

reformative thrust in history" (139) and an attempt "to show America's unique value" (158) in historical perspective.

Analyzing the fictions of the past that both Hawthorne and Melville present to their readers, Cagidemetro concludes that although the two authors proceed very differently from each other, they nonetheless share an important common basis: "both Melville and Hawthorne share a concern with the 'authenticity' of shared vision" (135). This concern is clearly not one inspired by Rankean ethics of historiography—to get everything *factually* right—but rather by humanist considerations: "For both writers, the notion of a usable past shuns forgetfulness, and, at the cost of the age's 'optative mood,' their fictions 'remember.' . . . They aim at constructing a contemporary subject of moral value who can form his own judgment of the past" (181, 186). In *Fictions of the Past*, Cagidemetro manages to show how these processes work in the texts under investigation. The study on occasion wanders off the topic and becomes hard to follow because of a detailed study of potential influences (DeQuincey, Carlyle, Emerson), but it generally manages to make its point well and to place the fictions by Hawthorne and Melville in their historiographic contexts.

Carlos Fuentes

The Orange Tree or The Circles of Time

Mexico: Alfagura, 1993

Reviewed by Alfonso González

Carlos Fuentes's latest collection of stories is a continuation of the author's recent practice of writing connected short fictions that develop one central theme (*Burnt Water* (1981); *Constancia* (1990)). The five narratives that constitute the present volume deal mainly with the relationship between humanity and history. History appears as the cyclic repetition of the individual's eternal essence, a conflicting fragmentation, against a backdrop of constantly flowing time. Although historical chronology creates the illusion of change, the individual's contradictory nature remains intact. Four of the stories are narrated by historical figures, one by a fictitious character. The objectivity of the stories is enhanced by the fact that all the protagonist-narrators are dead. Triumph, whether political or personal, is a common thread as Fuentes makes reference to the conquest of the New World, Mexico, Spain, and one's own fears. Another common element in the stories is the constant fragmentation of humans and history. Absolute personalities or events are nonexistent; there are only contradictory fragments that, when pieced together, give a glimpse of their true nature. Individual titles of the stories confirm this fragmentation, suggesting a duality: "The Two Shores," "The Two Numancias," "The Two Americas."

The orange tree functions also as a graphic metaphor that unites these opposing cultures. It is something concrete that the Europeans brought to America. The orange tree represents Europe's first successful foothold in the New World. As it took root and in turn produced oranges that brought forth other trees, it became a model for the possibility of unity of the two continents.

Jerónimo de Aguilar, one of Hernán Cortés's two interpreters, is the narrator of the first story, "The Two Shores," and the first to plant an orange tree on the American mainland. The story has eleven parts numbered ten through zero, and suggests the circular, repetitive nature of history. Chapter 0, the last, tells of the conquest of Spain by American Maya Indians repeating the theme of chapter 10, the first, that narrates the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards. One of the human aspects of this historical event appears as the narrator is torn between loyalty to his native Spain and allegiance to his adopted land, America.

The second story, "The Children of the Conquistadors," is in many ways a continuation of the first. It develops what happened to Cortés and two of his sons, both named Martín, after the conquest of Mexico. It alternates seven segments titled and narrated by Martín 2 with six fragments titled and told by Martín 1. The two sons then narrate in unison, and toward the end of the story speak again in six separate narratives. Martín 1 tells us that after the conquest of México his father planted another orange tree in Mexico near Acapulco. The personal conflict arises as Martín 1 debates with his brother their father's merits. After a time of exuberant wealth and glory, both are exiled from their native Mexico and die impoverished and forgotten. Their downfall comes about when some of the friends of Martín 1, also sons of Conquistadors, are implicated in a plot to overthrow the local government. The plotters are executed, and because the prosecutor feels that all friends of the rebels were implicated in the plot, Cortés's sons are exiled and their properties in Mexico confiscated. One of the human constants in this story would be the irony that neither the Conqueror of Mexico, nor his children, could benefit permanently from the great wealth he had given Spain. This ironic fact is also true of the Roman conqueror Escipión Emiliano.

The third story, "The Two Numancias," is set during the Roman conquest of the Spanish city of Numancia in 133 BC. It is narrated by historical figures using at least six different voices and all six subject pronouns. The story begins with the siege of Sagunto by Anibal that anticipates the assault and fall of Numancia 104 years later. The second Numancia in the title of the story refers to a mock-city built by Escipión Emiliano, conqueror of Numancia, as a training center for his troops. The creator of this second city is also the protagonist-narrator who is emotionally torn trying to reconcile his body and spirit in order to be worthy of the name of the Escipión family that had adopted him. With the conquest of Numancia he gains fame and glory, but lives only five years more.

The narrative structure of the fourth story, "Apollo and the Prostitutes," suggests a minute-by-minute account of the adventures of the protagonist, Vincente Valera, the only nonhistorical narrator in the volume. The "Apollo" in the title brings to mind the mythological god of music and prophecy, who is associated with the sun and light, and contrasts sharply with the negative connotation of the word "prostitutes," suggesting two opposing life-styles and posing a duality. The titles of the different sections give the exact or approximate time of the event narrated, e.g., 17:45, 18:30, 19:40; night fall, dawn, and noon. In this story the death of the protagonist-narrator mirrors the fate of his ancestors: Spanish shipwrecks in Ireland. After his death, Valera continues narrating the fate of the women he left stranded on the high seas. He also says that he dreams the other stories of the collection. He imagines himself as Cortés, as Martín 2 and Martín 1, as Cornelio Es-

cipión Emiliano, and as the character he played in a movie that won him an Oscar in Hollywood. The suggestion is that he is the "author" of all the other narratives, and that a human being is one and the same whether he lived in the sixteenth or the twentieth century, or whether he is a historical or a fictitious character. The personal conflict in this story arises as Vincente struggles with the alternatives offered by two cultures: U.S. and Mexican. He is repelled by both: "Mexican lack of security . . . and American excessive protection" (184). Running away from the artificial and make-believe world of Hollywood and looking for something more authentic, Valera finds himself in a bizarre adventure with seven prostitutes in the high seas near Acapulco sailing a small boat.

Contrasting with the exact chronology of the events in the previous story, the divisions of the last narrative, "The Two Americas," are untitled and separated only by a dotted line, blurring the time of the events entered into Christopher Columbus's diary. In "The Two Americas," Columbus's dilemma is whether to reveal his discovery to the King of Spain or keep the new-found lands for himself. Here Columbus does not return to Spain, but stays in the New World as the figurehead of his newly found paradise. However, succumbing to his desire for recognition, he writes to the King and Queen of Spain telling them about his pristine paradise, puts the manuscript into a bottle, seals it, and tosses it into the ocean. Five hundred years later, Japanese entrepreneurs find the bottle and soon after descend on earth's last uncontaminated paradise and conquer or destroy it soon after. The implication is that sooner or later civilization, Western or Eastern, is going to discover, colonize, and destroy whatever pristine lands are left on the face of the planet, just as it did with the New World five centuries ago.

As we can see in each narrative, due to one's eternal contradictory essence, just as the orange tree bears fruit every year, historical events recur. The essence of the ahistorical narrator is no different from his historical counterparts. The axiom that there is nothing new in the world is as old as time. The innovation of Fuentes's book lies in how the author interprets that reoccurrence. Some affirm that if we ignore history, we are condemned to relive it. Fuentes suggests that even if we know history, we are doomed to repeat our mistakes. *The Orange Tree or the Circles of Time* is a worthwhile addition to Fuentes's best works.

Harley D. Oberhelman

The Presence of Hemingway in the Short Fiction of Gabriel García Márquez
Fredericton, N.B.: York Press, 1994. Pp. 50. \$9.95

Reviewed by George R. McMurray

García Márquez's serious readers are generally aware that Ernest Hemingway was a major influence on the Colombian writer's early fiction. Nevertheless, no systematic study, prior to Harley Oberhelman's, has been published on this subject.

Oberhelman divides his book into segments discussing: Hemingway's close ties with the Spanish-speaking world, García Márquez's appraisal of Hemingway, Hemingway's presence in García Márquez's early short fiction, Heming-