

Borges as a Writer of Parables: Reversal and Infinite Regression

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The short stories of Jorge Luis Borges are representative of a major trend in twentieth-century fiction which concentrates on aesthetic rather than moral issues. Borges himself has stressed the essentially amoral and literary perspective which distinguishes his work from that of more ethically oriented writers: "I want to make it quite clear that I am not, nor have I ever been, what used to be called a preacher of parables . . . and is now known as a committed writer."¹ The committed writer, for Borges, is one whose ethical preoccupations not only dominate, but dictate a creative style which invariably "declines into allegory."² In contrast to such morally didactic literature, Borges presents his own stories as mere efforts to entertain or to move, but not to persuade. He expresses impatience not only with the aggressively didactic writer, but also with those readers who approach literature expecting symbols or lessons, and he often constructs his narratives deliberately to frustrate such allegorical interpretations. Borges would have his audience come to resemble himself, rich "in perplexities rather than in certainties."³ Fiercely antidogmatic, he perceives his stories as "tenuous and eternal crevices of unreason"⁴ in man's presumptuous architectural ordering of the universe.

Borges fosters this uncertainty in his audience by accumulating in his tales imagery rich in oxymorons, ideas based on paradoxes, and narrative structures of reversal. By writing in the suggestiveness of allusion rather than in the more fixed structures of symbol or allegory, Borges avoids the dogmatic singularity of purpose of the committed writer. These devices keep the reader of Borges's stories in a constant state of confusion which opens up new ways of perceiving both the word and the world in their infinite complexity and inexhaustibility.

Borges thus defines his work by the effect his narratives have on the reader. He recognizes in the reader's response to or participation in the dialogue of the text the power to determine and even to transform the nature of that text: "[If] I were granted the possibility of reading any present day page—this one, for example—as it will be read in the year two thousand, I would know what the literature of the year two thousand will be like."⁵ Despite his belief in the primacy and independence of reader response, however, Borges's effort to produce "perplexities" in his audience is certainly part of a deliberate attempt

¹Jorge Luis Borges, *Dr. Brodie's Report*, trans. Norman Thomas di Giovanni (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972), pp. 9-10.

²Borges, "The Approach to al-Mu'tasim," in *The Aleph and Other Stories*, trans. Norman Thomas di Giovanni (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1970), p. 50.

³Richard Burgin, *Conversations with Jorge Luis Borges* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), p. vii.

⁴Borges, "Avatars of the Tortoise," in *Labyrinths*, trans. Norman Thomas di Giovanni (New York: New Directions, 1962), p. 208.

⁵Borges, "A Note on (toward) Bernard Shaw," in *Labyrinths*, p. 214.

to undermine the reader's complacency of expectation and to persuade him into a more problematic vision of the universe. His allegedly innocent design to be "entertaining or moving, but not persuasive"⁶ should be examined more critically.

The ethically based literary tradition of parable from which Borges so explicitly disassociates himself bears a curious resemblance to the theory and practice of his short fiction. A concentration on audience participation rather than passive receptivity and an effort to break through dogma by creating uncertainty in the reader or listener are characteristics which distinguish the indirect and suggestive persuasion of parable from the more static and hierarchical didacticism of allegory. Parable "avert[s] the hearer by its vividness or strangeness and leave[s] him in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease him into active thought."⁷ When Biblical parable is examined as a morally neutral "language event" it may be defined by its utilization of the particular literary devices of paradox and structural reversal. It would appear, therefore, that despite his denial Borges is to some extent a writer of parables. I propose to examine in this paper several of Borges' short works in the context of the parable genre, exploring both his debt to and his divergence from the tradition's fundamental Biblical models.

In his study entitled *In Parables*, John Dominic Crossan illustrates one of the most common narrative patterns of Biblical parable in his analysis of reversal in the Good Samaritan story. The narrative sequence of this familiar tale traces the failure of a Priest and then a Levite to help a victim in need, and culminates with the good deed as finally performed by the Samaritan. This contradiction of the social conditioning of Christ's listeners, to whom the Samaritan was a social and religious outcast, frustrates their sense of righteous clarity and security as to the likely distribution of virtue and sinfulness, and leaves them "standing firmly on utter uncertainty."⁸

Many of the early parables, however, narrate events which are ethically neutral, such as the success or failure of crops in "The Sower" or the miraculous growth of the large shade plant from the smallest of seeds in "The Mustard Seed." In these amoral contexts, structural or thematic reversal may still be recognized in the fusion or confusion of the small with the great, the familiar with the extraordinary. The natural patterns of biological growth, as Crossan points out, are presented as a divine gift and thus a source of wonder and surprise. The particular and the familiar concretize the extraordinary allusions of parable, presenting them within the convincing confines of a narrative frame.⁹ Borges's parables most closely resemble these Biblical parables of reversal which focus on epistemological rather than moral contradiction; he consistently challenges the reader's assumptions about the distinction between dream and reality, literature and life, the particular one and the universal many. Like Biblical parable, the Borgesian parable renders the reversal of these categories convincing through an accumulation of a precise and implacable particularity of detail.

⁶Borges, *Dr. Brodie's Report*, p. 10.

⁷Charles Harold Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (New York: Scribner, 1961), p. 16.

⁸John Dominic Crossan, *In Parables* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), pp. 64, 55.

⁹See Dan Otto Via, Jr., *The Parables* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 105.

Borges's use of polar reversal and particularity is clearly represented in his short story "The Zahir," the narration of his chance acquisition of an ordinary coin which becomes an obsession. Borges proceeds directly from the wake of an elegant and aloof society woman, whom he worshipped, to have a drink in a common and vulgar wine shop, where he is given the Zahir as change. He considers the contradictory circumstances leading to this event as a "kind of oxymoron."¹⁰ The Zahir is not only paradoxical in its origins but in its effect, for it soon proliferates an infinite series of divergent associations in the narrator's mind, rendering its individual existence disturbingly multiple:

I reflected that every coin in the world is a symbol of those famous coins which glitter in history and fable. I thought of Charon's obol; of the obol for which Belisarius begged; of Judas' thirty coins; of the drachmas of Laïs, the famous courtesan; of the ancient coin which one of the Seven Sleepers proffered; of the shining coins of the wizard of the 1001 Nights, that turned out to be bits of paper; of the inexhaustible penny of Isaac Laquedem; of the sixty thousand pieces of silver, one for each line of an epic, which Firdusi sent back to a king because they were not of gold; of the doubloon which Ahab nailed to the mast; of Leopold Bloom's irreversible florin; of the louis whose pictured face betrayed the fugitive Louis XVI near Varennes."

From the single coin of Borges's history the Zahir becomes every other coin, real and fictional, each with its own weighty and undeniable particularity. Conversely, the material reality of Borges's Zahir dissolves in his thoughts into the airy uncertainty and potentiality of "a repertory of possible futures" and "unforeseeable time, Bergsonian time" (p. 159).

Despite these divine transformations of the one into the many, of the material into the abstract, Borges soon discovers that the Zahir is demonic as well. The dangerous power of this coin (its name signifies "notorious" or "visible" in Arabic, Borges explains) is its resistance to the very transformations and allusions it implies. Even after accomplishing with "scrupulous lack of plan" (p. 160) the random and accidental loss of the Zahir, the actual coin remains insistently and immutably unforgettable in Borges's consciousness. The resulting telescoping of all time, place and identity into a single obsessive object leaves Borges himself in a state of utter confusion in which dream and reality have been, or threaten to be, reversed: "I shall no longer perceive the universe: I shall perceive the Zahir. According to the teaching of the Idealists the words 'live' and 'dream' are rigorously synonymous. From thousands of images I shall pass to one; from a highly complex dream to a dream of utter simplicity. Others will dream that I am mad; I shall dream of the Zahir. When all the men on earth think, day and night, of the Zahir, which will be a dream and which a reality—the earth or the Zahir?" (p. 164).

Both reductively obsessive and limitlessly expandable, the Zahir is in itself an emblem of paradox or reversal. In his involuntary meditations on the coin, Borges visualizes both sides simultaneously, not by superimposition but "as though [his] eyesight were spherical, with the Zahir in the center" (p. 163). Such properties of the Zahir suggest to Borges the divine vision of the inconceivable mind of God: "[In] the language of God every word would enunciate that infinite concatenation of facts, and not in an implicit but

¹⁰Borges, "The Zahir," in *Labyrinths*, p. 158.

¹¹Borges, "The Zahir," in *Labyrinths*, pp. 158-59.

in an explicit manner, and not progressively but instantaneously."¹² "Perhaps the [two contrary] stories I have related are one single story. The obverse and the reverse of this coin are, for God, the same."¹³ To the human mind, such a totality of particulars and simultaneity of opposites would be intolerable, causing a terrifying confusion with its vertiginous multiplicity.

As Ana Maria Barrenechea has pointed out in her study of Borges's fiction, for this writer and total annihilation of the incomprehensible and contradictory universe is as inconceivable as its total salvation.¹⁴ So the paradoxical Zahir remains an ambivalent token which may destroy the world by monopolizing man's consciousness, riveting his attention on one single object which will make him "forget the universe"¹⁵ or it may contain that universe in all its infinite associations.

The effort to replace the world or to re-create it in its encyclopedic entirety is an impulse which appears in and behind many of Borges's stories, reflecting the artist's fearful aspiration to divine vision. In his effort to construct the entire world in a word, a poem, or a single map, every artist is continually thwarted by the limitations of the human mind which perceives successively rather than simultaneously. The plan of "ciphering the universe/ in one book"¹⁶ is recognized by Borges as infinitely rash, its incomplete results merely monstrous. In the "Parable of the Palace" he relates the story of the creation of a poetic text consisting of a single word which reproduces in every minute detail and thus obliterates an emperor's infinite palace. Borges finally denounces this legend as mere literary fiction, perhaps recognizing his kinship with the executed and anonymous poet whose "descendants still seek, and will not find, the word for the universe."¹⁷

Such a word could only be written in what Borges calls "God's Script,"¹⁸ a language which is by its very nature indecipherable. Borgesian and Biblical parable both respond to the necessity of presenting the divine vision in human language by utilizing the familiar and the particular to express the extraordinary and impossible. Christ speaks in parables not as in a secret language to an elite, but to the uninitiated who must be approached through mediation. Christ's use of the parable form is thus explained: "And when he was alone, those who were with him with the twelve asked him concerning the parables. And he said to them, 'To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables'" (Mark 4:10-11). Like Biblical parables, the modern parables of Borges are a medium of exchange which he compares to coins, "small material objects, hard and bright, tokens of something else."¹⁹ The ultimate aim of Christ's teaching through parable

¹²Borges, "The God's Script," in *Labyrinths*, p. 171.

¹³Borges, "Story of the Warrior and the Captive," in *Labyrinths*, p. 131.

¹⁴Ana Maria Barrenechea, *Borges: The Labyrinth Maker* (New York: New York University Press, 1965), p. 31.

¹⁵Borges, "The Zahir," in *Labyrinths*, p. 162.

¹⁶Borges, "The Moon," in *A Personal Anthology*, trans. Edwin Honig (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 196.

¹⁷Borges, "Parable of the Palace," in *A Personal Anthology*, trans. Carmen Feldman Alvarez del Olmo, p. 88.

¹⁸Borges, "The God's Script," in *Labyrinths*, pp. 169-73.

¹⁹Borges, "Commentaries," in *The Aleph and Other Stories*, p. 278.

and Borges's writing of parable is to transcend the limits of the mediation itself—to get behind the token to that secret something else. Thus Borges voices a final desperate hope at the conclusion of "The Zahir:" "In order to lose themselves in God, the Sufis recite their own names, or the 99 divine names, until they become meaningless. I long to travel that path. Perhaps I shall conclude by wearing away the Zahir simply through thinking of it again and again. Perhaps behind the coin I shall find God" (p. 164).

Such divine revelation, however, always retreats just before the reader of parable, remaining always beyond his grasp. In Borges's parables, therefore, patterns of reversal evolve into patterns of infinite regression which he compares to a series of microcosmic labyrinths: "I thought of a labyrinth of labyrinths, of one sinuous spreading labyrinth that would encompass the past and the future and in some way involve the stars."²⁰ Thus the complex aesthetic games which characterize his intricate tales retain to some extent the ultimately mystical or transcendent goals of traditional Christian parable. In his poem "Chess," Borges muses, "God moves the player, he, in turn, the piece. /But what god beyond God begins the round/ of dust and time and dream and agonies?"²¹ The chess game operates here as a metaphor for the artistic game, for man's presumption to the divine act of creation. In this artistic context, then, Borges's version of religious aspiration is, like the Zahir, both demonic and divine.

In one of Borges's most popular stories, "The Circular Ruins," the polar reversal of dream and reality and the more complex pattern of infinite regression or ascension towards divinity converge. In this story an anonymous priest dreams a man into existence, simultaneously obliterating from his creation's memory the history of his fabrication. The process of creation itself highlights the stylistic methods of traditional Biblical parable, for the impossible feat of inserting a dream into reality is accomplished through the accumulation of particularity, of undeniable physical detail. After several initial failures which follow a more abstract and academic method, the priest calls on the gods for assistance and dreams a beating heart. He dreams it meticulously for fourteen nights before running his index finger lightly along the pulmonary artery. He proceeds slowly and deliberately, dreaming even the numberless hairs on the creature's head.

After sending his son down river to worship the gods at another temple, the priest learns that his creation is performing the magical act of walking through fire unharmed. He fears that this figment of his imagination will discover he is a mere simulacrum: "Not to be a man, to be the projection of another man's dream, what a feeling of humiliation, what vertigo!"²² Ironically, the priest comes to experience this vertigo himself. The story ends in a fire welcomed at first by the dreamer as the death which will release and reward him, but which instead "carressed him and engulfed him without heat or combustion" (p. 50). The priest's foolish pride which made him see humiliation for his "son" and a crown of death for himself, is shattered: "With relief, with humiliation, with terror, he understood that he too was a mere appearance, dreamt by another" (p. 50).

²⁰Borges, "The Garden of the Forking Paths," in *Labyrinths*, p. 23.

²¹Borges, "Chess," in *A Personal Anthology*, trans. Alastair Reid, p. 76.

²²Borges, "The Circular Ruins," in *Labyrinths*, p. 50.

The infinite and hierarchical regression in Borges's tales from the dreamer to the one who dreams him, from the chess player to the player who moves him as a piece in a higher game, is also found in Biblical parable. In a group of New Testament tales identified as "master-servant parables," the earthly masters who rule by money and rank are revealed to be the servants of Christ, the "master who calls men to radical obedience," and Christ in his turn is identified as the "servant-subject of God."²³ As opposed to polar reversal, which suggests a vast and disturbing commotion within static confines, these parables of infinite regression generate a spiral motion which ascends towards, but never confronts, the final incomprehensible Master.

This familiar literary device of the dream within the dream, the tale within the tale, is typical of both traditional and modern parable. Borges examines this device in his essay "Partial magic in the *Quixote*" in an attempt to discover why such patterns of infinite regression as the Don Quixote of Part II becoming a reader of *Don Quixote: Part I* tend to disturb readers: "I believe I have found the reason: these inversions suggest that if the characters of a fictional work can be readers or spectators, we, its readers or spectators, can be fictitious."²⁴ The regressive or ascending uncertainty of Borges's fictions, then, unsettles not only the reader's expectations of the world or of literature, but also his very existence.

Seen as presenting the reader or listener with a language event rather than imposing an allegorical message, Biblical parable also lends itself to a critical focus in which "it is not ultimately the text which is interpreted and clarified, but the interpreter and his situation are illuminated."²⁵ The external spectator becomes the internal subject of the parable. The experience of Borgesian parable is also a gradual assimilation of the audience, which is drawn into the uncertain spiral of each narrative. The reader of "The Zahir," for example, is exposed to the same obsession from which Borges suffers. Once he encounters the coin in Borges's narrative, it contains not only all the encyclopedic associations catalogued by the author, but the additional reference to Borges's *own* story. For Borges, not only parable but all literary forms are thus a dialogue with the reader, a result of the "changing and durable images it leaves in his memory." Like the divine token of the total universe and all its reversals in the Zahir, "The Aleph," or the labyrinth of labyrinths, literature is inexhaustible; no book is "an isolated being; it is a relationship, an axis of innumerable relationships"²⁶ composed of the infinite responses of innumerable readers.

Borges perceives the reader as his partner in the potential but impossible goal of achieving "God's Script" in human language, of reaching the infinitely receding divine revelation: "If the plan does not fail, some reader of 'Kubla Khan' will dream, on a night centuries removed from us, of marble or of music. This man will not know that two others also dreamed. Perhaps the series of dreams has no end or the last one who dreams will have the key."²⁷

²³Via, *The Parables*, p. 181.

²⁴Borges, "Partial magic in the *Quixote*," in *Labyrinths*, p. 196.

²⁵Via, *The Parables*, p. 56.

²⁶Borges, "A Note on (toward) Bernard Shaw," in *Labyrinths*, pp. 213-14.

²⁷Borges, "The Dream of Coleridge," in *Other Inquisitions*, trans. Ruth L. C. Simms (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), p. 17.

As we have already seen, however, the single word, the key to the code, is never found, but perpetually eludes both writer and reader in the infinite regression of parable.

The silence of Biblical parable which withholds the certainty of salvation and the suspension of Borgesian parable on the permanent verge of discovery do not, surprisingly, produce a hopeless paralysis or frustration in the reader or listener. Their effect is instead to generate an intense sense of wonder and surprise at the continually shifting universe. Thus the very techniques of paradox, reversal, and regression which assimilate and enclose the readers in parable, also open up their world, exposing them to a "new way of understanding their situation in history."²⁸

Borges's most striking divergence from traditional parable is the disturbingly claustrophobic and self-enclosed quality which pervades his stories. Thus Borges's fiction simultaneously opens up the reader's world and closes in on itself; his expansive sense of mystical wonder at the universe turns back on himself in the narrow confines of his own mind and perhaps his blindness. While he laments the lack of awe and surprise in most people's perception of the world, his own astonishment arises from a very private perception of self: "I remember . . . when my father said to me, 'What a queer thing, he said, that I should be living, as they say, behind my eyes, inside my head, I wonder if that makes sense?' And then, it was the first time I felt that, and then instantly I pounced upon that because I knew what he was saying. But many people hardly understand that. And they say, 'Well, but where else could you live?'"²⁹

Borges's sense of wonder at himself or at the experiences in his life is thus peculiarly removed, almost alienated: "I am no longer the 'I' of that episode,"³⁰ or "my narration was a symbol of the man I was as I wrote it and . . . in order to compose that narration, I had to be that man."³¹ Since "that man" composed his story from the experience of what is now another "I," Borges in a sense becomes his own reader; he tells himself literary jokes in the lonely privacy of his composition: "That is a kind of stock joke. . . . For example, if I quote an apocryphal book, then the next book to be quoted is a real one, or perhaps an imaginary one by a real writer, no? When a man writes he feels rather lonely, and then he has to keep his spirits up, no?"³² Borges's confusion of fact and fantasy, of the real and the apocryphal, is directed as much towards himself as towards his readers.

The problem which confronts Borges in his activity as a writer is the basic challenge of traditional parable, "the gain or loss of existence, becoming authentic or inauthentic."³³ While this challenge is directed at the audience of Biblical parable, in Borges's case it confronts the teller himself. Borges's loneliness is that of the artist who is not one but many, who is "Everything and Nothing"³⁴ like the Shakespeare he dramatizes in that parable. He is com-

²⁸Via, *The Parables*, p. 53.

²⁹Burgin, *Conversations with Jorge Luis Borges*, p. 6.

³⁰Borges, "The Zahir," in *Labyrinths*, p. 156.

³¹Borges, "Averroë's Search," in *Labyrinths*, p. 155.

³²Burgin, *Conversations with Jorge Luis Borges*, p. 50.

³³Via, *The Parables*, p. 41.

³⁴Borges, "Everything and Nothing," in *Labyrinths*, p. 248.

posed of innumerable but ephemeral personae like his vision of George Bernard Shaw. Borges loses even his stories and his passions to some other official Borges, analogous to "that G.B.S. who represented the English playwright in public, and who lavished in the newspaper columns so many facile witticisms."³⁵

In "Borges and I" the voice of an "I" whispers to the reader behind Borges' back, telling of the gradual and continual assimilation into this public Borges of anything which might identify and characterize the nameless "I." "I live," he laments, "so that Borges may contrive his literature."³⁶ But even this attempt at some intimate converse with a reader belongs to "Borges" or to oblivion, or at best to "language and tradition" (p. 246)—the anonymous repositories of all good literature. A deep sadness and isolation reverberate beneath the witty joke which ends the parable: "I do not know which of us has written this page" (p. 247). Just as Christ was transformed in Biblical commentary from a teller of parables (a speaker in paradox) to a parable himself, the Parable (Paradox) of God,³⁷ so Borges contemplates with a mixture of amusement and horror this transformation of his self into literature or symbol.

Borges consents to this loss of self in the vain hope that part of him will survive and be justified in Borges. He writes, in part, for a final divine arbitrator: "I have already written more than one book in order to be able to write, perhaps, a single page—that justifying page which may be the abbreviation of my destiny, which only the assessing angels will listen to when the Last Judgement sounds."³⁸ It is with regret that Borges confronts the lonely subjectivity of his work, for he has set out to create a universe of "provinces, kingdoms, mountains, bays, ships, islands, fishes, rooms, instruments, stars, horses and people," only to discover finally that the "patient labyrinth of lines traces the image of his own face."³⁹ Again the Borgesian parable turns back on itself and the mind of its creator instead of transcending the limits of artist and work.

This failed transcendence, however, forms in itself an open ended structure, for Borges never abandons the divine search. To see behind his own face, as behind the Zahir, the face of God, he keeps trying to reach through but beyond his literature to the more complex and divine creation which constitutes reality itself. He recognizes that the literary creation of a tiger or a rose is mere "mention or allusion,"⁴⁰ yet he persists in his effort to reach the "other tiger" of reality: "something/ drives me to this ancient and vague adventure,/ unreasonable, and still I keep on looking/ throughout the afternoon for the other tiger,/ the other tiger which is not in this poem."⁴¹

³⁵Borges, "A Note on (toward) Bernard Shaw," in *Labyrinths*, p. 215.

³⁶Borges, "Borges and I," in *Labyrinths*, p. 246.

³⁷See Crossan, *In Parables*, p. 78.

³⁸Borges, "Profession of Literary Faith," in *Prose for Borges*, ed. Charles Hamilton Newman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 49.

³⁹Borges, "Epilogue to 'The Maker,'" in *Prose for Borges*, p. 46.

⁴⁰Borges, "A Yellow Rose," in *A Personal Anthology*, trans. Anthony Kerrigan, p. 83.

⁴¹Borges, "The Other Tiger," in *A Personal Anthology*, trans. Alastair Reid, p. 82.

This yearning towards the other, this impulse to break out of the self and the limits of its familiarity, characterize the experience of Biblical parable as dialogue and interaction. Dominic Crossan points out in an early study of parable that "One can tell oneself stories but not parables. One cannot really do so just as one cannot really beat oneself at chess or fool oneself completely with a riddle one has just invented."⁴² The unexpected shattering surprise which makes religious illumination possible is also necessary for the success of the aesthetic experience. E. H. Gombrich has argued, for example, that "we cannot, strictly speaking, watch ourselves having an illusion."⁴³

The essential uncertainty of the experience of Biblical parable is the mystery of the sublime and the holy which theologians define as that which "extends us beyond ourselves."⁴⁴ Similarly the expansion of the reader's horizon through literature has been described as that which extends "Beyond my situation as reader, beyond the author's situation, to the possible ways of being-in-the-world which the text opens up and discovers for me."⁴⁵ The self-enclosed and self-conscious privacy of the individual may be undermined by reversal and infinite regression—patterns of parable which serve both aesthetics and religion.

The permanent and progressive eschatology of Biblical parable, which points always to a mystery just beyond the listener's expectation or comprehension, mirrors Borges's repeated evocations of the "imminence of a revelation which does not occur."⁴⁶ This imminence constitutes, for Borges, the essence of the aesthetic phenomenon. The many points of intersection of Borges's literary parables and traditional Christian parable necessitate some qualification of Borges's separation of his work from the tradition of moral narrative. We may find this qualification expressed by Borges himself, who recognizes in his writing the convergence of ethics and aesthetics, an examination of the "literary possibilities of metaphysics and religion."⁴⁷

⁴²Crossan, *The Dark Interval: Towards a Theology of Story* (Niles: Argus Communications, 1975), p. 87.

⁴³Ernst Hans Josef, *Art and Illusion* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), p. 6.

⁴⁴Djelal Kadir, "Intimations of Terror in Borges' metaphysics," *Symposium*, 21, n. 3 (Fall 1977), 196-211.

⁴⁵See Paul Ricoeur's discussion of Gadamer's theory of *Horizontverschmelzung* (fusion of horizons) in "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics," *New Literary History*, 6, No. 1 (Autumn 1974), 106.

⁴⁶Borges, "The Wall and the Books," in *Labyrinths*, p. 188.

⁴⁷Borges, *Selected Poems*, trans. Norman Thomas di Giovanni (New York: Delacorte Press, 1972), p. xv.