Post-Coloniality and Post-Modernity:
Jorge Luis Borges: The Periphery in the Centre, the Periphery as the Centre, the Centre of the Periphery

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1. Post-Colonialist/ Centre/ Post-Colonialized/ Periphery vs. Post-Coloniality: Centre-Periphery

In this paper I would like to address the Post-Colonial question, a question which has become a newly emergent field of research. At the same time, and as the title of this paper suggests, I must address the very concepts surrounding Post-Colonialism, i.e. centre and periphery.

To begin, I wish to clarify within the context of my argument what is understood by the term “Post-Colonialism”, such that outside of its diverse meanings, there are at least two reference points which determine my use of the term: that of the Post-Colonialists and that of the Post-Colonialized. From this context, the terms ‘periphery’ and ‘centre’ can also be derived. One can surely qualify the centre as the producer of the ruling discourse, that is, the producer of power, for whoever has power imposes the discourse. Here it does not suffice to say “Wissen ist Macht” (knowledge is power), but rather “Macht ist Wissen” (power is knowledge), since the latter addresses the propagation of the imposition of a knowledge, its performance, and not its competence. In the Post-Colonialist state, race and geography have a secondary place, but technology, science, and particularly communication, have a major place. Today, communication is the major power, largely owing to the speed of communication and the effectiveness with which a communicative unity is transmitted.

The terms ‘periphery’ and ‘centre’ are neither static nor unilateral. Rather, their implications are diverse, and at least twofold: the periphery is understood as the periphery itself, just as the centre defines itself. The periphery is not always produced as a result of the centre, but, as a result of its deliberate imposition as the periphery, the opposite occurs for the centre. The periphery naturally detaches itself from the attitude of the centre, and the centre from the attitude of the periphery. This differentiation, based on reciprocal implications, would characterize the Post-Colonial condition as distinct from the Colonial condition, which produces a unilateral discourse. The relationships between periphery and centre, as well their homology and differences, may be represented in the following form:

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1 The diverse notions of the term “Post-Colonialism” and its theories are addressed by: Ashcroft, Griffin, and Tiffin (1989); Mishra and Hodge (1991); McChesney (1992); Shohat (1993); and Dunning (1993).
In order to further demonstrate the arbitrariness of such configurations, and in spite of the differentiated form, a possible distribution of the components of the periphery and of the centre could be proposed as follows: to varying degrees, all the Latin American countries would be designated as belonging to the periphery, along with all the Western European countries which are not masters of the power of technological, scientific, and information discourses. Also included in this category would be those countries which have delegated power, including Turkey, Greece, Portugal, Spain, in a certain manner Scandinavia, and on the American Continent Canada, as well as Eastern Europe, the Islamic, and the Asian worlds. Certain Western European countries such as Germany, France, England, and Italy, definitely belong to the centre, as do the United States, Canada (partially), and Japan. In the centre I would locate the United States at the forefront on the basis of technological, economic, military, scientific, and cultural power, followed by Japan and Germany. On the other hand, if the ranking criteria are the production of Western thinking, then the United States should follow France, Germany, and Italy; Japan would stay confined to a "certain" style of peripherism or centrum in certain areas of Western production (for example, fashion, furniture, art, architecture, commercial advertising).

The problem of the periphery and the centre can be studied in an exemplary form in the case of Japan, a country that certainly belongs to the centre by excellence, while at the same time the formula of its success is based on an adaptation of a type of Western product combined with a form of production rooted in its own sociological tradition. Clear examples can be found in architecture, where Japan is a leader, although it has been largely influenced by the United States or by European High Fashion. The ambivalence of the terms 'periphery' and 'centre' is evident, and their meanings are made even more undefinable by the permeable nature of their defining limits, as the example of Nipponese culture demonstrates. In the case of Japan, the terms 'periphery' and 'centre' lose the traditional extension and intensity according to which the Western World was the absolute centre, privileged by its political, military, industrial, technological, and scientific power. The collapse of the communist states in Eastern Europe accelerated the crisis of the differentiation. That is to say, the term Post-Colonialism could be understood as the relativization of the state of things between the periphery and the centre and the beginning of a dialogue (and maybe a redistribution of power in the field of culture) between the periphery and the centre.

In addition, I wish to describe the reach of the term 'post'. Post-Colonialism can be understood as an internationalist discourse with a political-economic and cultural bent, but also as a new nationalism, against which Fredric Jameson has already expressed his opinion (1992: 50). I would differentiate it from 'Post-Coloniality' (see below) in as much as this is a new form of pluralist and international cultural dialogue between the periphery and the centre. Post-Coloniality shares in this manner, the epistemologic cultural space of international Post-Colonialism, but it focuses on the cultural field rather than on scientific fields. In the context of Post-Colonialism, both tendencies, nationalism and internationalism, are present in today's Europe. Nationalism is present in Western Europe although in a restrained form (Germany, France, Italy); militant and belligerent nationalism is present in Eastern Europe; internationalism with nationalist overtones can be found particularly in Latin America, but both distance themselves from Colonialism. An example of the Colonialist transition from a dialogizing colonized discourse concerning the periphery, to a Post-Colonial one, is that of Bles Gana and his "Chilean realism", which is none other than a rough application of Balzac's ideology and narrative technique present in the Comédie humaine. The same may be said about José Estacio Rivera in La Vorrhine, with its marked localism. A discourse which still does not fully belong to Post-Modernity because of its aesthetics and ideology, and because its literary processes belong in part to a 'delayed modernity' (even though it carries the germ of Post-Modernity, or is 'conceived' by Post-Modernity, as Jean-François Lyotard (1988) would say), but which is neither peripheral nor colonized, but is decolonized, is that of the New Novel, beginning in 1955 with Alejo Carpentier's El Acoso and Juan Ruíz's Pedro Páramo. These novels, and definitely the ones produced from the end of the '60s, are neither Colonialist nor nationalist, and do not experience identity problems, since identity is lived and understood, and therefore they are indeed Post-Colonial. These authors do not resist the language in which they write as imperialist or as a crisis of identity. Authors like Gabriel García Márquez have openly manifested themselves against such committed literature (another term for peripherized or colonized literature in the context of Latin America) for being manichean and of no interest to anyone. In reality, to the Latin-American authors of the "boom" the

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2 McChesney (1992: 99) names Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States as "breakaway settler colonies." This term can only be accepted from a historical and formal point of view, and not, however, from the scientific, technological, and cultural point of view where there is not only access to power, but also the capacity to impose power. The United States can only consider itself as having been a breakaway settler colony since the First World War and only since then has the United States become a part of the military, economic, cultural, and scientific power. At present, United States has become the strongest country in the implementation of a hegemonic discourse. This example indicates with complete clarity that a differentiation of the diverse genres of Post-Colonialism and the inclusion of diverse criteria (especially those that are cultural) are necessary for formation of a consistent theory of Post-Colonialism. Outside of this context, as McChesney correctly states (1992: 99), some of these countries can be considered as Post-Colonial with respect to the originally colonizing country, but many times they find themselves in a new colonized situation before other countries which occupy this space.

3 See my critique (1990c).

4 See my article (1991b: 455).

5 García Márquez says: "My personal reservations regarding what is known as social novel, which constitutes the highest point for the committed novel, resides in its fragmentary character, its partiality, its manicheanism, which condemns the reader to a partial view of the world and life. The failure of this type of novel, in our countries, allows us to think that the Latin American reader has become aware of this limitation even if he/she can not express it. Thus the great paradox confronted by those writers who have attempted to express, with utmost good faith, the terrible political and social trauma of our peoples, and..."
problem of language does not present itself simply as a problem of identity, but rather as a material in which to create their own literary reality, their own fictional world. In this sense language acquires that transcendental identity described by Lyotard in Le Diférend (1983).

In the discussion of the topic in question there exists as well the danger of unnecessarily creating an erroneous causal relationship between Post-Colonialism or Post-Coloniality and nationalism, related to the problem of identity. The novel of the "boom", which is published for the most part in Spain and is translated worldwide, contradicts a similar postulation, if one considers not only the diffusion, but also the varied array of readers that it enjoys. I believe the phenomenon is reversed: it is not the mythicized Latin American reality which has given identity to this literature, but the authors who, through their discourse, have given to this reality an identity. These literary works, including those of the boom authors, but primarily of Jorge Luis Borges and of Octavio Paz, have substantially contributed to the founding of a discourse that is identifiable as that of Borges or that of Paz, and in this form, to a Latin American identity.

It seems inadequate to connect the discussion of Post-Colonialism to the tradition of a discourse that could be designated as localist-nationalist, and which claims the use of autochthonous or indigenous elements of the pre- or post-Columbian era, since they do not have the power to found an identity. Countries like Argentina, Chile or Uruguay lack a similar strong, and present, indigenous tradition in comparison with countries such as Peru, Ecuador, or Mexico. These indigenous cultures do not, however, possess either the language or the discourse that may be used in mass communication, and which is required in order to obtain the necessary widespread exposure of indigenous culture and the desired effect of establishing a localist-nationalist discourse. The identity of Latin America is not indigenous, but is the effect of a cultural shock when the Spanish and Portuguese imposed their culture, which in this context in turn underwent large transformations. After Columbus, the indigenous language never existed as dominant discourse (whatever have been or are the reasons), thus provoking the growth of a desire to found a discourse "against" situating itself, consciously or unconsciously, outside of history. The question is, against whom? Against the Castilian or Portuguese language? And if this were valid, in what language would indigenous self-expression be conducted? Is there a desire to create a culture against the Spanish or Portuguese, in spite of aspects of these cultures being theirs as well? Besides this, the problem of confrontation with the old Colonial

only of this people, is that they have become the smallest minority of writers in the world: nobody reads them... I believe that the Latin American reader does not need their drama of oppression and injustice continually told to him, since they know full well their daily lives, the suffer is in their own skin and flesh, and what they expect is a novel that will reveal to them something new” (Fuentes 1971: 94).

6 I am referring to Derrida’s observation: “Nationalism, when in certain languages get into print and are transmitted through books allowing subjects to identify themselves as members of the community of readers implied by those books” (1995: 459).

7 See this volume, Fernando de Toro, section 1.

nation does not now present itself as the problem of Latin America, rather, in the best of cases, the confrontation is with all that is experienced as foreign determination, and this according to a localist-nationalist discourse. To reclaim in exclusivity that which is autochthonous (and/or indigenous) for the formation of the Latin American identity appears to be a falsification of history, and today, an anachronism. Those who, after five hundred years of history, have not been able to define their identity, will remain without one because they do not possess the necessary intellectual force or because they lack the capacity to discover it. The identity of a country does not create itself through science and the economy. Identity is created through culture, and Latin America has had access to culture, has produced culture, and has imposed itself as culture, not including the problem of participation in the power of discourse. It seems that generally, the production of a discourse, as a result of a reflection and of necessity, is being confused with the power of this discourse. Latin America has its discourse, but often it is lacking power, and such a lack does not have its origin in the culture. After the Latin American poetry and novel which has been created since the nineteen-thirties, at least this aspect should be clear. As Helen Tiffin indicates, Post-Colonialism is a dialectical process of decolonization between centre and periphery, and it is impossible to recuperate the “purity of the colonized culture [or] create a discourse independent of its historical relationships and implications” (Tiffin 1987: 17-18). The dialogue, the debate which is now beginning, is not one of simple reproduction, but rather one of adaptation and of relativization of the dominant discourses of the centre. The point in question is now the re-writing of the centre’s discourse, as anti-discourse, as a subversive discourse, a discourse of the centre’s de-centering, in a semiotic-epistemic way (and not an ideological, militant, committed way). This subversive discourse no longer deals with the re-construction of a substantial identity (essence), but with an appropriation of the discourses of the centre and of its implantation, recodifying it through inclusion in a new context and historical paradigm. 8

It appears fatal in this context to qualify the Latin American culture in its reproductive totality (which is not even mimetic) 9 because this culture stems from ideas of the Centre. What is the alternative? Has Europe been, since the second half of this century, reproductive of the United States, especially in what corresponds to Post-Modernity? Or is the United States an epigone in what corresponds to Modernity, simply because both appropriate ideas that are later reconfigured? Are Lyotard and Gianni Vattimo “reproducers” of the “German hegemony” (Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger)? Are Pablo Neruda, García Lorca, Alberi or José Hernández “reproducers” of the French Surrealism? Are Diderot or Voltaire “reproducers” of Richardson? And are those among us, who partly or wholly work in the Hispanic field, “reproducers” of the ideas which have inspired us and have been in part

8 Tiffin and Perec (1991: 66) have similar positions on this subject.

9 At first sight the simple ‘reproduction’ of cultural or theoretical objects is frequently confused with ‘transmission’, which is a highly creative and rich procedure (see Genette 1984). The problem does not stem from the act of appropriation, but rather the form of the appropriation.
formulated by others in the Anglo-Saxon field with respect to their own history? Is Umberto Eco a reproducer of French Structuralism and Semiotics? And the Renaissance? Were the Italian renaissanceists, in their departure from greek-latin ethics, philosophy and theatre, among the colonizers who submitted themselves to the "greek-latin hegemony"? If the result would be similar to the "reproductive pillaging" which took place during the Renaissance, then let us welcome it!

This brief enumeration of diverse types of reproduction shows that those who argue against these forms of contamination, inevitably find themselves prisoners of ideology, in the myth of Modernity, of the 'New', in the concept of 'rupture', and in the concept of 'the genius' initiated and cultivated by the French-German romanticism and inherited by Modernity: Art ex novo does not exist or when it does, is an exception. What really takes place is epistemological changes, but these do not occur often. A theory is foremost a theory. Saussure's theory of signs, or Morris', Carnap's, or Austin's principles of the philosophy of language, are as valid in Europe as they are in other continents, and are always valid where language is employed as a means of communication. For this reason, to reject a theory because its genesis was European, is simply incomprehensible and unnecessary. The step that is not generally taken in Latin America in the practice of sign theory, is the absence of a recodification of general sign laws in relation to what is specific and particular to its own cultural context. Unfortunately, both the general theory and the cultural specificity of a determined region are confused, in one with the other. Due to a local/nationalist discourse, Latin America has often remained outside of the general discourse (effecting its own peripherization). On the other hand, declaring that Latin America has always been Post-Modern because of its syncretism, plurality, relativization of hierarchies and dualities, is a quixotic act, and certainly a mistake. Such a statement is nothing more than a cultural and intellectual fetish and a rejection of reality, particularly since these cultural properties were also present in Modernity.

2. Scientific Object of the Discussion: Extension and Intension of the Terms 'Centre' and 'Periphery'

The fields of action of the terms in question must be delimited in order to clarify whether or not the term 'periphery' entails the establishment of its own subversive discourse, differentiated with respect to the centre, and this means the foundation of an identity. Does periphery signify the establishment of a dialogue with, and not against, the centre? Does periphery signify an emancipatory project by putting the value of its discourses in relief in front of history, of the history of the centre? Does centre in Post-Modernity signify the exhaustion of its discourse and the appropriation of the periphery as a renewing fountain? Does centre signify the recognition of the "discourse of the other" through the relativization of one's own? Does centre signify the decentralization of the centre?
universality of consequence. Post-Colonialism is not exclusionary, rather, it includes multidimensionality, the interaction of diverse codified series of knowledge which is ultimately capable of unmasking that which, in Colonialism and neo-colonialism, had been established as the history, as the irrefutable truth, as contradictory and irregular, rather than as plural and multiple. Through this procedure, contradiction, plurality, rupture, on the one hand, and discontinuity in history and of concretization of culture in the diverse discourses on the other, would be interpreted in the same manner that takes place in fiction.

Post-Colonialism in its Post-Modern spirit introduces and lays foundations, it does not polarize, and it is not militant. The militancy of the old localist-nationalistic discourses is, through the centuries in the history of culture, what has produced exactly the opposite: with their dogmatism they have made an open discussion impossible, and in this manner they have nourished and developed the OTHER in the cultural centres. If it were not for those cultural centres, the periphery would continue being peripheral, peripheralizing itself narcissistically.\textsuperscript{15}

I recapitulate: I share McClintock's criticism regarding numerous publications which address the Post-Colonialism issue, where general criteria are not developed as being capable of differentiating the diversity that the term Post-Colonialism entails (1992: 87). For this reason, the synthesizing term of Post-Colonialism should consider the various 'post-s', that is, the histories of a multiplicity of countries and the vast array of perspectives within the history of one and the same country. Post-Colonialism should be understood as a paradigm, as should Post-Modernism, where diverse forms of Colonialism and neo-colonialism continue to co-exist. Post-Colonialism should be understood as an archetypal, and Post-Coloniality as the concentration in a cultural field in cases (regions, countries) where a similar definition is applicable. Post-Colonialism/Post-Coloniality are always interpreted according to such a definition, as well as when a dialogue is established between the periphery and the centre, where the periphery has a substantial effect within the foundation and development of discourses. The condition sine qua non is the possession of a language, and of one or more cultural traditions as appropriation. In this manner we are able to distinguish the Post-Colonial state or condition in current and still functioning forms of Colonialism and neo-colonialism. In spite of all the problems which the term Post-Colonialism entails, as McClintock has correctly pointed out, I do not agree that research in this "new" emerging field is mere academic fashion, marketing, and

\textsuperscript{15} A colonized and peripheralized mentality is exemplified in the curricula of literature in secondary schools by the Ministry of Education of Chile, at least for those which were supplied by the private schools, where many had the reputation of being the best in the country. Authors such as Rivera, Rubio, Conspirer, Coromines, Vargas Llosa, Pioneers, and García Márquez were not included in the curriculum in the 1950s and 60s, or were considered controversial or pornographic. The reasons why Borges was also not included, in spite of the fact that his work did not fit into these criteria, are incomprehensible. "Universal" literature, considered to consist of the French, Italian, Spanish and English classics up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, was a central part of literature courses. Something similar occurs with the teaching of history, although not to the same extent as with the teaching of literature: history is taught in order to transmit a profound nationalism based on "heroic acts".

\textsuperscript{16} Within the co-operative academic world the term is used deliberately as a euphemism. This is how Slaughter states it (1992: 99), and she coincides with McClintock in this aspect.

\textsuperscript{17} During's work (1993) is neither more of a commentary of Jameson and Lyotard than a contribution to the debate of Post-Colonialism, to which he has devoted only two pages out of thirteen.
What is really taking place there is not part of the cultural system of Post-Modernity or of Post-Coloniality, as it is understood in this paper, but rather they are regions where Colonialism has not yet been surpassed.

The question derived from this is whether or not the Post-Colonial discourse inserted in the Post-Modern dialogue had "power", that is to say, would it be recognized, accepted, and have its effect in the context of ruling discourses? In appearance a certain dialogicity is established, but with a limited participation in the power structures. Furthermore, is it possible to participate in a decentered or ambivalent dialogue, hybridized, without mutual imposition? As seems to be the case, but this does not mean that the balanced participation in a dialogue has immediate consequences on the exercise of power. When a dialogicity exists, the terms Post-Colonialism/Post-Coloniality and periphery/centre are rendered unnecessary, since it would no longer be a discourse of the other, of the colonized, but that of the other as a thinking being. If Post-Modernity as a paradigm bases itself in plurality, multiplicity, and rhizomatic proliferation, eliminating hierarchies at the discursive level (since the other is the only other word), the terms Post-Colonialism and periphery/centre are then only pertinent to an economic, scientific-technological level. The division between culture, economy, technology, etc., seems not only theoretically appropriate, but a practical necessity, and so must be clearly established and legitimized so as not to fall into the problems described by McClintock. After the dissolution of the capitalist and communist blocks, the failure of ideologies, and the end of progress in capitalism (Reagan/Bush era), as much as in communism, a new "World Order" has taken place: United States and Europe are placed in a post-historical age, whereas the Third World is placed in the history, where conflicts continue to be resolved through force.19 In any case: Post-Colonialism/Post-Coloniality is not a subordination, existing in a retrospective linear relationship in reference to Europe, but on the contrary, is at least the attempt at the decomposition of this reference.20 I am compelled to ask if the term Post-Colonialism does not run the risk of reiterating Colonialism, and for this reason it would be better to speak of discourses in the Post-Modern age.

We must ask then: where is Latin America placed in this debate? If we take the technological-scientific and information base as criteria, Latin America has remained virtually as naked of possibilities in Post-Modernity as it experienced in Modernity. The breach which has been produced seems unsurmountable. The peripheral condition...
the oppression, it would, once again, mean to re-inscribe it instead of eliminating it. This first step would be very far from being able to 'rewrite' Colonialism/neo-colonialism if it were to propose this type of rewriting. Lyotard provides us with an example from the theory of Marx, who, as we know, describes and analyses the capitalist mechanisms in order to unmask and overcome alienation. The result has been to prolong the plague of capitalism and the establishment of repressive systems. Exactly the same phenomenon has been occurring with that discourse which attempts to be independent from Colonialism/neo-colonialism: this discourse has been unable to elaborate itself independently, and what is worse, it has repeated the Colonial/neo-colonial discourse at another level.

The term 'remembering', the first in the activity of 'rewriting', can be understood as the attempt to take over the past in order to elaborate and overcome the Colonial state. What is important at this stage is that the elaboration be free: it does not have a pre-determined purpose, it allows association and a highly receptive state, and it finds itself in a momentary state of disorder. The elaboration describes something that cannot be understood. The only thing that is known with certainty is that it refers to the past. The past deconstructs itself and is not eliminated. The task is not to recuperate or to capture portions of the past, but rather to elaborate and elaborate (Verwindung) some of the Colonial and neo-colonial projects which were claimed as theirs, such as the emancipation of the colonized but with premises of the colonizers, without ever engaging in a dialogue. 'Rewriting' Colonialism implies having 'digested' it, and in such a way that it disappears as a determining category and opens a projection to the future, making the present possible. In Borges' work this problematic becomes demonstrable, as a specific (particular) case, and punctual analysis will later enable us to proceed to a more general level of theorization.

5. Borges, or the Periphery as Centre

5.1 Borges and Argentinian literature

I would like to state my position pertaining to the question of 'Post-Colonialism' by considering texts by Borges such as "The Argentine Writer and the Tradition", "The Immortal", "The Garden of the Forking Paths", "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins", "The Aleph", "The God's Script", "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Terrítorius", and "Pierre Menard, author of Don Quixote", as well as others by authors such as Ricardou, Foucault, Deleuze and Baudrillard.

My position springs from two premises. The first proposes that Borges is an author who appropriated the past, that is, by appropriating his debt with the past, he creates a future. If Latin America is peripheral and colonized and everything is imported, there exists the legitimation to appropriate cultural elements from the centre. But from the moment that Borges begins his readings and initiates his travel through literature, he does use literature as an intertextual pastiche, as a parody, but elaborates and perambulates it (Verwindung), producing his unmistakable, purely Borgesian (Argentinean?) discourse. The second premise is that the value of Borges' discourse, during Modernity and neo-colonialism, is not recognized, not considered; in the best of cases it is avidly ransacked, without acknowledgement, and his contributions are denied, only to be reclaimed by the centre. This situation partly changes when he is wrongly quoted, without faith, with indifference, but again, as in the first premise, he is made part of the centre. Borges' discourse presents the battle of difficult relationship between periphery/centre, which could be summarized in the following types of relationships:

a) it is known, but it is hidden (i.e.: nouveau roman, roman Tel Quel);
b) it is known, but it is refused as archaic (Ricardou);
c) it is employed as a point of fundamental beginning (Foucault);
d) it is employed, but it is partially mistakenly interpreted (Baudrillard);
e) it is totally ignored (Deleuze and Guattari).

A brief analysis of the well-known text by Borges "The Argentine Writer and the Tradition", will serve as illustration of some of these points:21

Borges begins his text by stating that the problem of the Argentine writer and the tradition is impossible to resolve. What is impossible to resolve is: that which would characterize Argentine literature (la argentina), the question of Argentinian identity and its relationship with others; the periphery wants to be the centre, and with the centre (Borges 1964: 267). In fact, Borges states that the problem "does not exist", for it deals with a rhetorical and pathetic problem (that is to say, for localisms, for phal-patriotism). The "problem" for Borges is reduced to an "appearance", to a "simulacrum", to a "pseudoproblem".

The "Argentinian" problem addressed here is the Latin American problem and, in general, that of the periphery. What Borges is really addressing is the relationship between the periphery and the centre, and he analyses the arguments used to constitute a legitimate discourse of the Argentinean and in so doing, refutes point by point, generic, thematic, and simply formal elements. Borges' argument can be summarized in three theses which he exposes and argues against, substantiated with diverse examples.

The first thesis concerns ideas of "local colour". Argentinean literature is based on goauche-like poetry and its lexicon, in procedures and themes which form an archetype, or a paradigm. Borges qualifies this criteria as "instinctive and harking argumentation". The representatives of this thesis give Martin Pierro by José Hernández (1872) as an example and, in its paradigmatic function, compare it with the works of Homer. In contrary to this thesis Borges gives the example of the Alcorán, his own works, particularly Death and the Compass, and Ricardo Güiraldes' Don Segundo Sombra (1926). The second thesis states that Argentinean writers must

21 In spite of differences of interpretation this portion of my article owes much inspiration to Amaro Echavarría's lecture delivered in Leipzig in May 1994 on the same text by Borges.
follow the Spanish tradition in order to ground their own. The third proposes that Argentineans are estranged from the past, and are separated from Europe, as if they were to find themselves in the first days of creation. With this in mind, searching for themes and European procedures would be a mistake.

a) Borges' arguments against the first thesis.

Martín Fierro is a paradigmatic work, but as a link in a chain it is not archetypical; it is not the starting point, nor even the origin. Furthermore, the equation proposed between the gauchesco genre (or ganchesca) and the art of the payadores (travelling country singers) is not a valid one since they are substantially different genres. Whereas the payadores tried to use a cultivated language and purposefully avoided popular language, the cultivated writers of the gauchesco genre, such as José Hernández, preferred to employ localisms to such an extent that they felt they had to provide the readers with a glossary in order to render the reading possible. While the payadores favoured general themes, the cultivated writers preferred popular and locally specific themes.

Borges' conclusions are that the gauchesco literature is as artificial as any other literature and the criteria of local colour does not adequately define what is Argentinean. He gives a series of examples of works which do not employ local colour but are Argentinean. As such, Enrique Bausa mixes the local with the universal in La urn, for example, the roofs of the Buenos Aires suburb and the longhues belonging to the Greek and Germanic traditions. The Argentinean is rooted in the use of images: the nightingale symbolizes Argentinean shyness, the difficulty they find in exposing their privacy, and the reluctance to be intimate.

This problem is located in a self-conscious and culturally peripheral context, and if one discusses the questions of autochthony, identity, and "influences" from the Centre, there is no problem. It is in this way that Borges refers to Racine and Shakespeare, who in turn took themes from Italian, Greek, and Latin antiquity, and yet no one would contest the fact that Racine is a French writer or that Shakespeare is an English writer. Borges also adds that those who defend "local colour" should reject this theory as a typically foreign aesthetic. Another example is Borges' Alcorán, a work in which camels are not mentioned, because, according to Borges, that which is part of that culture does not need to be mentioned specifically. The absence of camels is transformed, in this case, into a test of authenticity for the Alcorán in a case of doubt, and not the negation of its identity. Now then; who would persist in mentioning the camels, Borges asks himself:

Mohammed, as an Arab, had no reason to know that camels were especially Arabian; for him they were a part of reality, he had no reason to emphasize them. On the other hand, the first thing a falsifier, a tourist, an Arab nationalist would do is have a surplus of camels, caravans

In another example, Borges quotes some of his own early works which abound with localisms, and which he considers "books now happily forgotten" (1964: 181). He also criticizes his own text, Death and the Compass, which is, by his own account, a nightmare in which elements of Buenos Aires are deformed and the places are called with French names. Despite everything, the readers discover "the flavor of the outskirts of Buenos Aires." (1964: 181).

A final example noted by Borges is Don Segundo Sombra by Ricardo Güiraldes, a book which qualifies as a national symbol but, according to him, is full of metaphors "of the literary circles of Montmartre, of which the plot has been influenced by" Kipling's Kim, whose action is set in India, and which was, in turn, written under the influence of Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn, the epic of the Mississippi." (Borges 1964: 182). Borges remarks that this novel, considered a national symbol, has required three cultural contexts in order to be considered epic. Further, he finds it unacceptable that "that nationalists pretend to venerate the capacities of the Argentine mind but want to limit the poetic exercise of that mind to a few impoverished local themes, as if we Argentines could only speak of orillas and estancias and not of the universe." (Borges 1964: 182).

b) Arguments against the second thesis

Regarding the option to follow the Spanish tradition, Borges has two objections. The first is that if Argentinean [and Latin American] history may be defined as the attempt to separate itself or distance itself from Spain, then to propose the former Colonial power as an example of the origin, is indeed a contradiction. The second is that the enjoyment of Spanish literature is acquired and the Spanish texts are not always well received by readers. It is "difficult for them to find pleasure in these books without special apprenticeship," (Borges 1964: 183), unlike French or English literature, which does not create problems with their reception as Spanish literature does.

c) Arguments against the third thesis

Borges does not share the opinion that Argentineans [and Latin Americans] are estranged from the past, separated from Europe, and find themselves in a state of initiation. All cultural association with Europe can be perceived as false precisely because in Latin America is another historical and temporal sensitivity. The bond with the old world is so close that everything which occurs there has a great impact in the new world, and especially in Argentina.

After having refuted all the possible cases of the discourse of Argentineaness from categories presented above, Borges concludes with a lapidarian statement: Argentinean
(Latin American) tradition is submersed in Western culture and it has an even greater right to that tradition than those nations which are the owners of that tradition. Latin Americans act within Western culture, but without being tied to it, and from there the capacity for innovation arises: "I believe that we, the South Americans in general, are in an analogous situation; we can handle all European themes, handle them without superstition, with an irreverence which can have, and already does have, fortunate consequences." (1964: 184).

For Borges this discussion of Argentinianess is, to say, of identity, of the self, is a false problem since it reflects "the eternal problem of determination" (1964: 184), that is, the eternal question of the origin, of the unifying trace, and of the continuity in time. Borges professes a new condition, Post-Modernity, when he states that:

our patrimony is the universe; we should essay all themes, and we cannot limit ourselves to purely Argentine subjects in order to be Argentine; for either being Argentine is an unacceptable fact—and in that case we shall be so in all events—or being Argentine is a mere affectation, a mask.

I believe that if we surrender ourselves to that voluntary dream which is artistic creation, we shall be Argentine and we shall also be good or tolerable writers. (1964: 185)

This quotation is a perfect example of what I have described as Post-Coloniality: the association and the relationship of one's own context with that of others who are outside their own locality, the appropriation and the claim of cultural discourses and phenomena which belong to all and not only to one cultural region.

Very early, Borges showed which road to follow, and with a certain success. The Borgesian discourse is indelible and unmistakable, but is it Argentine? The question seems meaningless, but if we try to answer it we can only say that Borges' discourse is Argentine from a civic and geographic point of view. What is peculiar is that the great majority of Argentineans and Latin Americans, including the academic world, failed to see (or refused to accept) for a long period of time (or maybe they still fail to see?) that Borges was Argentinean and Latin American.

5.11 **Borges: his dialogue, pseudodialogue and non-dialogue with literature and European thought**

Is the appropriation of the OTHER, in Borges' rhizomatic thinking, conducive to a dialogue with the OTHER, or does the OTHER appropriate itself as THAT ONE? Regarding this subject, I would like offer the following examples: Borges and the *nouveau roman* and *roman Tel Quel*, Borges and Baudrillard; Borges and "Pierre Menard, author of *Don Quixote*", "The South", and "Tiên, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius".

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23 See my article: "An important fact is that Borges' Ficciones was translated into French by P. Verdoy in 1951. Between 1953 and 1955, that is to say, before that the *nouveau roman* became known, a series of articles dedicated to Borges' work were written by French critics, noting by important authors in France within well known literary and periodical magazines. These critics also wrote about the *nouveau roman* so that they were in a position to establish a connection between Borges' work and that of the *nouveau roman*, which makes this matter even more surprising." [my translation] (1952: 177).
At the foot of the mountain, an impure stream spread noiselessly, clogged with débris and sand; on the opposite bank I saw the evident City of the Immortals. I saw walls, arches, façades and fora: the base was a stone plateau. A hundred or so irregular niches, analogues to the mountain and the valley. There were nine doors in this cellar; eight led to a labyrinth that tenderly resembled the same chamber; the ninth (through another labyrinth) led to a second circular chamber equal to the first. I do not know the total number of these chambers; my misfortune and anxiety multiplied there. Horribly, I became habituated to this doubtful world.

I emerged into a kind of little square or, rather, a kind of courtyard. It was surrounded by a single building of irregular form and variable height; to this heterogeneous building belonged the different cupolas and columns. I felt it was older than mankind, than the earth. To the impression of enormous antiquity others were added: that of the interminable, that of the atrocious, that of the completely seamless. I had crossed a labyrinth, but the city of the Immortals filled me with fright and repugnance. A labyrinth is a structure compounded to confuse men; its architecture, rich in symmetries, is subordinated to that end. In the palace I imperfectly explored, the architecture lacked any such facility. It abounded in dead-end corridors, high unattainable windows, portentous doors which led to a cell or pit, incredible inverted stairways whose steps and balustrades hang downwards. (Borges 1964: 108-111)

The subtle technique shown in this passage, is characteristic of Borges, avoiding direct and explicit diegesis. In this aspect Borges's description is similar to Robbe-Grillet's descriptive technique in Jalousie, although Robbe-Grillet's style does not provide information in the concealment:

Now the shadow of the southwest column—at the corner of the veranda on the bedroom side—falls across the garden. The sun, still low in the eastern sky, raises the valley from the side. The rows of banana trees, growing at an angle to the direction of the valley, are everywhere quite distinct in this light.

From the bottom to the upper edge of the highest sectors on the hillside facing the one the house is built on, it is relatively easy to count the trees; particularly opposite the house, thanks to the recent plantings of the patches located in this area. (Robbe-Grillet 1965: 50)

Borges not only advances the creative description (hypothetical description), but also the fundamental literary principles of the mise en abyme, of the distanciation, and, in a certain manner, of the thèmes génératifs or generating themes. "The Garden of the Forking Paths" offers an excellent example of the mise en abyme:

In all fiction, when a man is faced with alternatives he chooses one at the expense of the others. In the almost unfathomable Ts'ui Pén, he chooses simultaneously—of them. He thus creates various futures, various times which start others that will in turn branch out and bifurcate in other times. This is the cause of the contradictions in the novel.

"Fang, let us say, has a secret. A stranger knocks at his door. Fang makes up his mind to kill him. Naturally there are various possible outcomes. Fang can kill the intruder, the intruder can kill Fang, both can be saved, both can die in so and so on. In Ts'ui Pén's work, all the possible solutions occur, each one being the point of departure for other bifurcations. Sometimes the pathways of this labyrinth converge. For example, you come to this house, but in other possible pasts you are my enemy; in others my friend."

This passage concerns a newspaper article carried in Mathias' pocket about a crime or the death of a young girl, and recounts in a grotesque manner the whole peripeteia of the same Mathias on the island where the death of a young girl has occurred. In spite of the level of the diegetic logic, these two facts have nothing to do with one another, but are found in the article in a homology which is obvious to that of the narrator of The Voyeur. It reproduces the observations of the island's inhabitants with respect to the young girl's murder: the reporters know as little as Mathias, the island's inhabitants, and the narrator of the novel do about the circumstances of the young girl's death. Both communicative instances, that of the article and that of the island's inhabitants, stem from details which are open to speculation.

Another example of a later passage from this same novel further exemplifies Robbe-Grillet's use of this technique:
Two of the sailors, who wanted their wives' advice, asked the salesman to stop by after lunch. They lived in a village, of which the topography could scarcely be complicated; nevertheless, they began extremely lengthy explanations to indicate the location of their respective dwellings. They probably saved him a number of useless or redundant details, but with such exactitude and such insistence that Mathias was completely confused. A description of the place containing willful errors would not have misled him more: he was not consistent in fact; that a good many contradictions were not mixed in with their redundancies. Several times he even had the impression that one of the men was using the words 'to the right' and 'to the left' almost by chance — indiscriminately. A quick sketch of the cluster of houses would have cleared up everything; unfortunately, none of the sailors had anything to write with, the woman was too absorbed by her recent purchase to offer them a sheet of paper, and the salesman had no desire to have his memorandum book used as a spot-map. (Robbe-Grillet 1958: 105)

The passage reproduces both the narrator's situation, represented here by the two sailors, and that of the reader, represented by Mathias. The story is trivial: Mathias goes to an island to sell watches and during that day a young girl drowns in the ocean. Mathias, who has had a black-out, is harassed by the anguish of not being able to reconstruct his path on the island, and is suspected in relation to the event. This effort of reconstructing his path is equivalent to the reconstruction of the path to the sailors' houses in the above passage — full of contradictions and useless details. In this way, Mathias loses himself before the speaker, just as the reader does before the narrator. The observation that only one sketch on a piece of paper could clarify the situation is equivalent to the requirement that the reader notice what has been written within certain segments of the narration, in order to attempt to construct a degesis which the narrator denies.

The House of Assination provides another opportunity for diegetic homology: "In the small music-room, Lauren, Marchat's fiancée, is playing the piano for a few silent guests; it is a modern composition, full of breaks and pauses, which she punctuates with sudden, short, nervous laughs whenever she strikes a wrong note, though she alone can tell when this happens" (Robbe-Grillet 1970: 119). The description of the piece of music which Lauren plays is of a 'modern' music, one with 'ruptures', full of 'false notes' and without 'tempo'. These four terms describe the principles of organization of The House of Assination, which itself lacks temporal rhythm. The novel is an atemporal labyrinth, lacking complete logic, with contradictions, negation, and variations in the thematic structure. It is a modern novel where only the narrator (or those initiated in the nouveau roman) is capable of recognizing these principles.24

Robbe-Grillet's text and those of the nouveau roman, but in particular those of Borges, are characterized by this double codification of the narration at an object-textual and meta-textual level by a constant reflection of what is narrated, by the negation of a pre-determined meaning, by the negation of mimesis, etc. In this way, the variation of the themes used in a text with its negation, expansion, or negation is typical of Borges' writing and of the nouveau roman. Furthermore, the

French authors and French critics have not acknowledged that fundamental properties of the nouveau roman were established and introduced by Borges. That is to say, until this very day a dialogue has not taken place, only a marginal apéçu, in spite of the conditions for reception being evident.

b) Borges and Foucault

Michel Foucault is inspired by the animal classifications in a Chinese encyclopedia, presented by Borges in "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins":

On those remote pages it is written that animals are divided into (a) those that belong to the emperor, (b) embalmed ones, (c) those that are trained, (d) suckling pigs, (e) mermaids, (f) fabulous ones, (g) stray dogs, (b) those that are included in this classification, (i) those that resemble flies as if they were mad, (j) immovable ones, (k) those drawn with a very fine camel's hair brush, (l) others, (m) those that have just broken a flower vase, (n) those that resemble flies from a distance. (1981: 142)

In his book The Order of Things, Foucault interprets and explains Borges' writing in the following manner:

In the wondertainment of this taxonomy, the thing we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fabulous, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking that...

[... ] The quality of monstrosity here does not affect any real body, nor does it produce modifications of any kind in the boundary of the imagination; it does not lurk in the depths of any strange power; [...] What transcends all of these, in thought, is simply that the plurality of the letters, of all possible thought, is simply that the alphabetical series (a, b, c, d) which links each of these letters to all the others.

[... ] The monstrous quality that runs through Borges' enumeration consists, on the contrary, in the fact that the common ground on which such meetings are possible has itself been destroyed. What is impossible is not the propriety of the things listed, but the very site on which their propriety would be possible. The animals [... ] where could they ever meet, except in the immaterial sound of the voice pronouncing their enumeration, or on the page transcribing it? Where else could they be juxtaposed except in the non-place of language? And though language can spread them before us, it can do so only in an unhittable space[... ] [... ] I mean the disorder in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension, without law or geometry, of the heteroclitic; and that word should be taken in its most literal, etymological sense: in such a state, things are "tiled", "placed", "arranged" in sets so very different from one another that it is impossible to find a place of residence for them, to define a common locus beneath them all. (1970: xv-xviii)

The dialogue between Foucault and Borges stems from the fact that Borges expresses the unthinkable ("the unthinkable impression between the naked impossibility of thinking that") (Foucault 1966: 7): that which is a contradicito in adjetico. Borges' discourse has its beginnings in the fragmentation of thought emanating from the rhizome which is part and parcel of Post-Modern thought. Borges reaches the limit
of thought, of the thinkable, and of the possible. He formulates that which, in the logic of thought, does not exist, that is, the impossibility of thinking a certain type of thoughts, thus producing linguistic monstrosities. It is from this kind of literary practice that the ‘fantastic’ dimension in Borges’ literary works is seen in his texts according to the mimetic formulation proposed by Todorov (1970), but instead they are in a semiotic-epistemological dimension. This is achieved by Borges’ production of an alphabetical series, which sustains the level of the signifier by an arbitrary, terrorizing, linguistic material. The meaning is obliterated inasmuch as an animal cannot be defined by a ‘camel-hair brush’. That is to say, the order is not based on opposing or equivalent relations, rather in the rhizomatic beginnings. These terms only exist on the blank sheet of paper, they are found in a temporal and spatial emptiness, in the semantic and pragmatic absolute. Borges opens and makes possible a new form of thinking precisely there, in the zero position, where solidarity does not exist, now that the structure and origin of the terms are impossible. Borges’ writings trouble Foucault, fill him with terror, because they show the abyss which is conducive to what Foucault describes in The Order of Things: Borges brings to a full closure Foucault’s thought and the consequences of his research (which does not include the twentieth century), that is, the consequences of the rhizomatic fragmentation of thought. Borges cancels out contingency inasmuch as he destroys the commonplace experience of discourse and of systematic thought. He denies the effect of language and therefore removes the power of language, in the sense that the terms are narcissistic, of an absolute self-reference. Borges creates discontinuous series, without identity, and in the moment that one of these series begins to stabilize itself other series are formed. Borges eliminates the difference, the through, use of thought and discourse without time or space, through circulation, through a rhizomatic language. This is the reason for the dialogue between Borges and Foucault.

But let us explore further this dialogue and ask: what is the motivation to read Borges with Foucault’s thought, and Foucault with Borges’ thought, and what is our interest in this relationship? Some obvious answers are offered by the apparently casual coincidences (but in the end they are not): both authors are concerned with the organization and the use of signs. Foucault deals with the semiotic-epistemological problem of similarities and differences in The Order of Things, describing how authors of diverse centuries try to read and interpret the world. Borges and Foucault meet on a voyage, in a desperate search to locate the signs which swarm without end. Foucault finds himself in search of the motivation of thought, and of the organization on the iconic level, since the Middle Ages to the Modern. Borges manifests the signs without home, as nomadic. Both authors abandon the familiar locus to transpose to the incognito, meanwhile Foucault battles with the problem of meaning of the signifer and of reference. Borges postulates the world as a signifier without a fixed

point. Both authors deal with the discourse of the I and of the discourse of the Other, of the world. As Foucault deals with the world and its codification, Borges ends up in pure thought. The event in Foucault is rooted in the voyage as a search for the form to describe thought, inasmuch as he reads the world through literature and literature through the world. In Borges’ writing the world disappears as an external reference as his voyage is rooted in the search for the absolute in spatial and temporal perception: he is not concerned with the world and its reading, but with the creation of signs as world, signs which are the world.

c) Borges, Deleuze and Guattari, and Baudrillard, or the ‘rhizomatic simulation’: Borges’ formulation of the rhizome theory

Borges established the rhizomatic thought in "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins" discussed above. Other texts worthy of mention are "The Garden of the Forking Paths", "The Aleph" and "The God’s Script". In "The Garden" we read:

Differing from Newton and Schopenhauer, your ancestor did not think of time as absolute and uniform. He lived in an infinite series of eras, in a dizzying growth, ever spreading network of diverging, converging and parallel times. This web of time—the strands of which approach one another, bifurcate, intersect or ignore each other through the centuries—embraces every possibility. We do not exist in most of them. In some you exist and in others I do, and you do not, and in yet others both of us exist. In this one, in which chance has favored me, you have come to my gate. In another, you, crossing the garden, have found me dead. In yet another, I say these very same words, but am an error, a phantom. (1962: 100)

In "The Aleph" we find another relevant passage:

I arrive now at the ineffable core of my story. And here begins my despair as a writer. All language is a set of symbols whose use among its speakers assumes a shared past. How, then, can I translate into words the limitless Aleph, which my floundering mind can scarcely encompass? [. . .]

[. . .] Each thing (a mirror’s face, let us say) was infinite things, since I distinctly saw it from any angle of the universe. I saw the teeming sea; I saw daybreak and nightfall; I saw the multitude of America; I saw a silvery cowl in the center of a black pyramid; I saw a splintered labyrinth (it was London); [. . .] I saw all the mirrors on earth and none of them reflected me; [. . .] I saw a bunch of grapes, snow, tobacco, lodes of material, steam; I saw convex equatorial deserts [. . .] (1970: 26-27)

The third passage, taken from "The God’s Script", reads: "I saw an exceedingly high Wheel, which was not before my eyes, nor behind me, nor to the sides, but every place at once. That Wheel was made of water. [sic] but also of fire, and it was (although the edge could be seen) infinite. Interlinked, all things that are, were and shall be [. . .]" (1964: 172). These three examples share simultaneity (which is dissolved) in a non-temporal and non-spatial absolute, as also the absolute heterogeneity regarding arbitrary contiguity, as in the example of the Chinese library

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26 See my articles (1992a), (1992b), and (1994c).
in "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins". The elements are decontextualized and put in another place, in a non-place.

Let us compare these examples with the theory of Deleuze and Guattari. They define the rhizome with the six basic principles which may be translated as: 'connection', 'heterogeneity', 'multiplicity', 'asignifying rupture', 'cartography', and 'decalomania'. The first two principles consist of proliferation of the rhizome in all the dimensions of n—1, the change of form, its randomness, the negation of genealogical trees, dualism, and deep structure. It does not deal with the codification of diverse sign systems, but rather with phenomena of diverse nature, including those from biology, economics, politics, and cultural systems.

A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organization of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tube agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also performative, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages. There is no ideal speaker-listener, any more than there is a homogeneous linguistic community. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 7)

The third rhizomatic principle, multiplicity, is understood as the absence of an object and a subject; the only possible way to apprehend is through determination, quantity and dimension. Metaphorically speaking, the rhizome is a net, a tissue, where only lines exist and where superimposition is not permitted. Its lines are unique and simple, occupying its dimension in totality and without the need of supplementation. Deleuze and Guattari offer an example of the ideal book which should have a plan where one page would contain the multiplicity of the elements in its totality: experiences, historical determinations, conceptions, individuals, groups, and social formations (1997: 9). The rhizome decreases the language towards other dimensions and registers in order to find itself. This principle is similar to Lyotard's notion of 'paralogy' and 'debate', and to Baudrillard's notion of 'simulation'. With 'multiplicity' as a term, the traditional determination between subject and object is emphasized. Deleuze and Guattari illustrate the change by means of a puppet metaphor: "Puppet strings, as a rhizome or multiplicity, are tied not to the supposed will of an artist or puppeteer but to a multiplicity of nerve fibres which form another puppet in other dimensions connected to the first." (1987: 8). Thus the rhizome is a network constituted only by lines which are manifested in a chain, which is always mutating and expanding. The theoretical formulation by Deleuze and Guattari of the ideal rhizomatic book, with the above mentioned characteristics, correspond in a large measure to Borges' narrative praxis.

The fourth rhizomatic principle describes the possibility of interruption or destruction of a rhizome, and the impossibility of duality. The rhizome 'determinatizes' an incipient term of the culture and 'reteterminatizes' it within the rhizomatic system. Neither imitation nor similarity exists; there is, instead, an explosion of two or more heterogeneous series in lines which are constituted by the same rhizome, and which are not subordinate to a superior system. The crocodile, to use an example from the natural world, does not assume the shape of a tree trunk, nor does the chameleon assume the colours of its environment, rather, they paint the world with their colours. In 'producing' rhizomes, they produce a whole world.

The fifth and sixth criteria of the rhizomorphic system refer to the absence of a genetic axis, of a deep structure, of an objective unity. In this sense, the rhizome is like a map with many openings, but it is not merely a tracing. Open to all dimensions, it is productive, yet not a reproduction. It is performance and competence:

The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid's reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen. Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome. It could be said that the orchid imitates the wasp, reproducing its image in a signifying fashion (mimicry, mimicry, lure, etc.). But this is true only on the level of the strata—a parallelism between two strata such that a plant organization on one imitates an animal organization on the other. At the same time, something else entirely is going on: not imitation at all but a capture of code, surplus value of code, an increase in valence, a veritable becoming, a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp. Each of these becoming brings about the deterritorialization of one term and the reterritorialization of the other; the two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization ever further. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 10)

This metaphor points to the apartial evolution of two completely unrelated beings. This concept is central to Borges, since he does not consider literature as a reflection of the world (Widerspiegelung), but rather that literature maintains a rhizomatic relationship with the world. Literature creates a world. It is not mimetic (a term originating in Aristotelian dualism), but creates another reality. Principles 5 and 6, those of cartography and decalomania, are referred to as the absence genetic axis, that is to say, to a deep structure or to an objective axis which is based on the principle of the sole copy. The rhizome, on the contrary, is not a copy, but a map, and so deals with maps and not with conducting copies. "The orchid does not reproduce the tracings of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome." (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 12). The map does not reproduce, but creates. The rhizome is a map with a multiplicity of openings and can connect itself in all directions, it can vary, be modified etc., it is open to all types of constellations, be it in a group, or as the only category. As the map has to do with performance, the tracing is tied to competition. "To be rhizomorphous is to produce stems and filaments that seem to be roots, or better yet connect with them by penetrating the trunk, but put them to strange uses" (1987: 15).

The fundamental elements of the rhizome include: a) an arbitrary connection of points; b) the production of diverse sign systems and of non-sign systems; c) an inability to be reduced to one or to many, although this is indeterminable: it is not one who will be transformed into two or vice versa; d) dimensions, and not unities, that is to say, it is not a structure, but lines; e) deterritorialization and
reterritorialization; f) avoidance of reproduction in favour of production; g) the qualities of a map rather than those of a copy or a tracing.

d) Literature as creative principle and the total simulation

"Tibón, Uqbar, Orbis Terrítorius" and "An Examination of the Work of Heretix Quain" can best be characterized by the following quotation from Borges' Prologue to Ficciones:

The composition of vast books is a laborious and impoverishing extravagance. To go on for five hundred pages developing an idea whose perfect oral exposition is possible in a few minutes! A better course of procedure is to pretend that these books already exist, and then to offer a résumé, a commentary. Thus proceeded Carlyle in Sartor Resartus. Thus Butler in The Fair Haven. These are works which suffer the imperfection of being themselves books, and of being no less tauntological than the others. More reasonable, more inept, more indolent, have preferred to write notes upon imaginary books. (1962: 15-16)

Baudrillard understands simulation as a virtual reality, a reality which is not the empirical one and for this reason does not recognize any reference; simulation operates in an invented reality which reproduces that which does not exist. Simulation consists of a virtual reality which implants itself as reality in itself, as HYPERREALITY: "The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth — it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true (Ecclesiastes)" (Baudrillard 1983: 1).

Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality; a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it. Henceforth, it is the map that precedes the territory — PRECISION OF SIMULACRA — it is the map that engenders the territory and if we were to revive the fable [...] (1983: 2)

According to Baudrillard, simulation is the elimination of the reference, or, expressed in another way, it is the creation of artificial references which are available to all systems, and is highly combinatory. It is not an imitation, a reproduction, or a parody. It simply and exclusively deals with a replacement of the reference, of an operation which eliminates the ontological substance of the real (dissuasion du réel). This operation offers all the signs of that real, but it is de facto only simulation, its usurpation. Simulation or hyperreality deny the difference between fiction and reality, deny the difference between true and false (1983: 5-6).

Whereas Western culture has always conserved and cultivated the belief (the myth of 'deep meaning'), that is to say, that which is hidden behind representations, icons and symbols (in order perhaps, to conceal that behind the icon of god nothing exists), Baudrillard postulates the total replacement of reality through simulation/hyperreality. All this is about the withdrawal of the utopian principle of equivalence between sign and reality through simulation, as a result of a radical negation of the value of the signs (négation radicale du signe comme valeur) of the signs as destroyers of reference. The phenomenon is simple: there are signs which instigate the hiding of something, which are clearly representative, and there are others which simulate that there is nothing behind the sign, that is, reality is not represented, but is present. The first kind represents the tradition of that which is true and secret, the second inaugurates the era of simulation (Baudrillard 1983: 10-11). As a consequence, the means of communication is mixed in with the message, thus constituting a unity. In this way, the materiality of the sign is equivalent to the message:

That is why contemporary "material" production is itself hyperreal. It retains all the features, the whole discourse of traditional production, but it is nothing more than its scaled-down refraction (thus the hyperrealists fasten in a striking resemblance a real from which they have fled all meaning and charm, all the profundity and energy of representation). Thus the hyperrealism of simulation is expressed everywhere by the real's striking resemblance to itself. (1983: 44-45)

Simulation, as rhizome, questions the beginning of the cause, of the duality (subject/object, active/passive, purpose/medium, etc.) and produces an "implosion of meaning", that is to say, an inflation, an extension of the meaning which obliterates causality and duality. Simulation describes the current situation where in our world more information is always being produced, but with an ever greater diminishing of the significance. The information devours its own message. Information, and not the message, is transformed into what is most important. This is why McLuhan postulated that the "Medium is the message", where the sender and the receiver share the same status. A similar formulation not only announces the end of the message, but at the same time, that of the sender, for if the medium transforms itself into message, then the medium becomes unnecessary. It is this absorption in particular which Baudrillard understands as implosion du sens. It seems evident that Baudrillard's terms simulation/implosion are equivalent to Lyotard's Post-Modernity and to Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome. This absorption of the poles is that which appears to horrify traditional Western thinkers, as Baudrillard indicates. Simulation and implosion, rhizome and Post-Modernity, appear anachronistically in our system (still dominated by idealism) as an apocalyptic; that which happens in reality, is the catastrophe of the significance, its exhaustion.

What we must ask ourselves is whether we accept that our condition is as we have described it, and if the answer is yes, then what is the alternative? Baudrillard's answer is lapidary:

[27 I would like to recall the debate between the iconoclasts and their opponents. The former wanted to destroy the icons because they conceal the insubstantial of what is represented, because they did not reproduce divinity but rather its perfect simulation with and autonomous life, and thus negated divinity as an irrepresentable reference. The latter accepted the simulation between the icons as the reproduction of a real reference.]
Beyond meaning exists fascination, which results from the neutralization and implosion of meaning. Beyond the social horizon, there exist the masses, which result from the neutralization and implosion of the social. What is essential today is to evaluate this double challenge — challenge of meaning by the masses and their silence (and this is not a passive resistance) — challenge of meaning coming from the media and of its fascination. All marginal attempts or alternatives to bring back meaning are secondary with regard to this challenge. [my translation] (1981: 126)

The most radical epistemological consequence emanating from this quotation is the negation of the origin category, of the original within our context of identity. Currently it is not possible, in the context of the media, to separate reality from virtual reality, which reminds me of Klonen's genetic principle, but now this principle also operates within the framework of the film industry. With the disappearance of the mystified original, the myth of reference, duality disappears and we attend to the end of metaphysics. Fantasy is now no more than a pretext for reality, but reality moves on to be a pretext for fantasy. Reality, and not its projection, posits itself as the new utopia, as Baudrillard points out. Today we are desperately trying to find reality, as simulation dresses itself with the clothes of reality. Reality passes on to become fiction, and simulation becomes reality. This is an anguish, unsettling, strange hyperreality.

Here, precisely within the realm of the hyperreal, the works of Borges acquire their full dimension and their explicability. They show how Borges creates his own discourse and how he arrives at a dialogue with the centre, from the periphery, and using themes from the centre. In the end they are themes which belong to the whole of humanity, as is shown, particularly with reference to "Pierre Menard, author of Don Quixote" and "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius". Here Borges appropriates, or better, imposes himself from the periphery to the centre, thus, the periphery becomes part of the centre.

In his classification of various types of simulation, Baudrillard seems to completely misunderstand Borges, when he denies his literary procedures the status of simulation. Baudrillard opens his book with a quotation of the Ecclesiastes and with the affirmation that Borges' literature is referential, that is, it is "the generation by models of a reality without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (1983: 2). In fact, the opposite is true. Borges works by producing a hyperreality, as beginning with the same kind of analysis as the quotation from the prologue of Ficciones demonstrates: Borges declares that he will write "notes upon imaginary books" (1962: 15-16) and expressis verbis mentions "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius". He writes without a reference, without an pre-determined model, his texts come out of a zero situation, and this is why Borges considers metaphysics a branch of fantastic literature, fantastic in a semantic-epistemological way.28

Borges had two possibilities in "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius": to simulate that some books exist and to summarize them, or to make notes about imaginary books.

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28 Please see my article (1992a), and above.
interextuality, and thereby anticipates Derrida's work while refuting the theory of the reception's aesthetic: discourses belonging to the past lose their meaning in the present and from this the need for debate and for the rewriting and not the reenactment of the past arises. Thus we can understand even better the expression 'write notes upon imaginary books', where imaginary is understood as *simulation*. To imagine/simulate books means to create new ones. It means to rewrite the past over again, back to back, and in some cases the rewritings are only recorded in the memory as palimpsest. Borges acts as if he is imitating, as if he is referring to references, but they do not exist even in the referenced form, or they exist as a new referential reality. This is precisely what occurs in "Pierre Menard, author of Don Quixote", an overwhelming text which denies the origin by copying the origin.

In denying mimesis and, along with this, the original, Borges opens up the discourse for the present and for the future, and he questions the demand for the truth and of the truth in a given system. In this way he appropriates culture: he becomes owner of the culture without worrying if the appropriation is legitimate or not, because all culture is at his disposal. Fiction, philosophy, literary science, etc. all form part of the universal discourse.

The negation of the origin and the replacement of reality for hyperreality are clearly stated, particularly if one carefully examines the elements that Borges mentions of Cervantes' Don Quixote in "Pierre Menard, author of Don Quixote".29 Cervantes effectively sacrifices the signs of reality (unmannered as Don Quixote gives priority to weapons and not to literature). Don Quixote qualifies all that is lived and written as a product of fantasy. Cervantes remains tied to the beginning of mimesis, in a world in which signs and references are divided, in which the significance begins to be articulated as a difference, although encrusted in reference. Cervantes intended to share the sign with the reference of 'reality', but his failure remains confirmed in the novel's ambivalent ending. Borges, on the contrary, has already undertaken his retirement from the referential world. Borges' palimpsest is rhizomatic since it is lacking an epistemological centre and is an attempt to overcome the dogmatic metaphors and its respective hierarchies, which stem from the Modern Era to Modernity: Cervantes' voyage was developed between reality and fiction, between world and signs, that of Borges is a pilgrimage through signs, in an adventure as a search without end. Where in Cervantes' work the event was based on the thematicization of the opposition between 'reality and fiction', in Borges' fiction the event consists in the reality of the imaginary of hyperreality.

6. Summary

I have commented on and analyzed some aspects of the debate surrounding the term Post-Coloniality, in combination with the dialogue between Borges, at the

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29 Some of these observations are included in my article (1994c).

The complexity of the term Post-Coloniality springs from the perspective from which it is understood: these may be economic, technological, and scientific, but also political-military and cultural, and this is why the term becomes conflicted. In order to deal with this conflict, I have proposed the term 'Post-Coloniality', which, without de-ideologizing it, I limit to culture. The term is operational and has the advantage of considering countries which are not economic-scientific powers within the production of cultural discourses. I consider Post-Coloniality to comprise a substantial part of the Post-Modern condition, which is itself characterized by deconstructionist, intertextual, and intercultural thought; by a recodification of history; and by a heterogeneity and hybridity of thought which is subjective, and of a radical particularity and diversity, and is consequently universal. Within Post-Coloniality the periphery and the centre engage in a dialogue which relativizes the distribution of discourse and power and its contents.

J. L. Borges' work is a perfect example of the problematic relationship between the centre and the periphery, in that it not only anticipates but creates a discourse. Created in Buenos Aires at the end of the 1930s, the lasting effect of Borges' discourse will occupy literature from the second half of the 20th century and further. It will constitute Post-Modern thought as it is particularly characterized by the structure of the text in the object-language and meta-linguistic levels; by the technique of the *mise en abyme*; by particular uses of descriptive technique; by the creation of a kind of generating theme; and in the performance of the rhizome and simulation. Borges appropriates universal culture and then creates his own and unmistakable discourse, a discourse which places him at the very centre of Post-Modern thought without denying his origin. Borges' relationship with the centre is very diverse: he is ignored by it, he is rejected by it, he is considered by it, and he is used as point of departure. His case demonstrates that the periphery can even be installed as centre. But, on the other hand, it also demonstrates that the dialogue with the centre continues to be unequal and arbitrary.

Works Cited and Consulted


