" (Weiss 82-83).

Living in Paris, Cortázar secured a job as a translator for UNESCO, translating into Spanish classic works of literature from Daniel Defoe to Edgar Allan Poe. The influences of these international authors are evident in his work, and it is interesting to note that, "Cortázar, like many others of his generation, did not really discover the literature of his own country until he was well into adulthood;" the majority of his literary influences came from abroad,

specifically Europe (Weiss 81). This disparity is due in part to the fact that there was more communication between individual Latin American nations and Paris than there was between the nations themselves because of ongoing political conflicts throughout the region. These political issues created a host of Latin American exile writers abroad; in fact travel was an essential part of Latin American writing during this time and Paris was practically a required stop for an expatriate writer. Given the long history of Latin American writers traveling to Paris that reaches back into the nineteenth century avant-garde, Weiss considers the city to be the most important place a Latin American writer could visit because it changed the course of Latin American writing, as,

> …Paris was the only place where such a tradition [of writing] might develop, due to its singular position culturally and politically. Throughout the nineteenth century, French culture, literature especially, stimulated the discovery of a native culture within Latin America; the twentieth century saw the flourishing of that culture whose very identity was changing—amid increased immigration from Europe and beyond—even as it was being articulated (2).

From the nineteenth century on, French literature had a great impact on Latin American writers, including such famed writers as Octavio Paz and Gabriel García Márquez, that lasted well into the mid-twentieth century when it manifested itself in Latin American expatriates like Cortázar himself.

Like Horatio Oliveira, his narrator in *Rayuela*, Cortázar lived with a sense of exile in Paris, not wanting to return to his native Argentina, a place where he no longer felt at home. However, unlike some individuals living in this condition, Cortázar felt that exile provided an author with a sense of opportunity that might not be found elsewhere. "In a paper delivered at

Cérisy in 1978, Cortázar called for writers to turn away from the negative value of exile, to profit instead from 'an opportunity for self-examination.' He urged the exile, in a 'deliberate act of distancing,' to use humor as a resource and to reinvent himself by opposing the conventional" (Wiess 93). *Rayuela* does just this; it is an extremely unconventional novel filled with deliberate acts of distancing, particularly from its narrator, Horatio Oliveira. Cortázar uses interstitial spaces such as simple city bridges and the arcades popularized during Baudelaire's time both to create and destroy distance for his characters. "For Cortázar, the apprehension of a hidden truth that he sought in his writing arose from a sense of displacement, an 'interstitial zone,' a state of being *in between* (Weiss 83). This idea of being in-between characterizes not only his choice of locations, but also the actions of his characters and the style of his work.

Cortázar's characters are rooted in the character of the *flâneur*, a wanderer who played several roles in Nineteenth-century Paris. The idea of occupying an in-between space is something that comes naturally for the Nineteenth-century *flâneur*. A virtual ghost of interstitial spaces, the *flâneur* poses at once as observer and documenter of Parisian street life in the nineteenth century. The *flâneur* observes with the aim of experiencing and then creating something from that experience, just as both Benjamin and Cortázar do in their respective analyses of Twentieth-century Paris and the modern *flâneur*.

Baudelaire's Nineteenth-century *flâneur* wandered the streets of Paris in order to experience the nature of the city, and both Benjamin and Cortázar create Twentieth-century works that create a world in which the reader himself can become such a *flâneur*. Benjamin's collection of convolutes are organized loosely into related sections, but the reader is free to wander about them at his own choosing, there is no particular path that is deemed more "correct" than any other. Cortázar combined existential questioning with experimental writing techniques,

resulting in something highly original. In spite of the Table of Directions that Cortázar suggests at the beginning of his work, *Rayuela* is open-ended and the reader is encouraged to arrange his own readings based on the material Cortázar provides.

> *Rayuela*…dissolves time and itself into particles, decomposes wholes and orders itself into gaps, dots, or syncopes, pulverizes space into variegated 'landscapes,' breaks language and information into a disparity of schizoid viewpoints. From its opening lines, the novel explicitly gives…linear and non-linear instructions for reading its so-called sequences (Chatzivasileiou 411-412).

If, as Benjamin posits, the modern city is the realization of man's ancient dream of a labyrinth, these works could be considered cities of writing through which the reader is free to hopscotch at will.

The title of Cortázar's novel *Rayuela*, or "hopscotch" in English, is particularly important in and of itself. Historically the hopscotch graphic has been associated with mysticism, and the Spanish version still begins with tierra (earth) and ends with the destination of cielo (heaven). Cortázar, however, turns it into a game of writing where the reader's destination is tied to that of his protagonist, Horatio Oliveira. The hopscotch chart serves as a pattern for the construction of *Rayuela* with the idea of "the center" taking the place of heaven as the destination. In the first section of the book describes Oliveira's hopeful-hopeless search for the truth, indicated by La Maga. By the second section Cortázar makes it evident that truth is not obtainable through a dialectic since the goal is continually shifting from its original form, thus multiplying its interstitial possibilities.

> Cortázar himself insisted that [*Rayeula*]…came from the…central attitude, 'to multiply their interstitial possibilities.' With *Rayuela* it could not have been

> otherwise, for the book dwells upon an inherent division—between 'the other side' (Paris) and 'this side' (Buenos Aires), between the diverse wealth of his cultural heritage and the need to put all that into question—which it does not seek to reconcile so much as eludicate the gaps, to create a polymorphic space. Cortázar saw it as a very Argentine book, precisely for its lack of certainties. Based partly on his first decade in Paris, it could only have been written by an outsider (Weiss 88).

It is interesting to note that Cortázar saw *Rayuela* as an Argentine novel, for it portrays itself from the beginning as the wanderings of a man in Paris, albeit an outsider. While Horacio Oliveira is not Parisian, he is a resident of the city (although a temporary one) who has distinct and important interactions with the city itself, be it streets, buildings or bridges.

CHAPTER 2

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE AND THE FLANEUR OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The word "*flâneur*" comes from the French verb, "*flâner*," meaning primarily "to stroll;" the second definition the Oxford dictionary gives is "to loaf around," succinctly providing a clear idea of the perception of *flânerie* in French (Corréard 370). "*Flâneur*" as a noun is then listed first as a stroller, and then a loafer (Corréard 371). Since Baudelaire's use of the term to describe his contemporary wealthy, educated city dwellers in the nineteenth century who walked through Paris in order to gain a specific experience of the city, the term has come to indicate many different phenomena in relation to modernity, poetry, and writing.

> 'Have you ever reflected on everything contained in the term "flânerie," this most enchanting word which is revered by the poets…? Going on infinite investigations through the streets and promenades; drifting along, with your nose in the wind, with both hands in your pockets and with an umbrella under your arm, as befits any open-minded spirit; walking along, with serendipity, without pondering where to and without urging to hurry…stopping in front of stores to regard their images, at street corners to read their signs, by the *bouquinistes'* stands to touch their old books…giving yourself over, captivated and enraptured, with all your senses and all your mind, to the spectacle.' (Victor Fournel, *Ce qu'on voit dans les rues de Paris*, in Gleber 3).

Flânerie in the eyes of Fournel, a Nineteenth-century French journalist, was about losing oneself to the chaos of the modern city as much as acting as its observer.

The *flâneur* functions as a parasite to the crowd, dredging it through observations and documentation for intellectual food or material for his next literary work. In this manner he wanders through an exterior of his own construction that is constantly changing by his own hand, his perception matters more to him than the reality itself. The *flâneur* indeed plays a double role in the modern city, for he functions as both a part of the crowd and as it's observer, who is able to, "…record…and respond…to the new phenomena of the metropolis, the new sensations of its streets" (Gleber 43). The *flâneur* as observer has an important relationship with the general populace of the city as their documenter.

Gleber notes that, "The rise of *flânerie* follows on the heels of the emergence of the city as a territory meant to be traversed;" prior to the rise of modernity, *flânerie* was an impossibility as the city's function was completely different (23). The onset of modernity brought changes in urban areas worldwide; in France this meant an increase in the movement of people around the country and within Paris specifically, and the rise of pedestrianism as an art form. Fournel defines *flânerie* as "a new state of existence that inscribes a significant phenomenon of modernity into the intellectual and literary perspective of its times," and Baudelaire's work on this subject truly captures the essence of the Nineteenth-century *flâneur* in Paris (Gleber 3). Baudelaire, "is one of the first modern authors to crystalize the aesthetic qualities of the 'chaos des vivantes cités,' that is, to awaken the city as a character in its own right," creating for the reader and the *flâneur* a definitive character with whom to interact in their aimless wanderings through the streets and arcades (17). The buildings, streets, and the mass of crowd itself become characters and subjects of works of art and poetry.

For Baudelaire, the arcades serve as a kind of bridge between the interior and exterior worlds of the city and enable the *flâneur* to find a place in the city. It is only fitting that the in-

between character of the *flâneur* should find a home in the in-between place of the arcade. The Nineteenth-century *flâneur* is known for his pedestrian explorations of the city, symbolizing a kind of refusal to incorporate more modern forms of transportation into his aimless wanderings in spite of modernity's undeniable presence throughout Paris. His chosen mode of transportation highlights the importance of the *flâneur*'s direct interactions with the exterior: the city itself, the architecture, and the people in the streets, which he might then use to create some work of art or literature.

Baudelaire sees the Nineteenth-century *flâneur* as having an important role in understanding, participating in, and portraying city life. Thus, the *flâneur* plays a double role: that of a participant and that of an observer of other strollers and city dwellers in their daily actions in the exterior public sphere. According to Gleber, a natural response to this perpetual act of observation is to create poetry, "Flânerie is the decisive move that facilitates the modern artist's intense exposure to his respective reality…flânerie…constitutes an 'essentially poetic act'" (52). Baudelaire, as a *flâneur*-poet does just that, becoming an extremely influential Nineteenth-century writer in his own right. Like much of Baudelaire's poetry, the poetry of the Nineteenth-century *flâneur* is focused on the urban landscape and the city itself: the exterior world of the *flâneur*.

The *flâneur* of the nineteenth century spends his days wandering the streets of Paris, going from street-corner to street-corner and district to district in a strictly pedestrian exploration of the city. In "The Painter of Modern Life," Baudelaire describes definitive traits he associates with the *flâneur*, "The crowd is his element, as the air is that of birds and water of fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect *flâneur*, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid

the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite" (9). Baudelaire believes that for the perfect *flâneur*, the exterior and interstitial spaces of the city become their home much more than any interior space ever could, altering the traditional view of the place of the interior and the exterior. For many *flâneur*s, this exploration of the exterior provided them with material to turn these experiences and random encounters into writings,

> …as Baudelaire calls it, the *flâneur*'s text transforms these marginal impressions into significant traces of the material dimensions of culture and history…Baudelaire situates the preferred space of this new language in an urban experience, claiming that such prose 'is above all a child of the experience of giant cities, of the intersecting of their myriad relations' (Gleber 52).

As *flânerie* became more widespread, the *flâneur* began to play an important role outside of art and literature, particularly in the field of sociology, and notably with German sociologist Georg Simmel who used the *flâneur* to codify the urban experience in sociological terms. In his essay, "The Metropolis and Modern Life," Simmel theorizes that the complexities of the modern city create new attitudes towards other individuals that consequently transform humans, change their relationship with time and space, and alter fundamental notions of being.

> The deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life. The fight with nature which primitive man has to wage for his bodily existence attains in this modern form its latest transformation….In addition to more liberty, the nineteenth century demanded the functional specialization of man and his work; this specialization makes one individual incomparable to

> another, and each of them indispensable to the highest possible extent. However, this specialization makes each man the more directly dependent upon the supplementary activities of all others…An inquiry into the inner meaning of specifically modern life and its products, into the soul of the cultural body, so to speak, must seek to solve the equation which structures like the metropolis set up between the individual and the super-individual contents of life (Simmel, "The Metropolis and Modern Life").

The nature of the modern city, in the eyes of Simmel, is to create in individuals a kind of blasé attitude and an altered notion of freedom and being that are essential to the notion of modernity. This idea is practiced by those such as the *flâneur* who spend their days in observation of the masses on the streets of the city, allowing himself to be influenced by all the different exterior aspects of modernity. Kracauer notes that the rise of the *flâneur* is connected directly to both modernity and capitalism, a driving force behind the arcades themselves.

> 'At this time appeared the type of *flâneur*, who sauntered along aimlessly and covered the nothingness he detected around him and in him with innumerable impressions. Shop window displays, lithographs, new buildings, elegant attires, fancy coaches, newspaper vendors—indiscriminately he inhaled the images which pressed in upon him' (Kracauer, *Boredom*, in Gleber 45).

The *flâneur* then absorbs modernity through his interaction with the exterior, turning these images and encounters into a form of cultural documentation.

Due to Paris' position as the seat of European—and consequently Western—culture and literature, it was only natural for it to be among the first to develop such a reaction to the onset of modernity in this urban setting. "The city and its many modern realities are both the catalyst and

the representation of an innovative inventory of images, a spectacle of new phenomena and unseen sensations" that cause the city-dweller to experience the shock of modernity, something unique to the Nineteenth-century European city (Gleber 23). All of the external changes occurring throughout Paris promoted imitation worldwide, and Gleber argues that *flânerie* became an international phenomenon. However, even in the Old World the *flâneur* remained on the periphery of modern city life.

According to Gleber, "The very beginnings of this movement are…initiated by an intensive experience of new shocks in urban realities…the pursuit of such novel experiences inevitably involves a journey into cities, and not just any city but to Paris, the most advanced and pronouncedly modern city in Europe" (6-7). While many people found shock in these new experiences there were some, like the *flâneur*, who reaped immediate benefits of observation and documentation in the exterior of the city. Modernism generally, and capitalism more specifically, changed the external face of the city of Paris and had great internal ramifications as well. However, the urban setting of Paris is one of the most important factors of *flânerie* for Baudelaire, due at least in part to the large part that the idea of the crowd played within the city, something he deemed exceptionally important.

It is particularly important that the phenomenon of the *flâneur* was created in Paris. Modernity changed the face of Paris extremely quickly, the population doubling from one to two million in just twenty-five years between 1835 and 1860; the fastest growth in the city's history, and creating a large metropolis by any Nineteenth-century standards. This population growth was due at least in part to the reorganization of peoples under the Second Empire of Napoleon III and the simultaneous reconstruction of the city under Baron Georg-Eugene Haussmann between the 1850s and the 1870s. Throughout this renovation many Parisians, mostly working class poor

and marginal figures like gamblers and prostitutes, were relocated from the center of the city to its edges, creating a sense of displacement even among the most common citizens of Paris. The renovation of Paris modernized the medieval city, making the streets more navigable for both pedestrians and vehicles and having a profound impact on the everyday lives of Parisians who found themselves suddenly unable to recognize a city many of them had known for their entire lives. Not the least affected were the working class peoples, who suddenly found themselves traveling to work from the outskirts of an unrecognizable city.

At the time that the idea of the *flâneur* was being popularized by Baudelaire, Baron Georges-Eugene Haussmann was pioneering a complete renovation of the city commissioned by Napoleon III that was intended to spearhead urban reform and limit the number of street revolutions that might take place in the city. This was particularly important in Paris given the city's history of street revolutions. These demolition and reconstruction projects that were occurring throughout the city were cause for discomfort and confusion for many Parisians, including Baudelaire himself, who felt alienated from his home. Whether intentional or unintentional, Baudelaire's position as *flâneur*-poet provided a sense of identity for displaced Parisians during this time. "However, even as Haussmann's modernization removed the working class from the center of the city, poets like Baudelaire made marginal figures, from the prostitute and the beggar to the thief and the *flâneur*, into the central characters of imperial Paris and its process of cultural and urban deracination" (Enjuto Rangel 26). Through his writing, Baudelaire was able to take the figures displaced by this modern renovation of the city and enable them to regain their position in the center of urban life even as *flâneur*s like himself remained on the periphery or in interstitial places such as the arcades.

Gleber refers to *flâneur*-writers of the nineteenth century as "walking writers," and they enter the public sphere of the streets and the arcades in order to "read" the texts of modernity within the context of their strolls; making a clear connection between *flânerie* and writing in Nineteenth-century Paris (4). In the Parisian arcades of the nineteenth century the *flâneur* is never at a loss for things to observe; many of these *flâneur*s chose to create works of art and literature based on these observations, Baudelaire among them. Writers such as these, including Baudelaire, were some of the first to register fascinations and reservations with the changing face of the city and its newfound sense of capitalism. Baudelaire, in his practice of *flânerie*, chose to cope with these changes by creating lyric poetry in reaction. With these changes to the city, its architecture and geography, came a need for writers and *flâneur*s alike to adapt to new conditions.

Through its resilience, the urban architecture that the *flâneur* spends his days acquainting himself with mocks any sense of durability of the self that the *flâneur* might entertain. The passerby therefore becomes a mutable muse for the *flâneur*, as (s)he will not be there should he return. As a result, love in Baudelaire's poetry is far from perfect; like modernity itself, Baudelaire's poetic love finds itself lost over and over again.

The true *flâneur* establishes no strong relationships with other individuals but rather creates temporary yet deeply emotional and intimate relationships with all he sees, writing a piece of himself into the margins of a text—something that is particularly obvious when he is among the crowd. The presence of the crowd is absolutely necessary for Baudelaire's *flâneur*, as one of his main functions is to pose as the observer of passersby. Baudelaire's sonnet *A une passante* (1857), is considered one of his most important poems about the famous Parisian *flâneur*. The poem is part of his work *Les Fleurs du Mal*, in the section entitled, "Tableaux

Parisiens;" and it is particularly succinct in its ability to embody the *flâneur*'s perspective, capturing in a just a few lines the hopelessness of his passion. In the poem Baudelaire, acting as a *flâneur*, encounters a woman in the street and immediately feels a sense of love towards her but she is gone in a moment, never to be seen again.

One lightning flash…then night! Sweet fugitive
Whose glance has made me suddenly reborn,
Will we not meet again on this side of death?
Far from this place! too late! *never* perhaps! (9-12).

Since Paris is such a large metropolis it is extremely likely to see another person but once, and so each street encounter bears with it for the *flâneur* the Romantic ideals of time and the fleetingness of youth. The woman in the poem serves as a physical reminder of the individuals who make up the Parisian crowd; the passing of a stranger is more than just a blank canvas onto which the *flâneur* paints his personal views, she is part of his creative process. The *flâneur* loves the passing stranger in the same way that he loves any source of inspiration for creativity. However, only the stranger in the street "introduces an important literary manifestation of [an] evasive experience, an experience that produces a shock in the city crowd that is both sensory and sensuous in every sense of the word" (Gleber 17). This sense of shock is not lost on Baudelaire himself and becomes a great theme throughout his works.

This is extremely evident in Baudelaire's "Le Cygne," (1859) the poem in which he laments the destruction of the old Paris. All he can see now is the scaffolding that represents the rebuilding of the city under Haussmann's reconstruction plan,

The old Paris is gone (the form a city takes
More quickly shifts, alas, than does the mortal heart)…(7-8)

He notes the pace at which the city is changing; unlike in earlier days of the city, Paris is changing at an alarmingly fast pace in the nineteenth century. Modernity has taken its toll on the city and its citizens. From the very beginning it is obvious that, "…in 'Le Cygne' the speaker depicts himself as an internal exile," Baudelaire himself is at a loss in his native city (Enjuto Rangel 28).

A swan, who had escaped from his captivity,
And scuffling his splayed feet along the paving stones,
He trailed his white array of feathers in the dirt (17-19).

Much like the swan who has left his pond and is now completely lost within the streets of Paris, Baudelaire as the speaker has a difficult time coming to terms with the changes modernity has wrought on his city—he is experiencing the shock of the modern.

For Baudelaire, modernity is marked with the finality of someday becoming antiquity, which is especially evident in the first line of "Le Cygne," in which he addresses Andromache—a direct reference to the ancient world at a time when he is observing the modern one.

Andromache, I think of you—this meager stream,
This melancholy mirror where had once shone forth
The giant majesty of all your widowhood,
This fraudulent Simois, fed by bitter tears…(1-4)

Unlike the mythological Andromache, Baudelaire's referenced widow is not seeing the reflection of her beauty in the river but the reflection of her pain, and the river itself is made up of her tears. Enjuto Rangel states that, "the power of remembrance in Baudelaire's poetics 'deforms' the temporal barriers between Modernity and Antiquity" (32). This temporal deformity creates for

the reader a sense of displacement similar to that which Baudelaire experienced while watching his city transform before his eyes.

Nineteenth-century modernity brought to Paris both an increase in population and an increase in industrialization, changing the face of street culture and creating a new sense of curiosity about the mutability of the city that is explored by the *flâneur*. "'The crowd' and 'the street' name the formative sites where modernity is constructed and its secrets wait to be investigated, to become illuminated by a sense of simultaneous curiosity, wonder, and terror" (Gleber 16). The crowd and the city itself hold innumerable possibilities for the *flâneur* is his role as observer.

Fournel addresses the connection between the *flâneur* and the crowd, or as he calls it, "the spectacle," that have come to constitute the streets of Paris with the onset of modernity in the city. However, it is Charles Baudelaire himself who provides a new definition of the *flâneur* as someone who walks the city in order to experience it, giving the term a direct connection to the phenomena of urban modernity. Baudelaire believed there was a connection between the *flâneur*'s actions and what he observed in the streets and arcades of the city, creating for the *flâneur* the persona of the documenter, or painter, of daily modern life in Paris. For the true *flâneur*, the street is his home much more than any interior space ever might be. *Flânerie* takes the normally private exterior space of the street and creates something private and interior out of it. It is only through the acts of wandering and observing that the *flâneur* feels at home in this exterior space.

The *flâneur*'s physical position in interstitial spaces is important in terms of literature. According to Crickenberger, "The *flâneur*'s dual interior-exterior nature, his ability to be both active and intellectual, to be reading the past of the city while existing entirely in the present, and

his manner of coloring the landscape with a bit of his own psyche places the *flâneur* at the center point of a whirlwind of contradictions." As a result of his in-between position, the Nineteenth-century *flâneur* haunted interstitial spaces, most famously the arcades, or *passages couverts de Paris*, that spanned the spaces between buildings during the mid-1800s. However, a thorough exploration of these arcades would not be carried out until Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Projects* of the mid-twentieth century.

CHAPTER 3

WALTER BENJAMIN AND THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY EXPATRIATE FLANEUR IN THE *ARCADES PROJECT*

Benjamin's idea of the *flâneur* relies heavily on literary, historical, and sociological notions of the relationship between an individual and the greater populace, something he explores at length in his *Arcades Project*,

> An intoxication comes over the man who walks long and aimlessly through the streets. With each step, the walk takes on greater momentum; ever weaker grow the temptations of shops, of bistros, of smiling women, ever more irresistible the magnetism of the next street corner, of a distant mass of foliage, of a street name…Like an ascetic animal, he flits through unknown districts—until, utterly exhausted, he stumbles upon his room, which receives him coldly and wears a strange air (Benjamin, *Arcades* 417).

Benjamin implies that the *flâneur* wanders the streets of Paris with no purpose other than to have a greater knowledge of the modern city, the one place in which he truly feels at home; this stands in stark contrast to whatever interior space he returns to at the end of the day. Like Baudelaire's definition of the Nineteenth-century *flâneur*, Benjamin defines the *flâneur* of the twentieth century as someone who walks the streets of the city with no other goal than gaining an experience of the city itself.

Paris, which Benjamin repeatedly refers to as the capital of the nineteenth century, was already teeming with crowds of people on the streets during Baudelaire's time, making the art of

walking and the art of observation that much more accessible and relevant. Benjamin observes that the main impetus for the *flâneur*, however, was the enjoyment of observation, "In the *flâneur*, the joy of watching prevails over all" (Benjamin, *Writer* 98). This "joy of watching" was made possible by the fact that big cities were overrun with people in search of work and a better life, and in the eyes of both Baudelaire and Benjamin the crowd is one of the most important aspects of the writings of the *flâneur*. "The crowd is the veil through which the familiar landscape beckons to the *flâneur* as phantasmagoria—now a landscape, now a room" (Benjamin, *Writer* 40). In spite of the crowds of people in the exterior and interstitial spaces of the city, the *flâneur* can transform this space into an interior that is all his own; the *flâneur* creates his own interior from the exterior of the big city.

The crowd provides for the *flâneur* a great point of observation and documentation, proving itself to be essential to *flânerie*. Benjamin observes that, "Of all the experiences that made his life what it was, Baudelaire singled out being jostled by the crowd as the decisive, unmistakable experience," and this experience is one that is extremely specific to the phenomenon of modernity with which he is so preoccupied (*Writer* 210). It is through the veil of this urban crowd that Baudelaire saw Paris, making observations and documentations from the vantage point of the *flâneur*. "Baudelaire describes neither Parisians nor their city…The masses were an agitated veil, and Baudelaire views Paris through this veil" (*Writer* 183-4). Baudelaire placed such an emphasis on the urban crowd that he was unable to see his own city through any other light.

While Baudelaire may not have recognized individuals, the crowds as a whole were an integral part of both his Parisian experience and that of the *flâneur*; Benjamin said that, "Baudelaire loved solitude, but he wanted it in a crowd," and it is this attitude that is evident in

Baudelaire's idea of the Nineteenth-century *flâneur* (*Writer* 81). For the *flâneur*, who had made the exterior streets of Paris into his own personal interior beginning with the arcades, the crowd posed as friend, foe, and everything in between. Not finding comfort in traditional interiors, "[the *flâneur*] seeks refuge in the crowd" (Benjamin, *Writer* 40). This crowd teeming the streets of Paris prevents the *flâneur*'s encounters from being anything but brief and superficial, which is of particular importance to Baudelaire. Baudelaire's *flâneur* is constantly on the fringes of Parisian life, occupying interstitial spaces, "[*flâneur*s are]…figures in the middle—that is, figures residing within as well as outside the marketplace, between the worlds of money and magic—figures on the threshold" (Eiland in Benjamin, *Arcades* xii). For this reason, the arcades, as interstitial spaces, are particularly important to both the Nineteenth-century and Twentieth-century *flâneur*.

Although the arcades had largely been demolished by the time Benjamin began his *Arcades Project* in the 1920s, they played no less a role in his Twentieth-century *flânerie* than in the days of Baudelaire. The arcades, as in-between structures, provided an exterior home for the *flâneur* in his wanderings through Paris, and the *flâneur*, in turn, provided something for the arcades themselves. Benjamin observes that, "It is in this world [of the arcades] that the *flâneur* is at home; he provides the arcade—'the favorite venue of strollers and smokers, the haunt of all sorts of little *métiers*'—with its chronicler and philosopher" (*Writer* 68). Benjamin considered the arcades "the most important architectural form of the nineteenth century…which he linked with a number of phenomena characteristic of that century's major and minor preoccupations," not the least of which is *flânerie* (*Arcades* ix). The arcades are particularly unique because they were not a planned structure but rather sprung up as capitalism advanced throughout the course of modernity and individual shop owners pooled their resources to create covered passages

between buildings as a way to lure customers off the street during times of inclement weather. By the time Benjamin began his *Arcades Project* in the 1920s, most of these structures were in various states of ruin or were no longer in existence. However, their importance was not diminished, particularly when considering Benjamin's use of interstitial spaces to create new paths of interaction with writing; "…as a structural apparatus with which to guide thought, these arcades offer a model that simultaneously finds its place both internal and external to traditional structures" (Crickenberger). In spite of their destruction after Baudelaire's time, the *passages couverts de Paris* have remained an important part of the city's architecture.

As the arcades became popular places for markets and consumerism, they were frequently very crowded locations. While this might discourage some from making the arcade their home, Benjamin maintains that the *flâneur* is fascinated by it, "…far from experiencing the crowd as an opposing, antagonistic element, the city dweller discovers in the crowd what fascinates him. The delight of the urban poet is love—not at first sight, but at last sight. It is an eternal farewell, which coincides in the poem with the moment of enchantment" (*Writer* 185). Baudelaire's *A Une Passante* provides an exploration of this idea; this "last sight" evokes in the *flâneur* a level of emotional involvement unequaled by the city through which he wanders, those seemingly permanent architectural structures that guide his strolls through the streets.

Like the destruction of the arcades after Baudelaire's time, the experiences of the *flâneur* changed between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, largely due to the changing face of modernity as a whole. According to Kelman, "Benjamin insists that the defining trait of modernity is they way experience has fallen in value. This inability to produce true experience can be seen in a number of symptoms: the lack of interest in lyric poetry, the liquidation of tradition and its representation as ruin, the decay of the aura of works of art, and the inability to

tell a story" (245-246). By the time Benjamin began writing the *Arcades Project*, the international cultural scene was no longer composed of poets and *flâneur*s, and Kelman attributes this to a change in the value of experience resulting from modernity. Like Simmel before him, Benjamin maintains that social forces determine the experiences of the individual, and in the case of the *flâneur* this means that individual experiences have lost some of their value.

> For the first time with Baudelaire, Paris becomes the subject of lyric poetry. This poetry is no hymn to the homeland; rather, the gaze of the allegorist, as it falls on the city, is the gaze of the alienated man. It is the gaze of the *flâneur*, whose way of life still conceals behind a mitigating nimbus the coming desolation of the big-city dweller (*Writer* 40).

While Baudelaire made Paris the subject of lyric poetry, no such poetry is being written in the twentieth century as the nature of art and documentation have changed greatly. Benjamin does not paint a promising future for the *flâneur*, noting that the big city-dwellers will come to desolation, a reaction to the huge changes in the nature of the city itself due to the effects of modernity.

The crowd, one of the greatest changes wrought on Paris by modernity, created what Benjamin repeatedly refers to as a sense of shock among the general populace. Benjamin refers repeatedly to the shock that the citizens of Paris experienced during this time; their external reality was changing at an alarming rate and there was no precedent by which to judge these changes. Benjamin notes that there is a, "…close connection in Baudelaire between the figure of shock and contact with urban masses" (*Writer* 180). The crowds in Paris encouraged the Nineteenth-century *flâneur* to take action, and these crowds had only multiplied by the time Benjamin experienced his own form of *flânerie* in the twentieth century. As Benjamin also

points out, it is important to remember that, "'Modernity' in Baudelaire is not based solely or primarily on sensibility. It gives expression to extreme spontaneity" (*Writer* 139). Consequently, a spontaneous sense of wandering through the streets is an essential aspect of *flânerie*, one that is shared by *flâneur*s in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The shock that Benjamin describes is of particular importance when considering modernity, as it is the sensitivity to these shocks that Benjamin declares symptomatic of the modern experience, "Shock as a poetic principle in Baudelaire: an urban scene traced out by the *fantasque escrime* of 'Tableaux parisiens' is no longer a homeland. It is a spectacle, a foreign place" (*Writer* 149). The wandering *flâneur* experiences a simultaneous sense of wonder and terror as he strolls through the streets and arcades of Paris. This wonder and terror is only compounded by the masses as they stroll through the city streets, observed by the *flâneur*, "…an unknown man who manages to walk through [the city] in such a way that he always remains in the middle of the crowd. This unknown man is the *flâneur*. That is how Baudelaire understood him when, in his essay on Guys, he called the *flâneur*, 'l'homme des foules' [the man of the crowd]'" (Benjamin, *Writer* 79). Baudelaire's fascination with the *flâneur* and his position in the Parisian arcades is evident in his body of work.

The creation of arcades forms an interstitial space, a kind of interior-exterior in which the *flâneur* feels at home. Ever threatened by the onset of *ennui*, the *flâneur* is able to find within these interstitial spaces a remedy: a place where he might stroll at leisure, observe people and building facades, and establish a relationship with the architecture of the city. As a character on the margins of society, the *flâneur* is completely at home in this in-between space because his personal boundaries are so ambiguous. Benjamin points out that the *flâneur* created for himself a home in the exterior world of Nineteenth-century Paris, "To him the shiny enameled signs of

businesses are at least as good a wall ornament as an oil painting is to a bourgeois in his salon. The walls are the deck against which he presses his notebooks; newsstands are his libraries and the terraces of cafés are the balconies from which he looks down on his household after his work is done" (*Baudelaire* 37). The *flâneur* does not desire the common interior space to which the rest of the populace is accustomed; he feels his true home to be in the interstitial spaces created by the arcades.

The Nineteenth-century *flâneur* could not have existed without the presence of the arcades, the most important interstitial feature of Paris at the time. As Benjamin states, "Flânerie could hardly have assumed the importance it did without the arcades….The arcades are something between a street and an *intérieur*" (*Writer* 68). With the arcades, the interior private realm began to have a presence in the exterior of the public street for the first time in history and thus the home of the *flâneur*—the walking observer—was born. The *flâneur*'s role as observer and documenter of city life in Paris was tied to both the arcades and the idea of consumerism, the impetus behind the creation of the arcades from the beginning.

> If the arcade is the classical form of the *intérieur*—and this is the way the street positions itself to the *flâneur*—the department store is the form of the *intérieur*'s decay…If in the beginning the street had become an *intérieur* for him, now this *intérieur* turned into a street, and he roamed through the labyrinth of commodities as he had once roamed through the labyrinth of the city (Benjamin, *Writer* 85).

The juxtaposition between these interiors and exteriors is what makes the interstitial space of the arcades to important to the existence of the *flâneur*. Benjamin links the arcades to the city's distinctive street life that was created by an increase in the number of people spending time dwelling in the streets of the city.

The arcades, which began as simple covered passages between buildings and home to panoramas, quickly transformed into marketplaces teeming with every kind of people—the perfect locale for the observations of the *flâneur*. Benjamin notes that, "In the panoramas, the city opens out, becoming landscape—as it will do later, in subtler fashion, for the *flâneur*s" (*Writer* 34). Benjamin also calls the arcades worlds in miniature, locations in which the *flâneur* could want for nothing and in which everything might be observed from one vantage point.

Benjamin believes Baudelaire's *flâneur* to be operating in reaction to the large-scale changes wrought by modernity on the big city, brought about largely by the architectural changes happening throughout the city in the mid-nineteenth century. According to Benjamin, "The masses came into being at the same time as mass production" (*Writer* 146). Benjamin believed that the rise of the *flâneur* came about in part because of these architectural changes in the city that created the arcades connecting neighborhoods in the name of budding capitalism.

Benjamin believes that architecture is the medium through which one might modify the prevailing aesthetic by changing the human mode of perception. In his *Arcades Project*, Benjamin turns his attention to the peculiar architectural construction of the arcades in Paris as a guide for a new kind of thought in which one might look at progress differently from previous times: no longer would progress be considered carrying out a plan towards a perceived goal, but rather would be a "deft and improvisational passage through and manipulation of imminent structures" (Crickenberger). Architecture and structures themselves play an important role for Benjamin's view of the *flâneur*, particularly the manner in which the *flâneur* establishes relationships with these structures throughout the city.

> In the windswept stairways of the Eiffel Tower, or, better still, in the steel supports of a Pont Transbordeur, one meets with the fundamental aesthetic experience of

> present-day architecture: through the thin net of iron that hangs suspended in the air, things stream—ships, ocean, houses, masts, landscape, harbor. They lose their distinctive shape, swirl into one another as we climb downward, merge simultaneously." Sigfried Giedion, Bauen in Frankriech. . . In the same way, the historian today has only to erect a slender but sturdy scaffolding—a philosophic structure—in order to draw the most vital aspects of the past into his net (*The Arcades Project* 459 [N1a,1]).

Giedion does not believe architecture to be purely utilitarian but references its "fundamental aesthetic experience," something Benjamin sees the *flâneur* experiencing in Nineteenth-century Paris.

It is Baudelaire's aesthetic and critical visions of the nineteenth century that have helped open up the modern city as a space for investigation, but it is Benjamin who brought these to light in the twentieth century (Harvey 224). As Gleber observes, "The art of taking a walk becomes further differentiated as modernity takes its course and the twentieth century approaches" (19). In the mid twentieth century, Walter Benjamin took a particular interest in the concept of the *flâneur*, especially in its relation to architecture and urban planning as demonstrated by Haussmann. Benjamin desired an exploration of the stroller in the city streets and the manner in which he is affected, both directly and indirectly, by the design he experiences only in passing. Consequently, Benjamin explores the *flâneur* as a product of both modern life and the Industrial Revolution, giving it a decidedly Marxist perspective. Benjamin ultimately became his own example, making social and cultural observations on long walks through Paris where he functioned as an uninvolved but highly perceptive *flâneur* dilettante.

Benjamin's own efforts at collecting and distributing information regarding the *flâneur* in the *Arcades* Project can be seen as its own form of *flânerie*; his written observations and wanderings closely resemble those of Baudelaire's *flâneur*. His work is filled with quotes removed from the original context in which they were written just as the wares sold in the arcades themselves were removed from the contexts of their production due to the nature of modernity and capitalism. Similarly, the *flâneur* himself is removed from the traditional context of life in the interior to create a detached life in the exterior streets. In a comparison between Benjamin and his subject, Crickenberger says his work, "constitutes the perspective of the project's primary protagonists—the *flâneur*, the gambler, and collector—all of whom are informed by habit as they proceed in a state of distraction," just as the reader does throughout the *Arcades Project* (Crickenberger).

However, this format seems only fitting for a book that includes a large sheave devoted entirely to the *flâneur*, who wandered in order to gain experience just as the reader must do when reading Benjamin's *Arcades Project*. Gleber indicates that,

> Benjamin's project of the arcades might be understood as an extended document that magnificently passes through cultural time, as a kind of 'meta-flânerie' that makes its way through the collected literary texts and exterior phenomena of a century. In his seemingly purposeless approach to seeing and collecting everything that he encounters in public space and culture, the *flâneur* prefigures the principle and structures of Benjamin's own seeing and collecting, of his own efforts to record the signifying moments and phenomena of capitalist modernity (48).

The structure of the *Arcades Project* is key, and is what Benjamin calls in his *Work of Art*, "reception as distraction;" it invites the reader to peruse the work much like the *flâneur* peruses the arcades themselves. According to Crickenberger,

> What results is a complex scholarly apparatus which encourages perusal and invites musing. It is an apparatus that stands as an alternative to didactic scholarship, failing to enclose its content in the shell of a preconceived argument and becoming instead a space in which the learning of the author opens up the possibility of learning for the reader (Crickenberger).

In this manner the text functions more like its architectural emblem than a research project. Composed of literary, historical, architectural, and sociological fragments, Benjamin's work, like the Parisian arcades, covers nearly all aspects of nineteenth century Parisian life. And, like the *passages couverts*, the reader is free to wander about these fragments at will in the manner of the *flâneur*—without a fixed goal or destination, simply to have a specific experience. Like *flânerie*, what is gleaned from the contents of the *Arcades Project* depends entirely on the conceptual leaps and navigation that its structure demands of the reader. "The concept of *passages* here function like the intersections of a spider's web, forever articulating new pathways of perceivable connections within this motley collection" (Crickenberger). The reader is thus allowed and even encouraged to hopscotch his way through this work in whatever manner he might choose. While Benjamin did originally organize his notes into the convolutes that are present in the contemporary version of this work, he provides the reader with only an overview in the beginning by which to measure one's trajectory. In a manner of speaking, the passages Benjamin compiles throughout his work provide the reader with a place to take a leisurely stroll through scholarship, a kind of academic *flânerie*.

In its attempt to convey to the reader the Parisian scene of the nineteenth century, Benjamin's *Arcades Project* can leave a reader wandering and in need of a guide. He does not provide the reader with any sort of guide or instructions for how to read his unfinished work, but leaves one to determine the best course alone. Crickenberger describes the work as,

> Sizable. Intimidating. Episodic. Unfinished. Seemingly ordered: alphabetically, arbitrarily, *The Arcades Project* functions more like the architectural construct that comprises its title image—one that might be mined and pondered—than as a guide to the acquisition of knowledge. The "Overview" (or table of contents) reads more like a guide to city of Paris than an outline of a sustained linear argument: "Fashion," "Conspiracies," "Marx," "Iron Construction," "Prostitution, Gambling," "Collecting". . ."The Streets of Paris." Despite the project's massiveness and seemingly haphazard nature, the collection is saved from chaos by the cover that was Benjamin's working title: "*Das Passagen,*" or *"Das Passagenarbeit"*—the *passages*. At first glance, the 1999 English translation of *The Arcades Project* is disorienting and over-stimulating. Comprised of several essays and thirty-six Convolutes or sheaves (originally taking the form of handwritten folios), one set organized by capital letters A-Z and ten additional files marked by lower-case letters, the collection bears a resemblance to a stack of file folders a collector of textual artifacts of the oft ignored side of nineteenth-century Parisian daily life might pull from the bowels of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. (Crickenberger).

The seeming disorganization of the *Arcades Project* can leave a reader feeling lost like a tourist in Paris with no guide, but it can also provide the reader with a new sense of freedom much like what the *flâneur* experienced in Nineteenth-century Paris.

Benjamin described the Parisian arcades as worlds in miniature, and that same phrase might be used to describe his *Arcades Project*—a miniature world of literary, sociological, and historical fragments through which its readers are invited to wander at random. The arcades provided the Parisian populace with an alternative to mainstream life: a veritable labyrinth of covered passageways connecting different neighborhoods and overflowing with new shops, places to explore, and people to observe. It was a world in which they might play a game of chance in the same manner that readers play that game when reading the *Arcades Project*, with no knowledge of where one might find themselves after a short period of time wandering. In the arcades, the *flâneur* is placed in unfamiliar and enclosed surroundings, a stark contrast to the wide, easily navigated boulevards in the exterior streets of the city. However, the wanderer is compensated with an increase in entertainment, a distraction from one's own life, just as Benjamin's reader is.

When reading the *Arcades Project*, one may easily lose one's way and become distracted with the structure itself, just as when wandering the physical arcades in the city. Benjamin provides the reader with nothing but a table of contents—no introduction, no table of directions like Cortázar's later readers are lucky enough to have. There are no characters to guide the reader through the *Arcades Project* or to make connections between seemingly unrelated ideas. Just as Horatio Oliveira finds himself in search of an elusive center in his acts of *flânerie* in Paris, so the reader of the *Arcades Project* finds oneself in search of something to grab hold of to make it all make sense. "But where is the center, that grim site of resolution? How will we be

able to tell when we are there when at each turn of the page we are confronted with another chance encounter that threatens to lead us astray?" (Crickenberger). The *flâneur* of the twentieth century has decidedly different characteristics than his predecessor, and these are demonstrated clearly through Benjamin's study of Baudelaire. However, Julio Cortázar later uses them in his work, *Rayuela*.

CHAPTER 4

JULIO CORTAZAR AND THE LATIN AMERICAN FLANEUR ABROAD IN *RAYUELA*

The title of Julio Cortázar's novel, *Rayuela*, is translated into English as "hopscotch," a word that seems to encompass one of the goals of the novel's structure: to have the reader create his own path through the work. *Rayuela* is a stream-of-consciousness novel where even the characters and the location are unstable. Depending on how one reads the work it has multiple beginning and endings. Cortázar provides the reader with a Table of Directions at the front of the novel which, if followed, skip around between the three main sections and even eliminate some chapters. However, he indicates that the novel can be read in two ways: either the reader can follow the Table of Directions he has provided or it can be read from cover to cover; he also leaves open the possibility of the reader choosing his own path through the work. The novel itself is composed of 155 chapters and divided into three sections: "From the Other Side," set in Paris, "From This Side," which is set in Buenos Aires, and a third section of 99 "expendable" chapters. Some of the last 99 chapters are intended to fill in gaps in the main story while others provide additional information about the characters. While these last chapters are entitled "expendable," they are the theory behind the whole novel and consequently extremely important in understanding it as a whole.

Unlike Benjamin's non-fiction *Arcades Project*, *Rayuela* has a clear narrator to aid the reader in his understanding of the work. Narration is also an important part of the work's structure; it skips around from first person to third person and is convoluted with stream-of-consciousness throughout. Horatio Oliveira, the novel's main narrator, writes some chapters but

other authors such as members of the Parisian Serpent Club to which Oliveira belongs write others. Much like a child playing hopscotch, the reader is never aware of exactly where he will end up.

In a manner appropriate for the character of the *flâneur*, Cortázar's "story [itself] detours from any fixed destination in order to explore the broader range of chance meetings," like those that the Parisian *flâneur* experiences in his daily interactions with the exterior spaces in the city (Schwartz, *Writing Paris* 57). Throughout these wanderings, Oliveira seems to believe that these casual encounters with the city and with other people can be beneficial in some manner for his understanding of Paris, of time, and of La Maga—three of the most important relationships to which he devotes himself throughout Cortázar's work. Oliveira's relationship to Paris is particularly interesting in light of the fact that he is a New World character participating in the art of *flânerie* in the Old World of Europe. However, the manner in which this is related to the reader is utterly twentieth century in nature as the convoluted stream-of-consciousness structure of the novel makes clear.

Chatzivasileiou considers *Rayuela* a kind of hypertextual novel in its broken structure.

> Hypertext privileges decentering of both reader and text. By moving through a web of texts, the reader is constantly shifting centre, narrative, and experience. One might even say that such a reader is itself postponed, or syncopated. This reader is always *cited* in some *other place*…Hypertext is 'an infinitely decenterable and re-centerable system'…[in which] the linear, the sequential, and the rational are absent (411).

Oliveira's physical journey through Paris and back to Buenos Aires co-exists with the reader's nomadic travel through the work itself, "*Rayuela* calls into question the idea of narrative as fixed

sequence, definite beginnings and endings, and unity or wholeness…[and] flirts with the margins" (Chatzivasileiou 411, 412). *Rayuela* is definitively the text of a Twentieth-century *flâneur* who does not limit his wandering just to the streets and interstitial spaces of the city but rather recreates them on the page for the reader to experience as well. "In a further assault on the reader's perceptual certainty, Cortázar attacks linear logic and sequence in developing a circularity in the narrative…Cortázar not only rejects sequential logic but also subverts the reader's concept of linear time, replacing it with mythical circular time" (Johnston 114). Upon first reading *Rayuela*, Cortázar's readers are left utterly lost at points where it is extremely unclear where the action is taking place and who is narrating the work. In the third section of "expendable" chapters, narration switches between several members of the club with no warning.

Morelli, a writer and member of the Club in Paris whose role is that of Cortázar's double, and a frequent narrator in the third section of the novel, "denounces the novel as a closed order, and desires to provoke or assume a text that is 'united,' which would allow for an opening. He aspires to a narrative that will not be the pretext for the transmission of a message, but will instead be the messenger" (Jaeck 10). As Morelli is Cortázar's double within the novel, it becomes easier to understand the nature of *Rayuela* as a work when keeping this in mind. Like the reader's experience in Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, the reader's experience of *Rayuela* is that of wandering the labyrinthine structure of this work in search of one's own elusive "center."

Like the interior-exterior juxtaposition created by the Parisian arcades, Cortázar-Morelli's writings have both an inside (essence) and outside (that which creates the essence), and the two are inseparable (Jaeck 18). The binary construction of the novel—taking place in multiple locations and with doubles of the main characters—is indicative of the relationship between reason and non-reason (madness) and the labyrinth itself. The novel is constructed in units of

two. There are two suggested books contained within it (Cortázar's and Morelli's), two suggested locations (the "here" and the "there") two suggested authors, two suggested protagonists, and two suggested paths in which the reader might encounter these elements, etc.

Within the work the Serpent Club as a whole analyzes Morelli's novel that he is writing throughout the story in which he attempts to reduce matter into spirit by means of "Oliveira's futile attempt to rejoin with a metaphysical center, which results in his irrevocable separation from that center and his consequent suspension in a state of infinite self-reflection," causing the work to have a circular structure since the destination has been destroyed (Jaeck 4). By continually referencing the hopscotch chart, Oliveira is trying to restore it to its previous existence as a signifier of transcendental presence, but it remains only a game in the work.

In chapter 54 in the second section of *Rayuela*, when Oliveira has returned to Buenos Aires and taken up residence in a mental hospital, he observes the hopscotch graphic in the courtyard from his bedroom window, "At night the hopscotch had a weak phosphorescence about it and Oliveira liked to look at it from his window" (Cortázar 313). Oliveira observes that the hopscotch game is glowing in the darkness of the courtyard, almost as if there were something mystical about its presence there. Not long after this, he observes a figure whom he believes to be La Maga (although she is not physically present in Buenos Aires) come into the courtyard and walk "slowly over to the hopscotch, not daring to step on it…Oliveira knew that everything was coming back into order…" (Cortázar 314). In this it is implied that, if everything is coming back to order, it was out of order before when he was in the labyrinth of Parisian streets in search of the center.

Oliveira spends his time in Paris wandering the streets of the city in search of what he refers to as "the center," something he seems to be extremely unsure how to define much less

encounter. "'And just what is this center that I don't know what it really is; can it be the coordinates of some unity? I'm walking back and forth in an apartment whose floor is tiled with flat stones and one of these stones is the exact spot where I ought to stop so that everything would come into its proper focus. The exact spot'" (Cortázar 78-79). However, Oliveira never seems to find this "exact spot," this center, of which he speaks so frequently, "A center as illusory as it would be to try to find ubiquity. There is no center, there's a kind of continuous confluence, an undulation of matter," and indeed there is no center to be found in Paris (241). Oliveira's search must be limited to Paris, however, since he has little to no interaction with exterior space in Buenos Aires. It would seem, though, that what Oliveira is in search of might be easier for him to find should he be able to identify it.

The other members of the Serpent Club in Paris are aware of Oliveira's search and function collectively as *flâneur*s when they have their club meetings. As fellow Club member Gregorovius is speaking with Oliveira he notes, "All the time I've known you, all you've done is search, but one gets the feeling that what you're looking for is right in your pocket" (Cortázar 180). In spite of this observation, Horatio Oliveira continues to function without a clear destination in mind, and at times seems confused about what he is even doing in Paris. When he meets Berthe Trépat he attempts to explain to her just what he is doing in Paris, "All right, he was an Argentinian who had been in Paris for some time, trying to…Let's see, what was he trying to do? It was hard to explain it all at once like that. What he was looking for was—…" but the center is so elusive that he can't even find the words to say what, if anything, he spends his days searching for (Cortázar 114). Oliveira finds himself utterly confused in *Rayuela*, searching for something to fill the emptiness that his experience with modernism has left in him.

Throughout his searching, Oliveira wanders through the labyrinth of Paris in the first section and then the labyrinth of the Argentina mental hospital in the second. "In *Rayeula*, Cortázar continues his analysis of…the labyrinth of signification of writing, and simultaneously writes the labyrinth itself, brought about by the absence of a metaphysical center" that is beyond language (Jaeck 6). Jaeck states that the elusive center for witch Oliveira is perpetually searching is not actually physical but metaphysical, indicating that he has been searching for the wrong "center" all along.

Just as Benjamin has transformed Baudelaire's Nineteenth-century *flâneur* to become part of his work in the twentieth century, Julio Cortázar has created an entirely different character for the *flâneur*: the displaced Latin American living in Paris.

> Cortázar's…fiction perpetuates a contemporary version of the Parisian *flâneur* moving among the metropolitan crowds in search of alternative experiences. The [works] presuppose a modern urban sensibility that avoids detailed descriptions…to configure instead an architecture of ontological alternatives. Cortázar uproots his *flâneurs* from the street and displaces them in urban intertices such as windows and corridors to emphasize fantastic otherness and the betweenness of Latin American urban cultural identity (Schwartz, *Writing Paris* 30).

The Latin American urban cultural identity to which Schwartz refers is a much more recent concept in the New World than in the Old, as European cities have been experiencing substantial population growth for more than a century. Consequently, to have the true experience of the *flâneur*, one has to travel to the Old World, and Paris specifically; it is not something obtainable in the New World.

Cortázar does not attempt to create a New World *flâneur* in *Rayuela* but rather sends his characters Paris, to the birthplace of the phenomenon. Once there, they read books, listen to jazz, form the Serpent Club, and frequently wander through the streets aimlessly. However, they are never able to truly capture the essence of the *flâneur* since they are living in exile; Horatio Oliveira and his fellow Club members appear to be displaced *flâneur*s of the twentieth century. "Oliveira, the novel's figure of the reader, is an incorrigible wanderer in all senses of wandering and digression. He is one that mis-behaves, mis-fits in fixed or diachotomic categories and moralities, misses the centre, 'place,' as well as the point (that is, he is mis-placed), or even mis-spells (with 'glíglica,' for instance)" (Chatzivasileiou 405-406). In all his attempts to find the center, Oliveira does nothing but miss it.

Traditionally, the characteristics of the *flâneur* are wealth and idleness, but Horatio Oliveira possesses only idleness. When he first comes to Paris he lives off loans, and the Serpent Club that he is a member of is composed of bohemians who want for work but who do not seem to want *to* work. The Nineteenth-century *flâneur* strolled streets and arcades as a manner of passing time, treating those he encountered as texts present for his own pleasure, a trait especially embodied by Oliveira. When the *flâneur* assumes the role of the narrator, he acts as both protagonist and audience like a commentator who is observing the action in which he participates, just as Oliveira does in *Rayuela*. In the third section of the work, composed of "expendable" chapters, the reader is made aware that the work is really Morelli's project and Oliveira is both the audience of this work and one of its main characters.

Both Oliveira and La Maga are members and frequent attendees of The Serpent Club, a group composed largely of expatriates living in Paris who assemble intermittently in order to drink, discuss literature and philosophy, and listen to jazz. Remaining true to the idea of

flânerie, the group meanders from subject to subject while they talk, just as the *flâneur* wanders from street to street and district to district in Paris, having no real destination in mind as, "…it was always easier to think than to be;" and Cortázar mentions "the aimless wanderings of almost all those in the Club," demonstrating just how much they possess the characteristics of the *flâneur* when they function as a whole (13, 132).

The nature of the *flâneur* has changed drastically from the nineteenth century to the twentieth, but his wandering searches through Paris remain consistent, as does his relationship with both the architecture of the city and its crowds of people in the street. The preferred locale of Cortázar's *flâneur* is, naturally, the streets of the city. For both Baudelaire and Cortázar's characters, this city is Paris and the journeys in which the *flâneur* participates were more than simply ways to pass the time, they are experiences and encounters with the character of the city itself, an activity in which the *flâneur* is naturally compelled to participate.

Haussmann's renovations encompassed nearly every aspect of urban life and he is considered to be responsible for the modern concept of urban planning and his work gave Paris the form that Cortázar's Twentieth-century characters were able to explore. According to Benjamin, one of the functions of the *flâneur* is to create historical and literary connections between these two worlds, and the streets and galleries of Paris serve to create cultural spaces—intersections between architecture, literature, and history—as much for the reader as for the characters in Cortázar's work (*Arcades* 432). The Parisian arcades are characterized by their blurred and yielding boundaries, giving both the reader and the *flâneur* a sense of being *elsewhere*. "The arcades offer an a-temporal and a-spatial quality to the travelling protagonist. They are the borders, the customhouse, of the story's movement, the "in-between" space the narrative occupies (*Writing Paris* 46).

The liminal quality of the streets creates spaces that can be occupied by the New World *flâneur*, who journeys in search of something in the Old World that he cannot and may never find. This is particularly true for Horatio Oliveira in light of Benjamin's assertion that the *flâneur* can never truly be in just one place, "…in the course of *flânerie*, far-off times and places interpenetrate the landscape and the present moment" (*Arcades* 419). Without a doubt, when the *flâneur* crosses the ocean to go to the New World, everything begins to change, as Oliveira's world is turned around in his transition between Paris and Buenos Aires, where, "…all doing meant leaving *from* in order to arrive *at*…every act entailed the admission of a lack…the inadequacy of the present moment" (Cortázar 17). However, as an interstitial space, the arcade serves to connect the "here" and "there" in *Rayuela*, allowing characters like Oliveira to travel between the two spaces. "The arcades not only join the adjacent sides of city buildings, they metaphorically join Buenos Aires and Paris in Cortázar's blurred narrative boundaries" (Schwartz, *Writing Paris* 43). Consequently, Oliveira is capable of traveling from Buenos Aires to Paris and back again throughout *Rayuela*.

Like the Parisian arcades, the bridges and interstitial spaces in *Rayuela* are in a constant state of construction and reconstruction. "Ultimately, the modern city is in a constant process of destruction and reconstruction, making what is fugitive, and ephemeral, a permanent trait of its space" (Enjuto Rangel 68). In spite of the fact that the original arcades of Baudelaire were virtually destroyed by the time Cortázar practiced his own version of *flânerie* in Paris, the bridges and arcades of Paris retain an extremely important position even in his Twentieth-century writings.

Oliveira's relationship to the city of Paris is that of a wanderer, and his function is to have as many encounters and experiences as possible by strolling aimlessly through the streets of the

city; he creates these experiences by spending his days establishing unintentional relationships with the city's streets and architecture through the art of *flânerie*. His movement and travels, both in the city of Paris itself and between Paris and Buenos Aires are frequent and an integral part of his story. Through Oliveira's errant searching he functions constantly in the liminal space between origin and destination, thus giving the reader an experience particular to his situation.

> Foucault…talks about the madman as an interstitial being, a traveler of literal and metaphorical navigations…' Oliveira practices interstitial vision '…in his constant literal and metaphoric trips of Search (for example, through Paris and its underworld)…Oliveira and, by extension, *Rayuela*'s reader is a perpetual traveller: consider, for example, the reader's vagrancy in disparate texts, navigations from 'del lado de allá' to 'de acá' to the fragmented 'de otros lados,' Oliveira's nomadism and wanderings in the underworld of Paris…" (Chatzivasileiou 409).

While Oliveira does spend the majority of his time in Paris wandering through the streets, he is often in search of something specific and elusive: either La Maga or "the center."

In "From This Side," the second section set in Buenos Aires, Cortázar attempts to give rise to interspatial differences that superimpose related texts from poetry, philosophy, novels, or just alternate viewpoints on the event itself. The entirety of the book moves from the truth as center to the truth as writing while embracing a paradoxical search for essence that is simultaneously a move away from the limitation of essence. Oliveira himself is a limited character. Unlike his literary double Traveler, Oliveira is empty and incapable of having tangible relationships.

While Oliveira's entire life is consumed by his endless search for the center, La Maga, has a personal life: a son, Rocamadour (who dies from her neglect), and other friendships.

Opposition determines their relationship; where Oliveira believes in definitions, intelligence, education, and seeing with his eyes open, La Maga has faith in experience, instinct, touch, wandering blindly. This relationship is reflected in the instances of opposition that Oliveira frequently witnesses in Paris—something he equates with the idea of truth.

Oliveira's impulse to travel propels the story "más allá" from the "here" of Latin America and all the way to the "there" of Old World Paris. The very name of the novel, *Rayuela*, suggests this experience: the erratic movement towards a final goal—the center—through a network of streets and paths. Even the titles of the sections—"From the Other Side" for the portion of the novel set in Paris, and "From This Side" for the action that takes place in Buenos Aires—imply that there is a distinct separation that is more than just geographic between Paris and Buenos Aires, the Old World and the New, that necessitates the presence of interstitial spaces such as bridges to bring them together. When Oliveira returns to the New World he laments that "he had to keep going, either start over or end it: there was still no bridge as yet" between these two worlds (Cortázar 226). Oliveira, therefore, must be responsible for the presence of interstitial spaces that span the gap between these worlds and thus he travels between the two locations.

> Travel is the transversal of the multiplicity of places…It does not connect places, but affirms only their difference…These transversals are "links" that manifest the hypergraphic character of *Rayuela*…understood also as a perpetual shifting of self…as if it were tangled within the multiplicity of a web of strings and being directed against all hierarchical fonts and structures: Transversality must thus be understood in a tense opposition to both vertical hierarchies and horizontal structures (Chatzivasileiou 409).

According to Benjamin, the city is a realization of the ancient dream of humanity—the labyrinth. It is to the reality of this labyrinth that the *flâneur* is unconsciously dedicated (*Arcades* 429). Similarly, Oliveira refers to the streets of the city as "…the tangled ball of yarn which is Paris, its infinite material all wrapped up around itself" (Cortázar 13).

Throughout *Rayuela*, Cortázar dedicates an immense amount of time and energy to the creation of an exact description of the physical geography of Paris for the reader, and his specific details of the city are entirely real. "More than an autobiographical detail…[Cortázar's] personal geography serves his writing as a location from which to examine the cultural and political dimensions of Latin America's postcolonial condition. Cortázar uses Paris and its traditional projection in Argentina to problematize cosmopolitan cultural identity in Latin America" (Schwartz, *Writing Paris* 27). Oliveira, who lacks a sense of identity and purpose, has no problem relating to the reader the specific exterior architecture of Paris—a city in which he has lived for but a short period of time—but he seems devoid of any such knowledge of his native city of Buenos Aires. And, while it is possible that he does possess this New World knowledge, the fact that he chooses not to share it with the reader is indicative of its lack of importance in his life. "His rendering of Paris, full of fantastic distortions, renovates the European city in order to reexamine Latin American postcoloniality through his stories' ontologically revolutionary urban planning" (Schwartz, *Writing Paris* 34).

While he is in Paris Oliveira thinks of Buenos Aires with a certain degree of fondness, daydreaming of maté and Argentine cigarettes. However, after Oliveira returns to Buenos Aires he feels uninspired by its plainness in comparison to Paris. "Paris here becomes the dangerous seductress, while Latin America (even its urban centers) represents routinized boredom" (Schwartz, *Writing Paris* 43). When Oliveira begins to find fault with the New World he turns

around and defends his actions to Traveler as a form of love for his country. "At first Traveler had criticized his mania for finding everything wrong with Buenos Aires, for treating the city like a tightly girdled whore, but Oliveira explained to him and Talita that in his criticism there was so much love that only a pair of mental defectives like them would misunderstand his attacks" (Cortázar 228). Although Oliveira claims his actions are done out of love, he, like many people in Latin America, is having a love affair with Paris rather than Buenos Aires. "'Paris is a great blind love, we are all hopelessly in love…'" (Cortázar 135). Unfortunately, as Enjuto Rangel point out, "ultimately the urban space reduces love to a fleeting, ruined, doomed desire," and this is what ultimately happens to Horatio Olivera (67). Whether conscious or unconscious, Oliveira's dissatisfaction with Buenos Aires is feeding his love for Paris and thus Buenos Aires ceases to exist in his mind as a real city, explaining his inability to provide geographical or personal details about the Argentine capital in the same manner that he does with Paris. Due to the nature of the divide between the Old World and the New World, Oliveira is incapable of functioning as a *flâneur* in Latin America; Buenos Aires lacks the necessary in-between spaces—such as bridges and the arcades—that compose the city of Paris and create spaces in which *flânerie* can exist.

Unlike the vivid and detailed geography of Paris, the geography of Buenos Aires is limited to descriptions of three specific places, all of which are interiors and none of which are detailed: Oliveira and Gekrepkin's apartment, the circus, and the mental hospital. It would appear to the reader that Oliveira's role as a *flâneur* exists strictly in Paris, as his life in Buenos Aires is much more stationary and he does not participate in any kind of active wandering about the city. The only wanderings to which the reader is privy occur between different floors in the mental hospital and even these have in mind a clear destination—definitively opposing the

actions of a New World *flâneur*. And the only real exterior occurrences in the New World are when his ship from Paris docks where he meets Traveler and Talita, and the un-bridge that he and Traveler build in order to create a sense of Old World in-between in the New World.

Oliveira, like many people living in Europe and most of the members of the Club, see Buenos Aires (as well as the New World as a whole) as backwards, underdeveloped, and provincial. Over the course of the interaction between Europe and Latin America, both sides have been keenly aware of the disparity between their geographical, cultural, and economic positions. "Those Latin Americans who set out, in what might be called a return voyage of discovery, were embarked on a sort of grappling with history, with both the past and the future. At the same time, the voyage could also be a way to situate oneself in that ongoing encounter between the New World and the Old" (Weiss 3). However, not all of these continued encounters had the hoped-for outcomes of success. Many Latin Americans became disillusioned with the Old World and returned to the New World only to find it, too, unfamiliar. "It is curious that most of the novels about Latin Americans in Paris end with the main characters either leaving or faced with the question of moving on" (Weiss 78). Indeed, Weiss points out that it is difficult to be convinced that Paris is not a place as perfect as it might appear. "One has to indeed fall quite low, as Horacio Oliveira does at the end of the first part of Julio Cortázar's *Rayuela*…to be disabused of the dream of Paris…Though time passes, the position of 'marginality lets a person prolong their adolescence until death surprises them' (77).

Buenos Aires has often been called the Paris of the New World, and consequently may be regarded as its double in this work. However, it is important to remember that not all doubles are equal partners; the postcolonial situation in which Argentina finds itself create an asymmetrical double in Buenos Aires that cannot truly compete with the Paris of the Old World. Therefore,

when Oliveira travels to Paris he is not visiting an entirely new location but rather the original of his native copy. The "original" Paris seems to be a gathering place for people who enjoy thinking more than living—the *flâneur*—while its "copy" is filled with people who enjoy living more than thinking—Traveler. Each city, the original and the copy, gets its own section of Cortázar's work devoted to it. "[it] signals its own process of creation when the speaker wanders through the city, and in his act of remembrance, reconstructs it" (Enjuto Rangel 32).

While Oliveira is in Paris, he seems glad to be there, but fantasizes about Argentine yerba maté and Latin American cigarettes. At one point, upon gazing around his adopted city, Oliveira notes that, "In Paris everything was Buenos Aires, and vise versa;" and occasionally he is unable to determine what city he is in because his memory imposes them upon one another (Cortázar 18). According to Weiss, the great impetus for Latin Americans to travel to Europe was to visit Paris, for its historical importance but also because, "After years of imbibing French culture at home [they] felt it imperative to go out and experience these forces by direct encounters—to walk the fabled streets, to meet in person some of the famous names. Paris was the center of the world for them, superseding even its classical origins" (8). Consequently, the encounters Horatio Oliveira has in Paris retain significantly more importance by virtue of their locale. When he returns to Buenos Aires after having such an exotic Parisian experience, the New World cannot possibly hold the same power as the Old. However, Weiss is quick to point out that even the great Latin American writers were loathe to remain in Paris for an extended period of time, "…after a certain stretch of time abroad, nearly all the writers returned to Latin America. Paris might be important for a writer's itinerary, but it was better not to stay too long (11). And, as Oliveira himself notes, "…his coming back had really been his going away in more than one sense…at the moment [in Buenos Aires] he was much further away from his own country than

when he had been wandering about Europe," for in leaving Paris he is leaving the life of the *flâneur* and his continued search for the elusive ideal of the center—things he cannot find in the New World (Cortázar 228). It is as though these characters are not just traveling between continents but through time as well. The reader is informed that Oliveira is not even returning to Buenos Aires of his own accord; he initially believes he is returning to Latin America to search for La Maga after she disappears from Paris when Rocamadour dies, but "…in reality he had not come back but…he had been brought back" (Cortázar 229).

As an Argentine living in Paris, Horacio Oliveira occupies a space that is distinctively in-between these locations; he is neither "here" nor "there". "[Cortázar's] stories in Paris are the narrative analogues to urban architectural structures of connection…Paris becomes Cortázar's stage for dramatizing the narrow threshold between spaces, times, and experiences" (Schwartz, *Writing Paris* 30). Oliveira's life in Paris, and indeed his life in Buenos Aires after his return, is liminal; much like the manner in which Eiland describes Benjamin's *flâneur*. "For Cortázar, the apprehension of a hidden truth that he sought in his writing arose from a sense of displacement, an 'interstitial zone,' a state of being *in between* (Weiss 83). In *Rayuela*, these in-between characters haunt interstitial places such as bridges and arcades; bridges serve to connect the "here" and "there," just as the arcades of Baudelaire's *flâneur*. These "interstitial zones" are an integral part of the Cortázar's work. When Oliveira first gives the reader a description of La Maga, he calls her, "…one of those people who could make a bridge collapse simply by walking on it…" implying that his mistress is the kind of character who can destroy these in-between spaces simply with her presence (Cortázar 8). Cortázar makes it clear that La Maga's character is inherently different from that of Oliveira; while La Maga can cause this kind of breakdown with her presence, Oliveira seems to be capable of effecting very little change in his

environment. As Oliveira attempts to paint a picture of La Maga he gives the reader only general overviews because her character is difficult to establish, "the impulse to explore a space *in between*…or else *beyond* cultures, borders, limits… [means that] Location, even identity, are thus fluid, hard to pin down, and the creative consciousness thrives in the absence of strict definitions" (Weiss 13). However, what is interesting to note is that some of the most integral bridge scenes in this novel occur not with La Maga and Oliveira but rather with their Argentine doubles, Talita and Traveler.

Thus, when Oliveira is searching for La Maga in the beginning of the novel, it is fitting that the first location in which he expects to find her is not a coffeehouse or her apartment but rather a bridge. Much like the arcades of the nineteenth century, Cortázar's bridges blur the boundaries between one place and another. "[Cortázar's] perspective traces what could be called the thrust outward, the impulse to explore a space *in between*…or else *beyond* cultures, borders, limits…Location, even identity, are thus fluid, hard to pin down, and the creative consciousness thrives in the absence of strict definitions" (Weiss 13). It is because of this lack of definition that the identities of Cortázar's characters—La Maga and Oliveira—are hard to establish and thus they each have a double in the New World. "It might be said that Oliveira, like a true 'schizophrenic passes from one code to the other, that he deliberately *scrambles* all codes' (Deleuze and Guattari *Anti-Oedipus* 15), as if they were precisely a web of strings. It might be said that Oliveira is no longer Oliveira but *other than Oliveira* (Chatzivasileiou 407). Traveler represents what Oliveira might have become had he chosen not to travel, but his time in Paris has changed him and created for Traveler a double who lives up to his name. Thus, Traveler leaves without leaving, he is the ghosting of Oliveira himself.

> Oliveira would be constantly *other than himself*, "transversing" and interrupting himself in the face of Emmanuele, Berthe Trépat, Traveler, la Maga and even in the face of the ideal reader. All these alterities, including the ideal reader of the novel (which Oliveira must become through Morelli's dictations), are not simply his dialectical doubles, vehicles of sublimation through which Oliveira can reclaim himself more potent than ever: they are the *other within* Oliveira's self and as such they refract him, split him and shatter him for ever (408).

The sameness yet difference of the double is obvious in the comparison of the double-characters throughout *Rayuela*.

Contemporary writers of prose fiction often depict the human condition through man's encounter with his *Doppelganger*, or double (Johnston 111). "This fragmentation results from an attempt to hide his true identity from both himself and the reader" (Johnston 112). The character experiences an existential feeling in which one feels oneself to be both oneself and another at the same time. Because Oliveira functions as a *flâneur*, a detached observer, he is capable of present his actions as well as the actions of others in an impersonal manner. "The fundamental opposition of the text thus develops in terms of an interior-exterior clash of perspectives…[the] movement of the narrative…involves a shift of perspective from exterior to interior…clearly establishing an opposition between antithetical points of view. It is this opposition which serves as the basis for the development of the doubles" (Johnston 113). The observations of the *flâneur* also represent a movement through space—the associations he forms in his mind involve a spatial transformation from interior to exterior and back again.

At first glance Traveler and Talita appear to be a perfect mirror reflection of Oliveira and La Maga. However, Oliveira is empty and devoid of feeling, an observer rather than a

participant, while both Traveler and Talita like La Maga, are intuitively in touch with both reality and each other. Consequently, Traveler and Talita "constitute a double reflection over 'here' of La Maga over 'there'" (Jaeck 35). It is only Talita, though, who becomes La Maga's true double when Oliveira superimposes the image of La Maga over her, recognizing in Talita the same intuitive intelligence that La Maga possesses. Unlike La Maga, Talita is an educated woman who has managed to remain intuitive in spite of this. Talita is also able to remain physically present, where as La Maga loses her grasp on physical reality after her child Rocamadour dies as a result of her neglect. The end of the section set in Paris is laden with references to La Maga's death, and potential suicide, as a result of Rocamadour's death.

Traveler and Talita are not the only characters who function as doubles in *Rayuela*, Morelli is in fact a double for Cortázar himself. Traveler is what Olivera would have been had he not gone travelling. While Oliveira and Traveler are physical doubles (they have the same build and coloring) they are not psychological doubles as Traveler has a fullness created by his intuition whereas Oliveira is in a perpetual state of emptiness.

Cortázar demonstrates a great preoccupation with architectural aspects of Paris as metaphors for cultural and metaphysical connections (Schwartz, *Writing Paris* 32). From the first sentence of the novel the reader bears witness to Oliveria's wanderings throughout the streets of Paris as he searches for La Maga on one of her favorite bridges in the city. "Would I find La Maga? Most of the time it was just a case of my putting in an appearance, going along the Rue de Seine to the arch leading to the Quai de Conti, and I would see her slender form against the olive-ashen light which floats along the river as she crossed back and forth on the Pont des Arts, or leaned over the iron rail looking at the water" (Cortázar 3). "The first book of *Rayuela* commences with [this] half-doubtful question, La Maga symbolizing an essence of life

or an intuitive consciousness that Oliveira is incapable of perceiving, describing or reaching on his own terms" (Jaeck 26). Like many of Cortázar's bridges, this bridge serves to symbolize connections, not just between locations in the city but between people and the city itself.

Once he returns to Argentina, Oliveira moves back in with Gekreptin in a building across the street from Traveler and Talita, and the proximity of their windows creates a scenario in which interstitial spaces play an important role. When Oliveira needs to borrow nails and maté from Traveler, the two attempt to construct a bridge across the street between their apartment windows rather than simply leave the house and meet one another in a common exterior space. It is a construction project seemingly without a purpose, as, when Traveler recommends connecting boards to create a bridge Oliveira replys with, "'That's not a bad idea at all…and it would give us a chance to use the nails…" (Cortázar 239). While attempting to push the first board out of his apartment, Traveler implies that they are constructing a bridge over hell, "Hey, if I keep pushing this board out the window the time will come when the force of gravity will drag Talita and me straight down to hell" (240). It is of particular importance that this bridge is built between the windows of two apartments as, according to Schwartz, "Windows, like the camera lens, provide portals to desirous encounters that result in multiple interpretations. These openings restrict passage more than doors or streets" (*Writing Paris* 35). Traveler confirms this during this interaction when he says, "'Windows are the eyes of the city…and naturally they give the wrong shape to everything they see'" (Cortázar 245). Thus the bridge between the two windows would appear differently to them than to those below because Oliveira, Traveler, and Talita view it through windows. "Always drawing on physical material constructions, usually architectural, all of the stories concerning Paris perform as narrative bridges. They rely on

Parisian windows, arcades, and the subway to connect realms that would otherwise exclude their protagonists" (Schwartz, *Writing Paris* 31).

It is also important to note that both Traveler and Oliveira use books to secure the boards that make up the bridge; Traveler uses *Quillet's Self-Teaching Encyclopedia* (a source of trivia, but not of knowledge, much like La Maga—none of Cortázar's female characters read a book, and if they do it is something trivial) and Oliveira the Swedish book *Statens Psykologisk-Pedagogiska Institut* (Cortázar 242). They are, quite literally, using texts to secure this in-between space in which their boundaries are blurred; a concept quite inverse from that of Baudelaire's *flâneur*, who used his position on the fringes (in the in-between) to create works of art and literature. While Traveler and Oliveira are consciously creating a bridge with the direct intention of connecting their apartments, they are also creating a metaphorical connection between the Old World—Oliveira and Paris, and the New World—Traveler and Buenos Aires. However, Oliveira is at a more privileged point of view because, "The Latin American[s] in Paris could…gaze in both directions, across the Atlantic and back, as they reflected upon two places at the same time, two experiences of home that coexisted in a curious suspension" (Weiss 236). However, the view is not the same from both sides, rather it is something more akin to a funhouse mirror as a result of the effects of postcolonialsim.

Rather than crossing their homemade bridge themselves, Traveler and Olivera have Talita brave the contraption in order to tie the boards together, to complete the bridge and bring some maté to Oliveira. Maté in this scene is particularly important because it is something Oliveira had been receiving from his brother via post while in Paris as it is unavailable there. Because Talita is La Maga's double, she is the only one who can cross this bridge between these two men, just as La Maga could cross the ocean between Latin America and Europe. While Talita is

preparing to climb over the boards, Oliveira observes that he and Traveler have created "A compound fracture in time and space" in the creation of this bridge between their apartments. Even Talita is aware of this as she complains about walking across the board, asserting that although she only weighs one hundred and twenty-five pounds she'll weigh five hundred at least by the time she gets to the center, implying that the same rules of gravity don't apply to this interstitial space (Cortázar 245). In the end, however, Oliveira decides that the maté doesn't make a difference to him, saying to Traveler, "'The minute-hand has made its circle, my son…You move in the time-space continuum with the speed of a worm,'" (255). And, when Talita finally throws the package of maté into Oliveira's apartment, it hits his wardrobe with such force that it breaks open, spilling the nails and tea leaves all over his floor, signifying to him that the time for maté has come to an end. Immediately after, Talita finds herself stuck on a wobbly bridge between the two windows, saying to Oliveira and Traveler, "Anything is better than being out here like this between the two windows," and Traveler gives her the choice of going back to their apartment (the Old World) or going forwards to Oliveira's apartment (the New World) (259). Ultimately she begins walking backwards to Traveler, who says in surprise, "You came back, you came back," for Talita has chosen to remain in the Old World, unlike her double, La Maga (260).

Bridges in *Rayuela* serve to connect "here" and "there". The story is dependent upon the architecture of the city and the literal and allegorical references to the Latin American conception of the urban (Schwartz, *Writing Paris* 33). In creating a bridge in Buenos Aires not only are they bridging the gap between the Old World and the New World but Oliveira is recreating his actions in Paris in which he would see La Maga on top of her favorite bridge but in this case it is her double Talita on a created bridge.

After the boards have been removed and the bridge disassembled, Traveler finds himself at his window waiting for Oliveira to appear in his own; and, looking across the street he notices that, "There was no sign of the boards any more, there was no way across" (Cortázar 273). Traveler seems to imply that without the boards—the mutual construction of the men representing both worlds—there is no manner in which to bridge the gap between the worlds and each man is trapped on his respective side while the middle remains untraversed for the moment. However, he then goes on to say that,

> …neither Horacio nor he had withdrawn the boards. In one way or another there was a way across, it was possible to come and go. Any one of the three, sleepwalking, could go from window to window, walking on the thick air without fear of falling into the street. The bridge would only disappear with the light of day, with the reappearance of the *café con leche* that would bring them back to solid constructions and tear away the cobwebs of the predawn hours with the heavy hand of news bulletins on the radio and a cold shower (274).

It is clear that for these characters, dreams and the fantastic are preferable to reality. "In [Cortázar's] view, certain situations encourage the interruptions of the fantastic, notably places constituting an in-between passage, like the metro, busses, bridges, and also the arcades from Nineteenth-century Paris that so fascinated Walter Benjamin (and of whom Cortázar makes no mention)" (Weiss 84). While Cortázar makes no mention of the arcades of Baudelaire and Benjamin, he creates an alternative interstitial location for his Latin American *flâneur*: the bridge. Unlike the arcades the bridge is ubiquitous, spanning both time and space, rather than being a structure specific to one location. In using bridges, Cortázar provides for his characters a space that is universally accessible.

In chapter 43, reaching the metaphysical center is compared to Talita reaching the center of the constructed board bridge that Traveler and Oliveira create between their windows. Cortázar reduces this to a parody by contrasting Oliveira's observations of the event with those of a child watching from below. "The child's remarks underline the lack of correspondence between Oliveira's metaphysical interpretation of Talita's approach to the center of the bridge, and the physical reality of the occurrence" (Jaeck 8).

For both Cortázar, and his characters, Paris represents the idea of modernism and the characteristics of the bohemian and the *flâneur*, which translates into the physical aspects of the city. "The bridges Cortázar proposes represent Paris as urban modernity, a transnational hub, and a place for aesthetic experimentation. He exploits Paris's imaginative capacity as connective tissue in stories that forcefully integrate the jumbled layers of postcolonial cultural identity;" something that is especially evident for the Argentines who have a specific point of view of Paris created by their postcolonial situation and the unique relationship between Paris and Latin America (Schwartz, *Writing Paris* 33). Horatio Oliveira, an Argentine living in Paris, demonstrates these characteristics throughout *Rayuela*.

Throughout the novel, Horacio is continuously picking up bits of string and keeping them in his pockets, something that fits the characteristics not of the *flâneur* but of the ragpicker described by Baudelaire. However it is not until he is in Buenos Aires that he puts this string to use. "He wondered where he had picked up the habit of always carrying pieces of string in his pockets, of putting colored threads together and placing them between the pages of books, of constructing all manner of figures with those things…" (Cortázar 327). Thus begins the chapter in which Oliveira constructs his un-bridge in the mental hospital in Buenos Aires where he works. First, Oliveira collects basins from around the hospital and fills them with water, lining

them up as a "first line of defense" behind the first barrier of thread he constructs throughout the room (330).

> Oliveira's derangement [is] triggered by his voluntary confinement in a madhouse ward, scattered with a web of strings and a pit of basins. Reader and discourse are made schizophrenic. Referring endlessly to each other, as if an old scratched jazz record was stuck, both chapters [58 and 131] are related as in a palindrome. Self-obsessive, the text repeats itself. Writing is self-referential, syncopated indefinitely, fallen in its own abyss of repetition, for the writer's pen is here like a damaged phonograph needle (Chatzivasileiou 407).

Parisian architecture plays an extremely important role in Cortázar's work, and possesses two primary objectives: first, to connect the continents of Europe and Latin America, and second to facilitate the movement and fluidity of time and space that Horatio Oliveira notes throughout the work. "…the Parisian arcades architecturally launch the transitions between Europe and Latin America, and metaphysically facilitate fluid movement in time and space" (Schwartz, *Writing Paris* 42-43). In the case of *Rayuela*, all of the Parisian streets—those with or without arcades or interstitial spaces—serve to form connections between Europe and Latin America, the Old World and the New World.

The creation of arcades created a kind of interior-exterior in which the *flâneur* felt at home. Ever threatened by the onset of *ennui*, the *flâneur* is able to find within these interstitial spaces a remedy: a place where he might stroll at leisure, observe people and building facades, and establish relationships with the architecture of the city. As a marginal character, the *flâneur* is completely at home in this in-between space because his own personal boundaries are so ambiguous. "To him the shiny enameled signs of businesses are at least as good a wall ornament

as an oil painting is to a bourgeois in his salon. The walls are the deck against which he presses his notebooks; newsstands are his libraries and the terraces of cafés are the balconies from which he looks down on his household after his work is done" (Benjamin, *Baudelaire* 37).

The *flâneur*'s physical position in interstitial spaces is important in terms of literature. According to Crickenberger, "The *flâneur*'s dual interior-exterior nature, his ability to be both active and intellectual, to be reading the past of the city while existing entirely in the present, and his manner of coloring the landscape with a bit of his own psyche places the *flâneur* at the center point of a whirlwind of contradictions." Consequently, Oliveira "…is approaching a state of madness through reason," something he demonstrates clearly in his construction of an un-bridge in his room at the mental hospital in Buenos Aires (Jaeck 24).

In the context of *Rayuela*, this juxtaposition of the roles that the city of Paris plays—that of the perpetuation of postcolonial cultural hegemony and the seat of the defeat of colonialism—is evident immediately as Horatio Oliveira is wandering the streets of Paris in search of La Maga, the perfect demonstration of the Latin American expatriate *flâneur* at home on the streets of Paris. As he wanders through the city streets, however, Oliveira contemplates the differences between Paris and Buenos Aires, thus making the double roles of the city even clearer. "I know that one day I came to Paris, I know that I was…doing what others did and seeing what they saw…Everything had been going badly…because the habits I had brought from Argentina would not permit me to cross from one sidewalk to the other to look at silly items…" (Cortázar 5). Horatio Oliveira's New World habits seem to be interfering with his immediate transformation into an Old World *flâneur*, in spite of his best efforts.

Benjamin calls *flânerie*, "A decidedly anachronistic if not 'timeless' form of movement, his walking helps him retreat from a time that is subject to functional measures and restrictions,

to the limitations that arise from the imposition of any specific speed, duration, or destination to his movement" (*Arcades* 417). It is interesting to note Benjamin's use of the word "anachronistic," considering that he is discussing the *flâneur* of Baudelaire as opposed to the expatriate *flâneur* of Cortázar; if Baudelaire's *flâneur* is anachronistic then Cortázar's is something far beyond that, for not only are his characters out of place but they are out of time. "Today fascinates me, but always from the point of view of yesterday…and that's how at my age the past becomes present and the present is a strange and confused future…We must establish ourselves in the present once more" (Cortázar 93). Just as "…with Baudelaire, a taboo is placed on the future," an act in which Oliveira participates as well (Benjamin, *Writer* 135).

For both *flâneur*s, that of Baudelaire and that of Cortázar, the preferred mode of the *flâneur* is walking. Regardless of whether it is Baudelaire's *flâneur* or Crotázar's, he chooses to walk. While he might be able to experience a kind of exploration of the city via tram, buggy, or streetcar, he does not utilize any modern forms of transportation but rather chooses the most ancient. Through the elimination of these more modern forms of transportation, the *flâneur* gains the ability to experience a much greater and more detailed discovery of the city and the manner in which modernity has taken it over. It is because of this mode of exploration that Soriano Nieto maintains, "the *flâneur* is like a modern physiologist" (423). In his *Arcades Project*, Benjamin states that the *flâneur* maintains a distant relationship with time, something that is especially evident in the character of Oliveira, particularly in his relationship with La Maga (423).

> Time is here discontinuous and dissonant with previous moments. It is indeed as strangled and syncopated as the text it weaves, as it recreates musical times of a jazz piece (like, for example, those of Benny Carter, Chu Berry, or Champion Jack

Dupree, to whom the friends of 'el club de la serpiente' listen while Maga narrates Ireneo's attack on her to Gregorovius) (Chatzivasileiou 404).

Oliveira refers to himself as "an imbecile for having kissed time;" in this he establishes the metaphor of taking time as his lover and creates a very singular and binding relationship between himself and time, giving the reader a distinct idea of how he sees the world: it is both something to be examined and something by which to be fascinated (Cortázar 7). His relationship with time is at its most distinct when Oliveira participates in acts of *flânerie*. "For weeks or months (keeping track of time was difficult for Oliveira, happy *ergo* futureless) they walked around Paris looking at things, letting happen whatever had to happen, loving and fighting, and all of this outside the stream of news events, family obligations, and physical and moral burdens of any sort" (Cortázar 23). Cortázar says that, "'In the name of the past we carry the greatest deceits in the present'" (279). For Deleuze, "time is: the ultimate existence of parts, of different sizes and shapes, which cannot be adapted, which do not develop at the same rhythm, and which the stream of style do not sweep along at the same speed…" (Chatzivasileiou 408).

In the fundamental fifty-sixth chapter Oliveira again demonstrates this unusual relationship, "Now he was beginning to feel more and more fear (and when he felt fear he would look at his wristwatch, and the fear would grow with the hour)" (Cortázar 329). Although this occurs at the end of his journey, the relationship between Oliveira and time is an essential part of his comprehension of his relationship with La Maga en the work as a whole and this is what necessitates La Maga's presence in his life, particularly when they are in Paris where she is physically present and they spend their time wandering the city streets.

Cortázar makes it clear that Oliveira and La Maga have a distinct relationship with their adopted city, and they spend hours wandering its streets aimlessly, in the manner of the *flâneur*. "So they has begun to walk about in a fabulous Paris, letting themselves by guided by the nighttime signs, following routes born of a *clochard* phrase, of an attic lit up in the darkness of a street's end, stopping in little confidential squares to kiss on the benches or look at the hopscotch game…masters of time and of the warm pavement" (Cortázar 21-22). Cortázar here implies that the acts of *flânerie* enables his characters to have some kind of power over time—something Baudelaire associates directly with the actions of his *flâneur* as well.

Although Oliveira is one of the newer members of the club, he is well-versed in both literature and philosophy, a stark contrast to La Maga, an even newer member who is constantly asking for explanations in whatever the club is discussing. "Everybody accepted La Maga's presence right away as something inevitable and natural, even though they would get annoyed with having to explain to her almost everything they were talking about" (Cortázar 23). The majority of the members of the Club feel comfortable dealing with abstract ideas above all else, but La Maga is much more grounded in the realm of reality, which is indicative of the distinctive and necessary disparity between her and the other members of the Club through her return to Montevideo. This return also serves to point out just how different her relationship with time is from that of Oliveira. Through their discussions the members of the Club are all hoping to reach a place of greater understanding, but only La Maga, with her lack of formal education, even comes close to this. "Only Oliveira knew that La Maga was always reaching those great timeless plateaus that they were all seeking through dialectics" (Cortázar 25).

Unlike many other members of the Club, La Maga has little formal education, which leaves her open to very different forms of knowledge. This is particularly evident in her

relationship to the idea of time. She wholly dismisses the idea of time in relation to her childhood, saying, "'There was no such thing as time in Montevideo in those days,'" and it is the continued casual nature of this relationship that Oliveira, whose very being is wrapped up in the very idea of time, envies (Cortázar 60). For Oliveira, the present moment is continually lacking but he is able to find something more substantial in both the past and the future. "Today fascinates me, but always from the point of view of yesterday…and that's how at my age the past becomes present and the present is a strange and confused future…We must establish ourselves in the present once more" (Cortázar 93).

Oliveira and La Maga's relationship is representative of the duality of time—the eternal in the face of the infinite. La Maga's character is more lasting than Oliveira's wandering sense of *flânerie* that follows him from Paris to Buenos Aires. La Maga, too, is present in both locations (although not in the same form), which is indicative of her role as an eternal person that transcends space and time and whose existence is indefinite. La Maga's double, Talita, is present only in the Old World while La Maga herself can transcend the space between both worlds. Certainly in Buenos Aires, where only Talita is present, Oliveira imposes the memory of La Maga on her, thus continuing her presence in his life. Because La Maga possesses the simple relationship with time that Oliveira desires, the character of La Maga can exist in both Paris and Buenos Aires, although she exists only as a phantom upon her return to the New World. Unlike the Benjaminian definition, in which he affirms the relationship between the *flâneur* is one in which the wanderer exists outside the realm of time, Oliveira defines his life through the city of Paris which is manifested in his relationship with La Maga and her overarching relationship with the Club as a whole.

> 'We see here a denial of linear, chronological time. Morelli proposes a parallelism of different times that may be perceived by those artists and writers who are capable of seeing beyond the superficial (eg, historical time), those who can see the figura to be formed by the fusion of analogous concepts, persons, and acts existing in historically different categories' (Brody, *Middle Ages, Modern Age* in Jaeck 25).

Like Oliveira, the reader is presented with a curious idea of time throughout the work. *Rayuela* itself is not written chronologically, forcing the reader to effectively hopscotch through time and space along with the characters as they proceed from one chapter and one section to the next, much as the *flâneur* wanders from street to street and district to district in the city of Paris. Within each section of the work, "…some [chapters] occur in a time and space in between earlier chapters, others stand as further extensions of a scene or offer more elaborate ramifications of various reflections, while others are simply citations from diverse readings that draw the reader outside of the story even as they cast another light upon it" (Weiss 89). And, within the third section composed of chapters that are deemed expendable, there is not only no sense of time or order but a lack of a sense of both place and person. It is rarely clear who is writing, from where, or when, leaving the reader at a lack as to their direct application to the work as a whole as well as with a sense of historylessness; "time is historyless…the perception of time is supernaturally keen. Every second finds consciousness ready to intercept its shock" (Benjamin, *Writer* 201).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In my initial approach to the idea that *flânerie* has been incorporated into Twentieth-century Latin American fiction, I felt that two of Cortázar's characters in *Rayuela*—both Horatio Oliveira and La Maga—were wonderful examples of the modern *flâneur*. This research proved fruitful, yet it lead my studies down an unexpected path in which I ascertained that the idea of the *flâneuse*, or the female *flâneur*, is something unattainable due to the masculine nature of the act of wandering about a city aimlessly. In the case of the *flâneur*, it is important to note that men rather than women have traditionally carried out these acts of wandering. Consequently, La Maga is not a representation of a *flâneur*, but rather a bohemian woman on her own quest in Paris. Oliveira as well is not a perfect *flâneur* in the sense that Baudelaire discusses in his works. However, Cortázar's creation of a new, more modern ide of *flâneur* as someone in a state of self-exile is manifested in the character of Oliveira.

Flânerie has deep roots in Nineteenth-century Paris with figures such as Charles Baudelaire who functioned on the margins of society, wandering the streets of the city and establishing stronger relationships with architecture and crowds than with individuals. He *flâneur* is known for his interstitial position in the Parisian arcades that were home to early capitalist endeavors in the city. Modernism created a situation in which the *flâneur* could transform the exterior and interstitial locations of the city into his own interiors, and while Haussmann's reconstruction of Paris changed the face of the city irrevocably, *flânerie* proved a resilient art form well into the twentieth century.

While the focal point of *flânerie* is its reaction to modernity, the idea carried importance not just for the theorists and writers of the nineteenth century during its development, but for those in the following century as well. Walter Benjamin, in his in-depth explorations of Nineteenth-century life in Paris, also came to function as a *flâneur* in his own right, creating a tome of collected information regarding Baudelaire and his contemporaries that came to be known as the *Arcades Project*. In the wandering manner of the *flâneur*, Benjamin's work conveys to the reader the physical, emotional, and societal ramifications of modernity on the people of Nineteenth-century Paris. The *Arcades Project*, as an unfinished compilation work, leaves its reader wandering through its passages much as the Nineteenth-century *flâneur* wandered through the *passages couverts de Paris.*

In a similar manner, Julio Cortázar's work, *Rayuela*, creates for the reader a sense of confusion in its structure. Set in 1950s Paris with a Latin American expatriate as its main narrator, the novel has an erratic, stream-of-consciousness structure that creates for the reader a sense of literary *flânerie*. Through his use of doubles, erratic writing styles, and interstitial locations, Julio Cortázar conveys a sense of confused wandering to his reader, much like what his main narrator Horatio Oliveira experiences in his search for the elusive "center" in Twentieth-century Paris.

Cortázar was highly influenced by European writings, something that is obvious in an examination of his Latin American *flâneur*s and their erratic wanderings throughout Paris in the twentieth century. His characters are constantly interstitial, particularly Oliveira who is in search of the center in Paris, something that does not transfer to his life after he returns to Buenos Aires where he is unable to function as a *flâneur* since he is in the New World. This disparity between the Old and New Worlds creates in the Latin American a necessary impetus to travel to Europe.

While Cortázar's characters may not be picture-perfect examples of Baudelaire's *flâneur*, they provide for the reader an idea of what modern *flânerie* in a state of self-exile looks like. Cortázar derived his inspiration from the European ideas of the nineteenth century, but with those ideas created a distinctly different and more international character for the twentieth century self-exile.

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