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## THE GENESIS OF AUGUSTO ROA BASTOS' *YO EL SUPREMO*

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Many critics have discussed the important role that the study of the genesis of a literary work plays in its interpretation. In *Le texte et l'avant-texte: les brouillons d'un poème de Milosz*, Jean Bellemin-Noel points out that the analysis of the genesis of a work entails a careful comparison of its "pre-texts" (rough drafts, fragments of a work published prior to the work itself, etc.) with the work printed in its "final form," in order to observe its process of elaboration.<sup>1</sup> Raymonde Debray-Genette indicates that this task should discover systematic variations from pre-text to text (the general laws that govern omissions, additions, alterations, etc.), and not simply describe individual variations, although at times these may be of great interest. The analysis of the significance of patterns of variations may help to confirm or disprove the interpretations found in the existing body of critical studies on a literary work.<sup>2</sup>

Nicasio Perera San Martín is the first to point out the value of a genetic study of Augusto Roa Bastos' *Yo el Supremo*, in "La escritura del poder y el poder de la escritura."<sup>3</sup> Perera San Martín discusses the existence of a fragment of *Yo el Supremo* published in *Marcha*<sup>4</sup> in 1973 under the title "Mi

reino el terror," and examines some of the differences between this fragment and the novel. There exists another pre-text of *Yo el Supremo*, the fragment "Ay del solo," which appeared in the magazine *Hispanamérica* in 1972.<sup>5</sup> (The first edition of Roa Bastos' novel was published in 1974.)<sup>6</sup> Thus, these fragments provide us with an opportunity to observe the laws of creation involved in the writing of *Yo el Supremo*.

To facilitate the analysis of the incorporation of these fragments into the novel, I have divided each into various segments (paired with the passages in *Yo el Supremo* to which they correspond), numbered consecutively.

"Ay del solo" has eighteen paragraphs, only some of which form the nucleus of corresponding sections of *Yo el Supremo*. I have assigned unit numbers<sup>7</sup> only to those paragraphs that constitute significant portions (as opposed to isolated phrases) of the novel.<sup>8</sup> "Ay del solo" consists of six basic parts, listed below:

*Unit one* (the reprise of the episode of El Supremo's fall from his horse during a storm): A phrase found in the last line of paragraph one (...*supe que había nacido viejo y que yo no podía morir más sino únicamente desvivir hasta el último suspiro*) and paragraphs two and three form the nucleus of pages 422-23 of the novel (ending with the blank space on page 423).

*Unit two* (the fall of the blind birds during the storm): Paragraphs four, five and six are incorporated into the novel on pages 423-24 (the section beginning under the blank space on page 423).

*Unit three* (El Supremo's complaints about military men): Paragraph fourteen is used in *Yo el Supremo* in the final paragraphs of pages 43 and 169.

*Unit four* (El Supremo's discussion of *oppressors and the oppressed*<sup>9</sup> in Paraguay): Paragraph fifteen is incorporated on pages 44 (the entire page), 47 (third paragraph), and in the first sentence after the heading *cuaderno privado* on page 326.

*Unit five* (the "voice" of El Supremo's conscience or the "unknown handwriting"): Paragraphs sixteen and seventeen (ending with the sentence *El gallo más pintado de toda la leyenda humana*) form the basis of pages 106 (final paragraph), 111 (the two complete paragraphs that appear here), and 439-40 (beginning under the blank space on page 439 and ending with the sentence *Estos perros del cosmos no enferman de hidrofobia*).<sup>10</sup>

*Unit six* (the novel's conclusion or "final voice"): <sup>11</sup> The rest of paragraph seventeen (beginning with *No quieres asistir al desastre de tu patria*) and paragraph eighteen are incorporated into *Yo el Supremo* on pages 453-56 (the section beginning under the blank space on page 453).

The second fragment, "Mi reino el terror," consists of four paragraphs, which I have divided into the following three units:

*Unit seven* (the Robertson brothers give El Supremo an English lesson): The first paragraph is incorporated into the novel on pages 139-40.

*Unit eight* (pirates rob John Robertson's ship): The second and third paragraphs, plus the beginning of the fourth paragraph (ending with the lines *Very fine that, alabaron mi acento, despanzurrándose de risa*) are used on pages 141 (first paragraph), 152 (the line *Entre el humo aromático y los destellos se entrevelan azuladas las calaveras de los hermanos Robertson.*), 326 (the first paragraph after the heading "cuaderno privado," except the first sentence) and 336-37 (through the second paragraph on page 337).

*Unit nine* (Héroe and Sultán react to the story *Candide*): The rest of the fourth paragraph (beginning with *Héroe y Sultán, amodorrados...*) forms the nucleus of pages 152-53 of *Yo el Supremo* (ending with the footnote on page 153). This part of the pre-text is used almost verbatim in the novel.

The above description provides a summary of the general correspondences between the pre-texts and passages from *Yo el Supremo*. This study will now focus on an analysis of patterns of variations based on an examination of the nine units defined above, considered as a whole. Variations (additions, omissions, changes from pre-text to text) may be divided into eight categories, each of which I discuss in detail below.

## 1. The hot / cold motif

A comparison of *Yo el Supremo* and its pre-texts reveals the systematic addition of a paradoxical hot / cold motif. In three instances, Roa Bastos adds this motif in the novel to phrases that appear in the pre-texts. Unit one, as noted before, is the episode in which El Supremo describes his fall from a horse during a storm. In the pre-text, the storm's raindrops are simply described as *Gotas de plomo derretido* (72).

However, in the novel they become *Gotas de plomo derretido ardiendo a la vez que helado* (422, my emphasis, = instance one) and *Goterones de fuego y escarcha* (422, = instance two). Similarly, in unit two, El Supremo's original claim in the pre-text, *aguanté los tiros* (72) becomes *aguanté los tiros de plomo derretido y helado* (423, = instance three). Once again, *derretido*, ("melted," which is already present in the pre-text) implies heat, while *helado* (added in the novel) means "frozen."

The repetition of the hot / cold motif throughout *Yo el Supremo* suggests that it may have some symbolic value.<sup>12</sup> Its addition to the two episodes mentioned above implies a possible association between this oxymoron and El Supremo's dual character because the dictator splits into and "I" ("Yo") and a "He" ("El"), primarily as a result of the fall he suffers in these segments. The binary opposition hot / cold thus suggests a parallel with Yo / El, usually interpreted as a division between the dictator's private and public selves.<sup>13</sup> It may also possibly allude to El Supremo's positive and negative character traits developed throughout the novel. The association is undoubtedly highly indeterminate, and it is by no means clear which term of the hot / cold pair corresponds to which term of the Yo / El division or any other set of binary characteristics.

Another possible interpretation of the addition of the hot / cold motif is that it converts units one and two into a prefigurement of El Supremo's death. The segment on El Supremo's demise is characterized by heat from the fire that the dictator has set in his room and the coldness of the mud and water the guards use to put the flames out:

*Gotas de plomo derretido, ardiendo y a la vez helado...* Las trombas de cieno se disparan en todas direcciones. Empapan, *quemán*, agujerean, manchan, *huelan*... Lo convierten en un albañal desbordado donde flotan *témpanos* viscosos, islotes de *llamas* (449-450, my emphases).

The novelist thus broadens symbolic associations through the addition of this element.

## 2. Wordplay

*Yo el Supremo* tends to add wordplay to the fragments that were published before it, with a few notable exceptions. Wordplay (conceptual and phonetic; neologisms, derivations, alliterations, hyphenated expressions with multiple meanings, etc.) characterizes *Yo el Supremo's* novelistic discourse, especially the dictator's speech; it is used to develop many of the work's themes. In the instances cited below, wordplay serves

to portray El Supremo as a clever, sarcastic man, interested in writing and the intricacies of words.

Unit three (El Supremo complains about military men) includes many examples of added wordplay, of which the following are the most illustrative. Roa Bastos changes the pre-text's *Cabromachíos encorsetados en brillantes uniformes* (74) to *Cabromachíos **escarapelados**, enconrsetados en brillantes uniformes* (169, my emphasis) in the novel. The author invents the word *escarapelados*, which is a derivation of *escarapela* ("rosette, cockade").

Another addition in unit three, *El procurador Marco de Balde—Vino* (169), is a play on words based on the name of a historical personage, Dr. Baldovinos.<sup>14</sup> Roa changes the surname by substituting an "e" for the original "o," adding a hyphen, capitalizing the "v," omitting the final "s," and placing the word "de" before it. *Marco de Balde—Vino* ("Marco came in vain") is thus a joke or insult indicating that Baldovino's efforts to help Buenos Aires annex Paraguay proved fruitless.

A good example of how the novelist plays with the multiple meanings of a single word is the incorporation of the sentence *El resto de la milicada, aparentemente flel, tampoco estaba en el flel de la balanza* (169, my emphases). Roa Bastos also adds numerous alliterations in unit three, including the phrases *Bando de los **contrabandos*** (43, my emphases) and *Pese a los **genes de la gens testarudos tarados engendran...*** (43, my emphases).

Unit four (the exploitation of the masses) also involves the addition of significant wordplay. The following example is an alliteration similar to those included in unit three and cited above. Roa adds to El Supremo's discussion of the masses oppressed before his dictatorship: *De un lado la holganza califaria del mayorazgo godo-criollo. Del otro, el esclavo colgado del **clavo*** (44, my emphases).

In the same unit, Roa Bastos changes the original pre-text version from *liberé la tierra arrancando los mojonés clavados en todas partes por los kalogathoi criollos. ...Liberé a éstos [the slaves] arrancándoles del alma los mojonés de su atávica sumisión* (74) to *El mojón de la Dictadura Perpetua libertó la tierra arrancándoles del alma los mojonés de su inmemorial sumisión* (47). Although both versions employ the word *mojón* in two senses, the second one makes the wordplay more effective by condensing it into one sentence and employing *mojón* with a more abstract meaning. In the pre-text, *mojón* is used first as a physical landmark and then to refer to the exploitation of the masses as "excrement." While the novel repeats this second sense of *mojón* (in its second reference), it changes the first meaning of the word to a decisive occurrence, or milestone, in the phrase *El mojón de la Dictadura Perpetua*. This alteration emphasizes the great

changes El Supremo's government effects with respect to the treatment of the common man.

Some other important alterations are found in units seven and eight. In unit seven, the pre-text version reads: *se bebieron [the Robertson brothers] durante cinco años mi fermentada cerveza. No iba a destapar una damajuana cada semana en homenaje a estos green-go-homes rapaces y desleales* (3, my emphasis). In the novel, these underscored words are changed to effect the following wordplay: *se bebieron [the Robertson brothers] durante cinco años mi fermentada cerveza. No iba a destapar una damajuana cada semana en homenaje a estos fementidos green-go-home* (140, my emphases). The change from *rapaces y desleales* to *fementidos* ("treacherous, false") leads to another novelistic alliteration. Similarly, in unit eight, Roa inserts *piratearon al pirata descendiente de piratas* (336, my emphases) and thus once again emphasizes the repetition of the same sound.

There are a few notable exceptions to this rule about the addition of wordplay. In three instances Roa Bastos omits the original wordplay found in the pre-texts. In unit one (the fall from the horse) the fragment "Ay del solo" includes the hyphenated *agua-acero* (72), while *aguacero* (422) appears in the corresponding passage from *Yo el Supremo*. Thus Roa Bastos eliminates the double sense (rainshower / steel-like raindrops) that the original hyphen and extra "a" produce. Similarly, in unit five (the "voice" of El Supremo's conscience) the novelist fails to incorporate in the novel the following wordplay from the pre-text: *Lo propio, lo hecho, lo dado, es lo que queda. El que da queda sin que dar* (75). Finally, in unit eight (pirates attack John Robertson's ship) Roa replaces the wordplay *green-go* with *gringo* (336). The reason for these changes and omissions in the novel is not readily apparent. However, compared with the number of additions, they do not jeopardize the general conclusion that *Yo el Supremo* (in comparison with its pre-texts) tends to increase the use of wordplay.

### 3. El Supremo's division into "I" and "He"

A few scattered changes appear to underscore the dictator's division into an "I" and a "He". In unit one (the fall from the horse) the pre-text reads: *A horcadas, la capa revolando al viento, erguido como siempre, Yo El Supremo alejándome de espaldas...* (72). In contrast, the novel reads: *A horcadas, la capa revolando al viento, erguido como siempre, EL, alejándome de espaldas...* (422). Roa Bastos eliminates "Yo" and "Supremo" because these omissions (especially the first) help to more effectively emphasize the split between the speaking / writing "Yo" (the dictator's private self whose identity is manifested by the word

"alejándome") and "El", the dictator's public identity. Note that this "Yo" and "El" are still united in the sentence from the pre-text.

In unit four ("the oppressors and the oppressed"), Roa also makes changes to maintain this distinction between "Yo" as private self and "El" as public figure. In the pre-text *El Supremo* states: *Aquí el único esclavo sigo siendo yo. El Poder Supremo me ha puesto al servicio de lo que domina* (74, my emphases). This comment suggests an identification between the "Yo", or private individual and the public figure who sacrifices his own good for that of the masses. Roa Bastos eliminates this possible association in the novel: *Aquí el único esclavo sigue siendo el Supremo Dictador puesto al servicio de lo que domina* (44, my emphases). The use of only the third person ("el Supremo Dictador") in this second version confirms the identification of the dictator's public role with the "El" portion of his split personality.

#### 4. Intertextuality

The next group of changes may be characterized as those which enhance the intertextual "dialogue" between *Yo el Supremo* and other works. Roa Bastos has added allusions and citations from other texts to a number of the passages that appear in the pre-texts, and these additions develop many of the novel's themes, including the necessary lack of originality of writers (who inevitably find themselves repeating the words and ideas of previous authors). Moreover, these additions support the theory that knowledge of intertextual sources can enhance the comprehension of Roa Bastos' novel.

Unit four opens up an important intertextual "dialogue" with Rousseau's *The Social Contract*. As we have already noted, the nucleus of this novelistic segment appears in paragraph fifteen of the pre-text "Ay del solo." Although the pre-text already contains the seed of Rousseau's thought in the sentence *La naturaleza no da esclavos; el hombre corruptor de la naturaleza es quien los produce*,<sup>15</sup> (74), it does not incorporate extensive quotations from *The Social Contract* as does *Yo el Supremo* in its corresponding section (page 44). Note that the underscored words in the following passage are taken from Rousseau's work:

¿Pretendían aún los dones-amos que la chusma hambrienta además de servirlos los amara? La gente-muchedumbre; en otras palabras, la chusma laborativa-procreativa producía los bienes, padecía todos los males. Los ricos disfrutaban de todos los bienes. *Dos estados en apariencia inseparables. Igualmente funestos al bien común: Del uno salen los causantes de la tiranía; del otro, los tiranos. ¿Cómo establecer la igualdad entre ricos y pordioseros? No se fatigue usted con estas quimeras me decía el porteño*



Pedro Alcántara de Somellera en vísperas de la Revolución. Voto, sueño piadoso, que no puede realizarse en la práctica. Vea usted don Pedro, *precisamente porque la fuerza de las cosas tiende sin cesar a destruir la igualdad, la fuerza de la Revolución debe siempre tender a mantenerla: que ninguno sea lo bastante rico para comprar a otro, y ninguno lo bastante pobre para verse obligado a venderse*. Ah ah, exclamó el porteño, ¿usted quiere distribuir las riquezas de unos pocos emparejando a todos en la pobreza? No, don Pedro, yo quiero reunir los extremos. Lo que usted quiere es suprimir la existencia de clases, señor José. *La igualdad no se da sin la libertad* don Pedro Alcántara. Esos son *los dos extremos que debemos reunir* (44, my emphases).

Compare the words emphasized above with the underscored portions of the following passages from Rousseau's *The Social Contract*:

Do you want coherence in the state? Then bring *the two extremes* as close together as possible; have neither very rich men nor beggars, for these *two estates*, naturally *inseparable, are equally fatal to the common good; from the one class comes friends of tyranny, from the other, tyrants*. (96, my emphases).

Such equality, we shall be told, is a *chimera* of theory... (97, my emphasis).

*Precisely because the force of circumstance tends always to destroy equality, the force of legislation ought always tend to preserve it*. (97, my emphases).

...were wealth is concerned, *that no citizen shall be rich enough to buy another and none so poor as to be forced to sell himself*. (96, my emphases).

...freedom and equality: freedom because any individual dependence means that much strength withdrawn from the body of the state, and *equality because freedom cannot survive without it*. (96, my emphasis).<sup>16</sup>

Roa Bastos has slightly altered a few of the quotations he borrows from Rousseau. The most significant of these alterations is the change from *the force of legislation ought always tend to preserve it [equality]* to *la fuerza de la Revolución debe tender siempre a mantenerla*. This change gives a more radical sense to Rousseau's original words and theory, and illustrates how Roa Bastos appropriates other texts to serve his own purposes and develop the novel's basic themes (e. g., El Supremo as the chief proponent of revolution for equality in Paraguay).

Unit five (the unknown handwriting or "voice" of El Supremo's conscience) also involves an alteration that introduces an intertextual source. In the pre-text, the "voice" of El Supremo's conscience tells him

*has visto y seguirás viendo a un tiempo... la tierra en que estás acostado ensayando tu yacer antepóstumo* (75, my emphasis). In the novel, this "voice" says: *Has visto y seguirás viendo a un tiempo... la tierra en que estás ensayando tu yacer último-último primero* (439-40, my emphasis). This change is an allusion to the Guaraní mythic figure known as "el Padre Ultimo-Ultimo-Primero," or "Padre Ñamandu." The Guaraní founding father also appears in other sections of the novel, for example, when El Supremo quotes from the Guaraní poem "Fundamento del lenguaje humano" (348-49).<sup>17</sup> The use of the words "último-último primero" to describe El Supremo underscores the parallel between the dictator and a mythic, superhuman being or deity, which is developed in many parts of *Yo el Supremo*.

Unit six (the novel's conclusion or "final" voice) also involves intertextuality. The pre-text reads: *La Revolución no devora a sus hijos, únicamente a sus bastardos* (75). The novel adds the underscored words to this sentence: *No, pequeña momia: la verdadera Revolución no devora a sus hijos, únicamente a sus bastardos* (453-54, my emphases). The reference to the dictator as a mummy establishes an intertextual connection between El Supremo and Ramón del Valle-Inclán's *Tirano Banderas*. Valle-Inclán frequently describes the dictator Santos Bandera as a "momia taciturna," "la momia del Tirano," "La momia indiana," etc.<sup>18</sup>

Some other intertextual allusions that Roa adds in the novel are less precise. For example, in unit five ("the unknown handwriting") the pre-text poses the question *¿Y cuál es la cuenta de tus años, contraidor de tu propio silencio?* (75, my emphasis). In the novel, "tus años" is changed to "tu Debe y Haber" (439). The balance sheet motif, which is developed throughout the novel, may be attributed to various possible sources. It appears in Guillermo Cabanellas's *El dictador del Paraguay Dr. Francia*,<sup>19</sup> Raymond Roussel's *Locus Solus*,<sup>20</sup> and even in Rousseau's *Social Contract*.<sup>21</sup> These sources are all extensively used throughout *Yo el Supremo*, so it is difficult to determine the precise influence for this change.

A Biblical intertextual reference, the Deluge, is simultaneously added to one part of *Yo el Supremo* (unit two) and omitted from another (unit eight). The episode about the blind birds (unit two), as it appears in the pre-text, contains no reference to this Biblical event, however, in the novel, Roa Bastos links these birds blinded in the storm to this disaster: *Las golondrinas se traían su verano desde el norte. El Diluvio les salió al paso. Les cortó el negocio* (423-24). In contrast, the novel does not repeat the following comment made by one of the Robertson brothers in unit eight's pre-text: *Après nous, le Deluge, Sire* (3). This statement is a parody of words that some historical sources attribute to Dr. Francia (the historical dictator upon whom the character El Supremo is based): *Después de mí vendrá el que pueda*,<sup>22</sup> and which Roa elsewhere includes in the pre-text

(unit six) but omits from the novel. In any case, the Deluge is associated with Paraguay's crises and El Supremo's decline. In many other segments of the novel, and its counterpart, "The Ark of Paraguay," frequently appears as a symbol of the country's salvation.<sup>23</sup>

Contrary to the general rule, there is one instance in which Roa Bastos eliminates the intertextual reference. In unit two (the blind birds) the pre-text refers to the birds as "gorriones" (72, "sparrows"), while the novel speaks of "golondrinas" (423-24, "swallows"). The pre-text thus evokes an intertextual connection with *Hamlet: there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow*.<sup>24</sup> The use of sparrows instead of swallows emphasizes the prophetic value of the episode about the falling birds, whose other elements (references to the Chaco, bullets, etc.), both in the pre-text and the novel, also suggest its role of foreshadowing a future Paraguayan disaster, the Chaco War. One result of the Chaco conflict, mass emigration from Paraguay,<sup>25</sup> suggests why Roa Bastos substitutes "swallows" for "sparrows". This replacement broadens the range of future events to which this episode alludes because, as Teresa Méndez-Faith points out, "peones--golondrinas" is the nickname given to Paraguayans who emigrate to Argentina and Brazil to find work harvesting cotton.<sup>26</sup> Thus the use of "golondrinas" in the novel undoubtedly evokes a second future problem for Paraguay, that of mass emigration.

## 5. A positive image of Paraguayans

Two omissions share the common effect of producing a more positive image of Paraguayans. Unit one's pre-text includes these words, eliminated in the novel: *...en este país que ha olvidado la limosna y el sentido de la limosna* (72). The inclusion of this idea would have contradicted the portrayal of the Paraguayans as a charitable and generous people in other episodes of *Yo el Supremo*, such as the segment on Modesto Servín (362) and the footnote about the townspeople's retrieval of the compiler's tape recorder from the river (34).

In unit four, El Supremo originally speaks of the Paraguayans' *atávica sumisión*, which implies that their subservient character is hereditary, and thus carries a negative racial connotation. In the novel, the dictator speaks of the people's *inmemorial sumisión*, removing the initial racial implication and replacing it with a temporal emphasis.

This last change is in accordance with another segment of *Yo el Supremo* in which the dictator suggests that the Paraguayans' submissive gesture of keeping their heads bent is due to a hidden bone in the neck, an anatomical characteristic peculiar to the race (pp. 133-34). The Swiss doctor Rengger disproves any such congenital explanation, and El Supremo's

subsequent commentary implies the possibility that the Paraguayans bend their heads under the weight of the dictator's authoritarian rule:

Le he pedido que en las autopsias buscara usted en la región de la nuca algún hueso oculto en su anatomía. Quiero saber por qué mis compatriotas no pueden levantar la cabeza. ¿Qué hay de eso? No hay ningún hueso, me dice usted. Debe haber entonces algo peor; algún peso que les voltea la cabeza sobre el pecho. (132-133).

## 6. El Supremo's defense of the rights of Paraguayans

Despite certain negative aspects of El Supremo's dictatorship (notably the above-mentioned subservience it fosters), a number of changes reflect the desire to more favorably portray the dictator's government, especially with respect to the rights of the masses. Unit three (El supremo's complaints about military men) reveals several important alterations in this vein. The statement [*The army members*] *buscaban a cada instante hacer temblar al Gobierno para obtener con amenazas no el bien del pueblo sino las pretensiones de sus privilegios* (74, my emphasis) becomes *buscaron a cada instante hacer temblar al Gobierno para obtener con amenazas no el bien del país sino las pretensiones de su arbitrio* (169, my emphasis). The change from "pueblo" to "país" amplifies the group of people whose benefit is at stake, since "pueblo" connotes the poor masses and "país" includes all Paraguayans. This suggests that El Supremo's opposition to the military is an attempt to help everyone, not just a single class, although the common people are the group El Supremo generally tends to favor.

Moreover, the change from "privilegios" to "arbitrio" is probably designed to eliminate the impression that military men legally enjoyed special status, and to emphasize instead that they arbitrarily tried to have their will done, without any legal foundation. Such privileges would inevitably cast a negative light on El Supremo, because although these abuses existed prior to his dictatorship, they occurred during the government of Paraguay's first independent Junta, of which Francia / El Supremo was an important member.

Unit four includes the addition of many sentences on the theme of the exploitation of the masses before El supremo's dictatorship, of which the following is a typical example: *Para estos mancebos de la tierra, para estos fierbrases del garrote, la chusma no era sino un apero de labranza más* (44) [note that the phrase "Mancebos de la tierra y del garrote" appears in unit three's pre-text]. Such additions help develop the dictator's criticism and reform of popular oppression.

Unit five (the "voice" of El Supremo's conscience) eliminates the pre-text's *Más te hubiera valido morir a tiempo, mejor aún no haber nacido* (75) in the novel, because this sentence suggests that El Supremo was worthless, and the novel generally strives to portray both his positive and negative sides, and especially his achievement of establishing the independence of the Paraguayan nation.

Unit six's pre-text (the "final" voice) reads: *Te pasearás entre las hileras de hamacas que cuelgan unas encima de otras, ya sin jerarquía visible, podridas por veinte años de oscuridad y sudor* (75, my emphasis), while the novel changes this to *pasearás entre las hileras de hamacas que cuelgan unas encima de otras, podridas por veinte años de obscuridad, sufrimiento y sudor* (455). The novel omits the mention of a "visible hierarchy" when referring to the prison hammocks because this phrase implies that the dictator enforced a societal caste system that he is consistently portrayed as having tried to eliminate in *Yo el Supremo*. We have already had the opportunity to observe El Supremo's support of social and economic equality in this study, especially in the discussion of Roa Bastos' use of Rousseau's *The Social Contract* (see pp. 12-15). Thus, the new version omits the allusion to the hierarchy and instead develops the theme of the suffering of the prisoners, who were largely conspirators against the dictator's government.

## 7. The development of dialogue

The fragments "Ay del solo" and "Mi reino el terror" already incorporate the dialogue between El Supremo and his conscience, as well as the dictator's dialogue with other characters, such as the Robertson brothers. The development of these two pre-texts in the novel tends to further amplify dialogue on various levels. For example, the novel converts unit four's pre-text, El Supremo's monologue on the exploitation of the masses, into a dialogue in which both Pedro Alcántara de Somellera (as we have already seen on pages 13-14) and the dictator's secretary, Patiño, speak. When El Supremo dictates the word "kaloikagatoi" to Patiño, the latter states: *Si tuviera Vucencia la bondad de repetirme el término que se me ha escapado* (44).

Similarly, in unit three, when the dictator asks *Has oído tú algo de Atenas, de Solón?*, Patiño replies *Lo que Vucencia ha dicho de ellos, nomás* (43). This question and answer do not appear in the pre-text. The dialogue with Patiño, which is totally absent from "Ay del solo" and "Mi reino el terror," is a fundamental aspect of *Yo el Supremo's* structure.

In unit seven's pre-text (the Robertson brothers give El Supremo an English lesson), El Supremo narrates the actions of the dogs Héroe and

Sultán. In the novel, Roa Bastos changes some of El Supremo's discourse into a direct conversation between the two dogs. For example, the original Sultán salió a recibirlos. Los hizo pasar al estudio (3) becomes *Sultán sale a recibirlos. Pasen al estudio, señores... ¿Se ha bañado por casualidad? Oh, sí, en agua de rosas, señor Sultán!* (139, my emphasis).

Finally, in unit eight, the original pre-text is fragmented and interrupted by the incorporation of footnotes in the novel. The two footnotes interjected on pages 336 and 337 of *Yo el Supremo* (both by the compiler) respectively confirm and contradict El Supremo's statements in this segment of the text. The novel thus introduces a footnote / text dialogue that is not found in the original pre-texts.

## 8. Temporal alterations

The last category is temporal alterations in the narration. These changes do not appear to obey any general rule. In units five and six (the "voice" of El Supremo's conscience and the novel's conclusion) Roa Bastos has taken some of the pre-text's present (and present perfect) tense verbs (e. g., "trabajo,") ("consigo," "has vacilado") and transposed them into the past tense ("trabajaba," "conseguí," "vacilaste"), while in unit seven (El Supremo's English lesson) he does just the opposite, systematically converting the original preterit into the present. This second set of alterations has the effect of vivifying the Robertsons' visit to the dictator. Perera San Martín has suggested a study of these verbal transpositions in terms of Harald Wenrich's theory in *Le temps*.<sup>27</sup> In any case, *Yo el Supremo* generally oscillates between the dictator's use of verbs in the present and past tenses, primarily because the novel contains his narration from the dual perspective of both life and death. Thus any alteration of verb tenses in the pre-texts may relate to *Yo el Supremo's* peculiar narrative situation.

The eight categories listed above include almost all of *Yo el Supremo's* fundamental themes and aspects. They highlight the novel's symbolic, paradoxical nature (category one), its baroque style produced by wordplay (category two), El Supremo's split personality (category three), the role of intertextuality (category four), Roa Bastos' preoccupation with projecting a positive image of Paraguayans and certain aspects of El Supremo's government (categories five and six), the novel's use of dialogue (category seven), and its constant play with time (category eight). One can derive these basic aspects of *Yo el Supremos* from an analysis independent of its pre-texts. However, the comparison with "Ay del solo" and "Mi reino el terror" both confirms the significance of these elements and enhances their comprehension by tracing their process of elaboration. Because the

two fragments are brief, variations are limited (especially in certain categories, e. g., three and five) and cannot provide us with as accurate an idea of the novelist's path and consistent patterns of alterations as would a comparison between *Yo el Supremo* and more extensive rough drafts. Nonetheless, even this limited examination of the novel in terms of its pre-texts casts light on Roa Bastos' concerns and intentions in his construction of *Yo el Supremo*.

### NOTAS

1 Jean Bellemin-Noel, *Le texte et l'avant-texte: les brouillons d'un poème de Milosz* (Paris: Librairie terminology when i refer to fragments of *Yo el Supremo* published prior to the novel as "pre-texts").

2 Raymonde Debray-Genette, "Généétique et poétique: Esquisse de méthode," *Littérature* 28 (1977): 19-39.

3 Nicasio Perera San Martín, "La escritura del poder y el poder de la escritura," *Seminario sobre Yo el Supremo de Augusto Roa Bastos* (Poitiers: Publications du Centre de Recherches Latino-Américaines de l'université de Potiers, 1976) 128, 137-41.

4 Augusto Roa Bastos, "Mi reino el terror," *Marcha*, viernes, 15 de junio de 1973, p. 3. All quotations from "Mi reino el terror" will appear with the corresponding page numbers indicated in parenthesis after each citation.

5 Augusto Roa Bastos, "Ay del solo," *Hispanamérica* 2 (1972): 71-76. All quotations from "Ay del solo" will appear with the corresponding page numbers indicated in parentheses after each citation.

6 Augusto Roa Bastos, *Yo el Supremo*, 9th ed. (México: Siglo XXI editores, 1979) is the edition used in this study (it is identical to the 1974 edition). All quotations from *Yo el Supremo* will appear with the corresponding page numbers indicated in parentheses after each citation.

7 in this study, i use the word "unit" to encompass both the paragraphs from the pre-text and the passages from *Yo el Supremo* to which they correspond.

8 Note that scattered words and sentences from paragraphs one and seven through thirteen of "Ay del solo" are used in the same or modified form in *Yo el Supremo*. For example, the citation from Pascal in paragraph one appears with some changes on page 445; paragraph seven's *Entendedme bien, pobres conciudadanos*, appears on page 400, while its words *Me habéis leído mal* become *me han leído mal* on page 439; in paragraph nine, the words *...puse sobre la mesa de la asamblea inaugural mis dos pistolas. He aquí mis argumentos: Uno contra Fernando VII. El otro contra Buenos Aires*, appear with slight alterations on page 105; the mention of the

*fortalezas desde el Salto hasta el Olimpo* (paragraph eleven) is repeated on page 48; the reference to Pascal in paragraph twelve appears with some changes on page 223 and the idea of a federation of Latin American states (also in paragraph twelve) resurfaces in the novel on page 225. These paragraphs from "Ay del solo", however, do not constitute major sections of *Yo el Supremo*, as do the units defined in this study, and I have thus omitted them from my discussion. Also note that I do not discuss every variation from pre-text to text, but only those that illustrate a pattern of variations.

9 "Oppressors and the oppressed" is the division that Gladys Vila Barnés suggests for an analysis of Roa Bastos' fiction in her study *Significado y coherencia del universo narrativo de Augusto Roa Bastos* (Madrid: Editorial Origenes, 1984) 28.

10 The selection of this sentence as the section's conclusion is somewhat arbitrary because the "voice" of El Supremo's conscience continues to speak intermittently for several pages. I chose this sentence because it marks the end of this section's discussion of chance, and the corresponding paragraph from "Ay del solo" is mainly concerned with the same topic.

11 Peter Turton, "Yo el Supremo: Una verdadera revolución novelesca," *Texto Crítico* 12 (1979): 23 uses this expression to refer to the speaker on the last few pages of the novel before the appendix (pp. 453-56).

12 Tzvetan Todorov, *Simbolismo e interpretación*, trans. Claudine Lemoine-Márgara Russotto (Caracas: Monte Avila Editores, C. A., 1981) 30-31, discusses the role of repetition in symbolic construction.

13 Sharon Keefe Ugalde, "Binarisms in *Yo el Supremo*," *Hispanic Journal* 2.1 (Fall 1980): 69-77, discusses the use of binary oppositions (including Yo / El and hot / cold) in *Yo el Supremo*.

14 Enrique Wisner, *El Dictador del Paraguay Doctor José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia* (Concordia, 1923) 114.

15 This sentence, also repeated in the novel (p. 47) is similar to Rousseau's *Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains*. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Maurice Cranston (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1968) 49. It may be a citation from another of Rousseau's works or the writings of one of the other Encyclopedists.

16 Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 96-97. Note that I have not followed the order of these paragraphs in Rousseau's text but rearranged them to facilitate their comparison with *Yo el Supremo*.

17 See *Las culturas condenadas*, 2nd ed., ed. Augusto Roa Bastos (México: Siglo XXI Ed., 1980), especially pp. 259-60.

18 Ramón del Valle-Inclán, *Tirano Banderas: Novela de tierra caliente*, 5th ed. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S. A., 1984) 41, 58, 60.

19 Guillermo Cabanellas, *El dictador del Paraguay Dr. Francia* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, S. A., 1946) 328. Cabanellas states: *En el debe y haber cuyo saldo es la obra de todo gobernante hay que consignar los resultados definitivos como un balance que exige la justicia*.

20 Raymond Roussel, *Locus Solus*, trans. Rupert Copeland Cunningham (London: John Calder, 1983) 130. The novel reads: *Gérard would see his credit consisting of the number of days accomplished grow at the same time as his debit, the total number of days yet to do, diminished*.



21 Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 65. Rousseau writes: *Suppose we draw up a balance sheet so that the losses and gains may be readily compared.*

22 Justo Pastor Benitez, *La vida solitaria del Dr. José Gaspar de Francia, Dictador del Paraguay* (Buenos aires: Librería y editorial "El Ateneo," 1937) 270.

23 For example, see pages 219, 355, and 383 of *Yo el Supremo* for references to the Deluge and the "Ark of Paraguay."

24 William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1959), Act V, scene ii, 140.

25 Luis María Ferrer Agüero, "El universo narrativo de Augusto Roa Bastos," diss., Universidad Complutense, 1981, 86.

26 Teresa Méndez-Faith, *Paraguay: Novela y exilio* (New Jersey: Slusa, 1985) 29-30. Note that I have omitted one important intertextual addition in this section (the interjection of the line beginning with *Erré por los lugares más desiertos...* in unit one). These words constitute an intertextual allusion to Pascal's *Pensées* whose significance I discuss in detail in my dissertation, "Augusto Roa Bastos' *Yo el Supremo* from a Dialogic Perspective," Columbia University, 1987, 356-62 (in which I also develop many of the points mentioned in this analysis). An examination of the relationship with Pascal in the present study would lead us far afield of the primary discussion of the genesis of the text. For the most complete list of passages from *Yo el Supremo* and the sections of Pascal's *Pensées* to which they correspond, see Turton, "*Yo el Supremo*: Una verdadera revolución novelesca."

27 Perera San Martín, "La escritura del poder y el poder de la escritura," 138 (footnote).