

Borges the Poet

Ed. Carlos Cortínez

Fayetteville: The University of
Arkansas Press, 1986

CHRISTOPHER MAURER

The Poet's Poets: Borges and Quevedo

Caminas por el campo de Castilla
Y casi no lo ves. Un intrincado
Versículo de Juan es tu cuidado
Y apenas reparaste en la amarilla
Puesta del sol. La vaga luz delira
Y en el confín del Este se dilata
Esa luna de escarnio y de escarlata
Que es acaso el espejo de la Ira.

Alzas los ojos y la miras. Una
Memoria de algo que fue tuyo empieza
Y se apaga. La pálida cabeza

Bajas y sigues caminando triste,
Sin recordar el verso que escribiste:
Y su epitafio la sangrienta luna.¹

I would like to declare the meaning of Borges' sonnet on Quevedo, the meaning of Quevedo to Borges, and the meaning of both of them to me.

The sonnet "A un viejo poeta" ("To an Old Poet") belongs to the oldest genre in Castilian literature—the poetic gloss. Borrowing an image from one of Dámaso Alonso's essays on the *jarchas*,² we can think of line 14 (borrowed from one of Quevedo's sonnets to the Duke of Osuna³) as a precious stone which "because of its brevity and extreme concentration" allowed itself to be set in precious metal.

The precedents of Borges' sonnet are remote and illustrious. The Italian critic Giovanni Caravaggi reminds us that some of the earliest Castilian sonnets were in fact glosses: Boscán began his experimentation with Italian meter by glossing verses of Petrarch, and occasionally placed the line or lines being glossed at the poem's "point of maximum tension," just as Borges does here.⁴ Petrarch himself ended each stanza of his *canzone* 70 with a line from one of his favorite poets, and that encouraged Garcilaso to end his sonnet 22 with a line of Petrarch: "non esservi pasato oltra la gonna."

But Borges' use of the gloss is far more interesting than that of Boscán or Garcilaso or Petrarch, for Borges believes that "it is not so much the text, as the way the text is read, that makes one literature differ from another. . . ."⁵ Before pursuing this, let us listen to what he has said about the line "Y su epitafio la sangrienta luna."⁶

Borges does not seem to think very highly of the sonnet to which it belongs, "the one about the geographical burial of the Duke of Osuna, who is mourned by rivers and has volcanos at his wake."⁷ But he discusses lines 7 and 8 of Quevedo's sonnet apropos of certain verses by the Nordic poet Egil Skallagrímson, "The falcon of the dew of the sword," and "Serpents of the pirates' moon." Borges believes that such lines as these

give one an almost organic satisfaction. It does not matter what they strive to transmit; what they suggest is nil. They do not invite one to dream, nor do they provoke images or passions. They are not points of departure, rather ends in themselves. Their pleasure—a sufficient, minimal pleasure—lies in the heterogeneous contact of their words. I look for the classical equivalent of such pleasure, and I come upon Quevedo's famous sonnet to the Duke of Osuna. . . . It is easy to prove that the splendid efficacy of these two lines,

Su tumba son de Flandes las campanas
Y su epitafio la sangrienta luna

is previous to, and independent of, any interpretation. I say the same of the expression which follows, *llanto militar* [military wailing], whose meaning is as trivial as it is clear: the wailing of the soldiers. As for the *sangrienta luna* [the blood-red moon], it is better not to know that it is a symbol of the Turks, eclipsed by I know not what piracies of don Pedro Téllez Girón.⁸

Spanish poets seem to have been finding their way towards that line ever since the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, about fifty years before Quevedo

wrote his sonnet and had long taken pleasure in confusing the Turkish crescent and the real moon.⁹ "Who can pity you now," asks Herrera, "you who follow the moon, adulterous Asia, sunken in vice?"¹⁰ Like so many of his most memorable lines, Quevedo's "*sangrienta luna*" is the sublimation of a literary commonplace.

But in the context of Borges' poem, that venerable commonplace comes alive. It is as though Borges were emulating Pierre Menard, author of the *Quijote*. It is a revelation to compare Borges' line with that of Quevedo: "La sangrienta luna: ¡la idea es asombrosa!"¹¹ It is hardly true that the phrase suggests nothing, transmits nothing. What was once a tired symbol is now a genuine metaphor that reminds the reader of some secret relation between the moon and human blood.¹² In 1921 Borges wrote that this very metaphor, and others like it, contort objective reality and help to create a new one.¹³

Let us return now to Borges' use of the gloss. I am using the term "poetic gloss" to mean any poem which deliberately provides a new context for words taken from another text. Not all glosses are explicative, but all of them remind us to what extent meaning depends upon context. For example, the meaning of the same *estribillo* changes from one *letrilla* to another, and it might even be argued that the *estribillo* acquires a different meaning each time it returns within any given poem. Borges' sonnet places a well-known expression in new surroundings: obviously, the words "Y su epitafio la sangrienta luna" mean one thing in Quevedo's sonnet and another in Borges'. The lack of "identity" of those words, their lack of semantic *sameness* seems to me to reinforce the message of Borges' sonnet and of the book to which it belongs.

The pathos of that sonnet lies in Quevedo's inability to remember a line of his own verse. This is doubly ironic, for not only does the old poet look at the real moon, he is meditating upon a verse from Revelation, Chapter 6: "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood."¹⁴ John's words describe the day of wrath, *dies irae*, which justifies the reference in line 8 to the moon as a mirror of wrath. It is, after all, a mirror.¹⁵ Here the moon is the mirror of the Lamb, of a wrathful God. The afterglow of sunset, any sunset, reminds us of Judgment Day:¹⁶ the old poet himself stands in judgment. In the dying light (light of the sun, light of consciousness) he is no longer

himself; he is no longer a writer, only a reader (in the background is Quevedo's lovely sonnet on reading, one of Borges' favorites, "Retirado a la paz de estos desiertos").

It is not difficult to discover the meaning of Quevedo's inability to remember what he once wrote. *El otro, el mismo* is a book of elegies. The elegy compares, either implicitly or explicitly, what is present and what is absent—in this case what is remembered and what is forgotten. What Borges compares most frequently in *El otro, el mismo* is Divine Providence, on the one hand, "the infinite web of cause and effect" and, on the other hand, the course of human events. The writer's ignorance of his own work, or of the significance of his work, reminds us of man's ignorance of Divine Providence. The sonnet to Cervantes entitled "Un soldado de Urbina" alludes to precisely the same ignorance of divine purpose. Line 14 thus deepens the irony, if not the pathos, of the sonnet. Even had Quevedo remembered his line, he could not have foreseen what it would mean to us. In a luminous page entitled "Mutaciones," Borges observes that "there is not a single thing on earth that oblivion does not erase, or that memory does not alter; and no one knows into what images the future will translate him."¹⁷

Perhaps this is the right moment to speculate upon Borges' image of Quevedo.

We will ignore, for the moment, the verbal habits that Borges admired and studied in Quevedo, among them the use of certain types of metaphor. *La hora de todos* seemed to him to be "a seedbed of tropes";¹⁸ the use of the epithet that contains an entire metaphor (Borges says of Quevedo, "Abrevió en sus epítetos la entereza de una metáfora," and provides numerous examples);¹⁹ the verb or epithet that gives material properties to abstract nouns, the love of paradox and of the little paradox called oxymoron;²⁰ the coining of verbs from adjectives and nouns, and the use of the second person singular to engage the reader and to anticipate his objections.²¹ Quevedo's discovery of words within words and Borges' use of words according to their etymological meaning hardly spring from the same impulse, but both make the commonplace seem very strange.

We shall pass over all this, because much has been said of the stylistic affinities between Borges and Quevedo, but all too little about their spiritual affinity.²² Borges once called Torres Villarreal "our brother in Que-

vedo,"²³ but he was not thinking of a fraternity of style. In 1927 he wrote, "I cannot remember when I first began to read Quevedo; he is now the author I visit most."²⁴ "His work is before us," he wrote in 1925, "with its apparent diversity of purpose. How can one reduce it to unity and coin a symbol for it? The only thing that ought to interest us is Quevedo's myth: the banner and the meaning that we make of it."²⁵

The Quevedo who accompanied Borges in the mid-1920s offered apparently an image of freedom and an example of self-truth. Quevedo meant rebellion against the "stilted provincialism" of the Real Academia Española, with its ideal of timeless propriety. In his introduction to an anthology of Latin American poetry in 1926, Borges wrote defiantly that in the "new American poetry"

language frees itself. Intransitive verbs become active ones, and the adjective does duty as a noun. Barbarisms flourish, as do neologisms and archaisms. In the face of the affected provincialism exercised by the Academy, our language is enriching itself.²⁶

Not since those tireless nights in which . . . Quevedo took his pleasure with the Spanish language have there been such . . . images, such floodtides, such Indian raids of metaphors as the ones you will find in this book.²⁷

The "rebellious Quevedo who took words from Latin and Greek and even from *germania*, the cant of ruffians" served as justification for Borges' own raid on *el lenguaje criollo*.²⁸

To certain Spanish and Latin American writers in the 1920s Góngora was no less a symbol of artistic freedom than Quevedo, but as Borges admired the *conceptismo* of Quevedo, he rejected the *culteranismo* of don Luis²⁹ and his modern disciples. Borges unjustly thought of Rubén Darío as Góngora's *albacea*, his literary executor.³⁰ Many of Quevedo's attacks on don Luis allude to color and light; so do Borges' attacks on so-called *rubenianismo*, with its *matices borrosos* and *apuntaciones de colores*.³¹ Quevedo mocked Góngora for his *crepusculallas* and Borges reproached Rubén y sus secuaces for their *palabras crepusculares*. Quevedo laughed at the *platería de los cultos* and Borges ridiculed the *crisolampos*, *amatistas*, and *carbunclos* of the early work of Herrera y Reissig.³² The battle between *culteranismo* and *conceptismo* was being relived in Buenos Aires in the early 1920s.

Borges was following Quevedo's example when he penned the "Eje-

cución de tres palabras," in which he burns at the stake the three words *inefable*, *misterio*, and *azul*. The precedents were the "Sueño del infierno," the "Cuento de cuentos," and perhaps also the *prematías*. Borges detested the *jerigonza* (the word Quevedo applied to the language of don Luis) of the Modernists and those of their disciples who "vocean nubes y gesticulan balbuceos,"³³ a phrase which either Borges or Quevedo might have written. The joyous idea of burning them at the stake is Quevedo's, as is the ridicule of poets whose thoughts are dictated by rhyme. Quevedo had called a woman *absoluta*; the law of rhyme had made her a *puta*. The *modernistas*, Borges noticed, were condemned to rhyme *azul* with *tul*, *gandul*, *abedul*, and even *baúl*.³⁴

Borges' line-by-line commentary of a sonnet by Góngora, his analysis of certain lines by Cervantes and by Herrera y Reissig owe their form, or at least their cruel irreverence, to Quevedo's *Comento contra 73 estancias de don Juan Ruíz de Alarcón*. "Las alarmas del doctor Américo Castro", in which don Américo is dismissed as an "incoherent writer of orthopedic devices that gather sheep, literary genres that play football, and torpedoed grammar books," recalls Quevedo's *Perinola*,³⁵ the book in which Borges read the strange words, "Historia infinita temporis atque aeternitatis."

As for the Quevedo who turned Apollo into a fat red silversmith of mountain peaks ("Bermejazo platero de las cumbres") and Daphne into a bat ("pues vais del sol y de la luz huyendo"), Borges shared his hatred of empty mythology and poetic untruth, protesting against "the coiners of false art who force upon us their rusty mythological figures."³⁶

For a time, Borges *was* Quevedo. It seems that Quevedo did more than provide him with literary poses, verbal techniques or polemical tricks. He helped Borges fight his battles, and those battles were far from trivial. The polemic between *culteranismo* and *conceptismo* revolves, after all, around a timeless problem: the relative importance of what one says and how one says it; substance and form, the idea and its verbal expression. Jaime Alazraki observes that for Borges style is not silverwork but ironwork, not ornament but function, utility, and efficacy.³⁷ In recent years Borges has spoken apologetically of his early enthusiasm for Quevedo and for other seventeenth-century writers; he declares that he once thought literature was nothing more than technique.³⁸ It is as though he had forgotten that Quevedo was once his dearest symbol of

the stylistic "utility" mentioned by Alazraki. In the 1920s Borges believed that *conceptismo* was an attempt to follow "con más veracidad las corvaduras de un pensamiento complejo."³⁹

In recent years Borges has spoken of a public Quevedo more or less incapable of writing intimate poetry.

My destiny is the Castilian tongue,
The bronze of don Francisco de Quevedo.⁴⁰

This is the "bronze" of the *Marco Bruto*, the bronze from which Quevedo cast epitaphs like the one to Osuna.

In *Other Inquisitions* and elsewhere, Borges declares that Quevedo's greatness is fundamentally verbal greatness. "To judge him a philosopher or a theologian or . . . a statesman is an error allowed by the titles of his works, but not their contents."⁴¹ No doubt Borges is correct. But what of Quevedo as a man, Quevedo as an attitude towards life, as a *sentidor del mundo*?⁴² What of the Quevedo who wrote the so-called "metaphysical poems" that ponder, as Borges himself has pondered, the nature of time and death?⁴³

There is a certain stoic calm in Borges' later verse which I cannot help but associate with Quevedo. Quevedo forbade himself from taking delight in the creation:

They will tell me to turn my eyes to the beauty of the earth, to the light of the sun, to relatives, to parents, to my estate, to delights and tastes. They tell me that I should weep when someone is swept away from these things halfway through his life. But it consoles me to see someone free of these things, for the beauty of the earth reminds us only of its end.⁴⁴

Borges could never have written those melancholy words. He writes in "Ewigkeit," "I shall not deny, like a coward, what my clay has blessed," and he has ridiculed the Spanish commonplace that the hour of death is more real than the hour of life.⁴⁵

And yet, Borges and Quevedo write of detachment from human passions and calmness in the face of death. Quevedo's stoic persona closely resembles that of Borges: in the poems, the poets' awareness of the inevitability of death give both a sense of invulnerability. The source of Quevedo's calm lies in the contemplation of death in everyday life. "You are invulnerable," Borges tells his reader. "Have not the spirits who

govern your destiny / given you the certainty of dust?" And he adds, "Reflect that in a way you are already dead."⁴⁶

What of the sonnet we have just examined? There is comfort in one's ignorance of divine purpose and in the conviction that oblivion conquers all, erasing personal identity. This is the dark lesson taught by both Borges and Quevedo. Quevedo, remembering Vergil, calls upon death thus:

Come now, oh fear of sages and of the strong.
The indignant, moaning body will go down
Beneath the shades, and my dry lips will drink
Their fill of oblivion.⁴⁷

Borges seems to be remembering Quevedo in a sonnet about death:

Quiero beber su cristalino Olvido,
Ser para siempre; pero no haber sido.

(I want to drink her clear Oblivion,
and be forever, never having been.)⁴⁸

Terror of dissolution, or yearning for dissolution govern Quevedo's best poems. As a young man, Borges saw that one of Quevedo's sonnets, "Cerrar podrá mis ojos la postrera / sombra que me llevare el blanco día," (to which Borges devoted a fine essay,) seems to promise immortality: "Intensity promises [Quevedo] immortality; not the intensity of *any* feeling, but rather the intensity of amorous craving, or, better said, of the act of love."⁴⁹ The early poem entitled "Inscripción en cualquier sepulcro" departs from that idea.⁵⁰ But in more recent years Borges seems to have written and spoken more often about the longing to be rid of himself: "Defiéndeme de mí. The words were spoken / By Montaigne and Browne and a Spaniard I forget."⁵¹ That Spaniard was probably Quevedo: "Desnúdame de mí."⁵² Certainly the idea is his: "Soy en mi defensa un peligro sumo,"⁵³ "Descanso ya de andar de mí cargado."⁵⁴ Quevedo's admirer Francisco López de Zárate wrote these words, which are worthy of Borges: "Hacedme, con no ser tan yo, dichoso." "Make me less myself, and therefore blessed."⁵⁵

Is Quevedo's greatness verbal greatness, as Borges insists? Gómez de la Serna once wrote these memorable words: Quevedo's work is "una sustancia activa que da bravura al corazón y a la conciencia, aprendiendo

cómo, desde el que lo ve todo, nos llega la enseñanza de menospreciarlo todo."⁵⁶ Perhaps Quevedo's greatness, like that of Borges, lies in having given enduring verbal form to a certain attitude towards life. Among the poet's poets is this seventeenth-century Spaniard who, like Borges himself, provides consolation in the face of death; this stoic who, like Borges, wonders at Time ("el es, y el será, y el fue"), who makes us feel that life is a dream, that we cannot know God's plans for us, that death is a law, not a punishment; and that God will somehow defend us and deliver us . . . from ourselves.

NOTES

1. Jorge Luis Borges, *El otro, el mismo* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1969): 79.
2. Dámaso Alonso, *Primavera temprana de la literatura europea: lírica, épica, novela* (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1961): 61-2.
3. "Memoria inmortal de don Pedro Girón, Duque de Osuna, muerto en la prisión" Edited by J. M. Blecua. Francisco de Quevedo, *Poesía original completa* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1981): 268-9.
4. One technique of Boscán was to "orientare la costruzione del sonetto verso una citazione autorevole, che viene collocata nel punto di massima tensione." G. Caravaggi, "Alle origini del petrarchismo in Spagna," *Miscellanea di studi ispanici*, 24 (1971-1973): 92.
5. Jorge Luis Borges, *Otras inquisiciones*, 3rd edition (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1966): 218. "una literatura difiere de otra, ulterior o anterior, menos por el texto que por la manera de ser leída." As an example Borges quotes the words "amica silentia lunae," which "significan ahora la luna íntima, silenciosa y luciente, y en la *Eneida* significaron el interlunio, la oscuridad que permitió a los griegos entrar en la ciudadela de Troya." (217-18).
6. Borges' poem on the moon landing of 1971 ends with a reminiscence of the very line of Quevedo: ". . . La luna, / Que el amor secular busca en el cielo / Con triste rostro y no saciado anhelo, / Será su monumento, eterna y una." Jorge Luis Borges, *El oro de los tigres* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1972): 53.
7. "Un soneto de don Francisco de Quevedo" in Jorge Luis Borges, *El idioma de los argentinos* (Buenos Aires: Colección Índice, 1928): 75. Edited by M. Gleizer.
8. "Las kennigar" in Jorge Luis Borges, *Historia de la eternidad*, 6th edition (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1969): 45-6. Borges returns to this sonnet in 1982 in the prologue to an anthology of Quevedo's verse: "La línea Y su epitafio la sangrienta luna permite dos interpretaciones: la luna, debidamente roja, sobre los campos de batalla de Flandes, y la blanca medialuna, sobre fondo rojo, de la bandera turca. Quevedo habrá imaginado las dos; lo significativo es el hecho de que nuestra emoción precede a las interpretaciones y no depende de ellas." Francisco de Quevedo, *Antología poética* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1982): 10. I am grateful to Robert Katz for calling this book to my attention.
9. José López de Toro, *Los poetas de Lepanto* (Madrid: Instituto Histórica de Marina, 1950): 121. For similar verses by Quevedo himself see *Poesía original*, 262, 265.
10. Fernando De Herrera, *Obra poética*. Edited by J. M. Blecua, vol. I (Madrid: Anejos del BRAE, 1975): 253.
11. "Pierre Menard, autor del *Quijote*" in Jorge Luis Borges, *Ficciones* 8th edition (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1956): 55.

12. Ovid's witch Dipsas alludes to the same relation: "sanguine, si qua fides, stillantia sidera vidi; / purpureus Lunae sanguine vultus erat" (*Amorum Liber I*, VIII, 11-12). Cf. Lope de Vega, *El caballero de Olmedo*, Act III, verse 860.
13. Jorge Luis Borges, "Apuntaciones críticas: la metáfora," *Cosmópolis*, (Nov. 1921): 401. I have not been able to see this essay and am following Zunilda Gertel's paraphrase in "La metáfora en la estética de Borges," in *Jorge Luis Borges*, edited by J. Alazraki, (Madrid: Taurus, 1976): 92.
14. Revelation 6:12.
15. Borges, "1924" and "La luna," *El otro, el mismo*, 75, 175.
16. ". . . el Juicio Final de cada tarde," writes Borges in *Fervor de Buenos Aires*. Cf. "Ultimo sol en Villa Luro" in *Luna de enfrente*.
17. "Mutaciones," Jorge Luis Borges, *El hacedor* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1971): 37.
18. "La adjetivación," Jorge Luis Borges, *El tamaño de mi esperanza* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Proa, 1926): 53.
19. Quevedo's expression *boca saqueada*, given as an example, reappears in Borges' sonnet to Walt Whitman (*El otro, el mismo*, 161). Another direct imitation of Quevedo occurs in the poem "Juan I, 14" (*Elogio de la sombra*), where Borges' line "Yo que soy el Es, el Fue y el Será" recalls Quevedo's "Soy un fue, y un será, y un es cansado." (*Poesía original*, 4).
20. On the use of the oxymoron in Borges' prose see Alazraki, *La prosa narrativa de Borges*, 2nd. ed., (Madrid: Gredos, 1974): 223 ff.
21. See, for example, "Ejercicio de análisis" (*Tamaño*, 107-114) and the "Prólogo" and "La nadería de la personalidad" (*Inquisiciones*). The use of *vos* is mentioned by Ana María Barrenechea in "Borges y el lenguaje" (Alazraki, 221). Giuseppe Bellini observes that the prologue of *Fervor* "per lo stile stringato e vivace, per il ricorso improvviso al 'tuteo' del lettore, non certo per il contenuto nichilista, riconduce ai prologhi quevedeschi dei *Sueños*." *Quevedo nella poesia ispano-americana '900* (Milano: Editrice Viscontea, 1967): 83.
22. An exception is Bellini's admirable essay, just cited: he writes of the "clima di spiritualita affine" of Borges and Quevedo, and their common interest in "i temi del tempo e dell'eternita della vita e della morte."
23. Borges, *Inquisiciones*, 7.
24. Borges, "La fruición literaria," *El idioma de los argentinos*, 102.
25. Borges, "Menoscabo y grandeza de Quevedo," *Inquisiciones*, 39.
26. *Índice de la nueva poesía americana*. Prólogo de Alberto Hidalgo, Vicente Huidobro y Jorge Luis Borges (Buenos Aires: Sociedad de Publicaciones *El Inca*, Ediciones Especiales, 1926): 17.
27. Hidalgo, *Índice*, 17.
28. In defense of *lunfardo* Borges writes: "La germanía fue el lunfardo hispánico del Renacimiento, y la ejercieron escritores ilustres: Quevedo, Cervantes, Mateo Alemán. El primero, con ésa su sensualidad verbal ardentísima, con ése su famoso apasionamiento por las palabras, la prodigó en sus bailes y jácaras, y hasta en su grandiosa fantasmagoría 'La hora de todos.'" See "Invectiva contra el arrabalero," *Tamaño*, 139-40.
29. Verbal reminiscences of Góngora's moral poetry are easily found in Borges; for example, his many variations on the last line of Góngora's sonnet 149, "en tierra, en humo, en polvo, en sombra, en nada," and on the last line of sonnet 163, "los días que royendo estan los años."
30. In *Fervor* ("A quien leyere") Borges writes: "A la lírica decorativamente visual y lustrosa que nos legó don Luis de Góngora por intermedio de su albecea Rubén, quise oponer otra. . . ."
31. Speaking of his days as an *ultaísta*, Borges writes: "Abominamos los matices borrosos del rubenismo, y nos enardeció la metáfora por la precisión que hay en ella, por su algébrica forma de correlacionar lejanías."
32. Borges, *Inquisiciones*, 141.

33. Borges, *Inquisiciones*, 153.
34. Borges, *Tamaño*, 103-4 and 120; *Inquisiciones*, 157; and *Índice*, 15.
35. I am thinking especially of this sentence from the *Perinola*: "De manera—dijo la bermejuela—que Montserrate cuanto al monte es capote, cigüeña, río atollado, cuatro lentiscos, cuatro huevos, lagarto de damasco, lobo con tajón y trinchante, toros con estoques de marfil, tigre con montante, rogativa de rosales, monje enfermo, ermitaño inquieto, lenteja y vieja." Quevedo, *Obras completas*. Edited by F. Buendía, Vol. I (Madrid: Aguilar, 1969): 455.
36. Borges, "Ultraísmo," *Nosotros* (Dec. 1921): 466.
37. Alazraki, *La prosa narrativa*, 161.
38. Alazraki, *La prosa narrativa*, 153.
39. Borges, *Inquisiciones*, 107, a propos of Unamuno.
40. Borges, *El oro de los tigres*, 81.
41. Borges, *Otras inquisiciones*, 56. In Leopoldo Lugones Borges writes, "Como el de Quevedo, como el de Joyce, como el de Claudel, el genio de Leopoldo Lugones es fundamentalmente verbal." 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Pleamar, 1965): 11.
42. A phrase Borges himself applies to Quevedo in *Inquisiciones*, 45.
43. See Bellini, 84 ff.
44. From a letter of 1631 to don Antonio de Mendoza, in *Obras completas*, 921.
45. "No sé por qué razón la hora de la muerte ha de ser más verdadera que las de vivir y el viernes que el lunes." *El idioma de los argentinos*, ed. cit. Cf. *Inquisiciones*, 101-3.
46. From "A quien está leyéndome," in *El otro, el mismo*, 181.
47. "Un soneto de don Francisco de Quevedo," *Fervor de Buenos Aires*, 79.
48. The poem "Inscripción sepulcral" from the same book, *Fervor de Buenos Aires*, is perhaps the early work where one hears Quevedo's voice most distinctly.
49. Borges, "Religio Medici, 1643," *El oro de los tigres*, 49.
50. Quevedo, *Poesía original completa*, 20.
51. Quevedo, *Poesía original*, 13.
52. Quevedo, *Poesía original*, 5.
53. Francisco López de Zárate, *Obras varias*. Edited by José Simón Díaz, Vol. II (Madrid: CSIC, 1947): 204.
54. Gómez de la Serna, *Quevedo* (Buenos Aires: Austral, 1953): 227.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alazraki, Jaime. *La prosa narrativa de Borges*. Madrid: Gredos, 1974.
- Alazraki, ed. "La metáfora en la estética de Borges." In *Jorge Luis Borges*. Madrid: Taurus, 1976.
- Alonso, Dámaso. *Primavera temprana de la literatura europea: lírica, épica, novela*. Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1961.
- Bellini, Giuseppe. *Quevedo nella poesia ispano-americana del '900*. Milan: Editrice Viscontea, 1967.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. "Apuntaciones críticas: la metáfora." *Cosmópolis*, (Nov. 1921), 401.
- Borges, *El oro de los tigres*. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1956.
- Borges, *El otro, el mismo*. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1969.
- Borges, *Fervor de Buenos Aires*. N.p., n.d.
- Borges, "La adjetivación." In *El tamaño de mi esperanza*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Proa, 1926.
- Borges, "Las kennigar." In *Historia de la eternidad*. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1969.
- Borges, *Leopoldo Lugones*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Pleamar, 1965.
- Borges, "Mutaciones." In *El hacedor*. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1971.
- Borges, *Otras inquisiciones*. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1966.

- Borges, "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote." In *Ficciones*. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1956.
- Borges, "Ultraísmo." *Nosotros*, (Dec. 1921), 466.
- Borges, "Un soneto de don Francisco de Quevedo." In *El idioma de los argentinos*. Buenos Aires: Colección Índice, 1928.
- Gómez de la Serna, Ramón. *Quevedo*. Buenos Aires: Austral, 1953.
- Hidalgo, Alberto, Vicente Huidobro y Jorge Luis Borges. *Índice de la nueva poesía americana*. Buenos Aires: Sociedad de Publicaciones, 1926.
- Herrera, Fernando de. *Obra poética*. Edited by J. M. Blecua. Madrid: Anejos del BRAE, 1975.
- Quevedo, Francisco de. *Antología poética*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1982.
- Quevedo. *Poesía original completa*. Edited by F. Buendía. Madrid: Aguilar, 1969.
- Toro, José López de. *Los poemas de Lepanto*. Madrid: Instituto Histórico de Marina, 1950.
- Zárate, Francisco López de. *Obras varias*. Edited by José Simón Díaz. Madrid: CSIC, 1947.
- Zárate, Francisco López de. *Obras varias*. Edited by José Simón Díaz. Madrid: CSIC, 1947.

W. KENNETH HOLDITCH

Borges and Emerson: The Poet as Intellectual

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Borges' deep love for the literature of the United States is the high position in which he has repeatedly, in writing and in interviews, placed Ralph Waldo Emerson as poet. One is certainly not surprised at his appraisal of Walt Whitman as an epic poet, or Emily Dickinson as "perhaps the greatest poet that America . . . has as yet produced," or when he speaks with admiration of the ideas expressed in Emerson's essays; but the praise for Emerson as a poet is another thing altogether. Traditionally Emerson has been admired by American readers and critics, rightly or wrongly, as a philosopher, thinker, and creator of pithy and memorable aphorisms that generously pepper the prose of his famous essays. His poetry, however, interesting insofar as it conveys some of the same philosophical concepts belonging to American romanticism, has generally been relegated to a distant second place. Yes, we remember the farmers who gathered by "the rude bridge that arched the flood" and "fired the shot heard round the world" and may even recall isolated lines such as "Things are in the saddle / And ride mankind," but when we quote Emerson, it is usually from unforgettable lines in his prose; and such essays as "Nature," "Self-Reliance," and "The American Scholar," for example. Borges' praise for the poems, then, places them in a new and intriguing light in which we can identify those aspects of Emerson's poetry Borges finds of particular interest and merit; examine specific poems which he singles out for comment or com-

BORGES *the Poet*

Edited by Carlos Cortínez

The University of Arkansas Press
Fayetteville 1986