Borges and Coleridge: The Rime of "The Immortal"

W. P. FITZPATRICK

The fictions of Jorge Luis Borges are only slightly more elusive than his *inquisitions,* his musing critical essays on life and letters. Borges' work seems forever shifting under analysis, the stories and essays as difficult of fixing as Proteus on the shores of Pharos.

In many of his fictions Borges conceives his role as artist to be that of editor of imaginary works; indeed, fictions like "Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," "The Garden of the Forking Paths," "Theme of the Traitor and the Hero," and "Three Versions of Judas" are primarily commentaries on or interpretations of imagined works. The initial effect of this device is to place, Platonically, the central "reality" of each fiction behind at least three artificial lenses. First there is the assumed, intuited "reality" which is seen through the dark mirror of the imaginary work, and then the next refraction, the commentary (the fictional frame), and last the perspective of Borges himself. But Borges himself is elusive:

> Little by little, I am giving over everything to him, though I am quite aware of his perverse custom of falsifying and magnifying things. . . . I shall remain in Borges, not in myself (if it is true that I am someone), but I recognize myself less in his books than in many others or in the laborious strumming of a guitar.[1]

The fall of reality into language makes of that reality a fiction, something *other than* the reality. In "Borges and I" the artist implies it is the same with the self, that part of oneself that lives in the words one writes. It would be simplistic to allegorize this fable and equate the speaker, the expressive I, with "Borges the artist" (recognizing himself in the books of others) and his antagonist with "Borges the man" — but something like that is the obvious conclusion in the face of Borges' conception of authorship. In his essay, "The Flower of Coleridge," he cites Emerson: "I am very much struck in literature by the appearance that one person wrote all the books; . . . there is such equality and identity both of judgment and point of view in the narrative that it is plainly the work of one all-seeing, all-hearing gentleman."[2] Emerson could not have foreseen Borges' reaction to those words:

> For many years I thought the almost infinite world of literature was in one man. That man was Carlyle, he was Johannes Becker, he was Whitman, he was Rafael Cansinos-Assens, he was De Quincy. (*Other Inquisitions,* p. 12)

It is the purpose of this essay to supplement Borges' list, offering evidence that that man also was Coleridge and, in the process, shedding some light on at least one of his Protean shapes.

I

Borges' view of authorship and tradition is similar to T. S. Eliot's, although, as always, Borges' thesis is indisputably his own. In the remarkable essay, "Precursors of Kafka," he reveals how his artistic voice can perhaps recognize itself best in books not credited to the "other Borges":

---

1. Jorge Luis Borges, "Borges and I," *Labyrinthes,* ed. Donald Yates and James Irby (New York: New Directions, 1962), p. 246. All subsequent references to this collection will be included in the text.

2. Jorge Luis Borges, **Other Inquisitions,** trans. Ruth L. C. Simms (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), p. 9. All subsequent references to this collection will be included in the text.

NOTICE
THIS MATERIAL MAY BE
PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT
LAW (TITLE 17 U. S. CODE)

> The word "precursor" is indispensable in the vocabulary of criticism, but one should try to purify it from every connotation of polemic or rivalry. The fact is that each writer *creates* his precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future [cf. T.S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent"]. In this correlation the identity or plurality of men matters not at all. The first Kafka of *Betrachtung* is less a precursor of the Kafka of the shadowy myths and atrocious institutions than is Browning or Lord Dunsany. (*Other Inquisitions*, p. 113)

Each artist, then, on the strength of his own vision creates his precursors, authors perhaps unknown to the artist himself who have been modified for all time in the reader's mind by his work. Such a thesis when coupled with the view of universal authorship could effectively preclude the poor critic from his favorite sport of influence-hunting and source studying. Individual authors become but ephemeral manifestations of an Absolute Imagination, their works mere idiosyncratic variations of "the number of fables and metaphors of which men's imagination is capable . . . a limited number of which "can be all things for all men, like the Apostle." (*Other Inquisitions*, p. 201)

Despite this Platonic obstacle to criticism, it may be illuminating to readers, (certainly not to Borges), to examine the evidence showing unacknowledged debts to prior authors — precursors, if you will — which amount to influences in certain of Borges' fictions. Given his intellectual and bookish disposition, what is surprising is that a plethora of such determinate influences does not exist in Borges' work. There are flashes of Poe and Hawthorne, perhaps of Kafka and some others, but generally the various fictions seem autonomous universes, little worlds which even the author, as author, is reluctant to inhabit.

Borges, as might be expected in a man fascinated by alternate possible versions of reality, shares with Coleridge a certain awe of dreams. In an essay on J. W. Dunne, Borges relates an idea both central to Dunne and, apparently, to himself:

> Dunne, surprisingly, supposes that eternity is already ours and that the dreams we have each night corroborate this. According to him, the immediate past and the immediate future flow together in our dreams. While we are awake we pass through successive time at a uniform speed; in dreams we span an area that may be very vast. To dream is to coordinate the objects we viewed while awake and to weave a story, or a series of stories, out of them. (*Other Inquisitions*, p. 21)

Time past and time present coalesce in dream, "having been" and "becoming" creating a new tense through such alchemy, and the result is stories, or, better perhaps, fictions. To write fictions is to create and control dreams. Discussing Hawthorne, Borges remarks that "his reality was always the filmy twilight, or lunar world, of the fantastic imagination" (*Other Inquisitions*, p. 67), and that "when Hawthorne died, the other writers inherited his task of dreaming" (*Other Inquisitions*, p. 69). Dreams, and thus fictions, exist for Borges in a no man's land, being neither reality nor mind; nexus of past and future, they admit of both, yet are freer than arbitrary fact and more substantial, more objective than mind.

If dreaming and fiction-making are the sibling offspring of a single Imagination, dreams being in fact fictions beyond conscious control, dream literature becomes a kind of intensive, or doubled, fiction. Enter Coleridge, precursor of Borges.

In *Other Inquisitions* there are two essays on Coleridge, and he is cited or alluded to in four others. No doubt Borges' interest in Coleridge is, like the great Romantic himself, multifaceted, but it is hardly coincidental that Coleridge is the creator of two of the greatest dream poems in English literature, fictions of such mystery and beauty that they alone might have earned Coleridge his renown.

an
s an
and,

pposes that
rs and that the
ch night corrob-
rding to him, the
and the immediate
ogether in our dreams.
re awake we pass through
ime at a uniform speed; in
span an area that may be
To dream is to coordinate
we viewed while awake
ve a story, or a series of
out of them. (*Other*
s, p. 21)

l time present coalesce in
ig been" and "becoming"
ew tense through such
the result is stories, or,
ps, fictions. To write
reate and control dreams.
awthorne, Borges remarks
ity was always the filmy
nar world, of the fantastic
(*Other Inquisitions*, p. 67),
hen Hawthorne died, the
s inherited his task of
Other Inquisitions, p. 69).
l thus fictions, exist for
o man's land, being neither
mind; nexus of past and
admit of both, yet are freer
y fact and more substantial,
ve than mind.
ig and fiction-making are
offspring of a single
, dreams being in fact
ond conscious control,
ure becomes a kind of
doubled, fiction. Enter
ecursor of Borges.
Inquisitions there are two
leridge, and he is cited or
four others. No doubt
st in Coleridge is, like the
tic himself, multifaceted,
ardly coincidental that
the creator of two of the
am poems in English
tions of such mystery and
they alone might have
idge his renown.

"The Dream of Coleridge" concerns "Kubla Khan," Coleridge's self-designated "fragment" of a dimly recollected dream vision. As startling as that dream poem's genesis may be, says Borges, "a later event makes the marvel of the dream in which 'Kubla Khan' was engendered even more mysterious. If it is true, the story of Coleridge's dream began many centuries before Coleridge and has not yet ended" (*Other Inquisitions*, p. 15). This later event succeeds "Kubla Khan"'s publication by twenty years. Commenting on a volume unknown to Coleridge at the poem's composition, Borges reports the next step in the series:

> A thirteenth-century Mongolian emperor dreams a palace and then builds it according to his dream; an eighteenth-century English poet (who could not have known that the structure was derived from a dream) dreams a poem about the palace. In comparison with this symmetry, which operates on the souls of sleeping men and spans continents and centuries, the levitations, resurrections, and apparitions in the sacred books are not so extraordinary. (*Other Inquisitions*, p. 15)

Five centuries separate two men who dreamed the same dream — a collective archetype, or an Idea seeking its proper expression?

After speculating on the possible explanations of this phenomenon (viz. coincidence, Coleridge's access to an unknown book, or metempsychosis), Borges advances this theory:

> The first dream added a palace to reality; the second, which occurred five centuries later, a poem (or the beginning of a poem) suggested by the palace. The similarity of the dreams reveals a plan; the enormous length of time reveals a superhuman performer. To inquire the purpose of that immortal or long-lived being would perhaps be as foolhardy as futile, but it seems likely that he has not achieved it. (*Other Inquisitions*, p. 16)

This immortal or superhuman performer will appear again — in Borges' fiction "The Immortal." He is one hypostatization of that Absolute Imagination which may author all things. Although there was the palace and the poem, Borges speculates that "the series of dreams and labors has not yet ended. . . . If this plan does not fail, some reader of 'Kubla Khan' will dream, on a night centuries removed from us, of marble or of music" (*Other Inquisitions*, pp. 16–17). If dreams lose their subjectivity (that is, if they are shared), they achieve reality, even if in different ways.

Dreams for Borges are constellations of an unknown (at least with any finality) but emerging reality. Kubla Khan's dream came forth as a palace and crumbled into fragments, then dust. Coleridge's dream came forth as language and image, a poem, but faded (or so he believed) into a fragment. Future unknown dreamers will bring forth *their* versions of this elusive reality in infinite manifestations.

With this background, a comparison of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "The Immortal" will demonstrate that the processes Borges finds so readily in the works of others are very strong in his own. These two works, poem and fiction, exhibit a pattern in which one can trace, as Borges does in "The Flower of Coleridge," "the history of the evolution of an idea through the heterogenous texts" of two authors (*Other Inquisitions*, p. 9). A thematic rhythm sounded poetically in "The Rime," echoed by Borges' exposition in "The Flower of Coleridge," is orchestrated into fictive form in "The Immortal."

2

Considering Borges' views on authorship and dream, his attraction to "The Rime" should be apparent. The crucial symbol in the poem, the albatross, was supplied the poet by Wordsworth, and the substance of the nightmarish journey itself provided by a *dream* of the poet's friend Cruikshank. Not only is the poem itself and its origin mysterious, strange, but it has, after its 1798 appearance, been accompanied by a *commentary*, a gloss added by an

"editor" to the Author's original poem. "The Rime" describes a dream-like journey, a surreal time-travelling, in which a man not only traverses vast areas of the earth's oceans, but also travels among death, life, and life-in-death. The poem's most dramatic imagery involves such important Borgesian symbols as the sun and the moon, emblems of dessication and renewal, and contains within its climactic scene, a dream within the general dream framework. Finally, the mariner himself becomes an immortal, seeking expiation, a transcendent figure who encroaches upon the sequential continuum, the *time* of waking men, to relate his visionary experience.

In "The Immortal" the story derives from a manuscript (written in English) found in a first edition of Pope's *Iliad.* The history of its author, Joseph Cartophilus, provides the plot of Borges' fiction. This man, a twentieth century antique dealer, had been a Roman tribune, an Anglo-Saxon mercenary, the scrivener of *A Thousand and One Nights,* a passenger on Lord Jim's *Patna,* and Homer's alter ego. As a tribune he pursues immortality and, achieving it, becomes a denizen of the deranged City of Immortals. Finding this troglodytic oblivion oppressive, he begins an almost interminable quest to reassume his mortality, a journey finally ending with his discovery of the spring of life, and his subsequent drowning in 1929.

On the face of it, the two works may seem only remotely similar, but with the perspective afforded by "The Flower of Coleridge" the generic relation between them can be demonstrated. In this brief essay Borges introduces this tantalizing remark from Coleridge:

> If a man could pass through Paradise in a dream, and have a flower presented to him as a pledge that his soul had really been there, and if he found that flower in his hand when he awoke — Ay! — and what then? (*Other Inquisitions*, p. 10)[3]

Borges muses on this text, concluding that "in the sphere of literature as in others, every act is the culmination of an infinite series of causes and the cause of an infinite series of effects" (*Other Inquisitions,* p. 10). Such a concentration of causes and effects may be found in Kubla Khan's palace and Coleridge's poem of the "pleasure dome." These two effects of dream voyaging are the *pledges* of having passed through, if not Paradise, something beyond the ordinary world; they are the visible tokens, preserved in waking life, of their encounter with the "milk of Paradise."

The next text cited in the essay is from Wells' *The Time Machine.* Borges describes Wells' time-traveller who "returns tired, dusty, and shaken from a remote humanity that has divided into species who hate each other. . . . He returns with his hair grown grey and brings with him a wilted flower from the future. This is the second version of Coleridge's image" (*Other Inquisitions,* p. 10). Note that Borges moves from Coleridge's speculation to Wells' polemical novel without remarking how Wells' *wilted* flower significantly distinguishes his protagonist from Coleridge's.

The final text comes from Henry James. Borges comments that "in *The Sense of the Past,* the nexus between the real and the imaginative (between past and present) is not a flower, . . . but a picture from the eighteenth century that mysteriously represents the protagonist. Fascinated by this canvas, he succeeds in going back to the day when it was painted. He meets a number of persons, including the artist . . ." (*Other Inquisitions,* p. 11). What Borges finds amazing, and what is relevant to the discussion of "The Immortal" and "The Rime," is that the hero "returns to the eighteenth century because he is fascinated by an old painting, but Prendel's return to this century is a condition for the existence of the painting. *The cause follows the effect, the reason for the journey is one of the consequences of the journey*" (*Other Inquisitions,* p. 11; my italics). In both "The Immortal" and "The Rime" there

---

3. Borges does not indicate precisely where in Coleridge this line is located.

ng
s in
n of an
cause of
ts" (*Other*
a concentra-
s may be found
e and Coleridge's
re dome." These two
n voyaging are the
ng passed through, if not
mething beyond the
l; they are the visible
ed in waking life, of their
the "milk of Paradise."

xt cited in the essay is
e *Time Machine*. Borges
ils' time-traveller who
lusty, and shaken from a
ity that has divided into
ate each other. . . . He
is hair grown grey and
a wilted flower from the
, the second version of
ge" (*Other Inquisitions*,
hat Borges moves from
peculation to Wells'
l without remarking how
l flower significantly
his protagonist from

ext comes from Henry
, comments that "in *The*
ast, the nexus between the
naginative (between past
s not a flower, . . . but a
e eighteenth century that
epresents the protagonist.
this canvas, he succeeds
to the day when it was
ets a number of persons,
e artist . . ." (*Other*
. 11). What Borges finds
what is relevant to the
The Immortal" and "The
the hero "returns to the
entury because he is
an old painting, but
rn to this century is a
the existence of the
cause follows the effect,
the journey is one of the
of the journey" (*Other*
. 11; my italics). In both
l" and "The Rime" there

are analagous inversions of cause and effect.

In Borges' discussion the most significant elements are the fact of time-travelling, whether to Paradise, the future, or the past, and the existence of an apparently independent object which both affirms the reality of such travel and is yet the cause or catalyst of it.

More specifically, the three versions of such travel discussed in "The Flower of Coleridge" correspond very closely to the evolutionary stages presented in "The Immortal," a fiction proceeding from Coleridge's "Rime," his poetic flower. "The Immortal" begins with an Edenic quest, similar to that in Coleridge's conjecture of a dream of Paradise, and moves through mortal time to a remote, vertiginous oblivion, an "era" in which time was not, and peopled by a kind of hybrid of Wells' Eloi and Morlocks, achieving a nexus in the eighteenth century through Cartophilus' subscription to Pope's *Iliad*, which becomes the catalytic object in the twentieth century, and initiates the time-travelling. Also, Pope's *Iliad* is a condition of J.C.'s discovering he is Homer. In these three texts and "The Immortal" there is the same dream-like movement that at will transcends time and space, focusing on an object that leads at once to past and future.

What is stressed here, in addition to the above details, is that Borges' story is closely tied to his essay on Coleridge, in theme and idea. However, a much closer relation exists between it and "The Rime," particularly in symbol, situation, and image.

We learn from the commentary preceding Joseph Cartophilus' history that this antique dealer is "a wasted and earthen man, with gray eyes and gray beard, of singularly vague features. He could express himself with fluency and ignorance in several languages . . ." (*Labyrinthes*, p. 105). Coleridge's antique mariner has a "long grey beard and glittering eye" (l. 3), and he too is generally emaciated. He can, he tells the Wedding Guest, "pass, like night, from land to land,/I have strange power of speech" (ll.586-87).[4] Now, this physical resemblance and their shared pentecostal fluency are not the only links between the two; there are similarities between the journeys of Cartophilus and the Ancient Mariner, as well.

Just as the palace and the poem were but two elements in a continuing series, so too the echoes of image and symbol from "The Rime" in "The Immortal" may be but the third stage of another series: from Cruikshank's dream to Coleridge's poem to Borges' fiction to . . . Although the tribune Flaminius Rufus slays no albatross (Wordsworth's detail) his gratuitous pursuit of the City of Immortals is as destructive of his sympathy for life as the Mariner's crime. Curious juxtapositions occur in both works. Before killing the bird the Mariner relates that "Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,/ Glimmered the white Moonshine" (ll. 77-8). After the act, he describes the sun: "Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,/ The glorious Sun uprist" (ll. 97-8). Compare Rufus' description of how his journey began:

> All that night I was unable to sleep, for something was struggling within my heart. I arose shortly before dawn; my slaves were sleeping, the moon was of the same color as the infinite sand. An exhausted and bloody horseman came from the east. (*Labyrinthes*, 106)

From moon to sun, from a life within the community of man to an outcast fate, both the Mariner and Rufus transform their lives under the gaze of moon and sun. Significantly, this "bloody horseman" from the east, a figure surely of the sun, transmits to Rufus the thirst for Immortality. This horseman's death begins the other's immortality, as the death of the albatross begins that of the Ancient Mariner.

---

4. This quotation and later ones are from S. T. Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," English Romantic Poetry and Prose, ed. Russell Noyes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 392-401.

That Rufus' journey begins in a garden and his progress is toward burning sterility suggest that his crime is that he seeks to be as the gods are. The Mariner's presumption, we learn at the poem's end, obliterated the sanctity of life, amounting to blasphemy. Whereas the Mariner's and Rufus' immortality becomes hellish, persecuted by the sun, Dante's entrance into Paradise is described by Borges this way: "He follows the paths of the ancient garden to a river that transcends all other waters in purity, although neither the sun nor the moon penetrates the trees to illuminate it" (*Other Inquisitions,* p. 101). Paradise is beyond the influence of sun or moon, the two symbols which demarcate the limits of Coleridge's and Borges' protagonists.

In the details of their journeys the Ancient Mariner and Rufus follow parallel courses, imagistically. Note first this passage from "The Rime":

> All in a hot and copper sky,
> The bloody Sun, at noon,
> Right up above the mast did stand,
> No bigger than the Moon.
>
> Day after day, day after day,
> We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
> As idle as a painted ship
> Upon a painted ocean.
>
> Water, water every where,
> And all the boards did shrink;
> Water, water every where,
> Nor any drop to drink. (ll. 111–22)

Compare that with the scene where Rufus and his men enter "the burning desert," having exhausted many other deserts where "the fervor of day is intolerable"; his men "burned with fever; in the corrupted water of the cisterns others drunk madness and death" (*Labyrinthes,* p. 107). Through madness, desertions, and death Rufus is finally alone: "I wandered several days without finding water, or one enormous day multiplied by the sun, my thirst or my fear of thirst" (*Labyrinthes,* 107). Intolerable heat and undrinkable water, the shared fate of the men whose actions have cut them (and their fellows) off from life.

Like Rufus, the mariner loses all his companions, he alone singled out by the dicing of Death and Life-in-Death for survival — of sorts. Imprisoned in sterile solitude for his crime, the Mariner exists in a timeless inferno. Rufus, too, finds himself "lying with my hands tied, in an oblong stone niche no larger than a common grave, shallowly excavated into the sharp slope of a mountain" (*Labyrinthes,* p. 108), an existence that is Life-in-Death. Like the Mariner he becomes an object, a counter for forces beyond his control: "I let the moon and sun gamble with my unfortunate destiny" (*Labyrinthes,* p. 108). He is won by infernal immortality, becoming an inhabitant of the mad vertiginous city of the Immortals. Here his existence is as the mariner's — a limbo removed from life and death.

The crucial release for both men from their stasis occurs in the same way. The Mariner, it will be recalled, seeing the beauty of the water snakes, blesses them unaware. After this spontaneous act of compassion and sympathy, he sleeps and dreams:

> The silly buckets on the deck,
> That had so long remained,
> I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
> And when I awoke, it rained.
>
> My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
> My garments all were dank;
> Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
> And still my body drank.
> (ll. 297–304)

Rufus dreams as well: "I dreamed that a river in Thessaly (to whose waters I had returned a goldfish) came to rescue me; over the red sand and black rock I heard it approach; the coolness of the air and the busy murmur of the rain awoke me. I ran naked to meet it" (*Labyrinthes,* p. 113). For both men, the refreshing rain follows an act demonstrating their sympathy for life, for the natural world. The Mariner blesses the snakes; Rufus remembers his past kindness with the goldfish, a memory given parenthetically, perhaps, unaware. Later in his tale Rufus explains that the Immortals were incapable of pity, but "At times, an extraordinary stimulus would restore us

the
h for
oned in
rime, the
less inferno.
"lying with my
g stone niche no
on grave, shallowly
he sharp slope of a
yrinthes, p. 108), an
Life-in-Death. Like the
ecomes an object, a
s beyond his control: "I
d sun gamble with my
stiny" (*Labyrinthes*, p.
by infernal immortality,
nhabitant of the mad
of the Immortals. Here
as the mariner's — a
from life and death.
lease for both men from
rs in the same way. The
be recalled, seeing the
ater snakes, blesses them
this spontaneous act of
d sympathy, he sleeps

kets on the deck,
long remained,
t they were filled with

awoke, it rained.

e wet, my throat was

ts all were dank;
drunken in my dreams,
body drank.
(ll. 297-304)

as well: "I dreamed that a
ly (to whose waters I had
lfish) came to rescue me;
nd and black rock I heard
e coolness of the air and
ur of the rain awoke me. I
meet it" (*Labyrinthes*, p.
men, the refreshing rain
ct demonstrating their
ife, for the natural world.
blesses the snakes; Rufus
past kindness with the
emory given parenthet-
s, unaware. Later in his
lains that the Immortals
of pity, but "At times, an
stimulus would restore us

to the physical world. For example, that morning, the old elemental joy of the rain" (*Labyrinthes*, p. 115). The renewal brought by the rain initiates the expiatory journeys of both men. Although Rufus does not begin immediately, in the context of his story, he places his departure immediately after the dream and the rain.

The journeys of these two immortal men, though both are still impervious to the limitations of time and space, do bring them at various times into compulsive contact with the world of man. Borges' protagonist, as Joseph Cartophilus (a lover of maps like the speaker in "Borges and I"), finally finds, at the point of his centuries past departure, the spring which finally grants him mortality.

The expressed conclusions of both men concerning the import of their harrowing experiences is the same. Rufus tells us that "one single immortal man is all men. Like Cornelius Agrippa, I am god, I am hero, I am philosopher, I am demon and I am world, which is a tedious way of saying that I do not exist" (*Labyrinthes*, p. 115). He concludes that "Death (or its allusion) makes men precious and pathetic. . . . Everything among the mortals has the value of the irretrievable and the perilous. Among the Immortals . . . every act (and every thought) is the echo of others that preceded it in the past, with no visible beginning, or the faithful presage of others that in the future will repeat it to a vertiginous degree" (*Labyrinthes*, p. 115). The Mariner's moral foreshadows Rufus': "He prayeth well, who loveth well/Both man and bird and beast" (ll. 612-3). But he, still trapped by Immortality, shares the fate Cartophilus escaped:

> Since then, at an uncertain hour,
> That agony returns;
> And till my ghastly tale is told,
> This heart within me burns.
> (ll. 582-85).

Coleridge's gloss is even more explicit: "And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land." Like the dream substance he is, the Mariner covers vast areas, cut loose from time and space. Like Rufus in his search, he travels "over new kingdoms, new empires" (*Labyrinthes*, p. 116).

Borges reminds us of the series of dream manifestations, the individual variations of the universal author, in his editorial postscript to Joseph Cartophilus' manuscript: "'When the end draws near,' wrote Cartophilus, 'there no longer remain any remembered images; only words remain.' Words, displaced and mutilated words, words of others, were the poor pittance left him by the hours and the centuries" (*Labyrinthes*, p. 118). Words: the tale of the Mariner, the manuscript of Cartophilus; Coleridge's poem, Borges' fiction — all versions of a reality seeking expression.

W. P. FITZPATRICK *is currently Associate Professor of English at West Virginia University where he is Assistant Chairman of the English Department and teaches modern and contemporary literature. His primary interest is in the experimental novel, and he has published numerous articles on Byron, Joyce, Gardner and Burgess in* Studies in Contemporary Satire, Modern British Literature *and other journals.*