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On Naming in Borges's "La muerte y la brújula"

OF ALL the many stories in which Borges posits his primary theme of the inevitable reenactment of the intellect's greatest triumph—its own annihilation—"La muerte y la brújula" ("Death and the Compass") may be his best known and most closely studied tale, and rightly so. The very title of his story conjoins futility and inventiveness, utter ruin and splendid artifice, in mocking juxtaposition. In many ways it is Borges's *summa*, and in it are to be found virtually all those other supporting themes, images, and techniques which shape the whole of his writing. Among these are most notably time's endless repetition and its logical consequence for both characters and events, each of which is shown to pre-exist and per-exist until their identity is layered beyond individual recognition, failing ultimately to achieve or sustain that desperate particularity which might proclaim some *one* or some *thing* unique in all the world. But no occurrence and no personage in Borges's works, and certainly not in "La muerte y la brújula," ever successfully defies the strobe effect that reduces them all at last to tremulous echoes. In the finely wrought, detective-story texture of "La muerte y la brújula" one sees type become archetype and complement become contrary, each defining itself in terms of its prefiguration or contrast, its "other." According to the meticulous rules of some eternal cosmic game, the destinies of the antagonists are woven together in a tapestry of recurrent numbers, shapes, and colors, beckoning and irresistible in their satisfying symmetry and indisputable logic. The intellect of the clever detective is complemented and opposed by that of the practical cop and the clever criminal; the mind creates, or finds created, clues, patterns, maps, labyrinths, and schemes which entrap while pretending to explain. I shall examine the sources and effect of that "otherness" as it bears on two characters not yet fully analyzed by Borges's critics, and

on the scene of the climax of "La muerte y la brújula," in an attempt to suggest why Borges chose these particular names and what they may provide by way of further meaning in the story.

The plot of "La muerte y la brújula" may be quickly recalled. Erik Lönnrot, a brilliant private detective, and Franz Treviranus, a commonsense police commissioner, have come to investigate the late-night stabbing on December 3 of Marcelo Yarmolinsky, a visiting rabbi and delegate to a Third Talmudic Conference. The rabbi lies murdered in his room at the Hôtel du Nord and Treviranus concludes that the victim was killed by accident, mistaken for the Tetrarch of Galilee lodged in the room across the hall with his hoard of priceless sapphires. Lönnrot meanwhile notices a sheet of paper left in the victim's typewriter. The paper bears a single sentence, "La primera letra del Nombre ha sido articulada," and Lönnrot senses a ritual in the making, not mere chance. He gathers the rabbi's cabalistic books and goes off to elaborate a more exhilarating hypothesis which a persistent editor for the *Yidische Zaitung* soon makes known to his readers. Subsequent crimes occur on the nights of January 3 and February 3 at points to the west and east on the compass equidistant from the Hôtel du Nord. Bolstered by his newly acquired knowledge of Jewish mysticism—especially of Hasidic sacrificial ritualism—and of the Hebrew custom of calculating the day from sunset to sunset, Lönnrot divines a fourth crime to be committed in the south, not on the third but on the fourth of March, to match the fourth and final letter of the Name: JHVH. He confidently proceeds to that last encounter, with ample time to await and capture the murderer, on the evening of March 2. Red Scharlach, a gangster fed by a smoldering grudge against Lönnrot for the earlier capture of his brother, is lying in ambush and takes Lönnrot prisoner. He explains to the astonished sleuth that the entire pattern of events, ironically brought to his attention by the newspaper article, has been carefully planned to lure the smug and despised Lönnrot to Scharlach's hideout at Triste-le-Roy. He then kills Lönnrot with the detective's own pistol.

Critics have discussed features of "La muerte y la brújula" at great length, but to my knowledge none has explored specifically the rich latency of "Erik Lönnrot" and "Franz Treviranus" or the implications of the name Triste-le-Roy, the villa where Lönnrot finds truth and death almost simultaneously.[1] In these two characters, in Scharlach, and in the mysterious villa, or *quinta*, much of the elaborately inter-

[1] The first to suggest the historical antecedents of these two characters were Marcial Tamayo and Adolfo Ruiz-Díaz in *Borges, enigma y clave* (Buenos Aires, 1955), pp. 37-38. The only critic who appears to have pursued the names beyond a passing mention is Louis I. Middleman in "Borges, Milton, and the Game of the Name," *MLN*, 87 (1972), 967-71.

woven, allusive fabric of Borges's poetic detective fiction is to be apprehended in its full scope and texture.[2] What is more, the awesome ability of Borges's prose to soar and contract concurrently is one of its most prodigious traits, and one which owes its power in significant measure to the author's Adamic gift of creative naming.[3]

Many commentators, including Borges himself, have, of course, stressed the importance of the morpheme *rot* in the detective's name as an indication of the likeness between Erik Lönnrot and his arch-criminal rival Red Scharlach, if not the actual identity of the two.[4] That

[2] "'El jardín de los [sic] senderos que se bifurcan' es, como muchos cuentos de Chesterton, un cuento detectivesco y poético a la vez. Como 'La muerte y la brújula,' que también escribí pensando un poco en Chesterton, tiene muchas cosas *worked-in, inlaid*." James Irby, "Encuentro con Borges," in Irby et al., *Encuentro con Borges* (Buenos Aires, 1968), p. 26. The interview originally appeared as an appendix to Irby's unpublished doctoral dissertation, "The Structure of the Stories of Jorge Luis Borges" (University of Michigan, 1962).

[3] "In fiction . . . Borges is free to employ this traditional device of prophetic onomancy and he does so by calling Homer *Cartaphilus* and in inventing other names like *Funes, Red Scharlach, Stephen Albert, Dahlmann* which are secret mirrors of the character's destiny. Such secret mirrors force an awareness on the reader which is beyond that of the characters themselves. While they are lost, we work our way through the labyrinth, perceiving an order usually hidden from them until the last, revelatory moment." (Ronald J. Christ, *The Narrow Act: Borges' Art of Allusion*, New York, 1969, pp. 183-84). Borges provides much the same conclusion in his poem "Una brújula": "Detrás del nombre hay lo que no se nombra" (*Poemas, 1923-1958*, Buenos Aires, 1958, p. 159). An alternate view is expressed by Sylvia Molloy in *Las letras de Borges* (Buenos Aires, 1979), pp. 140-57. She points out that Borges's act of allusive naming, while creative, is also destructive, one which grants identity and at the same time denies it, because it paradoxically attempts to differentiate and individualize by association. By telling us through naming what a character *is*, Borges tells us as well what he *also is* and what, by contrast, he *is not*. The self thereby becomes counter-self or *other* and, ultimately, nothing, all in the very act of affirming its identity.

[4] The first to point out the importance of shared color in Lönnrot's and Scharlach's names were Tamayo and Ruiz-Díaz, pp. 39 ff. Others have referred to it at some length (for example, Carter Wheelock, *The Mythmaker: A Study of Motif and Symbol in the Short Stories of Jorge Luis Borges*, Oxford, 1977, p. 90). Borges, speaking with Ronald Christ in "Jorge Luis Borges, An Interview," *Paris Review*, 40 (Winter-Spring 1967), 158, and later in *The Aleph and Other Stories, 1933-1969* (New York, 1970), p. 269, also calls it to the attention of the reader. Tamayo and Ruiz-Díaz further suggest near-identity through the shared destinies of Lönnrot and Scharlach (pp. 39 ff.). D. P. Gallagher, in *Modern Latin American Literature* (London, 1973, pp. 102 and 105 ff.), pursues the hypothesis of virtual identity in some detail. Borges's own interest in the "double" or the "other" goes back to his earliest writing and continues unabated for six decades. In the preface "A quien leyere" to *Fervor de Buenos Aires* (1923), the interchangeability of reader and writer is assumed. The final paragraph of "La encrucijada de Berkeley" (1932) posits reality as our mirror image, as does "El acercamiento a Almotásim" (1935). Through the stories of *El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan* (1941), *Ficciones* (1944), and *El aleph* (1949), "otherness" is a constant motif, one which finds its most thorough expression in *El hacedor* (1960). As if to dispel any doubt regarding the "other's" attraction for him, in *Borges on Writing* (ed. N. T. di Giovanni et al., New York, 1973, p. 98), the author

Erik conjures up Erik the Red, that *rot* means "red" in German, and that Red Scharlach is obviously twice "red" are ample suggestions of that parallelism, leading to the plausible conclusion that Lönnrot may be done in as much by his own obstinacy as by Scharlach's ingenious scheming. Lönnrot may convincingly be said to be the simultaneous victim both of homicide and of physical as well as intellectual suicide,[5] defeated by his own stubborn insistence on *his* truth, *his* solution, *his* reading of Scharlach's "tale."[6]

This similarity between Lönnrot and Scharlach depends in great part on the unifying power of the color red. And in fact, that color is apparent throughout "La muerte y la brújula" and is one of the strongest integrating motifs in the story. I shall make repeated reference to it as I discuss the other implications of these names.

Borges has told us that Lönnrot is a Swedish name.[7] What seems not to have been noted is that *rot* does not mean "red" in Swedish, for that word is *röd*. What is does mean is "root," or "source" in a figurative sense, and *lönn* is "concealed" or "hidden." With this further clue, it is even more tempting to suppose that the secret source of Erik Lönnrot's downfall is in his name, his identity—indeed, in himself—and that Scharlach is an instrument of the detective's self-destruction as an opposing yet necessarily complementary analogue. What I am suggesting is not the incorrectness of reading German into Lönnrot's name, but the incompleteness of overlooking the Swedish. Lönnrot, like so many of Borges's characters, is a composite or layering of qualities that bear meaning and determine "personality."[8] While some of that layering has been revealed by scholars, more remains.

Other critics have pointed to what Ronald Christ terms the "perva-

devotes some time to the relationship of the German *doppelgänger* and the Scottish fetch to his poem "El centinela."

[5] Borges says as much in *The Aleph and Other Stories*, p. 269, an echo of his earlier statement that "el descubrimiento final de que dos personajes de la trama son uno solo, puede ser agradable . . ." ("Los laberintos policiales y Chesterton," *Sur*, 5 [July 1935], 93).

[6] For a variety of views on Lönnrot and Scharlach as "authors," see Christ, *The Narrow Act*, pp. 110, 120; Lewis H. Rubman, "Creatures and Creators in *Lolita* and 'Death and the Compass,'" *MFS*, 19 (1973), especially pp. 442-52; and John Sturrock, *Paper Tigers: The Ideal Fictions of Jorge Luis Borges* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 125-34. Molloy (pp. 62-64) identifies Lönnrot and Scharlach as "readers."

[7] In the prologue to the section of *Ficciones* called "Artificios," he refers to "los nombres alemanes o escandinavos" employed in "La muerte y la brújula" (Buenos Aires, 1956), p. 115. Later, in *The Aleph and Other Stories*, he states that "Lönnrot is Swedish" (p. 268).

[8] Ronald Christ, in *The Narrow Act*, pp. 24-32, discusses the issue of "personality" in Borges's characters with special attention to the author's essays "La encrucijada de Berkeley" and "La nadería de la personalidad" (1925). I employ the term in cautionary quotes in deference to what Christ has convincingly established.

sive bookishness" of Borges's work. The historical name Borges chose for his detective may constitute a hitherto unnoticed example.[9] Elias Lönnrot (1802-1884) was a Finnish physician whose real love was not medicine but literature. Although Finland achieved political independence from Sweden in 1809, Swedish continued to be the prestige language of the country for many years thereafter. Lönnrot was an intellectual patriot, a major proponent of nineteenth-cenutry Finnish cultural and linguistic independence from Sweden. His interest in folklore and philology eventually led him to the single-handed creation, in 1835, of the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*. He collected short oral poems from the Lapps, the Estonians, and the Finnish tribes of northwest Russia, believing them to be fragments of a continuous epic of which no full version survived. He joined many of these shorter pieces with connective material of his own invention and imposed a plot to unify what had no unity on its own; the result was the *Kalevala*. Lönnrot's determination to make an epic where none was apparent to anyone else made him both a national hero and anathema to many other folklorists: a lone and utterly triumphant Borgesian "heresiarch."

The rich duality of this rather quixotic figure is not likely to have been lost on Borges. Lönnrot must have appealed to him as a Finnish nationalist masquerading under a Swedish name, and as a physician who deliberately chose to practice in the provinces so that he could pursue his literary vocation near its source. Borges must also have noted that Lönnrot himself invented what he subsequently "discovered," much as does the detective Erik Lönnrot. It would be difficult not to link the obdurate persistence of the physician and the detective as they pursue their goals to the end: the historical Lönnrot to his lasting fame, the fictional one to his own obliteration. In fact, there is more than a hint of Borges himself in Dr. Lönnrot, particularly in the ironic fact that the latter achieved abiding patriotic acclaim through the inventiveness of his fantasy and imagination. The publication and success of the *Kalevala* kindled an interest in Finnish language, culture, and art that effectively abolished Swedish as the preferred language in the decades that followed. To Borges, consistently obsessed with his own family history and its contrasting bookish and bellicose branches, the wry triumph of encountering a nationalist hero whose sole heroic act was literary must have been a special delight.[10]

[9] *The Narrow Act*, p. 137. Christ muses that Borges may also have had in mind the name of Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot (p. 189, n. 3).

[10] "'I expect you remember hearing,' said Pond, 'of all the excitement there was about Paul Petrowski, the poet from Cracow, who did two things rather dangerous in those days: moving from Cracow and going to live in Poznan; and trying to combine being a poet with being a patriot . . .'" This quotation on poetry and "real life" is from G. K. Chesterton's "The Three Horsemen of Apocalypse" in *The Paradoxes of Mr. Pond* (New York, 1937, p. 5). Borges has said that this story may have provoked his employment of Zeno's paradox at the end of "La muerte y la brújula" (Irby, p. 32). Chesterton transforms Zeno's paradox into the plot of his story: the German army has taken Poznan and with it Petrowski. The Prussian commander Marshall Von Grock sees Petrowski, in his role as an immensely popular poet, as an unthinkable danger, and he sends a mounted officer down the long causeway toward the city with Petrowski's death warrant. The prince arrives to review the frontline troops and is horrified that a poet revered even by the Germans is about to be put to death. He sends the swiftest horse and best rider with a reprieve to overtake the first rider. Once the second horseman and the prince have left the camp, Von Grock sends his best marksman after the second rider to kill him and save Germany and the prince from what he judges to be a terrible political blunder. The Prussian commander then proceeds down the dike himself to see the results of his decisive action. The marksman, who has killed the rider, goes on ahead to Poznan but returns to tell his dumbfounded commander that Petrowski is a free man, walking the streets amid cheers. The second rider had indeed overtaken the first, but was killed by the first who was determined to carry out his orders. The third horseman, drawing within range of the man ahead, had shot the bearer of the death warrant dead in turn.

Borges appears to view double vocations like Petrowski's and Dr. Lönnrot's as potentially dramatic *per se*. The pursuit of this topic would undoubtedly lend additional support to the concept of Borges's "dialectical art" employed by L. A. Murillo in *The Cyclical Night: Irony in James Joyce and Jorge Luis Borges* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 120 ff. Borges's characters contain and exhaust themselves in the same way that his stories inevitably bring about their own exhaustion or displacement.

[11] Ronald Christ, "Interview," p. 154.

Borges has confessed to an enduring attraction to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which has had an entry on Elias Lönnrot since the tenth edition of 1902. It is unlikely that Borges would have failed to note the entry, particularly given the uncommon surname of his detective and Borges's declared attachment to the eleventh and twelfth editions of that work.[11]

These observations in no way detract from the admittedly ubiquitous presence of the color red as a principal element of unity and identity in "La muerte y la brújula." They do, however, suggest that color is but one link in Borges's narration. To it must be added the well-known repetition of certain numbers (2, 3, 4) and geometrical figures (equilateral triangles, rectangles, rhombuses, and other symmetrical constructions). Another element, less easily seized, is the laminated density of almost every character in the story, major or minor, due in large part to the name each bears and to the extensive history he inherits along with his name.

Lönnrot and Scharlach are nearly equal as opponents, but the operative word is "nearly." Scharlach defeats Lönnrot because he outsmarts him at what appears to be his own game. The game, in truth, is Scharlach's, and since he invents it at Lönnrot's "insistence" and makes the rules, the detective is lost from the beginning. What concerns us here

is how Borges reinforces Scharlach's superiority through a single literary device: naming.

One of the ways in which the two characters may be measured is by the manner in which they are named by the author from the first paragraph of his story (leaving aside for the moment the suggestive literary figures in the background whose names and natures they may also share):

> De los muchos problemas que ejercitaron la temeraria perspicacia de Lönnrot, ninguno tan extraño—tan rigurosamente extraño, diremos—como la periódica serie de hechos de sangre que culminaron en la quinta de Triste-le-Roy, entre el interminable olor de los eucaliptos. Es verdad que Erik Lönnrot no logró impedir el último crimen, pero es indiscutible que lo previó. Tampoco adivinó la identidad del infausto asesino de Yarmolinsky, pero sí la secreta morfología de la malvada serie y la participación de Red Scharlach, cuyo segundo apodo es Scharlach el Dandy. Ese criminal (como tantos) había jurado por su honor la muerte de Lönnrot, pero éste nunca se dejó intimidar. Lönnrot se creía un puro razonador, un Auguste Dupin, pero algo de aventurero había en él y hasta de tahur.[12]

Borges's detective is introduced in the first sentence by his last name alone, almost as an act of respect for his implied fame, or in the complicity of mutual recognition of his prior existence by narrator and reader. Only in the second sentences does Borges call him by his full name. The same procedure is employed for quite a different reason in the reference to the first murder victim, Yarmolinsky, who is not identified as Dr. Marcelo Yarmolinsky until the second paragraph. The parallel is subtle, but the symmetry is unmistakable and serves to pair Lönnrot and Yarmolinsky by rhetorical technique so as to prefigure the destiny they ultimately share.

Lönnrot, Erik Lönnrot, Lönnrot, Lönnrot: these four utterances of the protagonist's name in the first five sentences of the story give him twice the typographical exposure of Scharlach and therein an apparent advantage. Moreover, the four early mentions of his name also initiate the four-series which becomes his numerical *cifra* (cypher, code) throughout the story. Further, insofar as his full name is known, he is presented without ostensible mystery, fitting a pattern the reader recognizes and with which he feels comfortable. By contrast, Scharlach is only partially revealed, his true nature clouded because we do not know who he "really" is. His mystery is also his threat. Still, the very acceptability of the detective's name is an indication of his potential limitation. Erik Lönnrot's given name is unearned, while Scharlach's nicknames correspond to demonstrable attributes. And Scharlach here has one more name than Lönnrot. Later in the tale he will produce an additional three: Gryphius, Ginzberg, Ginsburg. As if further to overwhelm Lönnrot's appellative pallor, Scharlach names himself—thrice—continuing the ruse of his aliases but also signaling his preeminence as inventor and, therefore, manipulator. Shortly thereafter, Scharlach names himself a fourth time[13]—Baruj Spinoza—and conclusively assumes the principal quality of Erik Lönnrot's Finnish namesake, that of creator.[14] Scharlach's six names, of which two are shades of the same color (Red Scharlach), two nearly homophones (Ginzberg, Ginsburg), and one someone else's pseudonym ("Andreas Gryphius"), create a marvelous perplexity for anyone who would "decypher" his true identity. His *cifra* may be any or all of the numbers from one to six, from the divine to the satanic terminating in a doubly divine trinity or "mystery." It is Scharlach's role in creating and sustaining the enigmatic concealment which confirms his superiority and determines his victory.

It is clear from the first paragraph of the story that Borges is establishing a contrast that apparently favors the straightforward, legitimate Erik Lönnrot over the illegal, alias-ridden Scharlach, masked forever in his underworld nicknames. That contrast is evident not only in the names the two bear, but also in the hunter/hunted relationship of detective and criminal, a correlation given a certain equivocal resonance in the next-to-last sentence quoted. Further polarity is provided, again subtly, in that every sentence except the first is contrastive, offering in its first clause a proposition that is qualified in the next: "Es verdad . . . pero . . ."; "Tampoco adivinó . . . pero sí . . ."; ". . . había jurado . . . pero éste . . ."; "Lönnrot se creía . . . pero . . ."

But what appears to be a decisively approving exposition of Lönnrot the clear-thinking, upright, brave defender of justice and the law, reliant on his own perspicacity and reason, comes apart in the last sentence. There we find in fact what we have already intuited in figure

[12] *Ficciones*, p. 143. Subsequent references will appear in the text.

[13] "Andreas Gryphius" was the pseudonym of Andreas Greif (1616-1664), the German baroque poet and dramatist who wrote of the vanity of human life and of petty human ambitions in three languages, Latin, new High German, and Silesian dialect. Several Ginzbergs and Ginsburgs may have been models; see Tamayo and Ruiz-Díaz, p. 38, and Christ, *The Narrow Act*, p. 137. The use of the name of Baruj Spinoza (1632-1677) is more bookish and numerical playfulness. Once again the double vocation, lens grinder and philosopher; double names—Spinoza Latinized his Hebrew Baruch to Benedictus, and his family name was originally Espinosa; double religious associations—expelled from the synagogue as a heretic, Spinoza was close to Christian circles without actually professing Christian faith; triple family geography—Spinoza, born in Holland, was a descendant of Spanish Jews who had emigrated first to Portugal, then to the Netherlands.

[14] For a discussion of Scharlach as God, see Gallagher, pp. 102-05. Rubman rejects this interpretation for either Scharlach in "La muerte y la brújula" or Humbert in *Lolita*: "Both murderers are artists who kill another, at one time superior, artist . . . But none of these fictitious artists is God, and their attempts to equal God are blasphemous and deserving of punishment" (p. 452). A year earlier, Middleman had declared that Scharlach was Satan, Treviranus God the Father, and Lönnrot Jesus Christ (p. 969).

from the color red: "algo de aventurero había en él y hasta de tahur." If these opposing qualities are present in Lönnrot, the presumed hero of the paragraph, should we not wonder whether they are part of the villain's makeup as well? We know from what Borges tells us here that Scharlach is by definition "aventurero y tahur." May he not also be "un puro razonador"? The answer is provided in full at Triste-le-Roy as the story is brought to a close and the brilliant, riddling ambiguity of the first paragraph is revealed as prophecy disguised: "a two-part structure—prediction and fulfillment—united by the correspondence of small details."[15]

Carter Wheelock has said, accurately I believe, that the dual rednesses of Erik Lönnrot and Red Scharlach indicate a situation in which both cannot continue to exist: one must yield.[16] By the end of the story Lönnrot does yield, but the suggestion of victory for Scharlach is already perceptible in the opening paragraph. As John Sturrock observes, Scharlach and Lönnrot "are only partially to be differentiated, as their names confirm. Both are *red* . . . , but Scharlach is the redder, his surname meaning 'scarlet fever' in German. Lönn*rot* is red, likewise in German, only the once, though his Erik may also suggest redness, as being the name of the celebrated Erik the Red."[17]

Sturrock's observation appears to me to incline more toward the equality of the antagonists than to the superiority of Scharlach, and that near-equality is a ruse I have discussed above. In sum, Lönnrot has a full name, publicly known; his attributes, perspicacity and reason, are likewise publicly known and celebrated; he has a gambler's reckless tendency toward risk and cannot resist a mystery; and, finally, he has as a namesake a man of science who prefers poetry as a calling and is immortalized for it.

On the other hand, Scharlach has only half a name and therefore is an irresistible mystery; he is a German Jew whose nicknames are both English, thereby compounding the intrigue; he is Lönnrot's avowed enemy and the latter's destruction is for him a matter of honor; he is a dandy not only for the assumed cockiness of his manner and attire, but because it will take a "dandy" to vanquish Lönnrot;[18] and he too has a namesake, a "bookish" outlaw balladeer who is remembered solely for

[15] Christ, *The Narrow Act*, p. 124.
[16] *The Mythmaker*, pp. 90-91, 107.
[17] *Paper Tigers*, p. 129.
[18] Scharlach's second nickname may derive, like the use of Zeno's paradox, from Chesterton's "The Three Horsemen of Apocalypse": "At this moment could be seen striding across the sun-chequered lawn, the large and swaggering figure of Captain Galahagan, the highly incongruous friend and admirer of little Mr. Pond. He had a flaming flower in his button-hole and a grey top-hat slightly slanted upon his ginger-haired head; and he walked with a swagger that seemed to come out of an older period of dandies and duellists" (p. 7-8). Cf. Rubman,

his musical verse: Will Scarlet from the English Robin Hood ballad cycle, who is variously known as Scadlock, Scathlock, and Scarlock.[19]

Clearly, then, Lönnrot and Scharlach are almost equals in the battle that begins to take shape in the opening lines of "La muerte y la brújula." The elements that separate them are in a name, where the possession of it for the one implies convention and limitation and, ultimately destruction; while for the other the lack of a name connotes the shadowy attraction of the fatal snare, a seductive and afferent void whose filling requires a later, inevitable sacrifice. In this regard it is worth noting that *red* in Spanish means "net," the first sense to come to mind for a reader in Spanish.[20] The implication of cunning craft and purposeful entaglement is obvious. Moreover, the repetitive reticulation of the net's traditional diamond design is pervasive in "La muerte y la brújula" in the recurring references to rhombic forms. The four-sided, four-angled rhombus has been much discussed by critics, chiefly as it bears on Lönnrot's numerical sign or "cypher." In fact, Borges's city of death and direction, here a tautly strung cosmic symbol, is overlaid with a single mesh of that net, stretching from the Hôtel du Nord westward to the desolate outskirts, east to the docks and terminating, as the tale does, in the south at Triste-le-Roy.

While Lönnrot, Yarmolinsky, and Scharlach are connected from the first paragraph through Borges's telling us of that connection, it is Franz Treviranus whom we actually see in first contact with Lönnrot. A good deal of commentary has already been devoted to the way in which Lönnrot and Treviranus embody the typical clever/dull pairings of the conventional detective story.[21] The reference to C. Auguste Dupin in the last sentence of the first paragraph gives us Lönnrot's classic profile: his unofficial status, his cold logic, his bewildered

"His second nickname is the Dandy, the man who changes his life into a work of art" (p. 449), and Sturrock, "He is a dandy because he must eliminate the merely fortuitous from his schemes, like the lamented Teodelina Villar [of "El zahir"], who would wear nothing that had not been decreed by the arbiters of fashion" (p. 129). María Luisa Bastos pairs Scharlach's dandyism (leadership) with the "royalty" implicit in Lönnrot's given name: "Este apodo, en efecto, parece una trasposición del significado de Erik: Scharlach, conductor—guía, modelo, jefe, como los *dandies* mundanos . . ." ("Literalidad y trasposición: 'Las repercusiones incalculables de lo verbal,'" *Revista Iberoamericana*, 43 [1977], 536).

[19] Middleman, p. 970, n. 4, thinks Scharlach may be a play on Sherlock Holmes. Gene H. Bell-Villada suggests that Scharlach may be a parody of Sherlock Holmes or a role reversal in his recent *Borges and His Fiction: A Guide to His Mind and Art* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1981), p. 92.

[20] Christ identifies Sir Thomas Browne as a plausible literary antecedent for Borges's use of net and lozenge as labyrinth in *The Narrow Act*, pp. 131-32, n. 33. See also p. 228, n. 19.

[21] See Christ, *The Narrow Act*, pp. 113-30; Gallagher, pp. 109-10; Sturrock, pp. 127-28; Bell-Villada, p. 89.

friend.[22] Yet in the role of bewildered friend, Franz Treviranus is only partially recognizable. The suggestiveness of his name, and therefore his character, is much greater than a simple association with equally simple literary precedents.

Treviranus shares with Lönnrot, Yarmolinsky, and the murderer-victim Daniel Simón Azevedo the possession of a full, legitimate name, but he is the only one of the four who survives. Along with his German ancestry, he shares that survival with Scharlach; and that is appropriate because in Scharlach's case survival is triumph. Treviranus is likewise victorious, since his theory of what caused the first of the series of crimes is conceded at last to be the correct one. He also shares nearly all of Lönnrot's attributes, as we see if we return once more to the first paragraph of the story. What is said there about Lönnrot can, with one notable exception, be applied to Treviranus as well: there is no suggestion of the adventurer or the gambler in him, and that saves his life. As for the rest, Franz Treviranus also considers himself a pure reasoner; like Lönnrot, he has been denounced by Scharlach (p. 151), but he gives no indication of being intimidated; he grasps the root cause of the "secreta morfología" from the first crime; and, though he neither prevents nor foresees the final crime, he does foreshadow it in his surname.

Treviranus suggests at the first level and most readily the *tresviri* of the Roman triumvirate, originally a three-man board of commissioners. As such his name is mathematically counterposed to the early mention of the Tetrarch of Galilee. Treviranus, by his repeated presence at the scene of each new crime but the last, is a virtual advocate of the number three, challenging the number four that Lönnrot will have no matter what. This preliminary gloss of Treviranus's name is also a reminder that there are three authority figures in the story: Lönnrot, whose renown is assumed; Scharlach, "el más ilustre de los pistoleros del Sur" (p. 150), "el más afamado" (p. 152); and the official investigator, *el comisario* Franz Treviranus.[23] Lönnrot is ultimately the odd man out in this triad, his death a requisite to the restoration of dual order and equilibrium inherent in the "good" Treviranus and the "bad" Scharlach, without the interloper who repeats too many of the qualities of both without resolving their implied conflict.

Borges himself tells us straightforwardly that Franz Treviraños is

[22] Borges's debt to Poe is more than mere analogy; see Rubman, pp. 442-46.

[23] Thomas E. Lyon, in "Borges and the (Somewhat) Personal Narrator" (*MFS*, 19 [1973], 371), has noted an authoritative omniscience beyond Scharlach, Lönnrot, and Treviranus, namely the narrative voice that glosses Scharlach's tale and the participation of the other characters in it: "Al sur de la ciudad de *mi* cuento . . ." (*Ficciones*, p. 152, my italics).

German.[24] Like Lönnrot, Treviranus derives much of what he is from the past, and both have historical forebears with medical backgrounds. Unlike Lönnrot's, however, Treviranus's antecedents are multiple.

Both Gottfried Reinhold Treviranus (1776-1837) and his brother Ludolph Christian (1779-1864) were physicians and, like Elias Lönnrot, something else as well: the elder was a naturalist who coined the term "biology" in 1802, the younger a botanist after whom Karl Ludwig Willdenow renamed a red-flowered gesneriad in 1809. It is in this seemingly inconsequential act of botanical taxonomy that Treviranus's surname is first linked with Scharlach's. The plant had been known until then by several scientific names, the most common being *Achimenes coccinea* after Browne and Persoon. Willdenow changed genus and species "in honorem Clariss. Trevirani" to an insistent *Trevirana trevirana*, retaining the varietal, descriptive *coccinea* ("scarlet").[25] In 1963, in keeping with the current practice of avoiding duplication in the generic and specific names, *Trevirana trevirana coccinea* vanished completely, unidentifiable today in the prosaic *Achimenes erecta*.

In these early forerunners of Franz Treviranus we find the complementary interests of physician and scientist, not the potential opposition of man of science and man of letters.[26] Where Lönnrot, like his namesake, is torn in his nature, Treviranus is whole, and it is this wholeness that ensures his survival. Later, another Gottfried Reinhold Treviranus appears (1891-1971), a conservative politician who fled Germany in 1934 and lived in exile in North America for fifteen years before returning to Europe.[27] It is in one of his books that we catch a glimpse of yet another namesake, G. G. Treviranus, a Bremen pastor who tutored Friedrich Engels as a young man. This Treviranus, we are told by the later Treviranus, was "a fervent adherent of Hegel's and Schelling's philosophies,"[28] some of whose major tenets suffuse "La muerte y la brújula," as do those of Kant.[29]

[24] *The Aleph and Other Stories*, p. 268.

[25] *Enumeratio plantarum, horti regii botanici . . . berolinensis* (Berolini, in taberna libraria Scholae realis, 1809), pp. 637-38.

[26] It may be to the point to recall that between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries medicine was considered a science in northern Europe, an art elsewhere. Otherwise Paracelsus and Fludd would not have been medical "heretics" or have caught Borges's notice in "La muerte y la brújula" and "El milagro secreto," for example, as metaphorical archetypes of the mind divided against itself.

[27] All three of these namesakes appear in *Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon* and *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie*, both of which Borges has confessed to consulting nearly as often as the *Britannica* (Christ, "Interview," p. 154). In them Borges would also have found the coincidence of the first Gottfried Reinhold's birth on February 4.

[28] G. R. Treviranus, *Revolutions in Russia* (New York, 1944), pp. 47-48.

[29] See Tamayo and Ruiz-Díaz: "Si se desoye la resonancia metafísica, el secreto de la trama perderá uno de sus ingredientes indispensables; si se ignora la

Treviranus's antecedents, two of whom have identical names, are an echo of the ludic ambiguity implicit in the name itself. *Treviranus* is a late Latin alternative adjective for an inhabitant of the area which was to become the city of Treves or Trier, first called Augusta Treverorum by the Romans, then Treveris.[30] The Celtic tribe that inhabited this corner of Belgic Gaul, and had a shrine or *nemeton* in the center of what is now modern Trier, was eventually conquered (58-49 B.C.) by Julius Caesar, as he records in his *Commentaries on the Gallic War*, the most famous lines of which are the first: "Gaul, taken as a whole, is divided into three parts, one of which the Belgae inhabit, the Aquitani another, those who in their own language are called Celts, in ours Gauls, the third." The tribal name of the Treveri or, almost immediately, Treviri, was already the source of a pun on *tresviri* in 53 B.C. In that year, on March 4, a date with some significance for "La muerte y la brújula," Cicero wrote to his friend and protégé C. Trebatius Testa, who was serving under triumvir Caesar in Gaul, that he should avoid the Treviri, as they were rumored to be *tresviri capitales*.[31] The pun itself is multiple. The *tresviri capitales* were the commissioners in charge of prisons and executions, but *capitalis* also means "deadly; affecting the life or citizenship." It is also significant that Caesar increased the *tresviri capitales* to four during his rule; succeeding him, Augustus reduced them to three again. For a time, then, they were a triumvirate in name only, not in number.

Borges plays on the rich etymological and historical resonance of Treviranus's name, not only to echo the pun on the number three, but also to astonish with the complexity of his ancestry, tied inexorably to that ancient city which was simultaneously Celtic and Roman, then Frankish, whence Franz. At the core of Treviranus's heritage is the Celtic enthusiasm for multiplicity, both biform and ternary, but especially the triad: the gods Teutates, Esus, and Taranis; three-headed Cernunnos; triple matronae; three-horned Gaulish bulls and boars; the pervasive use of the decorative and symbolic *triskele*.

Subsequently the most Roman of Gaulish cities, Trier eventually became a base for the conquest and government of the West, capital of the prefecture of Gaul, and a frequent residence of the Western emperors. It was ultimately called the "Rome of the North," adding a measure of directional ambiguity to the chestnut Black Finnegan em-

implicada crítica del conocimiento intelectual—la brújula del cuento señala a veces a Königsberg—no se advertirá la lección de un crepúsculo entrevisto por un hombre pocos segundos antes de morir" (p. 29).

[30] The common and expected form of the adjective is *trevericus*. Borges makes use of the later, clearly "German" toponymic, the one actually used as a family name.

[31] *Ad Familiares* VIII.xiii.

ploys when he tries to convert the ailing Scharlach to Catholicism.[32] And Borges's Black (Catholic) Finnegan reminds us, as Rubman points out, of Joyce's black (Protestant) Finnegan, both tavernkeepers, both burdened by the weight of earlier crimes in earlier times.[33] Black Finnegan also echoes another dark Joycean outcast, Leopold Bloom, the Wandering, Everlasting Jew. Leopold Bloom is Joyce's black "leopard," an apt companion here to Scharlach's southern red tiger and, as Wandering Jew, he is a reminder as well of Rabbi Yarmolinsky's metaphorical age of 3003 (p. 144), which for Borges is eternity itself tripled. That the only nicknamed criminals of "La muerte y la brújula" are "red" and "black" recalls both roulette and the deck of cards and ties these color-coded instruments of chance inexorably and mortally to Lönnrot the reckless gambler.

An important center of commerce and learning, Trier was designated an episcopal see in the fourth century and an archiepiscopal see in the ninth. Its archbishops became powerful temporal princes in constant struggle with secular authority, especially the counts palatine. From the ninth century on, the area was to become a pawn in a series of power plays that demanded allegiance first to Lorraine then to the East Frankish kingdom; the Norsemen sacked the city in 881 and in the centuries that followed Trier fell under the rule of Nassau, Luxembourg, Spain, Sweden, and France before passing finally to Prussia. First pagan, then Catholic, Trier weathered the siege of the Protestant reformation, though not without visible scars from her resistance to that theological and political assault.

Trier was said to contain the grave of St. Matthew, the only apostle buried north of the Alps, and one major religious relic, the Holy Coat of Trier, reputed by the faithful to be the seamless coat of Jesus. Its early exhibition by the archbishop drew throngs of pilgrims and provoked Martin Luther to denounce it. Finally, and for proper contrast, Trier was also the birthplace of Karl Marx, whose father was converted from Judaism to Lutheranism there a year before his son was born. The historical and cultural complexity of the city is an apt reflection of the prismatic characters who people "La muerte y la brújula." Indeed from this babble of tongues, creeds, and events comes the level-headed police commissioner who clearly sorts frivolity from fact and, like his city of origin, survives the disorder of experience and the ambition of out-

[32] "Un irlandés trató de convertirme a la fe de Jesús; me repetía la sentencia de los *goim*: Todos los caminos llevan a Roma. De noche, mi delirio se alimentaba de esa metáfora: yo sentía que el mundo es un laberinto, del cual era imposible huir, pues todos los caminos, aunque fingieran ir al norte o al sur, iban realmente a Roma, que era también la cárcel cuadrangular donde agonizaba mi hermano y la quinta de Triste-le-Roy" (p. 155).

[33] Rubman, p. 449.

siders. The clouded origins of his name are similar to those of Scharlach's and join these two as coequal in the ritual each performs to success.[34]

Treviranus's Celtic background is no mere coincidence but provides a further thread of unity which joins and resolves many of the motifs of "La muerte y la brújula." Caesar himself pointed out that the Gauls reckoned the passage of time by nights rather than days (*Commentaries* VI.xviii). The discovery of the first-century B.C. Gaulish calendar at Coligny in 1897 confirmed Caesar's observation and provided an additional documentary basis for the notion of opposing symmetry among the Celts, who divided their twenty-eight-day months into bright and dark halves which they considered propitious or risky, respectively. The Celts clearly shared with Jews and Moslems the practice of counting each day from sunset to sunset or from moonrise to moonrise.

The ties between Treviranus and Scharlach, established early through their common German ancestry and language, are further strengthened by the biblical evidence of contact between Jew and Treveran Celt in Asia Minor. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul writes in his Epistle to the Galatians (*Galatai*, a later form of the original Greek *Keltoi* or *Keltai*) that they must not be led into the observance of Mosaic law by the Pharisaic Jewish Christians who went to Galatia after him. Paul had heard alarming reports and had himself seen the "Judaizing perversion" that had almost persuaded the fickle Galatians to accept circumcision and, by extension, the obligation to observe the whole law at the urging of those "false teachers." He hastened to write to the recent converts, both Jew and gentile (Galatians 3:28), that their salvation lay in faith, not in "works" (3:11): Christ had made the observance of anachronistic legalities both unnecessary and dangerously wrong.

St. Jerome, in the preface to his Latin translation of this Epistle, states that the Galatians, in addition to Greek, spoke virtually the same language as the Treveri. His observation is confirmed by the fact that Jerome lived and studied in Trier for some time and while there learned the native Brythonic language. The Galatians, in fact, were Belgae who settled near present-day, thrice-named Ankara (Ancyra, Angora), Turkey, in the third century B.C. Though eventually subjected to Roman rule (189 B.C.), for many years thereafter they retained their pre-Roman meeting-place (called *drus-nemeton* 'oak-sanctuary,' or *dry-nemeton* 'most holy sanctuary'), their Celtic cantonal constitution (each of the three tribes of Tolistobogii, Trocmi, and Tectosages divided into four cantons or "tetrarchies," as Strabo called them, XII.v.1), and

[34] The similarity or near-identity of Treviranus and Scharlach is hinted at in Rubman, p. 446.

their own tetrarchs, each considered a *rix* ("king"), each ruling a minor "kingdom" (*ruired*).

Coincidentally, the Epistle to the Galatians is at the heart of the greatest upheaval in the Christian Church, a Borgesian "heresy" of profound and lasting consequences. Galatians was Martin Luther's favorite book of the Bible,[35] and it was his sympathetic response to Paul's devastating attack on "works" which led him to break with what he considered pharisaic Rome, most notably in his controversial interpretation of salvation through works alone. It is perhaps worth mentioning in passing that the first recorded instance of someone with the name Treviranus occurred in 1662, and the individual in question was Andreas Heinrich Treviranus, "ein pfarrer zu Bacharach," a Lutheran minister at Bacharach, a Treveran town with a substantial Jewish population.[36]

Lastly, it is clear that Scharlach himself consciously employs the Celtic practice of adopting nicknames to shield one's real identity. This totemic custom of masquerading for strength or protection, for the purpose of boastfully sustaining or slyly deflecting power (for example, "Cingetorix," the Treveran chief mentioned by Caesar, *Commentaries* V.iii: "King of a Hundred Battles"), also has its counterpart in Jewish custom. The most obvious examples are the elusive names given to God (Elohim, Adonai) and the various verbal tricks designed to foil the angel of death in the sickroom and rob him of his intended victim.

Though in many ways Treviranus is the character most taken for granted by the reader in "La muerte y la brújula," Borges obviously intends not only to establish and define the commissioner's rich, composite identity, but also to pair and equate him with Scharlach. The latter gains in strength through the association, acquiring in the implied comparison varied and virtually inexhaustible sources of crushing power. Treviranus and Scharlach share significant elements of a common geographic heritage, and even their differences—the polarity of gentile-Jew, lawman-criminal, reader-writer—tend to ally them, reinforcing a superiority whose ultimate confirmation is survival itself. Both win because they are clearly better readers of the book of life than Lönnrot, readers for whom there is no surprise ending, no settling of accounts as the result of their own inattentiveness. Lönnrot's "temeraria per-

[35] "The Epistle to the Galatians is my epistle. I have betrothed myself to it. It is my wife." Quoted in Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *A Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistle to the Galatians* (New York, 1884), p. iii.

[36] Josef Karlmann Brechenmacher, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Deutschen Familiennamen* (Limburg a.d. Lahn, W. Ger., 1957-1963), I, 346. Jews arrived in Bacharach or Bacherach in the first part of the twelfth century, many of them taking the name of the town as their surname in subsequent migrations. Cf. Heinrich Heine's incomplete epic, *Der Rabbi von Bacherach*. Bacharach is also famous for its *three* ruined castles: Stahleck, Fürstenberg, and Stahlberg, which formerly belonged to the powerful counts palatine.

spicacia," set down in the first paragraph of "La muerte y la brújula," is revealed at Triste-le-Roy to have been a mortal sarcasm: Lönnrot foresees but cannot see until the end, when clarity of vision comes out of season and predicting the present in the absence of a future is of no avail. On pages 152 and 153 we are told that Lönnrot "vió" six times; but six occasions too late is no substitute for seeing once at the right time. What Treviranus discerns immediately and Lönnrot scorns, Scharlach turns to advantage in a formidable act of deadly pagination for Lönnrot the careless reader.

Franz Treviranus's official task, then, is practically complete with the discovery of the second body. He has already stated earlier: "No me interesan las explicaciones rabínicas; me interesa la captura del hombre que apuñaló a este desconocido" (p. 145). And when the murderer Daniel Azevedo is found murdered himself, the score is virtually settled and justice has been done: the job is over. The third crime is a sham, and the last one is a personal matter between Scharlach and Lönnrot, a duel to be decided at Triste-le-Roy.

I have already said that Lönnrot, Treviranus, and Scharlach form a triumvirate of authority in "La muerte y la brújula." Authority is perhaps nowhere more fearsomely illustrated in setting and result than in the foreboding villa of Triste-le-Roy, "an intricate Hell"[37] and the seat and source of Scharlach's power, where Lönnrot is made dizzy as he comes face to face not only with his own near-double, but with duplication itself and all that it implies. It is here that Lönnrot perceives for the first time that there is one too many of everything and, even more chilling, of everybody. It is also here that Borges extends an image of layered, endless, underlying repetition that captures and mocks the compact density of his characters—triumphant, defeated, or marginal—all irrevocably trapped like the once-resolute Lönnrot by a slow, sloughing *time* resolving into inert *place*: "Lönnrot avanzó entre los eucaliptos, pisando confundidas generaciones de rotas hojas rígidas" (p. 153).

Borges has told us that Triste-le-Roy is a composite of *quintas* he remembers from the southern Buenos Aires suburbs of Adrogué and Témperley.[38] Later he says that it is patterned directly on the former Hotel Las Delicias in Adrogué, but that he owes its fictional name to the artistry of Amanda Molina Vedia, to whom the story is dedicated. She had painted an imaginary island on the wall of her bedroom, and

[37] Middleman, p. 970. In the following paragraph he goes on to state that the "complex house of doubles is a paradigm of Borges' Manichaean fable, in which Lönnrot and Scharlach are equal and opposed."

[38] "El escritor argentino y la tradición" (1953), cited in Tamayo and Ruiz-Díaz, p. 169. By the time this essay appeared in *Discusión* (1957), Borges had deleted the reference to Témperley.

on her map Borges discovered the name of Triste-le-Roy.[39] The shape, the sound, and the significance of Triste-le-Roy, whatever its origin, are certainly a felicitous conjoining of elements for the resolution of "La muerte y la brújula." The hyphenated, three-part name of the villa is the ultimate disclaimer of Lönnrot's insistence on four crimes, four places, four dates, four letters of the Name.[40] And while the numerical significance of a *quinta* has effectively faded in everyday Spanish, its etymological origins in the owner's one-fifth share of the tenant's produce hangs nostalgically over Triste-le-Roy like the pervasive aroma of eucalyptus. It is in this wispy memory of the number five that we see a hint of Scharlach's satanic *cifra*.

If we read Triste-le-Roy as French, the place strongly implies the weariness of power at the top, the very burden of authority.[41] This is confirmed in Lönnrot's apprehension of Scharlach's tone when he addresses the detective: "Habló; Lönnrot oyó en su voz una fatigada victoria, un odio del tamaño del universo, una tristeza no menor que aquel odio" (p. 154). Of note is Lönnrot's double perception as he grasps both what is said and the way in which it is expressed in Scharlach's three simultaneous emotions. Here, as in the name Triste-le-Roy, syntax itself drives home Lönnrot's deadly error in anticipation of his becoming the necessary proof of the imagined fourth crime by assuming concurrently, and ironically, the role of third victim.

Triste-le-Roy is French but is probably of Celtic origin. *Triste* or *tristre* is an Old French word meaning a meeting place or rendezvous, though derived from an earlier notion of a hiding place in the woods for watching or waiting during the hunt: an ambush. It appears to share the root word *drus* ("oak") which may have provided the *drus-nemeton* where the Galatians met and worshipped before their conversion, and the *drus-tanos* ("oak-fire") that gives Tristan of medieval romance his name. The word survives in English from the Scots as "tryst," the noun meaning an appointment to meet at a specified time and place, and the verb, to agree to meet.[42] Although in modern English its use is

[39] *The Aleph and Other Stories*, p. 268. The buildings and grounds at Adrogué also figure in "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" and "El aleph." María Luisa Bastos discusses this topography in some detail in "Literalidad y trasposición . . . ," especially pp. 540-41.

[40] For a note on the similarities between Triste-le-Roy and Dupin's "time-eaten and grotesque mansion" described in Richard Wilbur's "The House of Poe," see Rubman, p. 445. In the same article (p. 452), Rubman likens the death of Humbert in *Lolita* to that of Lönnrot in "La muerte y la brújula" noting that both "artists" die in a "labyrinthal mansion."

[41] Gallagher calls it "failure at the height of power" (p. 108, n. 33).

[42] " 'You walk late, sir,' said I as we met a second time.

'I bide tryste,' was the reply; 'and so I think do you, Mr. Osbaldistone.' " (Sir Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, Edinburgh, 1885, p. 245). There are several other meanings in Scots, the most suggestive for this story being "to distress," "to de-

generally restricted to a clandestine meeting of lovers, all of these senses are applicable to the inevitable, foreordained encounter of Lönnrot and Scharlach at Triste-le-Roy. The confusion of hunter and prey is clarified at last as the detective loses his orientation, his identity, and with them, his life.

If Roy is read as "king," then it is surely Scharlach who reigns victorious at Triste-le-Roy, though not without injury to his own kingship, detectable in his "tristeza." In killing Lönnrot, he also kills something of himself and interrupts the ritual which has given his life meaning. The pursuit may well resume with Scharlach and Lönnrot "en otro avatar," but for now it is over.

In several senses, the encounter between Scharlach and Lönnrot at Triste-le-Roy is a clash of opposing similarities, a Hegelian *coincidentia oppositorum*, as noted by Tamayo and Ruiz-Díaz and by Middleman and Wheelock, suggested in Murillo's term "dialectical art," and explored in our examination of the first paragraph of "La muerte y la brújula." While Lönnrot's given name undoubtedly suggests Erik the Red and joins the opponents through the motif of color, it needs to be remembered that Erik means "kingly," and the introduction of a regal pretension intensifies and further defines the conflict between the two.[43] That Lönnrot is a clear contender against Scharlach in the struggle for authority is evident not only in his "royal" name, but in his own sensation of "tristeza" (p. 157) which parallels Scharlach's.

It is more than likely that Roy, like Triste, is both Old French and Celtic. If so, we have come full circle to the redness that links and separates Erik Lönnrot and Dandy Red Scharlach from the opening lines of "La muerte y la brújula" and which forms a tie as well with the Celtic-speaking ancestors of Treviranus. Triste-le-Roy is unquestionably the center of Scharlach's southern *ruired*, his tetrarchal under-kingdom where he is both *rix* (Roy) and vassal to the mysterious "caudillo barcelonés" (p. 152). But *roy* in Scottish means "red," from the Gaelic *ruadh* in common origin with *rot* and *röd*. Scotland's equivalent of Robin Hood was the outlaw Robert MacGregor, nicknamed Rob Roy because of his red hair.[44] Like so many of the other characters I have

ceive," "to negotiate," "to come to terms." Cf. Old Norse *treysta* 'to make strong and safe, to make firm, to trust,' and Gothic *trausti* 'agreement, arrangement.'

[43] See note 29 above. The meaning of the "Königsberg" toward which, in Tamayo's and Ruiz-Díaz's view, the compass needle points takes on a double meaning in this context.

[44] Borges's literary interest in redheads is long-standing, as is his preoccupation with Scotsmen. In an examination of *El informe de Brodie*, Carter Wheelock observes: "There appears to be no significance, beyond Borges' personal whim, to the fact that the new stories are laden with Scotsmen (Brodie, Clara Glencairn, Glencoe, the Gutres), Germans (Zimmerman), and other North Europeans (the Nelsons or Nilsens of "The Intruder"). The prominence of red hair is consistent with all of these nationalities; all red things have symbolic meaning, I think, in Borges' work, and there may be a hidden significance here." In a footnote to this same passage, Wheelock names Norman Thomas di Giovanni as the source for the information that "Borges made some of his characters Scotch 'so they could have red hair'; Borges greatly admires the Scots" ("Borges' New Prose," *TriQuarterly*, 25 [1972], 419). See also note 18 above for the ginger-haired, Celtic Gahagan in Chesterton's story which Borges acknowledged as a likely stimulus for his own.

In *Borges on Writing*, in response to a question about Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Borges recalls that he "translated one of his best stories, 'The Redheaded League'" (p. 62). This is the tale that the physician-writer Doyle has his physician-writer Watson retell in which the dupe and one of the criminals are both redheads, and in which the same criminal has three names. Jabez Wilson, the pawnbroker-dupe whose shop is proclaimed by three gilt balls hanging over it, has been assigned the mysterious task of copying out by hand the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. In this narrative Watson also remarks on the split nature of Sherlock Holmes, "his extreme exactness and astuteness . . . , the reaction against the poetic and contemplative mood which occasionally predominated in him" (*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, New York, 1950, p. 279). It is also in this same story that Holmes, "whose knowledge was not that of other mortals" (p. 280), concludes the tale in response to Watson's praise of him by quoting Flaubert: "'L'homme c'est rien—l'œuvre c'est tout'" (p. 288).

[45] "But in Old Norse, and I think also in Celtic poetry, a battle is called a 'web of men.' That is strange, no? Because in a web you have a pattern, a weaving of men, *un tejido*" (Christ, "Interview," p. 129).

discussed. Rob Roy has an existence both in fiction and in history, most notably in Sir Walter Scott's novel of the same name. A few points of similarity between Scharlach's "life" (the tale itself) and Rob Roy's (as told by Scott) should suffice to establish the connection.

In the Introduction to his novel, Scott provides us with the following information about the historical personage whose story he is about to relate. For the alleged crimes of the outcast clan MacGregor, an Act of the Privy Council of King James decreed in 1603 that the name Gregor or MacGregor was abolished, and those who had borne it were commanded to change it or suffer death. Rob Roy MacGregor consequently also called himself Robert Campbell in compliance with that decree, which was still in effect in his time (1671-1734). In 1613, another act expressly forbade any persons of the former tribe to assemble in greater numbers than four, likewise on pain of death. Rob Roy had in Aberdeen relatives of a "bookish" sort: Dr. James Gregory, professor of medicine at King's College, and son of another Dr. James Gregory, the distinguished inventor of the reflecting telescope. In fact, the clan MacGregor was very nearly as famous for its scientific and literary achievements as it was infamous for its lawlessness. It is through Scharlach's overlapping destiny with that of the Gaelic Rob Roy that Borges binds together the three figures of Scharlach, Treviranus, and Lönnrot in the struggle for supremacy to which he himself has referred in another context as a "web of men."[45]

Triste-le-Roy is the appointed meeting place where red and red co-

mingle to the point of mutual absorption. And although Treviranus is absent at the end, his presence is nonetheless felt as part of the force of multiplicity and allusion, of the "otherness" that includes Lönnrot and also requires his immolation. Triste-le-Roy is Scharlach's fortress-stronghold, but it is also, as Borges takes unusual care to establish, a confounding grove or sanctuary, not unlike a Celtic *nemeton*.[46] The descriptions of trees and rotting vegetation, of fountains whose flow is capped, of the night and its eerie sights and sounds, of the threshold-hour in which the scene is set, are positively lavish for Borges, customarily disinclined to give physical detail. That a ritual is in progress is clear from the iconographic tableaux that Lönnrot sees as he nears his destination and from the formulaic presence of chromatic and numerical repetitions, shared perceptions and emotions, and foretold consequences for the present and prophecies for the future.

That the gods enshrined at Triste-le-Roy have Greek or Roman names may be more illustrative than definitive. Caesar himself tells us that the Gauls worshipped Mercury above all others (*Commentaries* VI.xvii). The god Caesar called Mercury for the benefit of his Roman readers was Teutates or Toutorix,[47] as pure and pre-Roman as the *Janus bifrons* to whom Scharlach refers in recounting his feverish, nightmare convalescence. Lönnrot perceives the same god doubly but under a different name: first as a two-faced statue of Hermes and then as a four-faced monster duplicated, distorted, and disguised in the shadow cast by the moonlight.[48] The figure of Hermes seen by both Lönnrot and Scharlach under similar circumstances of distress and hallucination readily suggests the *Rebis* of alchemy associated with Mercury, further confirmation of the aura of doubleness which attends Triste-le-Roy.

The confusion of *Hermes bifrons* and Janus is appropriate to the Celtic perspective I have proposed. Both gods represent Ovid's *res prisca*, the ancient "thing" of ambiguous sex that ruled ages before the

[46] ". . . ese círculo vedado / Que a un tiempo abarca el véspero y la aurora" ("Adrogué," *El hacedor*, Buenos Aires, 1960, p. 98).

[47] *Teut, tout, toot, taut, túath, deut*: all these roots signify the "tribe," the "people." Teutorix is the king of the tribe, the lord of humanity itself at its most functional, and recognizable, level.

[48] Chesterton's "The Three Horsemen of Apocalypse" may also have provided some of the sculpted imagery for the final scene at Triste-le-Roy: "Grock had taken off his helmet again; and though it is possible that this was the vague shadow of some funereal form of respect, its visible effect was that the queer naked head and neck . . . glittered stonily in the moon, like the hairless head and neck of some monster of the Age of Stone" (p. 23). Or immediately following: "'After and before the deed the German Will is the same. It cannot be broken by changes and by time, like that of those others who repent. It stands outside time like a thing of stone, looking forward and backward with the same face'" (p. 24).

natures of the gods were codified and catalogued, stripped of the multiplicity that earlier enriched them.[49] The Celtic mind was among the earliest to deal "theologically" with the logical impossibility that 3=1. Through a notion of correspondences and a doctrine of signatures, the marks of identity were found on the diverse, to the satisfaction of bards, vates, and druids alike, and to the confusion and consternation of the uninitiated.[50]

All three gods mentioned in the closing passages of "La muerte y la brújula" reveal the multiplicity of function, yet the singleness of source and purpose, inherent in the omnipresent color red. And while the statue of Diana is felt to crown Scharlach's successful hunt and capture of Lönnrot, it may well be that *Dy-ana* and the *Dy-anus* of Janus imply a common, divine creative force emanating from that same *res prisca* which Borges has rendered here as doubly proximate to androgyny yet outwardly distinct from it. It is also conceivable that the duplicated form of Diana is less Artemis than Hecate, the "accursed huntress" who, like Hermes, often appears with three faces at crossroads, near tombs, or at the scene of crimes. Both Hecate and Hermes preside over Lönnrot's imminent death, as they do archetypically over the endless transmutations prefigured in the reference to "otro avatar." It may be appropriate to recall that the alchemists saw in Mercury an essential ambiguity which they referred to as *Monstrum hermaphroditus* as well as *Rebis*, an implication which seems to be borne out in the polyvalent statuary of Triste-le-Roy. One might also note in passing that the Egyptian goth Thoth[51] and the supposed author of the Hermetic books were themselves called Hermes Trismegistos, a redundancy of epithet ("three times very, very great") which matches, if it does not surpass, the redundancy of shape and substance of Triste-le-Roy itself.

The nature and location of the ritual killing of Lönnrot and the events and signs leading to it are crucial to our understanding both of Scharlach's identity and of the specific rite being performed. The flight

[49] Ovid, *Fasti* I.102. To Homer and Hesiod we owe our antiseptic versions of the natures of the Greek gods; to the *indigitamenta*, those of the Roman deities.

[50] See the section on the "triunity of roles" for the writer in Christ, *The Narrow Act*, pp. 142 ff. See also Borges's own statement: "Y recuerdo una noche muy agradable en que adquirí bastante información sobre los *druidas* y sobre los *drusos*, que naturalmente eran vecinos en las páginas de la *Encyclopaedia*," quoted in Fernando Sorrentino, *Siete conversaciones con Jorge Luis Borges* (Buenos Aires, 1973), p. 91.

[51] Janus and Thoth face each other and themselves again in Borges's "Ragnarök," where "una de las caras de Jano miraba con recelo el encorvado pico de Thoth" (*El hacedor*, p. 47). Here, however, the gods do not conduct others to death; they themselves are gunned down by an irate crowd of intellectuals in a university auditorium, aroused to deicide because the same gods who invented speech have lost its gift.

of three months and four successive dates is put into motion by the murder of Rabbi Marcelo Yarmolinsky in the north on December 3. The crime was to be robbery or theft on December 4, not murder, and the intended victim was the Tetrarch of Galilee, not Yarmolinsky. But fate or chance intrudes, and the urgent force of surrogation or supplantation at a predetermined site begins to take concrete form.

Borges sets the intervening occurrences under the last four signs of the dying astrological year and allows them to run their course from the initial crime under Saggitarius through Capricorn, Aquarius and, finally, Pisces. Each of these signs represents one of the four elements and, as Borge employs them here, one of the four cardinal points. The first and last, north and south, are particularly significant in that both are bi-corporeal and therefore indicative of the inherent struggle of yoked opposites. Rabbi Yarmolinsky dies under the sign of conflict between the inquiring, philosophical mind and the blood lust of conquest. His death, under the mutable quality of the fire element, is literally "untimely," yet with the ironic complicity of Lönnrot, the chance happening is almost immediately revealed as symbolic of surrogation to Scharlach, who turns time, space, and event into a discernible and alluring pattern to his own brooding advantage.

Critics have made very little of Yarmolinsky's name. Christ tells us that Borges was fascinated solely by the sound of it, but that two possible models may have been Abraham Yarmolinsky, author of *The Wandering Jew*, and the noted Russian scholar Avraham Yarmolinsky, the latter former chief of the Slavonic Division of the New York Public Library and husband of the American poet Babette Deutsch, with whom he collaborated in several translations of Russian verse.[52] Bell-Villada speculates that Borges may have had in mind that *yarmo* means "yoke" in Russian and that he had applied the name to indicate the centuries of oppression endured by the Jews and embodied in the rabbi.[53] The etymology of the name has nothing to do with a yoke, however. Its origin is, rather, another powerful integrating motif which links the events in the north to those which transpire later in the south. "Yarmolinsky" is an adjective meaning an inhabitant of Yarmolintsy, a small town south of Podolsk in the Ukraine. The placename itself derives from an earlier Yermolay and a still earlier Yermelay which, in turn, is from the Greek Hermelaus, "people of Hermes." The veiled suggestion of an attendant Hermes in the north, long before he presides in full potency over the ritual death of Lönnrot in the south, is another indication of the virtually seamless integrity of Borges's narrative. That he has given the rabbi the name of Marcelo (Marcellus, diminutive of Marcus)

[52] *The Narrow Act*, p. 137.
[53] *Borges and His Fiction*, p. 92.

is not only an early and evangelistic clue to the four-series which Lönnrot resolutely tracks, but also integrates the name of St. Mark, whose astrological symbol was Leo, the fixed sign of the fire element, with the color red. (Leo, in Chinese astrology, was called the Red Bird, a color it shares with the Red Tiger who symbolizes the south.)

Who is the Tetrarch of Galilee whose place is taken by Rabbi Yarmolinsky on the night of December 3? It will be helpful to recall first that the Romans grouped the four ancient kingdoms of Galilee, Judaea, Samaria, and Idumaea into a single procuratorship. With those compass points in mind, then Borges's only model of any consequence becomes Herod Antipas (*antiphas* 'deputy,' 'he who speaks in the name of,' 'prophet'), ruler of the northern provinces of Galilee and Peraea at the time of Christ's death, by his name a surrogate himself, and by his deed the supplanter of the one whom Pilate declares King of the Jews. Borges's Tetrarch possesses the finest sapphires on earth which, in biblical symbolism, indicate his rulership and dominion, an earthly reflection of God's "sapphire throne" to which Exodus (24:10) and Ezekiel (1:26) refer. But Red Scharlach conspires to seize the Tetrarch's regal stones and take them to his own southern tetrarchy at the opposite extreme of this Galilee. Borges thus impresses on the story a further north-south opposition through the geographical context of the kingdoms of ancient Palestine, counterposing to northern Galilee an Idumaean realm in the south. Scharlach's domain is, then, a hostile Edom ("red"), land of Borges's red Adam in "Las ruinas circulares" and his poems "La luna" and "Invocación a Joyce." Biblically it is the quarrelsome, outlaw land ruled by the ruddy Esau, another "cunning hunter" (Genesis 25:27) whom Jacob in his turn displaced.

The pattern of form diagramming force continues on the west and east under Capricorn and Aquarius. Now, however, the events are clearly bait for Lönnrot to ensure his blind obedience to the ritual. Daniel Simón Azevedo dies in the west on January 3, but his fate had already been sealed a month earlier in the north when he blundered drunkenly into Yarmolinsky's room, thus betraying his pact with Scharlach. Borges even tells us that Azevedo is a northern hoodlum (p. 147), so his death on the west side can be seen as purely propitiatory. This second victim dies under the leading sign of the earth element. He is the murderer murdered, as Lönnrot is the pursuer pursued. As his name indicates, though perhaps opaquely, he is also a Jew. "Azevedo" is only partly the author's joke: Borges's full name is Jorge Luis Borges Acevedo, and Azevedo is the Portuguese spelling. The name means "holly thicket," and the northern European holly took the place, among the Celts, of the Mediterranean evergreen scarlet-oak (both of them *ilex* botanically), a tree associated with the red dye its kermes pro-

duced. Since its crimson stain was once used for coloring the faces of sacred successor kings or dyeing their robes a bright scarlet, *ilex* came to be considered a death tree, identified in both Mediterranean and Celtic mythology with the pretender to the throne and with the successful supplantation of the ruling king by his cyclical opponent.

The events under Aquarius, the fixed quality of the air element, on February 3 symbolize parallel lines of force and imaginative power. This is the only sign of the four not under the detriment or fall of the Moon or Mercury. Indeed, it is a sign that exalts in Mercury and the creative power of his Word, clearly seen in the triple names Scharlach assumes at Liverpool House: Gryphius, Ginzberg, Ginsburg.

We are finally brought to the point of southern opposition at twilight on Friday, March 2, under the water-element sign of Pisces. Both its fall and detriment are Mercury and its symbol of linked sea-creatures is that of bondage, captivity, and life after death. As the last sign before the vernal equinox it signifies the end of one solar reign and the threshold of a new one, its surrogate. In fact, due to the precession of the equinoxes, Pisces now occupies the place once held by Aries, the most powerful sign of the Zodiac, that of the ruler.

The last seven pages of "La muerte y la brújula" (pp. 151-58) set in high relief the ceremonial forms leading to the triumph of Scharlach's ascendency and to Lönnrot's inevitable fall. Lönnrot finally breaks with Treviranus and his secure world in the mundane but symbolic act of terminating a telephone call to the commissioner. Borges's four-word sentence, "Lönnrot colgó el tubo" (p. 151), shows the detective at the first moment of his willful isolation. Two hours later he is heading south to his fatal rendezvous, like the protagonist of Borges's other tale of death, time, and direction, Juan Dahlmann in "El sur."

Borges describes the approach to the south as delimited by the sluggish, polluted stream which the train crosses before Lönnrot alights and continues his journey on foot. This vile effluence, plugged with tannery scraps and garbage, contains the sloughs of time itself. It is the remnant of a river of loss and oblivion, an extension of the desert-colored estuary that flows by the Hôtel du Nord (p. 143). This liquid image is reinforced in the author's remark that the transmuted air itself was moist and cold (p. 152)—properly attributes of the water element.

Lönnrot leaves the train and strikes out across the open countryside. The scene is apocalyptic in its silent, barren flatness. The hour, one of those deserted twilights that seem to be dawns (p. 152), is a clear reference to transition, conjunction, or collision, as well as a signal that a new day has arrived by Hebrew and Celtic reckoning. If Hebrew, then the Sabbath has begun, the day on which Creation ceased and the Work was regarded as complete. Along the way Lönnrot sees various

apparitions against the stark, horizonless backdrop of limitless space (p. 152). These seem isolated and emblematic perceptions of Creation's leftovers, images of nearly unbearable loneliness and despair, looming and totemic in their stark verticality. Curiously, they fail to excite Lönnrot's apprehension as they do the reader's. He sees dogs, auguries of the death that awaits him. They are related to Scharlach not only as the traditional hunter's companions in the chase but also in their figuration as Gabriel's hounds, those Celtic hounds of hell with red-tipped ears. He sees an uncoupled railroad car sidetracked on a spur, called in Spanish a *vía muerta*, clearly a sign of a journey interrupted or over. He sees a silvery-white horse, an animal sacred to the Moon and an omen of death in Celtic folklore because Herne the Hunter, a Hermes-like psychopomp, rides a pale horse pursuing souls across the night sky, accompanied by his baying hellhounds. This horse is drinking water from a stagnant puddle, a reminder of the putrid, sluggish river whose waters have now been denied all movement, stopped in their flow like the sidetracked railroad car.

Lönnrot first catches sight of Triste-le-Roy as darkness is falling. His initial impression is of the villa's imposing height, dominating the countryside like the eucalyptus trees which, in turn, tower over the villa. The image symbolizes Scharlach's dark dominion over the surrounding precincts, but it is also a reverberation of the opposing height of the Hôtel du Nord and the events and circumstances entrained there. Eucalyptus, known by various other names, including bloodwood, is a form of myrtle, and like the scarlet-oak is another death tree in Mediterranean mythology. For Borges the aroma of eucalyptus is related to the past and to the south and thus associated in his work with death and disintegration.

Lönnrot approaches Triste-le-Roy by circling the grounds as the wrought iron fence does, defining the illusory perimeter in a pale gesture of Scharlach's "encompassing" maneuver in time and space which has successfully lured Lönnrot there. He repeats his enclosing pattern as he walks about the house in a second and tighter inner circle, still at the outer edge of Scharlach's fixed centricity as Scharlach lies in wait inside. By his cautious movement around the vertical axis of Triste-le-Roy, its trees, and statuary, Lönnrot unwittingly traces the symbolic figure of his own demise, the double and androgynous sign of the lingam in a circle.

Borges leads us to this place and moment of conjunction by a rich array of symbols suggesting the immanence of transformation. Not the least of these are those generally associated with the alchemical magistery. What he finds compelling as a trope is the Aristotelian notion accepted in alchemy that all of the four elements—fire, earth, air, and

water—already implicit in Borges's astrologically determined choice of dates, are mutually transmutable. Each of the four has in a certain equilibrium two of the basic characteristics—moisture or dryness, and heat or cold—one of which dominates; but by subjecting the secondary characteristics to manipulation by fire, the element changes into another. While matter itself is immutable, its forms are eternally subject to change. According to the adepts of alchemy, the forces that create the elements from matter employ the principle of sulphur and the principle of mercury to determine the predominant outward form: light-sun-gold-sulphur-fire-male (king) as opposed to darkness-moon-silver-mercury-water-female (queen). But sulphur and mercury, in balance, underlie all the metals, and the successful conjoining of their opposing qualities is symbolized in the androgynous representation of the hermaphrodite.

Now if we return to the first paragraph of the story, we readily see Lönnrot's "solar" dominance: his legitimacy, the fire of his intellect and of his name (Lönn*rot*), and his implicit kingliness (Erik). He is presented to us at a cardinal height (the north), at a height of achievement (his fame), and in the architectural context of what Borges calls the Hôtel du Nord's high, white prism. Moreover, he owes his rise in some measure, as we are to learn, to Scharlach's previous fall. Yet two secondary traits underlie Lönnrot's exalted position: he is something of an adventurer and a gambler. In contrast, Scharlach is defined at the outset primarily as an outlaw adventurer and gambler, but as the story proceeds to its climax he assumes more and more of Lönnrot's attributes and dominance, with the result prefigured in the color-code of Scharlach's name.

Dark Triste-le-Roy is under the shared tutelage and protection of both Moon and Mercury, formalized in the statuary at the villa's threshold. Scharlach's shadowy, criminal, liquid, nether kingdom of the south is opposed to Lönnrot's earlier radiance and splendor. Alchemically formulated, the red that suffuses the names and identities of both Scharlach and Lönnrot is an indication of the fiery cyclical ritual of transformation and supplantation that attends them in their struggle throughout time as each yearns to conquer the other and reign in his stead. Borges provides the reader with a first clue to the alchemical nature of this transformation in the yellow and red rhombs present at the site of the second murder. They are repeated in the diamond design of the harlequins' costumes at the scene of the third crime. Only at Triste-le-Roy are they fully revealed in the leaded windows whose panes are yellow, green, and red stained-glass rhombuses: the precise chromatic codes of the so-called peacock train signifying progressive alchemical transmutation. Hermes oversees the activities at Triste-le-Roy in the same way that he presides triply at the alchemical operation itself: as the material to be transformed, as the force and knowledge which transforms it, and as the transformation itself.

Scharlach's fixed stillness at the center of Triste-le-Roy contrasts with the circling volatility of Lönnrot, and the alchemical image is further refined as Lönnrot enters the villa whose aspect is remarkably androgynous in its interminable binary symmetry. The bedroom where Lönnrot pauses for a closer look (p. 154) is surely the same room in which Scharlach lay dying for nine days and nights three years earlier, felled by a police bullet. The memory of that previous struggle in which Lönnrot triumphed is in the flower that he touches, causing its dusty petals to disintegrate. The figure is notably similar to that of the stagnant pool and the sidetracked railroad car in their stark iconographic portrayal of the transitory stopped in its course. The cut flower, as always, is a reminder of the unavoidable presence of death, here intensified in the bloom's dessicated fragility. The flower is held in a porcelain goblet which, in its chalice shape, suggests sacrifice—the very word that ultimately drives Lönnrot on in his pursuit of the fourth letter of the tetragram. The container holding its flower posits another emblem of the alchemical process, the opus produced and retained in its vessel of transformation. The alchemists spoke of a non-existent sapphire-blue flower of the Hermaphrodite, a purely imaginary and symbolic blossom whose realistically defined hue signifies the realization of the impossible. Borges inverts the image, presenting us instead a realistic, if brittle, flower whose color is left unnamed. Here the figure is an appropriate analogue of the Tetrarch's splendid blue sapphires sought by Scharlach at the Hôtel du Nord; like them, the Hermetic sapphire flower is formed by forces of affinity and cohesion.

One need not belabor the alchemical paradigm, yet patently what is "destroyed" in the moment that Scharlach opens "fire" under the watchful eye of Hermes is a form. And just as surely the underlying forces which take the opposing forms of Scharlach and Lönnrot will struggle on throughout eternity "en otro avatar." What was once concealed in multiplicity is now fully manifest: Scharlach's is the color and the name of command, lordship, and vengeance. Red, whose mystical number is nine,[54] now partakes of eternity itself, the ninth attribute (p. 146) of the same JHVH whose Name is at last pronounced in the blinding, crimson flash of fire that kills Lönnrot.

If, as Sturrock argues, Scharlach is indeed the redder at the conclusion of "La muerte y la brújula," it is at Triste-le-Roy that this is confirmed through the sacrifice of Lönnrot, whose blood vindicates and

[54] Giacinto Gimma, *Della storia naturale delle gemme, delle pietre, e di tutti i minerali* . . . (Naples, 1730), I, 134.

further tints the double red that Scharlach proclaims from the beginning. Scharlach becomes triple red at the conclusion of the tale, spilling the blood of the third true victim and proving conclusively his power and authority. He has become a red triad at the last, reminding us of *na trì Deirg* of Irish legend: the three apocalyptic, redheaded riders, dressed in red and astride red horses who represent battle, conquest, and the destruction that causes death but permits a return to order.[55]

In "La muerte y la brújula," the name, the identity, and the dominion are in the same red color, but just as surely the color, and a good deal more, is in the names.

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[55] From *Togail Bruidne da Derga*, cited in Anne Ross, *Everyday Life of the Pagan Celts* (London and New York, 1970), p. 72. Rubman mentions fire, blood, and sin at Scharlach's color-associated attributes as he kills Lönnrot (p. 450). There is a syntactic echo and one repeated term in the last line of Borges's poem "Adrogué": "Yo, que soy tiempo y sangre y agonía" (*El hacedor*, p. 99).

BOOK REVIEWS

LITERARY LANDSCAPE: TURNER AND CONSTABLE. By Ronald Paulson. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982. xii, 274 p.

RUBENS AND THE POETICS OF LANDSCAPE. By Lisa Vergara. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982. xv, 207 p.

Both these books draw a distinction which can be applied both to landscapes and to rustic poetry. This is the distinction between an idealized countryside—inhabited by shepherds and shepherdesses whose innocence contrasts with court sophistication and who often carry classical names, the setting being explicitly in a happy past or Golden Age, or at any rate drenched in a nostalgia for lost bliss—and the workaday landscape of farming, hunting, or gardening, presented in terms of necessary work and even struggle, contemporary and realistic. The first is pastoral, and its idyllic setting is often named Arcadia; Paulson calls the second "georgic" and Vergara "rural" (though, paradoxically, Vergara has more to say on classical influences and the Virgilian tradition), and both make good use of the contrast with pastoral. For Paulson much eighteenth-century poetry is georgic, "from the complex *paysage moralisé* of *Windsor Forest* and *Grongar Hill* down to the sheer farming manual of *Sugar-Cane*, *The Hop Garden*, and *The Fleece*," and he then connects this with *Golding Constable's Kitchen Garden* and *The Stour Valley and Dedham Church*, which show "the age-old reliance of the farmer on the rhythm of the seasons that has replaced the eternal spring of the pastoral . . . by ploughing, sowing, and reaping—most dramatically by regeneration out of a maggoty corpse" (pp. 130-31). Constable's assertion of nature as a criterion naturally suggests a parallel with Wordsworth; but Paulson then goes on to show how very un-Wordsworthian he is in his social integration: "I have heard him say," Leslie wrote, "the solitude of the mountains oppressed his spirits" (p. 118). Not only did he paint human industry and farmed or inhabited landscapes, he "seldom (perhaps never) painted the house of a stranger, anyone without strong personal connections to the Constables" (p. 119). One could hardly get further from the solitary sublimity of Wordsworth, who loved man but knew very few men and women among his neighbors.

All this is fine, and one could carve an admirable piece of conventional art history out of Paulson's book; but this would be both to flatter and to underrate his intelligence, subtlety, and theoretical restlessness. He is not a critic who makes things easy for the reader. Leaping from one line of thought—and one painting—to another, he needs to be read slowly, even reread, simply to grasp the argument. The main point of his section on Turner sounds clear enough—that Turner "superimposed a public and literary meaning on a landscape of pure form and color" (p. 69) and it certainly corresponds to the way many feel about Turner; but it is not a thesis which will stand up in the ensuing discussion. In the first place, Paulson shows that Turner's central graphic principle, the vortex, has verbal elements "beneath it, waiting to be exhumed" (p. 98); indeed, the verbal, along with a taste for puns, proverbs, etc., is seen as central to Turner's sensibility. Thus the variants of the image of the sun include not only ways of painting sunshine but all