

## CRITICS AND CORTÁZAR

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It should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the text of Julio Cortázar that a wide range of critical work exists on his writing. In fact, the diversity of concerns informing Cortázar criticism, as well as the quantity of studies published in recent years, might seem a natural or inevitable by-product of the author's own variegated and voluminous production over the past three decades or so. To date, Cortázar has published at least four novels, six volumes of short stories, one dramatic work, two collections of poetry, several "miscellaneous" or "unclassifiable" texts, as well as many reviews and critical essays.<sup>1</sup> The problems that such a diverse corpus might present are indeed borne out in the multitude of studies undertaken in the past twenty years—studies that, if they do not focus on one particular work or collection, must choose among or deal simultaneously with distinct and sometimes hybrid literary forms.

The proliferation of Cortázar studies during the late 1960s and 1970s is a phenomenon of historical as well as critical interest. The creation of this "industria cortazariana," this "chaotic critical enumeration," underscores at least two well known facts concerning recent Latin American literary history, facts to keep in mind while reading Cortázar and his critics. It is mainly within the last two decades that the works of Latin American authors as a group have been widely disseminated both inside and outside their own countries. The "boom" that has brought Julio Cortázar to the attention of all kinds of readers has itself been aided (even, some might say, propelled) by the 1963 publication of Cortázar's "revolutionary" novel, *Rayuela*.<sup>2</sup> The many critical essays that have appeared since that time are surely ample evidence both of the general effect of the "explosion" of Latin American letters and studies and of the virtual canonization of Cortázar, one of its most prolific leaders. The critical issues raised by the productivity surrounding Cortázar's text are of a connected, but different, order because Cortázar criticism may be read not only in terms of the circumstances that may have accelerated its production, but also with respect to the results of that proliferation—that is, in terms of the critical nature of the whole enterprise and the individual works that thus far have defined it. Although the quantitative

leaps represented by recent writings on Cortázar are indisputable, their qualitative contributions, however, are not. (His case may be exaggerated, but is not unlike that of other Spanish American writers.) The generally uneven accomplishments of many of the existing studies are determined only in part by the complex and admittedly unwieldy nature of Cortázar's own corpus. A general methodological or theoretical weakness seems evident in many of the lengthy studies, whose critical aims and accomplishments might therefore be questioned.

This critical corpus includes at least twenty single-author studies (sixteen published since 1970) and ten collective volumes or special issues of journals devoted entirely or partly to Cortázar (six of these appeared as early as the late 1960s).<sup>3</sup> These compiled volumes generally contain the best material on Cortázar's work. Of these collective projects, two are circumscribed generically, while the others often present discussions of all of Cortázar's writings without regard for their literary classification. Although these multi-focus volumes theoretically do not focus on any single generic form, they usually give more space to discussions of Cortázar's novels and short stories. This tendency is perhaps to be expected because those texts are the most numerous and possibly the most significant of Cortázar's writings. Although critical essays are by far the mainstay of all of these collections, they sometimes offer interviews with Cortázar, short reviews of specific texts, transcriptions of panel discussions, and bibliographies.<sup>4</sup> Thus, like the author's work itself, these collections present us with a heterogeneous array of texts.

Of the ten collections considered here, four seem most useful for critics and students, even though the quality of their contents varies. The volumes of most interest and utility are those edited by Helmy Giacomani (1972), David Lagmanovich (1975), Jaime Alazraki and Ivar Ivask (1978), and the 1973 special issue of *Revista Iberoamericana*. The Giacomani collection and the *Revista Iberoamericana* issue have the widest scope and contain the most entries. The former is comprised of twenty-seven articles dealing with various Cortázar texts; the latter contains twenty-two items in all, including articles, short notes, and a partially annotated bibliography. The essays in both focus on either thematic, stylistic, or structural aspects of Cortázar's works; some approach those texts "directly," while others utilize comparative readings of Cortázar and related writers. The textual foci of these studies also vary: many attempt to traverse various texts or whole collections, while others concentrate on one specific work, most often *Rayuela*.

The two more specialized collections are shorter, but potentially of more immediate import for readers concerned only with Cortázar's fiction. The Lagmanovich collection, which focuses on the short narratives, provides twelve individual essays by different critics and a prologue by the editor, who attempts to formulate a thematic model for and

a general typology of all of Cortázar's short stories.<sup>5</sup> The volume by Alazraki and Ivask (1978) contains three pieces by Cortázar and an introductory essay by Alazraki, plus twelve critical studies. The generally high quality of most of these pieces, including the editor's introduction, makes this book a good addition to Cortázar studies.

These major collections serve an important purpose in uniting materials that would otherwise be dispersed, thereby simplifying research efforts. Moreover, their representative critical pieces provide general information about Cortázar's writing that may confirm views already held and, in a few welcome cases, suggest new critical paths. Readers wishing to acquaint themselves with Cortázar's text as a whole and with the criticism therefore would do well to start with these volumes. Nevertheless, these collections do have shortcomings. Their uneven quality cannot be attributed entirely to the variety of critical interests displayed because a wide diversity of critical "approaches" does not necessarily imply a marked qualitative variety of accomplishments.

This situation seems to me to be the case with Cortázar criticism. The unevenness of the essay collections is generated not only by differences among critics' interests, but sometimes by their disparate understandings of what it means to read critically Cortázar's or any text. The essays that would illustrate this problem are most often concerned with thematic aspects of Cortázar's works that could be read critically, but that nevertheless seem to elicit rather naive treatments by a number of Cortázar's readers. In such pieces, paraphrase and enumerative descriptions of themes or motifs substitute for critical discussion or analysis of Cortázar's writing. Studies that attempt to trace briefly the "development" of a particular thematic element or to describe the repetitive patterns of narrative situations or anecdotes often merely enumerate themes or scenes or provide paraphrastic reductions of individual texts. Although such essays could provide what might be useful information (such as descriptions or summaries of specific works or aspects), their critical contributions are negligible. Thus, while such studies may not be entirely without value for the new or general reader of Cortázar, they are hard to defend as useful for critics concerned with the possibilities for a methodologically sound and systematic analysis of Cortázar's work. The collective volumes remind one that Cortázar's writing poses many difficult questions, and in addition, that the success or failure of the critical response it has evoked may be determined as much by his critics' notions of what analytical discussion entails as by their familiarity with his work.

The above-mentioned essay collections could also serve as a set of exemplary volumes through which one might begin to read the single-author studies devoted to Cortázar's texts. These individual books contain readings that parallel in many ways the aims and results of the

essays in the collective volumes. They thus provide a kind of micro-cosmic view of Cortázar criticism as a whole. In one of those collections, some of the major problems informing most of the book-length studies and articles are described, and significant questions concerning the critical enterprise generated by Cortázar's writing are raised. Cortázar criticism reveals that many critics unwittingly seem to be grappling with the problematics of what Roberto González Echevarría has diagnosed as "the fundamental questions posed by Cortázar's work." He finds that these questions revolve around "the embarrassing problem of how to read an author, not a book," and include the following: "Is 'holistic' criticism viable? Is it possible, in other words, to read Cortázar instead of engaging in a series of isolated exegeses of his works? And if it is worth attempting such a reading, how does one avoid turning it into a thematic gloss, a formalistic reduction or a biographical narrative?"<sup>6</sup> These queries accurately describe the main categories of the single-author studies and underscore the methodological problems characteristic of many of the longer projects.

Most of the book-length studies appear to attempt an overall discussion of Cortázar's work; however, several books deal only with one generic group or with a single text. The general studies include books by Amícola (1969), Curutchet (1972), Filer (1970), García Canclini (1968), Escamilla Molina (1970), Picon Garfield (two from 1975), Roy (1974), and Sola (1968). Sosnowski (1973) deals mainly with three major prose fiction texts; MacAdam (1971), Mastrángelo (1971), and Planells (1979) concentrate on the short stories; and Aronne Amestoy (1972), Genover (1973), and Brody (1976) discuss *Rayuela* exclusively.<sup>7</sup> None of the books that to date have attempted an overall view of Cortázar's work constitutes *the* definitive critical study that everyone interested in Cortázar should read. Given the proliferation of such studies, it would seem that Cortázar's critics believe that a "holistic" reading is not only viable, but imminent (with the major obstacle to its completion being, perhaps, the author's own continued productivity). The wide array of book-length projects attempting something like an overview also reveals, however, that it is either a difficult or critically problematic undertaking that few, if any, of Cortázar's readers have been able to handle. Not many of the books really venture to deal with Cortázar's total output, even though some appear to describe such a project. Those that attempt to be "complete" and those that limit their investigations to selected groups of texts too often fall into precisely the patterns of thematic, formalistic, and biographical reductionism mentioned above.

Although the more general studies deal with many of the same texts, they also display a variety of critical postures or interests. For example, for Amícola (1969), a reading of Cortázar's work implies a discussion of both contextual and textual elements. After attempting

briefly to situate Cortázar's work within the Argentine literary tradition and to define in very sketchy terms his work's relation to the development of the novel and the short story, the book undertakes an enumerative and unsystematic review of individual texts, dominant stylistic and thematic elements, as well as "important" characters in Cortázar's major works. Curutchet (1972) undertakes a more logical and apparently systematic approach by focusing on the "evolution" of Cortázar's writing from *Los reyes* (the "prehistory" in which the rest of his work is grounded and repeats) to *62: modelo para armar*. The chronological progression from text to text is here viewed as an essentially dialectical movement that culminates in *62*, the one that Curutchet considers the generator and center of the whole study (the title of the entire work is the same as that of the chapter dealing with *62*). Although this chapter is the book's best, its analysis (admittedly the pretext for the preceding discussions) is not really capable of carrying the whole study, which otherwise relies rather heavily on thematic enumerations and even on identifications between characters and Cortázar, whose own "ideas" are too often equated with those explicitly represented in his fictions.

Filer (1970) contains one of the most arbitrary and unsystematic descriptions of "themes and techniques" in Cortázar's work from *Los reyes* to *La vuelta al día en ochenta mundos*. Although this work studies a more diverse body of texts than do some other general treatments of Cortázar, its paraphrastic and inventorial approach undercuts the possibility of a critical reading. Picon Garfield offers an introductory, but paraphrastic, discussion in *Julio Cortázar* (1975), and a more sophisticated thematic, but nevertheless reductive, study in *¿Es Julio Cortázar un surrealista?* (1975). The former, presumably intended for young or new readers of Cortázar, takes an elementary approach to his work, but its lack of any cohesive methodology renders questionable its utility, even for beginners. The book consists of brief descriptions of Cortázar's texts and an array of quotes from interviews with him, from which his own statements are often extracted to serve as critical explanations of his writing. *¿Es Julio Cortázar un surrealista?* is, on the other hand, a scholarly investigation that provides detailed material regarding Cortázar's relation to surrealism. It is an encyclopedic literary "source" or "influence" study that attempts to document the many links between Cortázar's work and that of the French surrealists; for Picon Garfield, a correct reading of Cortázar cannot be undertaken without establishing these contextual relations. The description of the stylistic and thematic characteristics of surrealism and the ways in which Cortázar appears to incorporate those elements into his own work provide much information. The study seems more concerned with describing the French texts than critically reading Cortázar's because in setting out to establish the predominance of surrealism in all aspects of Cortázar's work, the study

reduces his writing to the display and reworking of the themes, language, and situations of that literary movement. The concerns here seem to be almost entirely contextual, and Cortázar's texts as texts are virtually ignored in the process of picking out their surrealist sources.

In Roy (1974), the strategy is similar; here Cortázar's work is read only in terms of one contextual factor and thereby reduced to a display of that element's many manifestations within his writing. Having assumed that previous studies of Cortázar already have analyzed sufficiently the "purely literary" aspects of his work, Roy argues that it is time to read Cortázar as a mirror of his own cultural context, that is, his "argentinidad," as reflected in his writing from the pseudonymous *Presencia* to *Libro de Manuel*. Emphasis is placed on biographical and thematic details; texts are examined only insofar as they represent the truly Argentine quality of Cortázar's writing. The Sola (1968) study attempts to combine discussion of textual and contextual questions and, more important, to consider the heterogeneous nature of Cortázar's literary production. This rather early examination concentrates on reading his works in terms of the varied generic roles or functions assumed from *Los reyes* (the one which seems to generate the diverse yet unified texts that follow) where he reveals himself as "the poet," onward to his work as narrator (i.e., author of various forms of short narrative), novelist, essayist, and translator. Sola's book is limited not only by its early publication, but also by its methodology. It is often a more descriptive than analytical discussion that, like other studies that follow it, relies heavily on enumerations of significant thematics and plot summaries (especially in the section dealing with the short stories). Nevertheless, Sola's study offers a suggestive first overview of Cortázar's variegated literary corpus; by both emphasizing and trying to interconnect the diverse "roles" developed by the author, the book begins to reveal the problems inherent in dealing with Cortázar's corpus, as well as the possibilities and limitations of this particular "response" to its formal complexity.

Because the task of the more circumscribed studies (those dealing only with Cortázar's fiction, short narrative, or *Rayuela*) would seem to be less problematic than those concerned with more than one genre, one might expect their accomplishments to be greater. Yet many of these studies exhibit certain methodological limitations similar to those that characterize the more general books and restrict the nature of their critical results. Attempts to examine closely a specific text, or to read a generic group in terms of its thematic or structural systems, do provide much useful information, however. In Sosnowski (1973), for example, we have an informative and thorough discussion of a significant thematic or unifying "undercurrent"—the "mythic vision of reality"—in several of Cortázar's major fictional works. The study underscores the predominance of this "vision" throughout Cortázar's first four collec-

tions of stories and first two or three novels. The major portion of the book discusses *Los premios*, *Rayuela*, and "El perseguidor," texts that embody in the most explicit and, according to Sosnowski, most significant fashion the "pursuer" motif that is so inextricably involved in the "mythic vision of reality." The study draws on Cortázar's views concerning literature, the explicit statements of the pursuer-protagonists within those fictions, and the texts of various thinkers concerned with this literary or philosophical theme, some of whose works are mentioned by Cortázar himself. The close readings of the "pursuers" who dominate the texts in question are detailed and informative; however, those discussions and brief commentary on the short stories as a group would have been aided considerably by a more complete and rigorous consideration of the key concept of "mythic vision" in the first chapter.

The remaining studies—MacAdam (1971), Planells (1979), Aronne Amestoy (1972), Brody (1976), and Genover (1973)—deal either with Cortázar's short narratives or with *Rayuela* and fall into two main categories. One group (MacAdam and Brody) tries to offer a systematic critical model for identifying and dealing with the structuring principles of the texts in question, and the other group resorts either to paraphrase or reductionistic enumeration in order to describe the dominant thematics of specific works. Although the projects of those in the first group have questionable success in their individual undertakings, they are more critically suggestive and useful than the others named here. MacAdam's Proppian model of "basic situations" or sequences characterizing the narrative structure of the stories in Cortázar's first four collections is, as I have noted elsewhere, an early attempt to view systematically all of the short narratives and to theorize about the structural "constants" informing them.<sup>8</sup> His method is in its own way reductionistic, and one might easily call into question the real utility of the analytical paradigm because of its limited perspective. This study nevertheless moves toward a reading that would concern itself with more than the purely thematic or generic questions generating other studies. It would seem that to limit a reading of the stories to any of these single categories would be to leave aside many important and connected issues; to attempt to interrelate them might prove to be more difficult, but ultimately more productive. An effort to do such an integrated reading of a single text is the "Critical Guide" to *Rayuela* undertaken by Brody, which presents a discussion of the thematic, structural, linguistic, and stylistic aspects of the novel. The study admittedly is aimed at an audience of nonspecialists or students and therefore utilizes some generalizing and often simplistic methods. It nevertheless goes further and appears to operate at a higher level than some works supposedly addressed to a critically sophisticated readership. By dividing and focusing the comments on *Rayuela* around those four basic categories, and by continuing to interrelate them throughout

the book and in the concluding comments, Brody offers a critical model that is simple and direct, but also productive. The utilization of some anecdotal and thematic paraphrase, and emphasis on the question of "authenticity" and on the book's equation with the biographical author's "vision of life" detract somewhat from the work's critical solidity, but the study offers a clear idea of how to begin to read *Rayuela*. The book therefore might serve as a good example for students (and even for more experienced readers) who do not know how to read a text critically or to take into account more than one analytical category.

The other books devoted to Cortázar's short stories and to *Rayuela* that are mentioned above essentially provide thematic glosses and paraphrases, notwithstanding their apparent attempts to go beyond that kind of treatment. Aronne Amestoy (1972) is a good example of the paraphrastic "analysis" that also informs portions of other studies.<sup>9</sup> The major problem of this work is its conflation of authorial and character statements and its general identification of those declarations with the text's own performance. Planells (1979) suffers somewhat from a similar confusion; the discussion of the three thematic elements or components that pervade Cortázar's stories from *Bestiario* to *Octaedro* (*soledad*, *incomunicación*, and *erotismo*) seems to be grounded in a belief that Cortázar's intentions and explanations of his writing are transparent keys to his stories. Although the study's aim is to read these components as basic to the philosophical perspective of Cortázar's work, the discussion is dominated by the enumeration of subthemes within each major thematic category and by numerous paraphrases of the stories in which those themes are to be found. Likewise, Genover (1973) attempts to focus on philosophical categories and undertakes a mostly thematic investigation to illustrate main points. The study undertakes a reading of *Rayuela* in terms of its connections with existentialist concerns and literary themes or techniques. Structural and linguistic elements are discussed in part 1, while part 2 enumerates the primary existentialist thematics that pervade Cortázar's novel. Although the concomitant treatment of structure, language, and theme would appear to describe a rounded or integrated study, the book's overriding concern is nevertheless with the last of these categories. This reduction of the text to its possible links with existentialism might be of use to some readers interested only in that particular connection; however, its elementary consideration of various aspects of the novel used to establish those "vertical" connections makes questionable its contributions to Cortázar criticism.

The extant studies of Cortázar are sure to be joined in the future by other single-author and collective volumes that will take up other aspects of his writing, as well as reconsider topics already touched upon by other critics. I, like many of Cortázar's readers, would hope that those new additions to Cortázar criticism would begin to consider more



analytically and systematically Cortázar's own texts, and take seriously the critical issues raised by previous efforts to interpret his work, efforts that are part of a critical "boom" that has yet to prove itself adequate for the task at hand.

NOTES

1. Cortázar's novels include: *Los premios* (1960), *Rayuela* (1963), *62: modelo para armar* (1968), and *Libro de Manuel* (1973); his short story collections: *Bestiario* (1951), *Final del juego* (1956; 2nd enlarged edition, 1964), *Las armas secretas* (1959), *Todos los fuegos el fuego* (1966), *Octaedro* (1974), and *Alguien que anda por ahí* (1977); his dramatic "dialogue" or "poem": *Los reyes* (1949); his poetry collections: *Presencia* (1938; under pseudonym of "Julio Denis") and *Pameos y meopas* (1971). Among his "miscellaneous" volumes are: *Historias de cronopios y de famas* (1962), *La vuelta al día en ochenta mundos* (1967), *Último round* (1969), *Fantomas contra los vampiros multinacionales* (1975), *Territorios* (1978), and *Un tal Lucas* (1979). Cortázar's essays and reviews have appeared in literary and critical journals since the 1940s, and some have been reprinted in several of his "miscellaneous" books. This list is itself a preliminary classification of Cortázar's work according to conventional categories, and therefore the "miscellaneous" group includes volumes that are as different from each other as from those included in other categories. As such, the list necessarily takes a kind of position with respect to the nature of Cortázar's work, even if only for the sake of bibliographical order. Some of the most basic problems raised by the heterogeneity of Cortázar's writings are therefore evident from the outset. See Martha Paley Francescato, "Bibliography of Works by and about Julio Cortázar," in Jaime Alazraki and Ivar Ivask, eds., *The Final Island: The Prose Fiction of Julio Cortázar* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1978), pp. 171–99, for the most complete list to date of Cortázar's work and the critical studies devoted to him through 1977.
2. See Emir Rodríguez Monegal, *El boom de la novela latinoamericana* (Caracas: Tiempo Nuevo, 1972) for a discussion of the history behind and the immediate factors surrounding the "boom." Cortázar's role and the significant impact of *Rayuela*'s publication for the development of the Spanish American novel are readily acknowledged in this commentary (p. 82). For other points of view concerning the "boom," as well as on Cortázar's relation to its development, see also: José Donoso, *Historia personal del "boom"* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1972) and Hernán Vidal, *Literatura hispanoamericana e ideología liberal: surgimiento y crisis (Una problemática sobre la dependencia en torno a la narrativa del boom)* (Buenos Aires: Hispamérica, 1976).
3. See Paley Francescato, "Bibliography of Works by and about Julio Cortázar," Section III, pp. 177–99, for a list of critical texts—theses, books, essay collections, articles and reviews—published through 1977. For the convenience of my readers, the following list, drawn from Paley Francescato's bibliography as well as from my own examination of specific volumes, is provided as a chronological summary of books and collective volumes (or parts thereof) dealing only with Cortázar. Titles marked by an asterisk are not included in Paley Francescato's list.

Works published in the 1960s: *Setecientos monos*, Año 2, No. 7 (1965); *Boletín de Literaturas Hispánicas*, No. 6 (1966); *Cuadernos de la revista Casa de las Américas*, No. 3 (1967); *Índice*, Año 22, Nos. 221–23 (1967); Néstor García Canclini, *Cortázar: una antropología poética* (Buenos Aires: Nova, 1968); Ana María Simo et al., *Cinco miradas sobre Cortázar* (Buenos Aires: Tiempo Contemporáneo, 1968); Graciela de Sola, *Julio Cortázar y el hombre nuevo* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1968); Sara Vinocur Tirri and Néstor Tirri, eds., *La vuelta a Cortázar en nueve ensayos* (Buenos Aires: Carlos Pérez, 1969); Mercedes Rein, *Julio Cortázar: el escritor y sus máscaras* (Montevideo: Diaco, 1969).

Works published in the 1970s: Roberto Escamilla Molina, *Julio Cortázar: visión de conjunto* (Mexico City: Novaro, 1970); Malva Filer, *Los mundos de Julio Cortázar* (New York: Las Americas, 1970); Alfred MacAdam, *El individuo y el otro: crítica a los cuentos de*

Julio Cortázar (Buenos Aires-New York: La Librería, 1971); Carlos Mastrángelo, *Usted, yo, los cuentos de Julio Cortázar y su autor* (Córdoba: Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, 1971); Lida Aronne Amestoy, *Cortázar: la novela mandala* (Buenos Aires: Fernando García Cambeiro, 1972); Juan Carlos Curutchet, *Julio Cortázar o la crítica de la razón pragmática* (Madrid: Nacional, 1972); Helmy F. Giacomani, ed., *Homenaje a Julio Cortázar* (New York: Las Americas, 1972); Davi Arrigucci, Jr., *O Escorpião Encalacrado: A Poética da Destruição em Julio Cortázar* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1973); Kathleen Genover, *Claves de una novelística existencial (en Rayuela de Julio Cortázar)* (Madrid: Playor, 1973); *Revista Iberoamericana* 39, Nos. 84–85 (1973); Saúl Sosnowski, *Julio Cortázar: una búsqueda mítica* (Buenos Aires: Noé, 1973); Joaquín Roy, *Julio Cortázar ante su sociedad* (Barcelona: Península, 1974); \*Brita Brodin, *Criaturas ficticias y su mundo en Rayuela de Cortázar* (Lund: Liber-CWK Gleerup, 1975); David Lagmanovich, ed., *Estudios sobre los cuentos de Julio Cortázar* (Barcelona: Hispam, 1975); \*Evelyn Picon Garfield, *Julio Cortázar* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1975); \*Evelyn Picon Garfield, *¿Es Julio Cortázar un surrealista?* (Madrid: Gredos, 1975); *Books Abroad* 50, No. 3 (1976); \*Robert Brody, *Julio Cortázar: Rayuela* (London: Grant & Cutler/Tamesis, 1976); Teresinka Pereira, *El realismo mágico y otras herencias de Julio Cortázar* (Portugal/U.S.: Nova Era/Backstage, 1976); Alazraki and Ivask, eds., *The Final Island* (1978); \*Antonio Planells, *Cortázar: metafísica y erotismo* (Madrid: José Porrúa Turanzas, 1979). Hereafter references to individual texts will be made through mention of author's or editor's name and publication date, or to journal title and date only.

4. See Paley Francescato, "Bibliography of Works by and about Julio Cortázar," pp. 178–80, for lists of the contents of all the collective volumes.
5. See Lagmanovich, "Prólogo: para una caracterización general de los cuentos de Julio Cortázar," pp. 7–21. Although his theoretical model is admirable for its efforts to go beyond other critics' work and to try to account for the variations structuring all of Cortázar's stories, its success is rather limited. Both the enumeration of paired or contrasted thematic "constants" and the list of "dynamic" typological categories seem to be somewhat arbitrarily constructed in terms of thematically centered binary oppositions. Here the overriding concern for thematics undermines the possibilities for creating a totalizing model, or even an entirely sound system of analysis. The attempt is itself of some importance, however; even if it fails to meet the needs of the texts in question, it at least points to the absence of such a model and raises questions about its potential construction.
6. Roberto González Echevarría, "Los reyes: Cortázar's Mythology of Writing," in Alazraki and Ivask, eds., *The Final Island*, p. 63.
7. This list is a sample of titles that would represent the different types of projects already undertaken on Cortázar's work during the past two decades. Likewise, the discussion that follows deals with a selection of volumes representative of both early and recent publications to which I have had access, as well as indicating the kinds of "approaches" informing most major studies to date (February 1981).
8. See my review of *El individuo y el otro: crítica a los cuentos de Julio Cortázar*, by Alfred J. MacAdam, *Revista Iberoamericana* 39 (1973), pp. 693–95.
9. See my "Leaps across the Board," *Diacritics* 4, 4 (Winter 1974), pp. 29–34.