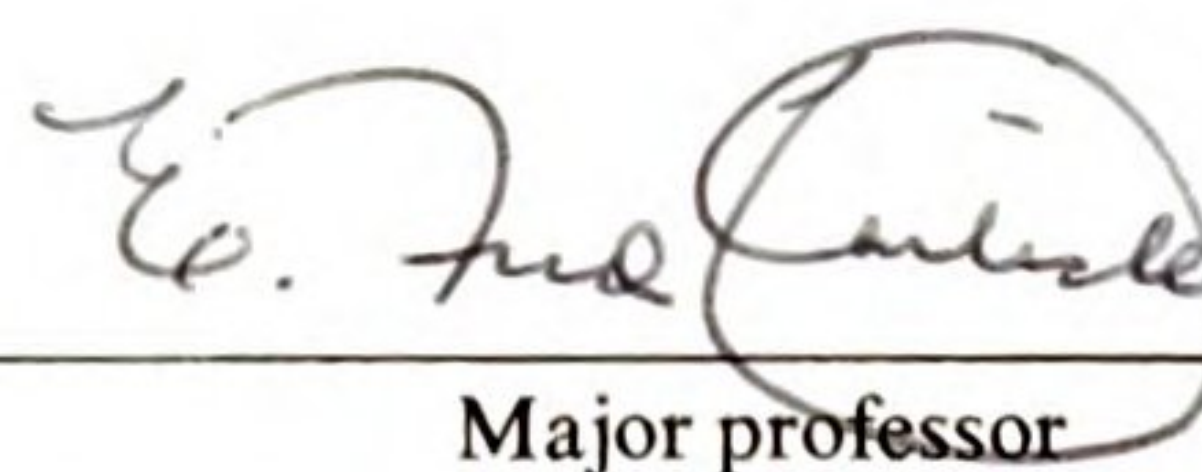




This is to certify that the
dissertation entitled
Self, Reader, Persona:
Whitman, Borges and Their Experimental
Trinity

presented by
Joseph John Benevento

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for
the Ph.D. degree in English


Major professor

Date May 18, 1983

REMOTE STORAGE

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE

SELF, READER, PERSONA:
WHITMAN, BORGES AND THEIR EXPERIMENTAL TRINITY

By
Joseph John Benevento

A DISSERTATION
Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1983

136-4406

ABSTRACT

SELF, READER, PERSONA:
WHITMAN, BORGES AND THEIR EXPERIMENTAL TRINITY

By

Joseph John Benevento

Jorge Luis Borges has long admired Walt Whitman's poetic "trinity." According to Borges, this trinity consists of the writer and his reader joined together by the third member, the character or persona "Walt Whitman," who is in fact a composite of the writer or self and of each one of his readers. Whitman makes the reader a character in his poetry, thereby creating a dialogue between writer and reader, by inviting each reader to find a place in the open-ended composite figure "Walt Whitman."

Variations and adaptations of the Whitman trinity can be found throughout Borges' fiction. Borges also creates an open-ended atmosphere that invites reader participation, and Borges also presents a "Borges" character who is a composite of self and reader. Both authors believe that the self can best be discovered through dialogue with the reader within the creative process itself. They therefore employ throughout their work notions of the double self or of the self who can represent all the others, in part to suggest the

interchangeability of writer and reader, self and other. They constantly encourage the reader to become actively involved, in a creative and primary way, in the work of art itself. They accomplish this task most directly by presenting a composite persona who is potentially both writer and reader. Indeed, if the reader will join the writer in the venture of the creative process itself, the power and vista of the composite character become limitless.

Whitman and Borges even have a final ironic parallel in their writing; the later work of both men features a retreat from active dialogue and an attempt to hide behind a persona which is employed as a disguise for self instead of as a means of communication.

Borges' fiction is suffused with the adaptations of the trinity concept that he discovered in Whitman's early poetry. Borges' considerable influence on much of modern fiction, especially in such areas as reader engagement and narrative point of view, help to link Whitman, in his role of literary theorist, to the mainstream of contemporary fiction.

To my parents, Joseph P. Benevento and Mary Benevento for teaching me what can never be learned at a university, and to my wife, Carmen R. Cid-Benevento, without whom my work and my life both would be senseless endeavors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my dissertation director, Professor E. Fred Carlisle, for his overall guidance, and in particular for his sharing of his expertise on Whitman. I would also like to thank Professor Donald Yates for first showing me the connection between Whitman and Borges, and for his frequent helpful suggestions as well as his careful stylistic comments on each chapter of the study in process. I thank Professor Stephen Tchudi for his support and guidance. And finally, a special word of thanks to Professor Cathy Davidson for her prompt, careful and insightful reading of each chapter of this study, and for her honest and encouraging commentary, without which this dissertation would have been twice as difficult to complete.

Preface

In the text of this study virtually all quoted matter from Borges' work is rendered in English for the convenience of my audience. All translations of Borges' work that appear in the text are my own, unless otherwise noted. I have Professor Donald Yates to thank for assuring the accuracy of these translations, and only myself to blame for the injustice they do to Borges' originals.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
NOTES FOR INTRODUCTION	12
Chapter One, Self: "What is a man anyhow?".	15
I - Some Biographical and Psychological Affinities	15
II - A Focus on Identity	24
(A) One For All- The Many In One	26
(B) The Recurrent Self, The Eternal Return	38
(C) The Double Self, The Self As Other	46
NOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE	56
Chapter Two, Reader: The Search For "El Lector Complice"	62
NOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO	111
Chapter Three, Persona: The Composite Self	118
I - The Whitman Persona	126
II - The Borges Persona	145
NOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE.	161
Chapter Four, Persona: A Farewell to Self and Reader	165
NOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR	203
Conclusion	207
NOTES FOR CONCLUSION	214
BIBLIOGRAPHY	215
Primary Sources	215
Secondary Sources	217

INTRODUCTION

To the casual reader of Walt Whitman and Jorge Luis Borges, important connections between the two writers are not apparent. The finest work of Whitman, his free verse poetry, bears little ostensible resemblance to the best work of Borges, his short stories and essays. On the surface, the bard of optimism and expansiveness does not seem compatible with the careful weaver of sad labyrinths. Though both men would surely be listed among the most important and influential writers of their respective countries, and even of their respective centuries, they might appear to belong to different traditions, and to have pursued vastly different goals.

However, anyone who can claim even a general familiarity with the works of Borges knows that his knowledge of and interest in Whitman has been extensive. Borges has written essays about Whitman,¹ alluded to him often in both his poetry and prose,² presented lectures on his poetic methods and innovations,³ and even published a translation of selections from Leaves of Grass.⁴ Borges has been familiar with Whitman since first reading him in Geneva in 1917, and his first published poem, "Himno al mar," ("Hymn to the Sea") was,

by Borges' own admission, an attempt to be as much like Whitman as possible.⁵ Critics, predictably enough, have duly noted that Borges' early poetry, in both form and subject matter, is partially modeled on Whitman.⁶ Borges has admitted that there was a time when he felt Whitman to be "poetry itself."⁷

However, Borges has also claimed that Whitman was merely a stage he had to go through in his poetry, as, for example, Keats and Swinburne were stages.⁸ Clearly, Borges' later poetry, which often employs fixed meters and rhyme, is not modeled on Whitman,⁹ yet even if it were, the fact remains that Borges' fame does not arise primarily from his work as a poet. Though his poetry has always been well-received, Borges' best writing has usually been done in the short story, sketch or essay form, and these works have rarely been thought to have important stylistic or theoretical similarities to the work of Walt Whitman.

Hence, it is not surprising that although most book length studies of Borges will include several references to Whitman, one does not find chapters or normally even consecutive pages devoted to the Whitman - Borges connection, and there are relatively few articles on the subject.¹⁰ Perhaps there are not enough critics who are well-versed in the work of both men because the careful reader of Whitman who is also a careful reader of Borges

can discern that Whitman's influence on Borges extends beyond his poetry, and is at the heart of Borges' finest prose.

Within his work, Borges refers to Whitman at least as frequently as he does to authors whom he usually claims were influential in his writing, such as Chesterton, Stevenson, De Quincey, Kipling and Poe. Actually, Whitman's name appears more frequently in Borges' prose than in his poetry, and some of Borges' finest short stories such as "El Aleph" and "Deutches Requiem" have obvious Whitmanic elements.¹¹ In Borges' essays and lectures on Whitman, the focus is not on Whitman's poetic stylistics, but is instead on his contributions as an experimenter in literary theory and form. As early as 1931 in his essays on Whitman in his book Discusión, "Nota sobre Walt Whitman," ("Note on Walt Whitman"), and "El otro Whitman" ("The Other Whitman"), Borges also was acutely aware of and interested in the way that Whitman engaged the reader by attempting to make him an active participant in his language experiment.

The basic framework for this study was given to me by Borges himself, through a lecture he gave on Walt Whitman at the Michigan State University campus on January 12, 1976.¹² The basic content of the lecture differed little from what Borges has been saying about Whitman for the past fifty years, but there were a few

subtle and important additions.

In this lecture Borges stressed his appreciation of Whitman as one of the great literary experimenters of all time. He argued that Whitman's accomplishments, in his early editions of Leaves of Grass, especially, have rarely been appreciated as experimental, precisely because the experiment was so successful. He further argued, as he had in "Nota sobre Walt Whitman" forty-five years earlier, that what Whitman had done was to create a composite hero, "Walt Whitman," based on an idealized version of himself, but including all men and women, and hence the only fit hero for democracy. This "Whitman" persona, often confused with the historical Whitman, was in itself a fine achievement, but Borges claimed that Whitman went even further in his innovations. Whitman actively sought to include the reader as an active participant in his experiment, as another member of the trinity of self, reader and persona. The persona would serve as a type of intermediary to facilitate communication between the author and reader. Borges thus conceives of Whitman's finest work as a trinity of self, reader and persona, with the persona functioning as both an intermediary and as a catalyst to invite and provoke the reader into an active role in the work of art.

While all of this information was available in earlier Borges pieces in Discusión or in his introduction

to his translation of selections from Leaves of Grass, what Borges went on to say that night in East Lansing made his view of Whitman appear to be far more than a disinterested theory. Borges claimed that, to the best of his knowledge, no one had ever duplicated Whitman's experiment. He admitted freely that poets such as Sandburg or Masters or Neruda had followed aspects of Whitman's style or thematics, but he insisted that no one had really followed up on the literary theory of the trinity.¹³ Borges then went on to hypothesize that if someone were to follow up on the theory today the result would be, "quite different, maybe as good, but quite different."

My contention in this study is that Borges is, by and large, correct in all he has had to say about Whitman's literary experiments and their degree of success. However, Borges is ironically incorrect in his assertion that the experiment has never been duplicated. Borges himself is the writer who has done something, "as good but quite different," with the literary theory that he inherited from Whitman.¹⁴ It is precisely because Borges' specific adaptations from Whitman are so ostensibly distinct that they have gone to this point largely unnoticed. Whitman was not just a stage that Borges passed through. Emir Rodríguez Monegal is correct in asserting that Borges "never really got over Whitman."¹⁵ Ronald Christ is also correct in his argument that Whitman

was the model for Borges' adaptation of a persona, though Christ did not pursue the extent or full significance of that connection, nor examine its relation to Borges' treatment of the reader.¹⁶ Borges has fashioned his own self- reader- persona trinity, in large part on the model that he discovered in the works of Whitman.

The initial obstacles that prevent one from readily seeing the connection between Whitman and Borges can be overcome without great difficulty. Though Whitman's best work is mostly in poetry and Borges' mostly in prose, and though Whitman is usually thought of as an optimist and Borges as a skeptic or pessimist, both men are fascinated by the riddle of identity, and they employ analogous means in attempting to solve that riddle. While it would be difficult, and perhaps foolish, to try to "prove" that Borges took much of his theory and practice in writing directly from Whitman's "trinity," and while there can be no argument about the significant differences that do exist between the two authors, I still believe that it is possible to demonstrate that Jorge Luis Borges is as much, if not more, of a legitimate literary successor to Walt Whitman as is Carl Sandburg, Hart Crane, Allen Ginsberg, Pablo Neruda or any of the other writers generally viewed as owing some degree of debt to Whitman.

Whitman and Borges share two important preoccupations. They both have as a principal and recurrent purpose throughout their writings the discovery and definition of self, and they both spend a great deal of time analyzing and discussing the essence of the creative act. Hence, not surprisingly, for both men the study and creation of the work of art is closely tied to their search for and analysis of self. Though Whitman and Borges are both, in that sense, "self-centered," paradoxically, they both conduct the search for self through attempts at communication and what Borges calls a "shared investigation" with the reader, often by means of the persona as a kind of intermediary or bridge.

In chapter one the investigation into Whitman and Borges' relation will begin with a recounting of some important biographical and psychological affinities that invite the way towards a further investigation. Borges and Whitman's great preoccupation with identity will be amply documented, and three categories of self-analysis will be discussed. Both Whitman and Borges frequently deal in their writings with the notion of one man who can stand for, represent or be all the others. They are both also intrigued by the idea of a recurrent self and the possibility of a double self.

The search for self is clearly central to both men, but both men saw that such a search, coupled with a desire for reader response, could produce a search for self that could be shared. Thinking of all men as the same man allows for the writer legitimately to feel that he can speak for all. The notion of a recurrent self is tied to a longing for permanence, and a dialogue with future readers insured by the printed word that actively seeks such dialogue. The idea of a double self allows for the viewing of self as other, which not only makes the type of persona that both men employ possible, but also, like the two preceding views of self, allows for an interchangeability between writer and reader, self and other, that further legitimatizes the reader's participation. So for Whitman and Borges the search for self, far from being unamenable to artistic or rhetorical concerns, is in fact closely tied to both.

Chapter two will examine the ways in which Whitman and Borges actively courted what Julio Cortázar would later call in Rayuela "el lector cómplice," or the accomplice reader. Emphasis will be placed not only on how the two men tried to engage the reader in their writings, but also on additional evidence from their journals, interviews and other sources that suggests

that such an accomplice reader was something that both men saw as crucial both to their own art and to the writings of authors to come. The reader's place within the trinity will also be kept in mind, since the engaged reader is engaged in part to allow the self an opportunity for self-knowledge and discovery.

In chapter three the complex workings of the Whitman and Borges personae will be analyzed. The question of persona in both writers is a complex one because there are widely divergent opinions among critics over just how much either man was in control of the personae that they created. Many critics argue that Whitman became progressively less able and/or willing to distinguish his historic self from his artistic or idealized self, and Borges in the brief essay "Borges y yo" ("Borges and I") freely admits the difficulty that such distinctions cause him.

My thesis in chapter three is that Whitman and Borges produce much of their best work when a genuine trinity is functioning, when Whitman and Borges invest their respective works with a genuine sense of self and seek a genuine response from their readers, by means of a composite persona that is loosely based on the author but potentially inclusive of all the readers as well. When the Whitman or Borges persona is

functioning at its best, the reader discovers a genuine avenue through which to enter actively into the work of art.

Chapter four will emphasize the fragility of such an ideal trinity by arguing that both Whitman and Borges in their later years produced work in which the persona was used more and more as a device to hide or obscure the real self, and hence to thwart both reader engagement and real self-examination. Both men in their old age allowed themselves to be honored as literary gurus, which in turn allowed them to feign a complacency that rarely had been present in their earlier works.

Whitman at times tried to pretend that there was no distinction between his persona and his person, that he was leaving in his book a genuine record of his specific personality. Borges at times has tried to pretend that his ideal has always been to keep himself out of his work; he has consistently denied wanting to perpetuate the memory of Borges. Yet both men attempted to do the same thing from opposite angles, to obscure the true self behind a persona pretending to be the only self that mattered. Persona in their later works shifted from a composite of self and reader to a distancing or obscuring device for the author.

The conclusion to the study will assess how important the idea of a trinity and the workings of a persona are to

the works of the two authors. Whitman's influence in Latin America, already considered extensive, will have another outlet, in the mainstream of contemporary Latin American fiction. Borges' work, which has itself been so influential, has been significantly influenced by Whitman, a Whitman of literary theory and vision that we in this country should perhaps learn to value more.

NOTES FOR INTRODUCTION

¹ "Nota sobre Walt Whitman," and "El otro Whitman," both appear in Discusión, (1931). Whitman is a partial subject or reference point of several other essays, among them, "Valéry como símbolo," from Otras Inquisiciones, (1960).

² Borges poems with Whitman allusions include, "Matthew 25:30," and "Camden, 1892."

³ One such lecture is documented in, "Walt Whitman: Man and Myth," Critical Inquiry 4 (June 1975), 707-718.

⁴ Entitled Hojas de Hierba (Buenos Aires: Jiménez Editores, 1969), these selections include translations of "Starting From Paumonok," "Song of Myself," generous selections from "Children of Adam" and "Calamus," and several other shorter poems.

⁵ See, "An Autobiographical Essay," in El Aleph and Other Stories, 1933-69 (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1970), p. 216. (The "Essay" was composed initially in English by Borges in collaboration with Norman Thomas de Giovanni; the two men also collaborated on the translations in the volume.)

⁶ Cesco Vian in his book, Invito alla lettura di Jorge Luis Borges (Milan: U. Mursia editore, 1980) p. 63, claims that Borges' meter and line length in his early book of poetry, Luna de enfrente, are modeled in part on Whitman's. Gene Bell-Villada further claims that Borges' early poetry in general is written, "in a free verse medium apparently modeled in form as well as content after Walt Whitman." Borges and His Fiction (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), p. 16.

⁷ "An Autobiographical Essay," p. 217.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ In his preface to his poem, "La rosa profunda" ("The Unending Rose") which appears in his collection, El oro de los tigres, translated by Alistair Reid as The Gold of the Tigers (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1977) Borges claims that while Whitman was justified to "do away with rhyme," each poet must find what is right for himself. This statement helps explain Borges' return to traditional forms such as the sonnet or milonga.

¹⁰ One of the few articles comparing the two men is simply titled, "Borges y Whitman" by Didier T. Jaen, Hispania 50 (March 1967) 49-53. Though Jaen argues that the two men share more similarities than are at first apparent, and though he even begins to compare the "other" Whitman to the "other" Borges, he ends up settling for a discussion of a few incidental similarities in a few of the poems of each man.

¹¹ See Bell-Villada, p. 221, or Carter Wheelock, The Mythmaker (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), who in discussing a passage from "Deutches Requiem" that deals with Whitman says, "In these words Borges attributes to Whitman characteristics of the nominalist or Alephic world view; Whitman enumerates or catalogues like Dante or like Carlos Argentino Danieri," p. 161.

¹² This lecture was the first of a series entitled Preferences that Borges delivered on the Michigan State campus in the winter and spring of 1976. Though I was not attending Michigan State at that time, and hence was not in attendance at the lecture, I have since see it on videotape, and listened to it numerous times through the voice library of Michigan State.

¹³ In another discussion of Whitman's trinity that serves as a foreward to Homage To Walt Whitman (Didier Tisdell Jaen, English translations and notes) (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1964) Borges has this to say: "Strange to say, Whitman has many imitators- and no disciples. People think that they are Walt Whitman if they are sufficiently breezy, slangy and unmetrical. The plan of making a character out of the writer and the reader has not been attempted again, and for all we know, it may be impossible," p. xvii.

¹⁴ Discussion of a literary trinity of self, reader and persona which is limited to the works of two authors, naturally leads to the consideration of the possibility that this trinity may be functioning on some level in the works of a good many authors. Some reader response critics, for example, would argue that a literary work always calls for the active participation of its reader. Walker Gibson, on the other hand, stresses the inevitability of the literary persona in his book Persona (New York: Random House, 1969). These critics and others will be dealt with in the appropriate chapters of this study. For now, I will only assert that Whitman was perhaps one of the first writers to try consciously to allow the reader to become an active accomplice in the work of art. Borges clearly believes that this is the case, and he has been especially impressed by Whitman's means of inviting reader participation, the use of a composite persona made up of both writer and reader, which may not have been consciously attempted again until the advent of Borges and his fiction. Whitman and Borges, through the use of this composite character both consciously attempt to be observers and participants of their work simultaneously, to be, as Whitman phrased it in "Song of Myself," "Both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it."

¹⁵ Emir Rodríguez Monegal, Jorge Luis Borges: A Literary Biography (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1978), p. 148.

¹⁶ Ronald Christ, "Borges Justified: Notes and Texts Toward Stations of a Theme," in, Prose for Borges, Eds. Charles Newman and Mary Kinzie, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), pp. 46-81. This article makes some of the most important connections between Borges and Whitman that can be found, and will be returned to at several points in the study.

Chapter One

Self: "What is a man anyhow?"

I - Some Biographical and Psychological Affinities

An obvious problem in comparing the work of Borges and Whitman is that they not only lived and wrote in two different centuries, but also in two different countries, cultures and languages. Additionally, Whitman is best remembered as a poet, and Borges is most regarded as a short story writer and essayist. While these factors cannot be ignored or minimized, there still exists an interesting range of similarities between the two authors, which help to counterbalance the more readily noticeable differences in their backgrounds, and which may help to suggest why they evolved a similar preoccupation with identity in their writings.

In "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads" Whitman claimed that nobody could ever understand him or his work without specific reference to nineteenth century American life in all its particulars. Such an attitude would suggest an inherent difficulty in comparing Whitman to a twentieth century Latin American author. However, Borges is hardly a typical twentieth

century Latin American author. For example, after Spanish itself, Borges' second language is certainly English. Borges has English blood from his father's side, and his paternal grandmother, Fanny Haslam, lived in the Borges household and helped teach the young Borges English. Most of Borges' early reading was done in English, in his father's library of English and American books. In his "Autobiographical Essay" and elsewhere Borges has stated that these early readings were among the most important events in his entire life, and they are what he remembers most vividly from his childhood. Borges has even published a few poems and his autobiographical essay in English, and has frequently been interviewed or given talks in English. Hence, in discussing Whitman's possible influence on Borges, one has the additional advantage of being certain that Borges has read and appreciated Whitman in the original, which is of course not usually the case when comparing authors who wrote in two distinct languages.

Borges has in fact had a deep and penetrating interest in nineteenth century American literature in general. He has co-authored a textbook on American literature,¹ held the position of professor of English and American letters in Buenos Aires, and frequently written about or expressed great interest in prominent nineteenth century American authors such as Poe,

Hawthorne and Emerson. Furthermore, Borges claims little real affinity with twentieth century literary movements, scoffs at the notion of himself as a modern author, and virtually lays claim to being more of a contemporary of Whitman than of Neruda or Cortázar.² Indeed, most of Borges' literary heroes, including Stevenson, Chesterton, Poe, Emerson, De Quincey, Swinburne, Carlyle, and Hawthorne were all either contemporaries of Whitman, or men who wrote about or were written about by Whitman. Hence, though Borges may certainly exaggerate his lack of affinity for modern literary movements, perhaps hoping to forget his connections with "ultraismo," or to evade connections with contemporary movements he has helped to promote, it is still clear that in a real sense Borges is more in line with Whitman's literary world and all of its accomplishments than the average twentieth century author may be.

Of course this affinity has an ironic base. Whitman, who laid claim to being so tied to nineteenth century America, is, in fact, now considered by many to have been the first "modern" poet, while Borges, who is so responsible for many of the innovations of modern fiction, lays claim to being a nineteenth century author. Somehow the two men manage to meet, perhaps timelessly, in the middle.

Both men share some basic biographical similarities

as well. Both had fathers who could be termed "free-thinkers" (Walt Whitman senior was a devotee of Thomas Paine and Elias Hicks; Jorge Guillermo Borges of Herbert Spenser and of philosophy in general) who, in spite of competence in their respective fields, never had a great deal of practical success. Indeed, both the Whitman and Borges families made key moves when the respective authors to be were very young, in part because of family finances.³ In some sense it can be argued that the two writers inherited from their fathers an inability, or at least a reluctance, to integrate philosophical and practical concerns, a trait that later may have helped to develop both men's sense of a double self. Both men, like their fathers, saw little relation between their work-a-day worlds and their philosophical or aesthetic interests, especially when they were developing as writers and thinkers.

Whitman and Borges both wrote for newspapers, gave lectures, and held non-writing positions such as carpenter (Whitman) or library clerk (Borges) in order to earn a living that their writing did not usually provide. Their careers as writers always seemed at odds, or at least separate, from their everyday lives.⁴

Whitman's family or his working class acquaintances had little knowledge of or appreciation for his poetry. Borges also felt alienated from his fellow workers at

the library where he worked from 1937-46, while in the process of producing some of his finest work. This sense of alienation was heightened by his, "co-workers flawless ignorance of his fairly important reputation as a poet and literary critic."⁵ Both Borges and Whitman at key points in their careers sensed a distinction between their literary and everyday selves, a distinction which made it easier to consider the literary sides of their personalities as an "other" self. This distinction even carried over to Whitman's correspondence, where it is rare to find a literary allusion of any sort, as if Whitman had been trying to keep the two lives separate.⁶ Therefore, it may be more than a coincidence that the lack of recognition both men suffered from, and the practical need both men faced to spend much of their time in non-literary pursuits, seemed to cause in both men a sense of separation between their literary and everyday selves. This sense of division would later play an important role in their evolvment of self in their writing.

Another source of conflict for both men was in their ambivalence about the "man of action," the man of physical strength and bravery. Borges never claims to be "one of the roughs," and most of his mentors, from his father, to Rafael Cansinos-Assens, to Macedonio Fernandez, to Alfonso Reyes were all men of intellect,

not physical force. Still, Borges' fascination for the gaucho or for the "compadrito" (street tough) is well-documented, whether it be in Historia universal de la infamia, (A Universal History of Infamy) or in stories such as "La intrusa," ("The Intruder"), "El otro duelo" ("The Other Duel"), or "El sur," ("The South"). A desire to be someone he is not, (a desire acted out most clearly in the autobiographical, "El sur," in which the protagonist, a bookish sort, gets the opportunity to die a "man's death" in a knife fight), runs throughout much of Borges' work. In a more recent work, the poem "Tankas," Borges laments not having been a military man as his ancestors were; instead he bears the shame of the "man who counts the syllables."

Both Borges and Whitman reveal in several instances their great admiration for their military ancestors, who had fought with distinction in the wars against the European colonizers.⁷ While Borges freely admits his sense of shame (and perhaps even exaggerates it) in not having been a man of action or physical toughness, Whitman was unwilling to admit that he was not just such a "rough." However, his now famous letter to John Addington Symonds, in which he invents six illegitimate children to try to dissuade Symonds from believing in the homosexual base for the "Calamus" poems, is just one rather uncomfortable proof that Whitman felt a good deal

of insecurity in trying to maintain a "manly" front. The attempt to work through or mask their ambivalence over matters of virility or physical toughness is often apparent in the work of both men. Perhaps they both sensed a division between art and "really" manly endeavors, a division which further encouraged them to look upon their literary selves as separate selves.

There are also some ironic parallels in the writing careers of both men. Whitman's first writing was for newspapers, but his first literary attempts, aside from some bad poems, were some short stories written under the influence of Hawthorne and Poe, a few of which were published in the same journals that published those authors.⁸ Borges' first creative work published was poetry which revealed a marked Whitmanic influence. While Borges' early poetry was far better than Whitman's lurid and melodramatic fiction, neither man's early published work in any way anticipated the sudden emergence of their master works. Whitman's 1855 Leaves of Grass and Borges' El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan, (later expanded with a section called "Artificios" to form the present Ficciones) both were strange, unexpected works of genius. Both men were middle-aged before their best writing began. After these middle-age writing peaks, both authors gradually began to write with "diminishing effectiveness," (as

William Carlos Williams termed it in Whitman's case)⁹ well into their old age. This lessened power coincided somewhat with their increasing physical infirmity. In 1873 Whitman suffered the first of many strokes, which left him partially paralyzed and often bed-ridden for the remainder of his life. Borges has been almost totally blind since 1955.

The parallels in their writing careers continue in their old age in that both men became types of literary "gurus," with hosts of admirers and/or interviewers, who made the trip to Camden or Buenos Aires to pluck the remaining words of wisdom from the two old men. Late in life both authors achieved a notoriety based mostly on works they had written when they were much younger. Yet both men seemed to prefer their later work, and were happy to share such opinions with their interviewers.¹⁰ However, the strict veracity of some of those interviews may be somewhat in question, since Whitman referred to himself at that time in his life as a "furtive old hen," and Borges has suggested in at least one story that he may not be wholly honest during interviews.¹¹ Both men, as they advanced in age and reputation, learned well how to play the part of the revered old author.

Another possible alliance between the two men is that both have been said to have had types of mystical

experiences. Borges has published the account of his experience in three separate sources,¹² and the mystical experience that Bucke, Cowley and others really believe Whitman had, is dramatized in canto five of "Song of Myself." For both men, then, these experiences found an important place in their writing. However, neither man need be considered a "mystic," though certainly that label has been applied often enough to Whitman, because in both men's work the search for self is closely allied with a sense of the other. The key to self-realization for both men often rests upon the recognition of the reality of relation to an other.

Whitman and Borges both gained from their personal experiences a sense of disjuncture between their personal, everyday lives and their careers as writers. Both men needed to expand the borders of conventional literature to allow for a reintegration of self. The normal distinctions between poetry and prose were redefined by Whitman, and Borges has claimed that the distinctions are arbitrary,¹³ a comforting position to anyone attempting to compare Whitman's poetry to Borges' fiction. In general, Whitman and Borges both sought to blur the distinctions between art and life, so as to encourage the search for self by artistic means. Both men were keenly interested in the potentials of language, from poetry to slang,¹⁴ and both connected this

fascination with language and art to the search for self. Both understood that the search for a means of optimal expression and communication was a way to the self. Hence in both men's work the pervasive search for self and for an explanation and definition of identity goes along with an attempt to define and express who the writer is and who or what the reader can be. Hence both men's fascination with the creative process is wedded to their search for identity.

II - A Focus on Identity

Whenever critics discuss the major themes of Borges they always list identity,¹⁵ and few would argue with Whitman's own assertion that his writings deal from first to last with "the personal critter." Yet it is equally true that both men are concerned with the "not me" as well; in fact Whitman explains in "Specimen Days" that the "relation between the me and the not me" is the most crucial philosophical question. Borges and Whitman often times seem to be the only major characters in their respective works. Borges, in fact, has admitted that he is his stories' only protagonist,¹⁶ and he has also frequently pointed to the autobiographical elements in many of his stories.¹⁷ Yet for both men the focus on self is often on the self as other, or on the self in

relation to others. Indeed, Borges' admission to the autobiographical elements in his stories is itself a paradox, since he has so often argued against the existence of the individual.

At times Borges and Whitman seem diametrically opposed on the question of identity because Whitman stresses that the self is all important, while Borges emphasizes the futility of personal pride.¹⁸ However, both men see the various possibilities of relation. Whitman's "Personalism-Ensemble" concept allows for the individual and for his union to the whole, while Borges essays such as "Everything and Nothing" and "De alguien a nadie" ("From Someone to No one") from Otras Inquisiciones stress an awareness of personality contingent upon, but also threatened by a sense of identity with all. Using the terms of the Borges essay "Everything and Nothing," one might say that Whitman more often puts his emphasis on the "Everything," while Borges seems more convinced of the "Nothing." Yet it remains true that both authors continually play with a concept of identity intimately related to a concept of otherness.

The remainder of this chapter will investigate three characteristic themes of identity that Whitman and Borges utilize in their writing: the idea of one man standing for, or being all men, the idea of a recurrent

self, and the variations on the theme of a double self, or self as other. While the usage of such themes is clearly important to both men's resolution of self, it is also clear that all of these themes have related artistic or rhetorical ends. The idea of many in one not only legitimatizes one man speaking for all, but also suggests that the writer and reader are interchangeable, if each person entails all persons. The recurrent self suggests the perpetuation of identity of the essential self through art, and also suggests that the reader in this life may be the writer in the next. Finally, a double self or self as other facilitates both reader participation and the creation of a persona. In both men the search for self is allied to a search for an audience willing to consider various alternatives that aid in the establishment of an extended notion of self.

(A) One For All - The Many In One

The first poem of any real and lasting merit that Whitman ever published (for the first time in July, 1855) opened with three of the now most famous lines in American literature: "I celebrate myself,/ And what I assume you shall assume,/ For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you." In "Song of Myself," especially

in its 1855 version which was still without a title, Whitman began his attempt to speak as a representative hero. Throughout the poem he continually seeks to make clear his ability and willingness to identify himself with all of the creation. Whether one chooses to see the main character of the poem as a "kosmos,"¹⁹ a poet-prophet of democracy,"²⁰ a lyric-epic rhetorician,"²¹ or even as a shameless charlatan,²² his attempt to stand as a representative being for all of mankind remains persistently clear. He claims brotherhood with "all the men ever born," or he presents a catalogue of humanity and then calmly states: "and these one and all tend inward to me and I tend outward to them/ and such as it is to be of these more or less I am."

Whitman's representativeness seems to know no bounds. He is of the "old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise." He does not "decline to be the poet of wickedness also." He assures us that if he is not speaking for all of us he is wasting our time as well as his own. He speaks the "the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands... If they are not yours as much as mine they are nothing or next to nothing." Whitman cannot go on writing poems unless he can believe that he speaks legitimately for all: "All I mark as my own you shall offset it with your own/ Else it were time lost listening to me." Whitman's democracy in this poem is a

democracy of identity; all of us deserve the same because we are essentially the same: "In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barleycorn less/ and the good or bad I say of myself I say of them." Whitman stands for the dignity of all and takes on their defense: "Whoever degrades another degrades me/ And whatever is done or said returns at last to me."

Whitman's identification is complete when he can be "the hounded slave," or the "Fireman with breastbone broken," when he can say, "I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there." Though clearly one man could not be all the people that Whitman claims to "be" in this poem, nor do all the things he claims ability to do, one man who is in some sense all the others can make these claims for us all. By means of the "Whitman" character, the writer Walt Whitman was able to create a device that allowed for the separateness and distinction of each individual, but simultaneously united and identified all. Whitman the writer never claims that all the others are merely projections of his ego; he instead insists that the others are not "mere dreams or dots." Individuality is one key part of the "Personalism-Ensemble" concept developed by Whitman. The character "Walt Whitman" of "Song of Myself" and some of the other poems is the exemplification of that concept. This persona (which is

of course the principal subject of chapter three) is a composite character modeled in part on Whitman, but open-ended enough to include all of humanity.

Whether the real man Walt Whitman was himself more of a mystic,²³ or a humanist,²⁴ or some strange combination of the two, the claims that the character "Whitman" makes for identity in "Song of Myself" are quite obviously part of his reason for being confident that he can speak for all. Even if some of his readers "do not know how immortal" or divine or unified they are, "Whitman" can calmly state, "I know." "Whitman" is aware of and can be all things because the writer Walt Whitman has allowed for all of the readers to have an opportunity to contribute their part to the composite, to also be "Walt Whitman." It is the strength within this composite that allows for the confidence and optimism of "Song of Myself."

Whitman certainly is not so confident or resolute in all of his poetry, nor does the same "Whitman" persona of the early poems constantly reappear, but the notion of one man who is made up of all the others is an idea that he returns to often. Though some have accused Whitman of egoism, or even egomania, his poetry, (especially up to 1860) no matter how self-celebrating or self-centered, does not often leave out at least some awareness of and identification with the other.

In "I Sing the Body Electric," while there is a focus on the individual body, there is also a suggestion that the reader too can revel in his or her body, as well as a reminder that none of the benefits of life can be "for you only and not for him or her." In "Salut Au Monde," Whitman allows the reader to ask him questions, ("What do you see Walt Whitman?") and affirmatively answers that all of mankind around the globe is equally, "inevitable... Each of us here as divinely as any is here." In "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," Whitman again admits that all the good and evil of the others is contained within him, "The wolf, the snake, the hog not wanting in me." Again he contains all that any other individual might contain, and he has felt all that they might feel.

"There Was A Child Went Forth" is a poem of identification of the child with every object in the world of the not-me. The "first object he looked upon that object he became." This merging or identification is repeated in "The Sleepers," in which the medium of the dream allows Whitman to "dream in my dream all the dreams of the other dreamers, and I become the other dreamers." Even in a seemingly defeated poem such as, "As I Ebb'd With the Ocean of Life," in which the process of identification seems to be thwarted, or to have a negative effect, Whitman's merge with the sea and land eventually reassures him that the "flow will return."

Therefore, he can even identify with the sea scum and be, "But a trail of drift and debris." None of this would be possible if Whitman meant here to suggest that his literal personal self alone was capable of a cosmic, mystical awareness of his total identity with all of the universe. As will be made clear in the subsequent chapters, it is only the "Whitman" persona, that includes the accomplice reader and is expanded and augmented by that alliance, that is thereby capable of an expanded and augmented vision.

While Whitman's later, usually shorter poems do not always make his identification theme as explicit, his later prose such as "Specimen Days" or "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads," makes clear that his attempt was from first to last to set himself up as a representative for the "divine average." Of course, the very fact that Whitman chose himself for the model of representative man has caused much misunderstanding about Whitman's celebration of self. Whitman, in making the boldest claims for himself usually does so with the understanding that he wants and expects his readers to make the same claims for themselves. Whitman usually recognizes relation to the other. Even when he claims, in "Song of Myself," that "Nothing, not God is greater to one than one's self is," the very next line is, "And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy walks to his

funeral dressed in his shroud."

The opening lines of the first of the "Inscription" poems that begin the final editions of Leaves of Grass state a seeming paradox: "One's self I sing, a simple, separate person/ Yet utter the word democratic, the word En-Masse." Whitman's Personalism-Ensemble concept is a confusing one to those who believe that a separate person, by definition, cannot be an integral part of any ensemble. Some people quite naturally believe that it is a contradiction to claim to be, "Both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it." However, George Herbert Mead, the American philosopher and sociologist, whom one of his students referred to as a potential, "Walt Whitman of the realm of thought,"²⁵ in his discussion of "Self" in Mind Self and Society, suggests that all of us are made up of an "I" and a "me." The me is that socialized part of ourselves tied to, derivative from, and in some sense identical with, all of the other me's that comprise society. The I is that part of each self which is never static or fully definable, which exists in a constant state of becoming. The I balks against the conformity of the me and is the cause of change, questioning, rebellion, creativity, in short, individuality.²⁶ Mead's I and me construct corresponds well to Whitman's Personalism-Ensemble notion.

It is no coincidence that Ronald Christ employs Mead's ideas to good advantage in his discussion of Borges' methodology and its relation to Whitman, a discussion that will take on added relevance in the subsequent chapters. In any event, Mead's theories demonstrate that Whitman's paradox of strong individuality wedded to a sense of identification with all the others is by no means a unique or necessarily eccentric theory.

Borges' conviction that there are no real differences between individuals, that one man readily can stand for all, has been a recurrent theme from his earliest poems and essays to his most recent fiction. Whether he believes in any autonomy for the individual or not is a matter of some debate, since he has given contradictory answers to this question, sometimes within the same essay, as in "Nueva refutación del tiempo," ("A New Refutation of Time") from Otras Inquisiciones.²⁷ In either case, the notion of one man standing for all of us is a key thematic device throughout his work.

In Borges' book of essays entitled Inquisiciones (his first of three books of essays written in the 1920's and since deleted by Borges from any list of his complete works) appears the essay "La nadería de la personalidad," ("The Nothingness of Personality.") These early essays were almost certainly later rejected by Borges for their

stylistic extravagances and not for their content per se, because Borges' denial of a separate autonomous I in the essay in question is something he much later reiterates in essays such as "Nuestro pobre individualismo," ("Our Poor Individualism") and "De alguien a nadie" ("From Someone to No one") from Otras Inquisiciones. Interestingly enough, Borges brings Whitman into the discussion in "La nadería de la personalidad," for the first of many times to come. He disagrees with Whitman's notion that to name everything is synonymous with identifying with all, but he does note that Whitman was the first American to believe that "to try to express yourself and want to express all of life are the same thing." Though in "De alguien a nadie" Borges claims that it is a "fallacy" to believe that not to be one thing is somehow to be all things, and though Borges suggests that if one man can be all men then none of us is anyone, it remains true that Borges uses the idea of one for all as an expansive notion in much of his work,²⁸ though his expansiveness is rather distinct from Whitman's.

Examples of Borges' idea of one man standing for all of us are numerous in his short stories. "La forma de la espada," ("The Shape of the Sword") from Ficciones, initially seems to be little more than a trick story.

John Vincent Moon recounts his tale as if he were the hero of the piece, the man betrayed, only revealing his true identity at the end of the piece as the traitor Moon. Moon claims that he has employed this technique so that his listener, (in this case "Borges" himself, taking on with us the role of audience) will hear his entire story to its conclusion before despising him. However, as J. M. Cohen points out, there is a metaphysical identity here between betrayer and betrayed,²⁹ and as George Mc Murry notes, the shock we feel at the end of the story demonstrates that "any man can be all men."³⁰ Once we have discovered Moon's real identity, we can recall with heightened perspective some earlier lines of Moon's in the story: "What one man does is as if all men were doing it... Perhaps Schoepenhauer is right; I am the others, any given man is all men." Moon the coward can recall the story from the hero's perspective so authentically because in some sense he too is the hero.

The idea of one man's actions being representative of the actions of all people recurs in the opening story of Ficciones "Tlön Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." In this story Borges tells us that in the "vertiginous act of coitus" all men are the same man, and that every man who recites a line of Shakespeare is William Shakespeare. In "Tema del traidor y del héroe," ("Theme of the Traitor and the

Hero") also from Ficciones, Borges narrates the story of Kilpatrick, a man remembered as a hero, who was actually a traitor. Upon being discovered by his associates, Kilpatrick had agreed to participate in an elaborate hoax. He allowed himself to be assassinated by his former compatriots, the Irish nationalists, who made the death appear to be an assassination perpetuated by their opposition. In this way their cause would be served by having a "hero" martyred, instead of a "traitor" exposed. The trick element in the story is present, of course, but again what saves the story from mere trickery is the notion that all of us contain the potential to be both hero and traitor; none of us can decline to be, like Whitman in "Song of Myself," "the poet of wickedness also."

"El fin" ("The End") from Ficciones presents the reader with the hypothetical killer of the fictional character Martin Fierro, who, upon killing Fierro, somehow seems to merge with him: "His task of avenger completed now he was no one. Better said he was the other, he had no further destiny on the earth and he had killed a man." As Mc Murry notes, "Borges himself has pointed out if one man is all men when he kills another he kills himself as well. We might reason then that the hypothetical killer becomes nobody, or perhaps his victim,

who is also nobody."³¹

In stories in El Aleph such as "Los teólogos," ("The Theologians") "Emma Zunz," or "La espera" ("The Waiting"), or in stories from El informe de Brodie (Brodie's Report) such as "Guayaquil" or "El duelo" ("The Duel") again and again there is the suggestion that apparently distinct or antagonistic personalities are actually identical, or mere mirrors of continuing archetypes. Underlying all of these variations is the suggestion that one can stand for or contain all the others. Even Emma Zunz, the highly specifically motivated murderer from the story of the same name, loses her specific vengeance upon completing her deed. Borges ends her story with the subtle suggestion that Emma has served an archetypal sense of vengeance, and hence the specifics of her story become meaningless in this larger context.

Ideas of a recurrent self or a double self all really evolve in some sense from an acceptance of the possibility that we all may be more than finite or fixed individuals. Though Borges' tone usually seems so distinct from Whitman's, and though he seems to derive little joy from notions that Whitman at least sometimes finds uplifting, Borges like Whitman may also believe both in a real individual and in the possibilities

inherent in the concept of the many in one.³² As Ana María Barrenchea suggests, Borges employs an expanded notion of self in his works to release the individual from the bonds of finitude and mortality.³³ In so doing Borges also helps to release both the reader and writer from the conventional gulf that separates them. If one man can be all men then what "one man does" (and writing is one form of doing) "is as if all men were doing it."

(B) The Recurrent Self, The Eternal Return

Another aspect of self that Whitman and Borges characteristically explore in their search for personal identity is the idea of a recurrent self, and the allied notion of an eternal return. Neither man seemed to have any faith in the Christian concept of an eternity in heaven or hell on the basis of performance in one lifetime. Both writers evolved a concept of infinite time and recurrent self to thwart the grave; both men seem to consider seriously the notion of both life and self as a continuous process of being.

In "Song of Myself" the last few cantos are reserved for Whitman's farewell, yet somehow this farewell is not permanent. Though each person must travel the road for him or herself, Whitman remains somehow in some form to help us: "You will hardly know who I am or what I mean, /

But I shall be good health to you nevertheless." He concludes, "Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged./ Missing me one place search another/ I stop somewhere waiting for you." Either Whitman will return, or he never really departs, as long as there are readers who are truly engaged by his character.

This notion of recurrence becomes a favorite device of Whitman to be used both playfully and in full earnestness. In the frontispiece poem of the final edition of Leaves of Grass, which begins, "Come said my soul," Whitman suggests the possibility of returning "invisibly" after death for the sake of the "chants resuming." For Whitman, then, from the first poem of the book, the recurrent self is linked to the idea of perpetuation through art. Whitman often asks us how we can be sure that he is not somehow by our sides at the very moment that we are reading his poetry. Whitman, "garrulous to the last," does not want to let go of his "fancy," and he need not do so, so long as there is a reader willing to consider that he lives on through his impartation of self in his book, for the purpose of dialogue with his future readers.

"Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" is perhaps Whitman's most obvious treatment of the notion of an eternal return. For Whitman as for Borges the repetition of an action by succeeding generations guarantees somehow the continuity

of the actors. Distance, time and place, "avail not," for we have all been "struck from the float forever held in solution." Therefore, since Whitman has experienced all and felt all that his future readers are feeling, we have to concede the validity of his questions: "Who knows but I am enjoying this?/ Who knows for all the distance, but I am as good as looking at you now, for all you cannot see me?"

Whitman seems to delight in this sort of direct address to his reader, returning to it again and again. In "Full of Life Now," from "Calamus" he ends the poem by advising us to, "Be not too certain but I am now with you." Whitman's recurrence is linked to his book, but also to his reader's acceptance of his terms. In "So long" from "Songs of Parting" he claims identity with his book with the well known lines, "Camerado this is no book/ Who touches this touches a man." Whitman seems to understand that his return is predicated on how much of himself is contained in his work. Yet he also sometimes speaks of a return not specific to himself or his book. In "Song of Myself" he proclaims that to be president is but a "trifle" because we "will more than arrive there everyone and still pass on." While Whitman's view of time seems to be more progressive and evolutionary than purely circular or repeatable, the idea of our return to future lives is still there. Also,

if everyone will get to be president and "still pass on," then certainly the reader can more readily expect to be the writer, either now, or at some future time.

Borges' dealings with recurrence are more specifically linked to a cyclical or labyrinthine vision of time and the notion of an eternal return, but his overall treatment of the subject is still close to Whitman's, and serves similar ends. In his book of essays Historia de la eternidad (The History of Eternity), Borges deals with the idea of an eternal return at length, anticipating in this 1935 book the use of the concept in many future poems and stories. In the title essay Borges mentions the nightingale of Keats and a cat discussed by Schopenhauer as creatures who are eternal because they live in an eternal present and have no concept of mortality (this eternal cat appears some years later in the story "El sur"). Still, Borges takes this notion further by arguing that for us as well there has been but one "I" all along, in a continuous process of being. Borges quotes his own essay, "Sentirse en muerte" ("To feel oneself in death" would be the literal translation) to corroborate the notion that we too live in an eternal present, that what happened before continues to happen and will continue to happen in the so-called future.

In "La doctrina de los ciclos" ("The Doctrine of the Cycles") Borges again deals with Whitman, this time in relation to Nietzsche, who was a prime proponent of the idea of an eternal return. Borges claims that Nietzsche attempted to make the belief in an eternal return (an unending circle of time where all things can and will happen until they are repeated again) a cause for celebration. Borges says that Nietzsche wanted to "be Walt Whitman, he wanted to fall in love minutely with his destiny." Borges does not share the feeling that a belief in an eternal return need be a happy one, since there is no escape from our condition if it is true (a sadly worked out example of the rigors of this circle is later portrayed in the story "El inmortal," "The Immortal"). Still, it is interesting to note that once again Borges links Whitman to an idea that fascinates him, and notes that their only real difference is a temperamental one over how to interpret the phenomenon of recurrence.

Borges utilizes the notion of recurrence continually in his fiction to create a world of almost infinite possibility and relation. In a short piece entitled "La trama" ("The Plot") from El hacedor Borges matches the destinies of a nameless gaucho and Julius Caesar, linked by having both been betrayed by trusted friends.

The "Pero che," of the gaucho is equivalent to the "Et tu Brute" of Caesar, though the gaucho has no way of knowing that he has been killed because of destiny's preference for symetry, "he did not know that he was dying so that a scene could be repeated." In "Guayaquil" from El informe de Brodie a similar theme is enacted. The two men in the story become unwitting doubles of San Martín and Bolívar, which suggests, as Mc Murry puts it, "the eternal return of an archetypal solution."³⁴ In "El encuentro" ("The Encounter") from the same collection, two men at a party fight an unexpected duel, which, unknown to them, is essentially between two weapons that had somehow retained the essence of a former unresolved animosity between two enemies. In all these cases the essence of the deceased individuals lived on somehow through time. The tone is distinct from Whitman's, but the possibility of recurrence is what matters.

In "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan," ("The Garden of Forking Paths") from Ficciones the almost ridiculous coincidence that the Chinese spy should encounter and then need to kill the very man who has figured out the secret of the spy's ancestor's book that is also a labyrinth, is counteracted by the message of that book itself. Within it all things are possible,

and all possible destinies will eventually come to pass in the almost infinite realm of possibilities. In some lives the paths of the two men do not even cross, in some they are friends, and in this most bizarre set of circumstances, the spy must kill Albert to let the Germans know the British munitions site. What is essential here is the idea that any particular set of occurrences is but one set of possibilities, and each of us has infinite opportunity and variety awaiting. This idea is also suggested at the end of "La muerte y la brújula" ("Death and the Compass") from Ficciones when Lönnrot calmly discusses with Scharlach the "next time" that Scharlach will kill him, as if they are fated to meet again and again under slightly different circumstances. Obviously there is again significance in all of this for the writer-reader relationship. In one of life's "forking paths" I am the author, while in another I am the reader; thus in some sense I am already both.

While this notion of recurrence is usually taken more in a personal vein by Whitman, both authors recognize that a work of art is in part a living example of how essences live on beyond the physical life of an author. In "Profesión de la fe literaria," ("Profession of Literary Faith") from the second of Borges' three rejected books of essays, El tamaño de mi esperanza, (The Size of My Hope), Borges early on admits a desire

to write a "few eternal pages." Whitman's constant probing of the reader, his insistence that he might still be with us, was almost an invitation to keep him alive by our continuing the dialogue with his genuine self through the reading process itself. Borges does not usually align his interests in recurrence to a personal wish for continuity, but he is not entirely immune to the potential charms of the notion either. In "Le regret d' Heraclite" from El hacedor, in two lines which Borges attributes to a fictional author, he regrets that in all his lives he has yet to be, "the man in whose arms Matilde Urbach swooned." In "Delia Elena San Marco," a short sketch from the same book, this time using his own name and that of a deceased woman that he loved, Borges wistfully wishes that in some future life he and Delia will meet again and wonder if in a past life they "were Borges and Delia."

Hence, though it is true that Borges has often said that if he should live again he wants no recollection of this life,³⁵ it is equally true that both Whitman and Borges look to the notion of a recurrent self as a way of perpetuating their present identities, or the essence of those selves that can perhaps be purified through the creative process. Both saw their writing as a natural means to such self perpetuation.

(C) The Double Self, The Self as Other

A final important element of self that both authors explore thoroughly is the idea of a double self. Indeed the double self, or seeing the self as other, is a rich and varied approach for both men. Sometimes the distinction is made between the public and private self, at other times between the hero and traitor or winner and loser. Borges and Whitman both make distinctions between the "real" self and a somehow less genuine self, or between the artistic or idealized self and the historical or everyday self. For both men the distinctions are not easy ones; it often becomes difficult to tell the selves apart. In all cases, however, the two men try to come to terms with a sense of doubleness that seems never to be completely absent from their work.

In "Song of Myself" several variations of the double appear. The "Me myself" stands apart from the "trippers and askers," "idle" and "unitary," and manages to be, "Both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it." While to some this may seem like a solitary or Romantic characterization,³⁶ the notion of being both "in and out of the game" can suggest a simultaneous ability to be subject and object, to see the self as other, which George Herbert Mead has suggested is a very real part of being fully human.

In that light, such an ability stands out as an important part of a whole self who recognizes himself as others see him. Though Whitman may be "in character" while making this assertion, some of his early "disciples" documented Whitman's real ability to see himself as an object.³⁷ As early as 1847 Whitman was to write in a journal that he often had the feeling of himself "as two," and as late as his old age conversations with Horace Traubel, Whitman somewhat playfully confessed to not knowing, "which Walt Whitman I am."³⁸

In canto five of "Song of Myself" the doubleness seems to be of body and soul, except that Whitman does not express a preference: "I believe in you my soul, the other I am must not abase itself to you,/ And you must not be abased to the other." Some critics have noted, though, that the various doubles seem at times to be contradictory or incoherent. They argue that Whitman mixes a cosmic representative self with his everyday self in an ineffective and confusing manner, which Whitman himself could not really control.³⁹ When Whitman speaks of "the other I am," he may not have an other clearly in mind, according to these critics. Therefore, just how much critical control Whitman had over his sense of doubleness or over the various personae he employed will become a crucial question when persona is discussed at length in the third and fourth

chapters of this study.

In later poems Whitman's sense of doubleness turned against him at times, most notably and most devastatingly in "As I Ebb'd With The Ocean Of Life":

Oppress'd with myself that I have dared to open
my mouth,
Aware now that amid all that blab whose echoes
recoil upon me I have not once had the least
idea who or what I am,
But that before all my arrogant poems the real
Me stands yet untouch'd, untold, altogether
unreach'd Withdrawn far, mocking me with mock
congratulatory signs and bows
With peals of distant ironical laughter at every
word I have written.

In this poem, then, the dangers of doubleness are more apparent than the advantages. Somewhere the "real" self stands back unable or unwilling to be touched by poetry. While some see this poem as a more realistic presentation of a fallible self than is rendered in earlier Whitman poems, in some ways the usage of a double here is in fact more Romantic than normal for Whitman. Whitman's lament here can be taken as a typical Romantic complaint of being unable to express the unexpressible. In that regard it is similar to a Borges poem, "Matthew 25:30," (which ironically alludes to Whitman as a successful model of a poet), which ends with Borges' lament that he has yet to "write the poem." However, just as "As I Ebb'd With The Ocean Of Life," ends with Whitman's calm assurance that the "flow will return," Borges also rarely believed for long in the

futility of the attempt at self-expression. Still, Whitman's poem may have served as a signal of his realization that the real self is not easily reached. The "real" self may need the persona to help facilitate communication with others, a communication necessary to the achievement of greater self-awareness.

In poems such as "That Shadow My Likeness," and "Goodbye My Fancy," Whitman's doubles are the authorial or idealized self versus the mortal individual. Leslie Fieldler argues that Whitman's "fancy" in "Goodbye My Fancy" is precisely his poetic persona that he is loath to part with, and whom he hopes need not be erased by the death of its creator, the man Walt Whitman.⁴⁰ In the same essay, Fieldler contends that "That Shadow My Likeness" is a richly ironic poem because in it the persona is speaking about the man Walt Whitman as if he were a shadow less real than the persona that he created. Such a perspective is remindful of the distinction that Borges makes in his famous sketch "Borges y yo," or in his story from Ficciones, "Las ruinas circulares," ("The Circular Ruins") only two of the many places where Borges deals with his own sense of doubleness.

Borges, like Whitman, and to some extent, perhaps, because of him, is fascinated by the variations on the theme of a self that entails, comprehends or comprises the other. Borges employs the idea in his poetry,

fiction and essays. In fact one of his later books of poetry is entitled, El otro, el mismo (The Other, The Same). Still, generally his most interesting use of the double is within his fiction.

For example, in "Los teólogos," from El Aleph, two theologians are so antagonistic to each other that one of them finally causes the other to be burned at the stake as a heretic. Yet when the second man dies, also by fire, upon his arrival in heaven he discovers that to God he and his rival, "formed but one person." Borges' doubles are often made up of seeming opposites. In the intricate metaphysical detective story, "La muerte y la brújula" ("Death and the Compass") from Ficciones detective Eric Lönnrot believes that he is solving a crime, by attempting to think like the other, the criminal. However, the real murderer is not the Jewish Kabbalist seeking the name of God through ritualistic murder, as Lönnrot had been led to believe by his own over-intellectualization of the case. The murderer is, instead, his own arch rival, Red Scharlach, who has trapped Lönnrot in order to kill him, by anticipating every false assumption that Lönnrot would make, by more accurately thinking like the other. Scharlach and Lönnrot, seeming opposites, are really two sides of the same coin, a fact further suggested by the redness

in both their names, (Lönnrot and Scharlach suggesting red and scarlet respectively, especially to someone with a little German.) The master detective who attempts to think like the criminal, to become the other, is at least as old as Poe's "The Purloined Letter," but in Borges' story it is the criminal who prevails, though in some sense there is no victor, because the elaborate escapades of the two men have really been a bizarre form of suicide.

More intricacies upon the pattern of the double are evident in the stories, "Las ruinas circulares" and "El sur" from Ficciones and "El otro" ("The Other") from El libro de arena (The Book of Sand). "Las ruinas circulares" deals with a kind of magician who has decided to attempt to dream a man, to bring a being to life by sheer will, artistry and concentration. The long and arduous process of creation is catalogued up to the point that the "son" is complete. Clearly a parable for the creative process itself, the story ends with a devastating shock when the creator discovers that he himself is the mere figment of a prior creator. Whether this story demonstrates, as Rodríguez Monegal suggests, how Borges tried to overcome a sense of being his father's golem,⁴¹ or whether it is, as Christ asserts, a model for Borges' artistic process, perfected from Whitman's model - the creation of an artistic double or persona so that the

original can disappear-⁴² certainly what is true is that Borges believes that the artistic process and the search for self are bound in a fundamental way.

In "El sur," the two selves dealt with have a highly autobiographical base. Juan Dahlmann essentially is Jorge Luis Borges; they have similar family backgrounds, and the accident that befalls Dahlmann is taken right from Borges' own life.⁴³ For Dahlmann as for Borges the contrast is between the sedentary bookish self and the self still tied to ancestral longings for bravery and adventure. Dahlmann's wish-fulfilling end, fighting a knife fight instead of dying from a clumsy, freakish accident and subsequent infection, demonstrates the doubleness of Borges' everyday self, the self conversant in art and literature, and the self tied to the Romanticized world of battles, glory and the gaucho code.

In "El otro" the two selves presented in a fascinating dialogue are the very young Borges of his Geneva school days and the contemporary Borges, an old and finally renown author and visiting professor at Harvard. The young and old men debate over the normal Borgesian preoccupations with time and identity, and charmingly disagree over who is dreaming whom. One subject of disagreement, characteristically, is Whitman. The old

Borges shows an awareness of Whitman's use of persona, while the younger man indignantly protests that his Walt Whitman is "incapable of telling a lie." Borges' ability to sit calmly on a park bench and literally "talk to himself," demonstrates graphically the ease with which he can conceive of self as other.

Still, the short sketch "Borges y yo" ("Borges and I" or "Borges and Myself") is perhaps the most perfect description of this sense of doubleness. In "Borges y yo" the distinction is made between Borges the public figure, the one to whom things happen, and the private self who seems to lose everything to this public man. Borges has termed this distinction to be between the spectacle and the spectator. The "I" lives so that "Borges" can create literature that in part justifies the "I." The "I" comes to realize that he can only be perpetuated through "Borges" even though the "I" recognizes himself less in the works of "Borges" than in the works of many others, or in the "labored strumming of a guitar." Still this distinction between "Borges" and "I" is not even that neat because at the end of the piece comes the admission that "I don't even know which one of us is writing this page," a statement reminiscent of Whitman's "I don't know which Walt Whitman I am." Also the distinction between the private and public

selves again reminds one of Mead's distinction between the "I" and the "me."

Whitman and Borges' preoccupations with the ways of looking at self serve both purposes of self-examination, and an exploration into an experimental theory of the creative process. The trinity that Borges adapts from Whitman arises from similar preoccupations with self and art, but it is distinct enough in its particulars to account for the different tones in the two men's work. To be engaged in the work of art and yet able to stand back from it, this is a goal that Borges derives in part from Whitman.⁴⁴ Both seek reader engagement as a real way to self discovery, and both come to view persona, which at its best can encompass both writer and reader, spectator and spectacle, observer and participant, self and other, as the best means toward such engagement.

Whitman and Borges attempt to engage in dialogue with the other because it may be only through such dialogue that they can best discover and realize their true selves. As Georges Gusdorf argues in Speaking, "The detour through others always leads me back to myself,"⁴⁵ or as Martin Buber has argued, we are only really alive when we are in communion with the genuine other, "All real living is meeting."⁴⁶ Gusdorf's notion that the personality of the writer is created as it is

expressed through communication⁴⁷ also bears great relevance to the use of persona by both men. Whitman and Borges seem to adhere to such convictions, and that is why their search for self normally involves an other, an other especially invited by these experimental writers to join in the dialogue of the experiment in progress.

In the next two chapters the reader and the persona's roles in the ideal trinity will be examined. Then chapter four will cover how the process of true dialogue can degenerate at the slightest relaxation.⁴⁸ Persona that can unite reader and writer and aid in self-illumination, can help to obliterate and obscure the self when used more as a mask in the conventional sense, or as a defense against genuine entry into the work. When persona is used to obscure the self instead of to launch a "shared investigation" between writer and reader, then the reader's participation, his capacity to serve as an "accomplice," is no longer fully realizable.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE

¹ Jorge Luis Borges, with Esther Zemborain de Torres, An Introduction to American Literature (translated by L. Clark Keating and Robert O. Evans), (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1971).

² Borges explicitly stated in a television interview with Dick Cavett on May 6, 1980 that, "I think of myself not as a modern writer; I think of myself as a nineteenth century writer." He went on to say that, "I think of literature in terms of the nineteenth century and the beginnings of the twentieth century...I have no affinity with surrealism, dadism or other tomfoolery."

³ Whitman's family moved from near Huntington, Long Island to Brooklyn when he was not yet four. Borges' family moved from Buenos Aires to the suburb of Palermo, "a poor neighborhood on the outskirts of Buenos Aires," (Rodríguez Monegal, p. 48).

⁴ Especially good sources for the biographical information presented in this section are: Justin Kaplan, Walt Whitman, A Life (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980) and Gay Wilson Allen, The Solitary Singer, (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1955). For Borges see Rodríguez Monegal, and Borges' own autobiographical essay.

⁵ Donald Yates, "Behind 'Borges y yo,'" Modern Fiction Studies 19, (Autumn 1973) 317-324, p. 321. This article also contains a vivid recounting of an anecdote which Borges related that synthesizes his sense of separation between the everyday self and the "Borges" or writing self:

One day the pimp and dance hall entrepreneur came across a reference to a writer names Jorge Luis Borges. "Look here" he exclaimed to Borges, "This fellow has the same name as you. How about that, che, do you know who he is?" Borges looked at the biographical note and the photo of himself taken at a time when he had a moustache and beard and answered, "No, I really don't know him." p. 321.

⁶ Whitman: The Correspondence, Edwin H. Miller, editor, (New York: New York University Press, 1961). In his introduction Miller notes this lack of literary references in the letters and states that Whitman "endeavored to separate the inseparable- Whitman the man and Whitman the poet," p. 4.

⁷ Borges' pride in his military ancestry, besides being frequently noted in interviews, is documented in such poems as, "Isidoro Acevedo," and "Página para recordar al Coronel Suárez, Vencedor en Junín," ("Page To Commemorate Colonel Suarez, Victor at Junin.") Whitman, "prized his ancestry and its long and patriotic association with American history... In the Revolutionary War a maternal ancestor fought under the command of John Paul Jones, while a paternal great uncle was killed in the battle of Long Island." The Columbia Encyclopedia (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968) p. 2322.

⁸ See Kaplan, pp. 114-117. Kaplan discusses the tales at length and also notes that James Russell Lowell felt that the stories had been written "a la Hawthorne," while others have seen the influence of Poe.

⁹ William Carlos Williams, "An Essay on Leaves of Grass," in Whitman, A Collection of Critical Essays (Roy Harvey Pearce, editor) (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962) p. 147.

¹⁰ Whitman in a letter dated July 6, 1865 extols the virtues of "Drum Taps" over Leaves of Grass, and many years later declares that, "When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom'd," "Passage To India," and "Chanting the Square Deific," were his finest works. See, Whitman: The Correspondence (VI) p. 246, and Horace Traubel, With Walt Whitman in Camden (VI) New York: Mitchell Kinnerly, 1915) p. 156. Even more surprising are Borges' claims. In the already quoted Dick Cavett interview, Borges claims that his finest books are, in poetry, El otro, el mismo, and Historia de la Noche and in fiction, El informe de Brodie and El libro de arena.

¹¹ The story is "El otro" ("The Other") and it appears in El libro de arena.

¹² Borges' account of his feeling of being an "abstract perceiver of the world," during a quiet walk in a "timeless" old section of Buenos Aires is first documented in "Sentirse en muerte," in the early book of essays, El idioma de los Argentinos, 1928. Though Borges has since rejected that book as a whole, the short piece "Sentirse en muerte" has been reprinted in the title essay of Historia de la eternidad, 1935, and in "Nueva refutación del tiempo," which can be found in Otras Inquisiciones, 1960.

¹³ See Richard Burgin, Conversations With Jorge Luis Borges (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968) p. 75, in which Borges claims that the writing of poetry and fiction are not essentially different tasks.

¹⁴ Whitman's discussion of slang and the potentialities of the American idiom can be found in his essays, "Slang Today in America," and "An American Primer." Of course Borges' collection of essays, El idioma de los Argentinos, (The Language of the Argentines) is vitally concerned with the uniqueness of Argentine expression.

¹⁵ For example, Donald Yates in his article, "The Four Cardinal Points of Borges," lists Borges' three major themes as "time, infinity and identity," in The Cardinal Points of Borges (Lowell Dunham and Ivar Ivask, editors) (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968) p. 28. J. M. Cohen in his book, Jorge Luis Borges (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1973) thinks that the three principal themes are "time, identity and the relation of truth and fiction," p. 66.

¹⁶ See, "Borges at N.Y.U.," in Prose For Borges, p. 400.

¹⁷ See the afterword to The Book of Sand (Norman Thomas di Giovanni, translator) (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1977) in which Borges, in speaking of the story "The Congress" states, "I have woven into the story-as is my habit- a number of autobiographical elements."

¹⁸ Such an emphasis comes out clearly in stories such as "Las ruinas circulares," in which the creator discovers that he too has been created, or in "El muerto," ("The Dead Man,") in which a young tough who thinks he is in control of a gang has really been proscribed for execution after a period of mock respect for his leadership.

- 19 Ward Welty, "The Persona as Kosmos in 'Song of Myself,'" Walt Whitman Review 25 (1979), 98-105.
- 20 Roland D. Sawyer, Walt Whitman The Prophet Poet (Boston: Gorham Press, 1913.)
- 21 David Daiches, "Walt Whitman Impressionist Prophet," in Leaves of Grass One Hundred Years Later (Milton Hindus, editor) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955) pp. 109-122.
- 22 Esther Shepard, Walt Whitman's Pose (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938).
- 23 A few of the best of the many Whitman as mystic in "Song of Myself" arguments can be found in:
 V. K. Chari, Whitman in the Light of Vedantic Mysticism (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964);
 Malcolm Cowley's Introduction to Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass, the First (1855) Edition pp. vii-xxxvii.
 For a counterargument to these and other Whitman as mystic assertions see, Joseph Benevento, "Whitman and the Eastern Mystic Fallacy, Calamus 20, (June 1981) 12-23.
- 24 Among those who have argued convincingly for Whitman's relation to and focus upon humanity see:
 E. Fred Carlisle, The Uncertain Self: Whitman's Drama of Identity (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1973)
 G. S. Amur, "Whitman's Song of Man- A Humanistic Approach to 'Song of Myself,'" Walt Whitman Review 18 (1972) 50-56.
- 25 See, George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self, Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934) p. xxxv.
- 26 See Mead's chapter on "Self," especially pp. 194-199.
- 27 This essay stresses the irreality of time, space and the individual only to reverse itself at the end with the poignant confession that "The world, unfortunately, is real, I unfortunately, am Borges."
- 28 Mary Kinzie believes that, "Despite Borges' derogation of the idea that 'somehow not to be is to be everything,' this is so constant a premise in his fiction that it not only suggests the jump from the single to the divine but just as forcefully grounds the descent into an other which is smaller than the self," Mary Kinzie, "Recursive Prose," in Prose for Borges p. 39.

29 Cohen, p. 59.

30 George R. Mc Murry, Jorge Luis Borges (New York: Frederick Ungar Co., 1980) p. 95.

31 Ibid, p. 91

32 In the Cavett interview, as well as in his conversations with Richard Burgin, Borges explains his general disenchantment with politics with reference to his own strong individualism.

33 "Borges dissolves the awareness of personality so he can free man from the limitations of his world." Ana Maria Barrenechea, Borges The Labyrinth Maker, (edited and translated by Robert Lima) (New York: New York University Press, 1965) p. 81.

34 Mc Murry, p. 12.

35 See Burgin, p. 107. Borges expresses the wish that if he were to return it would be with "no memory of having been Borges."

36 For example, E. Fred Carlisle argues that the progression of self in "Song of Myself," is from "concentration on the monological self to discovery of the dialogical self," Carlisle, p. 180.

37 John Burroughs, Whitman, A Study (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1896), "Then Whitman had a curious habit of standing apart, as it were, and looking upon himself as of some other person," p. 96.

38 Traubel, (V1), p. 108.

39 See Allen, p. 160, "The ambiguity of the I is disturbing and inconsistent."

40 Leslie Fieldler, "Images of Walt Whitman," in Leaves of Grass One Hundred Years Later. Ed. Milton Hindus. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955) pp. 55-73.

41 Emir Rodríguez Monegal, "Borges: The Reader as Writer," in Prose For Borges, p. 119.

42 Christ, pp. 66-70.

43 In 1938 Borges suffered a severe gash on the head from an open window casement, and an infection subsequently developed that almost proved fatal. Hence his experience closely parallels Dahlmann's.

44 James Britton, in speaking of the various roles that a writer can choose from, speaks principally of the role of spectator versus the role of participant. While Britton very carefully distinguishes between the two roles, he does not seem concerned about the possibility of attempting both roles at once. Borges and Whitman seem to believe that, with the help of the reader and persona, they can be, "Both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it." See James Britton. The Development of Writing Abilities, (London: Macmillan, 1975).

45 Georges Gusdorf, Speaking (La Parole), Translated by Paul T. Brockelman. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), p. 66.

46 Martin Buber, I and Thou, Translated by Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Scribner and Sons, 1970) p. 62.

47 Gusdorf, p. 74.

48 Ibid, p. 75: "at the slightest relaxation the new form degenerates into formula. There comes a moment when the power is lost, when style seems an empty imitation of itself, a whole jumble of conditioned responses in which the person is the victim rather than the master."

Chapter Two

Reader: The Search For "El lector cómplice"

In his widely acclaimed experimental novel, Rayuela (Hopscotch), Julio Cortázar attempts to define a new readership and a new writer-reader relationship. In chapter seventy-nine the character Morelli, an obvious spokesman for Cortázar's literary theories throughout the novel, presents his ideas for the development of a "lector cómplice," or "accomplice reader," who would replace the conventional reader of earlier novels. Morelli argues that a new theory of reading is needed because in the past the reader was limited and restricted by the conventions of the novel. Morelli laments the fact that these conventions and restrictions have come to be considered necessities, and that the more the novel limits us, "to its own ambit... the better the novelist is thought to be."¹ Morelli proposes a new novel that, instead of selfishly clutching the reader, would invite him to become "an accomplice as it whispers to him underneath the conventional exposition."² Morelli seeks a reader who is unafraid to grapple with a text which no longer promises easy answers or eventual resolution.

The new kind of novel and its "accomplice" reader both arise from a rejection of literature as it is normally understood. The reader is given a far more creative and primary role to play. The new novel must take this reader into account, and the new novelist can no longer write merely to impart a lesson or express a view on life or art. The new novelist opts for a third possibility:

...that of making an accomplice of the reader, a traveling companion. Simultaneize him, provided that the reading will abolish reader's time and substitute author's time. Thus the reader would be able to become a coparticipant and cosufferer of the experience through which the novelist is passing, at the same moment and in the same form. ...give him something like a facade, with doors and windows behind which there operates a mystery which the reader-accomplice will have to look for (therefore the complicity) and perhaps will not find (therefore the co-suffering). What the author of this novel might have succeeded in for himself, will be repeated (becoming gigantic, perhaps, and that would be marvelous) in the reader-accomplice. As for the female-reader, he will remain with the facade and we already know that there are very pretty ones among them... With which everything turns out happily, and as for those who protest they can go soak their heads."³

Readers of Rayuela well know that Cortázar's novel, in its subject matter and especially in its extraordinary setup, is a fine example of the kind of novel that Morelli calls for, and that Rayuela is one of the most important novels to come from Latin America in the past

several decades. However, not many critics seem aware that the theory of readership considered experimental and even revolutionary by the admirers of this novel had already been attempted successfully by Whitman in his poetry and by Borges in his short stories. Indeed, by way of the influence of his countryman Borges, Cortázar was introduced to perhaps the most essential member of Whitman's trinity, the participating reader. Indeed the reader that Whitman seeks out throughout his poetry and prose is highly analogous to Cortázar's "lector cómplice."

Whitman's active, participating reader is a persistent concept throughout his creative work, and is also what Borges considered to be the most daring part of Whitman's experimental trinity. Like Morelli's ideal reader, the reader Whitman seeks would also be a travelling companion who is willing to deal with uncertainty, with half-hints or even less than half-hints. Whitman's ideal readers are confident of their ability to supply much of the matter themselves; they believe in their roles as coparticipants in the work. In fact, both Whitman and Borges have put more emphasis on the crucial need for such a reader, on his importance and centrality to the creative act and on the artist's inability to complete the act without a discerning, participating reader than Cortázar ever did in Rayuela.

Though it is not my purpose here to draw lengthy comparisons between Whitman and Cortázar, it is still interesting to note that a theory considered avant garde by Cortázar's readers in the 1960's was already well developed by Whitman by the 1860's. Borges, it seems, was one of the few readers who really appreciated and understood Whitman's readership theory, and was then able to adapt its principles to his own fiction.⁵

Both Whitman and Borges seek out a genuine other in the reader to help with the search for self and to encourage a similar investigation on the part of the reader. In other words, Whitman and Borges, often accused of not having any "real" characters in their work aside from themselves, are innocent of that accusation precisely because they always assume the reality and importance of their readers, whom they encourage to contribute to the development of the work of art. Both men sought an accomplice in the reader, someone willing to be an equal partner in their literary and self-exploratory ventures. No reader is turned away who comes to the work willing to help in the search, willing to take part in the, "perpetual journey," instead of expecting resolution, neatness and a set of ready-made answers.

Whitman's belief in the need for an active readership is a persistent one throughout his poetry and prose,

though later on in his career he came to recognize that the potential for accomplice readers was not as great as he had at first envisioned. An examination of Whitman's prose pronouncements on the need for such a reader, and the nature of what reading should be, must first be undergone in order to investigate how these ideas carried through in his poetry, and how they later came to play a prominent part in the works of Borges.

Whitman's 1855 preface to Leaves of Grass is noted for its definition of a new poet and his new poetry, but is also at least as concerned with the new reader. When Whitman asserts that the "United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem," his explanation of that statement ends in his assurance that what the United States is "best or most in" is not in its "legislatures," "colleges," "churches," nor even its "inventors," but "always most in the common people." Whitman's new readership is to come first from the common people of the United States because through their political institutions and in their everyday lives they had already accepted the notion that "all men are created equal." Hence they can most naturally assume the role of coparticipant in the work of art because they alone would be naturally set against conceiving of an author as a superior being of any sort. Whitman's complaints against European, or as he called it,

"feudal" literature, were not only complaints about the princes and kings that peopled the pages of such literature, but also against the traditionally hierarchical set-up of author over reader which he sought to eliminate. Clearly a democracy seemed to be the ideal location for such an experiment.⁶

Later on in the preface Whitman states that the poet has to bring, "everything to bear on your individual character"; the poet cannot take the people for granted but must treat them as individuals. The poet is always aware that, "the others are as good as he, only he sees it and they do not." The "great poets say we are no better than you, what we enclose you enclose. Did you suppose there could be only one Supreme? There can be unnumbered supremes." Whitman's meanings often have philosophical and poetic import at once. Clearly the idea of many supremes can be taken, and has been taken, as a belief in some form of pantheism. However, on a poetic level, Whitman is denouncing the old writer-audience relationship which set the writer on top, from where he preached down at the people. All readers in potential are equal to the writer and by a full participation in the poem they can come to an appreciation of their own powers. Whitman wants a democratic readership; no reader should feel unequal to put him or herself squarely in the writer's place.

There is an encouragement of interchangeability here that stems in part from notions of the self as other already considered in the first chapter of this study.

Whitman's closing line to his 1855 preface, "The proof of the poet is that his country absorb him as affectionately as he has absorbed it," has often been misunderstood. Many have seen that sentence, in retrospect, as an ironic line in which Whitman called for a general approval which he never received. Certainly Whitman was disappointed by his lack of popular appeal, but the closing line of the 1855 preface is more sophisticated than the naive call for popular acceptance that it is too often considered to be.

The statement sets forth a basic tenet of Whitman's readership theory. For this poetry to be successful Whitman's reader must absorb the "poet" (who is in fact the composite poet-persona to be discussed in the next chapter) as much as the person Walt Whitman has attempted to absorb the reader by the creation of the poet-persona which encompasses his genuine self. The reader must find his or her place in the work, must fit into the poems as fully and as trustingly as Whitman himself has. Self and reader must meet, in part through the unifying device of the composite persona or character, "Walt

Whitman," who has no possibility of success if the reader will not add his or her part to the composite. Otherwise there can be no meeting, no dialogue, no true "proof" of the success of the poet. As later examples from Whitman's prose will demonstrate, he fully hoped that his readers would take "Song of Myself" especially to be their poem. As Cowley, Fieldler and others have suggested, the original rendition of the poem was a far more anonymous one,⁷ and was thereby even better suited to allow each reader to place him or herself inside. Whitman wants his readers to abandon the feudal models just as they had abandoned feudal politics and join him as equals in the poetic experiment.⁸

Whitman's anonymous reviews and other writings about the early editions of Leaves of Grass reinforce the readership theory espoused in the 1855 preface. In an unpublished preface he wrote for the 1855 edition, Whitman informs his readers that, "Indeed I have not done the work and cannot do it. But you must do the work to really make what is within the following song- which if you do I promise you return and satisfaction earned by you yourself far more than ever book before has given you."⁹ Clearly Whitman believes that the readers must make the book, must absorb it and place themselves into the work as co-creators.

In an anonymous review written by Whitman that is reprinted in Leaves of Grass One Hundred Years Later Whitman notes that the poet of Leaves of Grass calls for the reader to go "hand in hand" with him on the journey. The poet also seems to enjoy enticing the reader, "Rather is his pleasure to elude you and provoke you for deliberate purposes of his own." Even before he wrote Leaves of Grass Whitman was interested in the notion of an active reader. Allen tells us that as early as 1849 Whitman heartily approved of an article on Tennyson that suggested that the best art called for suggestion for its effect and self-exertion on the part of the reader.¹⁰ Whitman continued to call for the active reader for many years, though later in life he began to appreciate what a rare being such a reader really was.

In "Democratic Vistas" Whitman's misgivings about democracy in the United States extend to his discouragement in not encountering more active readers. Whitman's complaint that a great literature needs great readers was fully consistent with his notion that the reader had an equal responsibility to the fruition of the work of art. "Literature has yet to recognize the people," he laments in this essay, but he also implies that the people are not responding to a literature that is attempting such recognition. His literature is democratic

in its stance that all are equal partners to it. However, the readers must first awake from their accustomed lack of responsibility that conventional literature had lulled them into:

In fact a new theory of literary composition for imaginative works of the very first class and especially for highest poems is the sole course open to the States. Books are to be called for and supplied on the assumption that the process of reading is not a half sleep but in the highest sense a gymnast's struggle, that the reader is to do something for himself or herself, must be on the alert, must himself or herself construct indeed the poem, argument, history, metaphysical essay, the text furnishing the clue, the start or framework. Not the book needs so much to be the complete thing, but the reader of the book does.

Whitman wants the reader to go through the book and experience what the writer himself needed to go through to compose the work. As Gusdorf would put it a century later, since good writing is a result of tremendous effort and struggle, then the reading should be correspondingly challenging.¹¹ In the 1876 preface Whitman reiterated his notion that his poems were meant to be for all people, calling Leaves of Grass the poems of "average identity (of yours whoever you are now reading these lines)... To sing the song of that law of average Identity of yourself consistently with the devine law of the universal is a main intention of those Leaves." Whitman also refers to the, "half hints and even less than half hints," that he believes are

his responsibility to supply; we must do the rest ourselves, and so much of the final meaning is left to us.

In an essay entitled, "Poetry Today in America," Whitman claims that the new poetry, "Like all modern tendencies has direct or indirect reference to the reader, to you or me, to the central identity of everything, the almighty Ego." Near the conclusion of his Specimen Days once again Whitman tells his "poetic student and friend" that, "I only seek to put you in rapport. Your own brain, heart, evolution, must not only understand the matter, but largely supply it." In "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads," Whitman explicitly announces that, "I seek less to state or display any theme or thought and more to bring you, reader, into the atmosphere of that theme or thought, there to pursue your own flight." Bucke's early biography of Whitman quotes the poet as saying, "I am sure my book necessitates that its reader transpose him or herself into that central position and become the actor, experiencer himself or herself of every page, every aspiration every line."¹² In fact Whitman confesses to Bucke that he may know less about the meaning of Leaves of Grass than some of his readers.

Clearly Whitman sets forth tenets about the writer-reader relationship that later prove quite dear

to Borges. The writer needs the reader, for the reader in a real sense creates the writing, fills in and expands upon the meanings. The author is there to suggest, entice, perhaps even goad, but the reader must become an equal partner, must seek to contribute to the work as fully as possible. The apt symbol for the book that both Whitman and Borges wanted to deliver is present in Borges' poem, "Arte poética." In that poem Borges says that art is like a river, which is always the same river, but also never the same because it is constantly flowing, always in process. Everyone comes to the same work of art but no one ever perceives exactly the same thing. Whitman clearly wanted his poetry to attain its different levels of meaning from the different people willing to enter into it fully.

However, Whitman came to realize that the great reader he envisioned was a rare species indeed. In "Ventures on an Old Theme," he states that, "To have great poetry we need great audiences." In the preface to "Goodbye My Fancy," he says, "To have great heroic poetry we need great readers- an heroic appetite and audience. Have we at present any such?" Borges applauded Whitman's experimental view of the reader as perhaps his greatest triumph of all, but during his lifetime few fully active readers were apparent. John

Burroughs may have been in that group, in part because he had direct contact with Whitman. Burroughs was aware that "Whitman always aimed to make his reader an active partner in his poetic enterprise."¹³ He also felt that, "One source of his charm is that we each see some phase of ourselves in him... Whitman's aim is only to thrust the riddles before you, to give you a new sense of them, and start the game afresh."¹⁴

Still, readers like Burroughs were in the minority. In his old age conversations with Horace Traubel, Whitman recognized this fact very well, but still clung tenaciously to the concept of the active, participating reader. Whitman argues for the open-endedness of his work by telling Traubel, "I maybe do not know all of my own meanings," and again, "I am still looking for some of the meanings myself."¹⁵ Whitman and Traubel agree with the notion that perhaps half the greatness of Homer and Shakespeare resides in their readers.¹⁶ Whitman jokes with Traubel over how much of a Whitman expert he has become, predicting that, "it will after a while get to be 'I Horace Traubel, a cosmos, of Camden a son' and so forth. That is what the Leaves amount to anyhow-that's what I mean them to amount to, there is a certain point in their evolution where they cease to be my creation, possession."¹⁷ This sentiment is reinforced towards the end of the first volume of conversations, "It does not

seem like my book- it is your book too- anybody's who chooses to claim it."¹⁸ And while that statement might seem like a commonplace if spoken by most other authors, coming from Whitman it serves to summarize a life long commitment to the active encouragement of full reader participation in his work.

The problem is that only those who really did choose to claim the book as their own, by putting themselves into the composite, or by joining the author on the poetic journey as coparticipants, could catch the entire "drift." So Whitman must sadly admit to Traubel that, "It has often occurred to me that perhaps all through the poems I assume too largely the responding sympathetic gifts of the reader."¹⁹ Later on (in volume two of the Traubel interviews) Whitman accepts the idea that, though his book is still potentially for everybody, it will likely attract only a minority: "I don't look for a vast audience, for great numbers of endorsers, absorbers, just now- perhaps not even after a while. But here and there- every now and then- one, several will raise the standard, Leaves of Grass will finally find its way."²⁰ Here and there the poem was to find an audience, but perhaps Borges was the first reader-writer who could fully implement a practical appreciation of Whitman's theory.

So Whitman, from 1855 right up to the time of his death, argued for an active readership through his prose works. One then wonders just how prevalent this notion really was in his poetry- what did Whitman do to encourage and create the accomplice reader in his actual works of art? Are there examples in his poetry of the reader actively sought after as coparticipant? Are there opportunities for the reader to put him or herself in the poet's place? Is Whitman intentionally open-ended or inconclusive in order to allow us to "pursue our own flight"? Is a proper reading of Whitman's work in essence a "shared investigation," as Borges would put it? I believe that the answer to all of these questions is yes, and with the help of some accomplice critics and a close look at a few of Whitman's key poetic statements on the new art of reading, the evidence can be readily shared.

Fortunately, there have been several critics who have paid some attention to what Whitman was attempting to do with his readers. For example, Roy Harvey Pearce contends that Whitman's "Calamus" poems are all about how to be a good reader; the "I" of these poems includes the reader, according to Pearce.²¹ He argues that in "Calamus" and in "Children of Adam" Whitman defined the poetic process and the reader's role in it. Charles Feidelson argues that the I and you in "Song of Myself"

merge; the audience is potentially both the subject matter and the creator of the poems.²² Feidelson feels that Whitman's poetry is "primarily a reflection of the literary method in which the writer and his subject become part of the stream of language."²³ James Miller notes that Whitman encouraged the reader to be independent; "the reader must make his own discoveries through his own experience."²⁴ Leslie Fieldler contends that "no poet engages the reader with so fervid and intimate a clasp, no writer describes the act of reading so erotically."²⁵ However, Fieldler believes that this phenomenon results because Whitman is so unsure of a readership, because he begins to suspect that there are few accomplices out there: "It is an odd subject for the Great American Poem ("Song of Myself") the celebration (half heroic, half comic) of the mating between an I whose reality is constantly questioned and an even more elusive you."²⁶ Fieldler suggests that Whitman merely doubled the self to assure himself of a responsive audience, a charge that Christ levels against Borges, whom he says took his cue from Whitman.²⁷

However, Whitman's belief in a real other is proved by his conviction that the reader must participate in and contribute to the poems. Whitman may have conceived of a double self, but this conception did not alter his conviction that each reader could be a real

and active participant in the work of art. Whitman believed, as he told Traubel, that "a great many of my readers credit my writings with things that do not attach to the writings themselves, but to the person who reads them- things they supply- bring with them."²⁸

Whitman never conceived of his readers as "mere dreams or dots"; he sought the genuine other for participation in his poetic experiment.

Don Bogen notes that Whitman's original version of "Who Learns My Lesson Complete," from the 1855 Leaves of Grass, contains direct invitations for audience participation, and seeks a genuine other outside the poem. Bogen argues that the original poem is seeking from its audience, "direct participation in the creation of the poem."²⁹ Each of us must individually experience the lesson in order to learn it. "In a sense the poet is asking the reader to trade places with him, to be the I who espouses personal wonder and then moves outward to embrace a you who is Walt Whitman."³⁰ For Bogen the poem's key lines are the last two, which are deleted in later versions of the poem: "Come, I should like to hear you tell me what there is in yourself that is not just as wonderful./ and I should like to hear the name of anything between Sunday morning and Saturday night that is not just as wonderful."

Thomas Rountree has argued that all of "Song of

Myself" is a vivid example of Whitman's principle of "indirect expression" in action. Only the reader, through reciprocity, can bring meaning to the poem, for as Whitman said in the 1855 preface, a great poem is a beginning to a man or woman. Rountree notes the frequency of direct address in the poem as a prime example of Whitman's attempts to elicit a response.³¹ Eric Birdsall also has noted that Whitman's poetry called for an "active and necessary partner."³² Among book length studies, one work which gives a thorough examination of the I-you relationship in Whitman's poetry is E. Fred Carlisle's The Uncertain Self: Whitman's Drama of Identity. Carlisle's thesis is that Whitman's poetry elaborates a self "that emerges and exists mainly in relationship with others."³³ Carlisle stresses, therefore, that Whitman's work must be approached as a "man speaking to others... the poem is not just an object of analysis but instead a spoken word that engages the reader and calls on him to respond."³⁴ Carlisle argues that Whitman discovers the value of the dialogic self through the process of writing poetry and through the evolvment of his poetic persona. Carlisle thereby makes distinctions between the monologic and dialogic self and prefers the latter because it stands in relation to others; it does not see the others as mere extensions of itself. Even so, one must admit that, for the most part, the

only real character in the actual poetry is "Whitman." The only recognized and engaged other is the reader himself who is outside the poem, but who is invited to step inside and thereby make the poem dialogic. Only an accomplice reader can rescue Whitman from accusations of self-centeredness, by agreeing to share in the composite persona made up of self and reader. Whitman's poems consistently express this need for a genuine other to participate in the poetry in order to make it whole.

In the "Inscriptions" poems that begin the final editions of Leaves of Grass, Whitman's invitation begins. In "Shut Not Your Doors," Whitman tells us, "the words of my book nothing, the drift of it everything." It is a book that the intellect will not grasp so much as the "untold latencies" that will "thrill" to it. In "Poets to Come" Whitman claims that he has written but a few "indicative words for the future." He turns his head to us and then "averts his face/ Leaving it to you to prove and define it/ Expecting the main things from you." Since his poetry is for all of us, we are all potentially "poets to come." Each reader who will pick up the "latencies" will have a start towards a new way of viewing both life and art. Whitman's words often have this dual philosophical and aesthetic significance. In the simple words of "Poets to Come" he is claiming that all of his readers are potential writers, the main things

are left to us. This belief in the creative potential of the reader is shared by two of Borges' most interesting fictional authors, Pierre Menard and Herbert Quain. Whitman's belief in the reader's potential opens up a wealth of new possibilities to the discerning and creative reader.

The "Calamus" poems are, as Pearce noted, good places to look for a discussion of the reading process. In "Whoever You Are Holding Me Now In Hand," Whitman emphasizes the difficulty of the journey he is calling on his readers to make. "The way is suspicious, the result uncertain, perhaps destructive/ You would have to give up all else, I alone would expect to be your sole and exclusive standard." This passage echoes Christ's statement that one must "give up all else to follow me." Just as Christ tells the rich man that he should not follow him if he cannot give up all of his possessions, Whitman tells us that if we do not comprehend, "that which I hinted at," simply to "release me and depart on your way." Still, in spite of the Christ parallels, Whitman's hints are at least as poetic as they are religious or philosophic. The road is uncertain precisely because the poet no longer can give guarantees; it is up to the reader to make of or take from the poems what he or she can. This is why harm may come as easily as good; the experience of reading is as much involved

in risk taking and personal agitation as the process that was involved in writing the poems.

If the reader is not ready to take Walt Whitman by the hand and join him in the search, then the hints will never be understood, and the reader should return to more conventional poetry. When Whitman says to "give up all else" he suggests that to understand his poems we have to revolt against the limitations of conventional literature. Borges is right to call Whitman's work a bold, incredible experiment. If the reader is not ready for the close commitment called for by Whitman, if the reader is not ready to "touch" the writer, then the book cannot function properly. Indeed part of the very function of the book is to "certainly elude you," but the accomplice reader is ready to accept that premise.

When Whitman says in "Scented Herbage of My Breast," "I do not know whether many passing by will discover you or inhale your faint order, but I know a few will," he is noting that he already realizes, by 1860, that his work is too indirect, his hints too "faint" to have mass appeal. Still his work is out there, is natural like the calamus plant, and hence is available to anyone willing to make the effort, willing to venture "In Paths Untrodden."

In "I Saw in Louisiana a Live Oak Growing," Whitman beautifully expresses his need for others; no joyous

leaves can sprout from his creativity without a responding other: "But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves standing alone there without its friend near, for I knew I could not." He is not a Romantic writer who can create from the depths of his separate soul; his writing calls for the participation of the reader. In "Full of Life Now," the closing "Calamus" poem, Whitman suggests that even after death he will return, will be made real again by those readers willing to take his poetry to heart: "Now it is you, compact, visible, realizing my poems, seeking me." Whitman thereby suggests that the dialogue need never end since one can never be too sure that he is not "now with you." Whitman's search for relation occurs most genuinely outside the poem in that he seeks relation with his readers; yet the reader who is willing to participate thereby enters into the poem and the poetic experience.

While Whitman's reference to this process and the reader's part in it is constant, especially in poems written before old age,³⁵ there are perhaps three poems in which Whitman most clearly spells out his faith in the active reader's potential and necessity. All of these poems were written before 1860; they are "Salut Au Monde," "Song of the Open Road," and "Song of Myself."

"Salut Au Monde" is the poem that Borges has specifically alluded to in essays and lectures as the poem in

which the accomplice reader is most directly evident. While this poem has too often been discounted as a simple geography book catalogue of places and people that Whitman felt impelled to list, it is in fact far more innovative in its pattern than a first glance might indicate. The poem begins, "O take my hand Walt Whitman/ Such gliding wonders, such sights and sounds." One has to ask, if Walt Whitman is being addressed then who is the speaker? Clearly, as Borges so well appreciated, the speaker is the reader, who attains direct participation in the poem by being able to address "Whitman" directly. In the next chapter the nature of the character "Walt Whitman" will be examined carefully; for now the necessary fact is that the person Walt Whitman who wrote "Salut Au Monde" has let us view the composite persona in formation. If his readers will take him by the hand, together they can become "Walt Whitman," who only is capable of the tremendous vision and unity of the poem.

As Gusdorf has said, the perfect communication releases us from all sense of limitations.³⁶ And this poem is about transcending all limitations by joining ourselves with the writer, who thereby is buoyed by identity and relation and can thus express the message of the poem-universal relation and brotherhood. "What do you see Walt Whitman?" "What do you hear Walt Whitman?" are questions by Whitman the person or "self"

and by the readers; two members of the trinity converge to cause the tremendous vista of the third. It is not Walt Whitman the historic person who haughtily claims connection with the universe just because he can name many people and places. It is Whitman and his companion readers joined together and thus limitlessly able to see relation and connection. Hence by the disarmingly simple device of allowing us to ask questions of the character "Walt Whitman," Whitman has allowed us a direct way into the entire process and signification of the poem.³⁷

It is of course no coincidence that "Song of the Open Road" follows "Salut Au Monde" in the final edition of Leaves of Grass. As Carlisle argues, "Song of the Open Road" is one poem where Whitman defines the genuine self as one tied to relation, discovering who he is through encounter. On the aesthetic level, the poem is not realized until it is encountered genuinely by the reader who is willing to take the author by the hand. Carlisle believes that by the end of the poem Whitman has discovered that, "self discovery is itself a process, a live-long endeavor- it does not take place in a moment of mystic illumination, nor does one move steadily towards it as if it were the summit of a great mountain."³⁸ As Carlisle points out, Martin Buber believed that real moments of full humanity occur between the I and the you, or, from a literary standpoint, writer and reader; they

can never be located solely in the I or the you. Clearly Whitman's whole theory of reading is therefore compatible with Buber's definition of relation. The I needs the you to create the poem's meaning, the poem may seem to be a constant but it is never the same to any reader or even to the same reader twice. Carlisle's use of Buber is fruitful here especially in its elucidation of the idea that Whitman's love making to the reader or his challenging of the reader are not mere gimmicks, but are instead based on the most authentic of needs. When Whitman states in "Song of Myself" that if his thoughts "are not yours as much as mine they are nothing or next to nothing." he really seems to believe that this is true. Without the reader's generous participation the creative act is incomplete.

Hence in "Song of the Open Road," the invitation to travel with Whitman is an invitation to a journey of the self and the soul, but it is also a poetic adventure. "Whoever you are come travel with me! Traveling with me you find what never tires." Whitman claims that on his journey we will find "realization," "adhesiveness" and the "efflux of the soul," if we open ourselves up to the process of communication. Carlisle is right to assert that Whitman discovers in this poem that self discovery is a process; it is in large part the communication process, and one prime avenue of that process is Whitman's

new theory on the relation between writer and reader.

Again easy resolution is not promised, "Listen I will be honest with you,/ I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new prizes." Clearly his poems are, on some level, those "new prizes." Whitman wants us to know "the universe itself as a road, as many roads, as roads for traveling souls." This notion is very similar to Borges' idea in "The Garden of Forking Paths," which is also a work that deals with life's meanings and the province of art and its audience. The forking paths suggest the infinite possibilities of life and the many different ways any one work of fiction can be interpreted, or even that more than one interpretation possibly may be valid at the same time. The open road is also the delineation of a process that suggests both an approach to life and an open-ended continuity and reciprocity in poetry. Both men constantly mix the philosophical with the aesthetic.

"Song of the Open Road" concludes with a question, a device typically employed by Whitman to encourage open-endedness: "Will you give me yourself: Will you come travel with me? Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?" Whitman here almost implores us to join him in his poetic and life experiments, even though he realizes that we must all decide freely to travel the road; as he phrased it in "Song of Myself," "you must

travel it for yourself." Only the you can bring itself to communion with the other; no poet or person can force reciprocity. In "Song of the Open Road," Whitman ardently asks each reader to become a "traveling companion," thereby anticipating, by over a hundred years, Cortazar's similar plea for such readers in Rayuela.

"Song of Myself," by far Whitman's longest poem, and generally recognized as his most important, unsurprisingly has key things to say about the reader. From its very first lines the poem establishes the I as a composite, "I celebrate myself,/ And what I assume you shall assume,/ For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you." Some have denied Whitman the right to "assume" for all of his readers; however, he only really does so for the active, participating reader who willingly joins him on the journey that is the poem. The shelves "crowded with perfumes" in the second canto can certainly be taken for book shelves which are cluttered with attractive and "fragrant" works, but the "atmosphere" of Whitman's poem has no "taste of the distillation."

When in that same canto Whitman addresses the reader directly, he does so to ask a question that has probably made quite a few literary critics uncomfortable, "Have you practis'd so long to learn to read? Have you felt so proud to get at the meaning of poems?" The calm

disdain of these lines can be devastating, but their real intent is to reveal that the old way of interpreting literature misses the mark; literature should not have a fixed or definitive meaning for us to "get." Instead Whitman asks us to:

Stop this day and night with me and you shall
possess the origin of all poems,
...You shall no longer take things at second
or third hand, nor look through the eyes of the
dead, nor feed on the spectres in books
You shall not look through my eyes either nor
take things from me,
You shall listen to all sides and filter them
from yourself.

The reader is the "origin of all poems," there is no literature without a reader to respond to the writer. Yet what Whitman is proposing is more than a commonplace because he suggests a method of reading that is primary and participatory, hence no longer a second or third hand process. All that we read we will filter through ourselves, thereby recreating it, or really creating it fully for the first time. Hence Whitman's poem is in part about how to read his poem; he has placed the hints in his book, and it is up to us to make the discoveries for ourselves first-hand.

When Whitman later in the poem says that what he confides in us, "I might not tell everyone but I will tell you." he is presenting a richly ironic line. Anyone who reads that line can be "you" but the only you who is really addressed or engaged here is the individual,

accomplice reader. Hence throughout the poem the you is indeed elusive and never fixed; it is up to someone outside the poem to allow for the possibility of a genuine dialogue with a real "you." Everyone is invited to the "meal equally set, no one is turned away," but not all will accept the invitation.

Whitman sees communication as the key to understanding of the self, and as the key to what the creative process can uncover. Speech he refers to as the "twin of my vision." Speech is personified long enough to tease the poet, "Walt, you contain enough, why don't you let it out then?" Obviously the answer to that question is that communication implies risk- will the self find corresponding willingness for openness and reciprocity in the reader? Whitman understands that he is asking the reader to take risks; everyone must ultimately make the decision to travel the road for himself or herself.

Whitman wants to believe that, "It is you talking as much as myself, I act as the tounge of you," but he knows that this is only as true as the reader will allow it to be. Without reader compliance all that he asserts is "nothing or next to nothing." So at the end of the poem Whitman is almost wistful when he says, "Listener up there! What have you to confide in me?... Talk honestly for no one else hears you, and I stay only

a minute longer... Will you speak before I am gone? Will you prove already too late?" The poem has to end at some point on the page; Whitman can do only so much to encourage the reader to participate. Hence at the end of the poem he can only promise to "stop somewhere waiting for you"; the poem ends but its meanings can reverberate through the thoughts of the participating reader. Whitman intentionally leaves the poem open-ended to allow for maximum reader input. Therefore, as early as 1855, Whitman had already set down in both prose and poetry the basic tenets for a reading theory that still is considered avant garde today.

Many critics seem to have been confused by Whitman's attempts at communication with his reader. Gay Wilson Allen insists that Whitman should have resigned himself to the fact that he was merely, "an author speaking through the medium of literary art,"³⁹ instead of trying to make love to his readers. Martin Green complains that Whitman wanted "partisans, not critics"; however Green never realizes that though he is essentially correct in that assessment he is missing the fascinating potential inherent in the coparticipating partisan that Whitman envisioned.⁴⁰ Borges is among the still relatively select number of such partisans who appreciate the theoretical innovations that Whitman pioneered,

particularly those regarding the reader, and so Borges has consistently developed and refined the experiment in his own writing.

Borges like Whitman believes in the necessity of the active reader, believes that the reading creates the writing, and gives the reader opportunities to get directly involved in the work of art. He also gives the reader a variety of options and choices, and believes that the question is often superior to the answer, if indeed an answer is possible. Like Whitman, Borges is inclined to say, "I answer that I cannot answer, you must find out for yourselves." Finally, Borges, like Whitman, treats the reader as real, as perhaps the only certain "given" in his work, for only a genuine other can have the effect upon his work that Borges has always claimed the reader is capable of.

Ronald Christ accuses both Whitman and Borges of having no real other represented in their work, of merely doubling the self. He also accuses Borges of merely employing interviews as another way of talking to himself.⁴¹ While there is evidence to suggest that Borges sometimes plays the role of "Borges" while being interviewed by people who are more interested in his fame than in his person, this fact does not preclude the possibility that Borges may sometimes use these interviews, just as he sometimes employs his fiction,

as opportunities to reveal fascinating aspects of his genuine self. For example, in the introduction Borges wrote for Richard Burgin's Conversations With Jorge Luis Borges, he refers to dialogue as a form of "shared investigation," suggesting that in talking to Burgin he has learned more about himself. Quoting Whitman from "When I Read the Book," Borges says, "I think I know little or nothing of my real life," but implies that dialogue is one means available to a greater awareness of self. Borges also tells us that he is rich in "perplexities not certainties," and these he is willing to share with Burgin, as he has with the readers of his fiction. Borges also expressed to Burgin a belief that, "every time a book is read or reread then something happens to the book."⁴² Borges believes that the reading has a great and always varied effect on the writing.

Borges has always maintained that the reading is in some sense more important than the writing. Alistair Reid insists that Borges takes pains to identify himself first as a reader.⁴³ Rodríguez Monegal has quoted Borges' early pronouncement to his readers in Fervor de Buenos Aires that, "Our inconsequential selves differ but little; the circumstance that you are the reader and I the writer of these exercises is accidental and irrelevant."⁴⁴ As with Whitman, Borges' relation to his reader stems initially from his ideas on identity

and unity, but the aesthetic consequences of the writer-reader interchangeability are again to democratize the relationship, and to expect much from the average reader, at least in potential. To Borges the reader is extremely essential, and very real.

As A. C. Dyson points out, "His insistence that each reader adds more to the work he reads than the author did could make us more, not less real than the author himself."⁴⁵ Borges really does seem to believe what he says in "Tlön, Ubqar, Orbis Tertius; the person who recites the lines of Shakespeare becomes, in some sense, William Shakespeare. The reading creates the writing, and the reader has a creative role to play. As Dyson notes, in Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths," Borges "allows the reader to add twists of his own."⁴⁶ Dyson also points out that Borges' conclusion to The Book of Sand expresses the hope that his book will, "go on branching out in the hospitable imaginations of those who now close it."⁴⁷ The emphasis is always on an open-ended questioning.

Borges has called Whitman, "perhaps the most complex and daring adventurer in all literature,"⁴⁸ and it is his relation to his readers that Borges was impressed by. "When you are reading Walt Whitman you hear Walt Whitman's voice, a dialogue is created."⁴⁹

Borges also attempts to create such a dialogue; though Borges is less directly intimate with his readers, (he does not claim, even figuratively to hold our hands, nor does he ever address us as "reader dear"), he does wish to share the creative process with us first-hand. However, instead of spelling out his theories in essays, Borges created essay-form fiction, in which he could present his theory and simultaneously show it in action. "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote," and "Examen de la obra de Herbert Quain," ("Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote," and "An Examination of the Work of Herbert Quain,") are the two stories in which Borges most explicitly presents his view of the participating reader and his potential. These two stories introduce a view of the writer-reader relationship that Borges utilizes and develops throughout much of his subsequent fiction.

Borges' fiction is indeed rich in "perplexities, not certainties." As he says in his introduction to Otras Inquisiciones it is the imminence of a revelation, not the revelation itself, that makes up the aesthetic event. The writer can only suggest; the reader must complete the act as he or she sees fit. In Pierre Menard and Herbert Quain Borges introduces two prototypical writer-readers who show the way to a reading of Borges, and to all of the writers who were to follow his example. His theory on the reader is very similar

to Whitman's, and if its end results seem different that is only because what Borges wants to share with his readers is a sense of confusion and even chaos, which is different from the sense of cosmos that Whitman often seeks to explore with us.⁵⁰

On the surface, "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote," is a comic story, a type of elaborate hoax. The story is written in essay form by a pedantic narrator who recounts the literary works of a recently deceased friend, Menard. The humor comes in part from the ridiculous obscurity of all the published works considered, even though most of Menard's interests correspond to Borges' own. In any case, the narrator argues that Menard's greatest work is an "invisible" one that he never published- his rewriting of two chapters and a fragment of a third of Cervantes' Don Quixote. Menard does not translate, memorize, modernize or copy the work, he rewrites verbatim as Pierre Menard, thereby rejecting the notion that the creation of this book should be unique to Miguel de Cervantes. Menard sought to create pages that would coincide line for line with Cervantes' masterpiece, but be by Menard. He meant to "continue being Pierre Menard and arrive at the Quixote through the experiences of Pierre Menard." Both the narrator and Menard himself, through letters he had written to the narrator, inform us that Menard's Quixote

is far more significant than the publication of the original work by Cervantes. After all, Cervantes wrote spontaneously and as himself; Menard had to try to recreate a work without any of the aids or perspectives that were natural to Cervantes, such as Spanish local color or Catholicism. Menard's work, therefore, is superior to Cervantes' because it arises from a purer aesthetic principle; it can in no way be accidental or incidental. While these claims of Menard seem preposterously amusing and pretentious, they do force us to reflect on the dynamics of reading, and on what our role as readers really is.

In one rather amusing but extremely effective passage in the story, the narrator quotes two identical passages from Don Quixote, the first by Cervantes, the second arrived at independently by Menard. The narrator finds Menard's version vastly superior; its concepts and language are both surprising, richly ironic and extraordinary in Menard, but predictable and inevitable in Cervantes. The conventional reader of this story-essay has a source of amusement and satire in this story of a pretentious and obscure writer who tries to claim precedence over Cervantes. However, the accomplice reader goes beyond the joke (though enjoying that too), and in so doing discovers in Menard a prototype for Borges' reader, someone who recreates a work of literature by

putting his or her own particular self into the work and making it his or her own, without changing any of the words. Menard is essentially an argument for Borges' notion that the reading creates the writing, and even the writer, though the creativity of the reader normally remains an "invisible" work. It is nearly as challenging a task for us to read the Quixote with full understanding as it was for Cervantes to write it. The near impossibility but undiminished nobility of attempting the task makes an active sensitive reading of the Quixote a type of Quixotic activity all its own. Furthermore, Menard, a very marked individual, creates the Quixote in a way unique to himself, just as any active reader must do.⁵¹

Don Quixote is an appropriate vehicle for Menard, and thus for Borges, because in it Cervantes, by mixing fact and fantasy so elaborately (as when Don Quixote and Sancho get to read about their own exploits) has created an early example of the kind of open-ended work of art that Borges ardently believed in. Don Quixote shares with Leaves of Grass and many of Borges' stories a quality of open-endedness; within the characters of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza we are implicitly invited to locate our own. Additionally, just as we can think of Menard's attempt as a mere farce, so did many people once consider

Cervantes' work to be merely an elaborate joke. However, to a participating reader, Cervantes' work redefines heroism and forever blurs the borders of reality and fiction; it does not merely, "smile Spain's chivalry away." Menard reminds us that the Quixote started out as an "agreeable book," but is now a formidable classic. Clearly, then, it is the readers who have accounted for half of Cervantes' greatness over the years, just as Whitman had said was the case with Shakespeare and Homer.⁵²

Menard refuses to accept the idea of author worship. He believes that, "To think, to analyze, to invent are not anomalous acts, they are the normal breath of the intelligence. To glorify the occasional fruition of the function; to make treasures of the old and foreign thoughts... is to confess our languidness or barbarity. All men ought to be capable of all ideas and in the future it will be so." What Borges is saying here through Menard is that readers to come will have more of an ability to participate in the work of art, to take actively their parts as inventors and creators, and will be thereby less prone to give all the credit to the specific author whose job was to suggest or initiate the investigation. It is every reader's province and right to share equally in the creation of the work of art; to bring his or her particular self to bear upon it.

Borges has never believed in political democracy as unflinchingly as Whitman did, but he is an aesthetic democrat; he argues for the effect that any reader can have on the work and he encourages all readers to pursue the possibilities of an active readership.

"Pierre Menard" is not really an example of Borges' agreement to, "Eliot's famous dictum that every new work of art alters our perception of previously existing works of art,"⁵³ though some have made that assumption. Borges' story is in the Whitman tradition and hence opposed in principle to Eliot's influence. To Borges it is every reader, not every new work of art or artist, that can and must change our understanding of the text. Like Whitman, Borges plans to create art that will take this principle as a given, and create a literature specifically geared to giving the highest rewards to those readers most actively engaged in a coparticipation with the author.

As James Irby notes in his article on "Pierre Menard" (which discusses Borges' influence on modern American authors) the writer-reader relationship in the story, "thoroughly confounds the premises of all traditional commentary; that the author has authority and priority, that the reader's status is subsequent and subservient, and that a text has distinct borders and consistency."⁵⁴ Borges gives a new respect to the reader's role in "Pierre

Menard," a role he elaborates upon further in examining the opus of another fictional author, Herbert Quain.

Quain, like Menard, is the author of obscure works which appear fairly insignificant on the surface, but are, under closer examination, highly suggestive works that are closely tied to an understanding of the reader's role in the work of art. The story "Examen de la obra de Herbert Quain," also is set up as an essay, in which a friend of the recently deceased author reviews the works produced by Quain. One of the first things revealed about Quain is his disagreement with the literary theories of Flaubert and Henry James. Unlike these authors, Quain believed, we are told, in the commonness of literature, to the extent that he felt that "there is scarcely any street talk that doesn't reach it." Quain also values "asombro," shock or surprise, in literature. Clearly, Quain is within the Whitman-Borges school. Whitman had felt that literature was common, was alive in the common people, and Borges has said that he too believes that poetry is, "happening all the time. I do not suppose poetry is something exceptional, I suppose poetry is happening all the time."⁵⁵ Borges also values "asombro," particularly as a device to jolt the reader away from his normal expectations. Borges, like Quain, wants the reader to feel the question, the

uncertainty, and the open-endedness of the literary endeavor.

Quain's first novel, The God of the Labyrinth, is a detective novel with an accomplice reader very much in mind. Borges has been a consistent admirer of the form, perhaps because, as P.D. James explains, in such novels a reader is invited to participate, to work along with the detective, avoiding the same pitfalls and false clues to arrive at the proper solution.⁵⁶ In Quain's novel there is an additional twist; after the detective comes to an elaborate and ingenious conclusion, discerning readers uncover a clue sentence, ("They all believed that the meeting between the two chess players had been accidental") which tells them that the detective's solution is erroneous. The reader able to understand this clue is at first disconcerted, but if he or she goes back and rereads pertinent passages, the "correct" solution can be arrived at. Hence here the reader has an opportunity to outsmart the detective and to be more of a participant in the story than the main character. However, only the careful reader who is willing to forego the expectation of getting the answer from the author can derive the additional pleasure.

The next of Quain's works discussed is the novel April March which is a complex work made up in fact of nine separate works of three chapters each, all of which

share the same initial chapter. The initial chapter is a dialogue between two unknown characters; the subsequent versions allow for all sorts of development from the initial dialogue, in all sorts of chronological and unchronological orders. The notion of chapters fitting into different patterns is of course later developed in Cortazar's Rayuela. The play with chronology is notable, though of course more fully developed, in such works as Alejo Carpentier's Los pasos perdidos (The Lost Steps) and Carlos Fuentes' La muerte de Artemio Cruz (The Death of Artemio Cruz). While Borges need not be the exclusive or even primary source for any of these ideas in these authors, the point is that this examination of Quain's work is in part a blue-print for the new type of novel and short story possible if the new type of audience can be defined and identified.

Quain's drama, The Secret Mirror, concerns a reappearance of the characters of the play's first act in the play's second act, but with different names. One of the characters of act two turns out to be the author of the wish-fulfilling first act of which he is the hero. This example of a play within a play within a play is Borges' tribute to similar devices employed in Hamlet and Don Quixote. Borges discusses the consequences of such a set-up in his essay, "Partial

Magic of Quixote," in which he suggests that Quixote and Panza's opportunity to read about themselves troubles us so much because if fictional characters can be readers of their own lives then what prevents us as readers from being fictional characters in someone else's fiction or dream? This premise is of course a principal one in Borges' "Las ruinas circulares" ("The Circular Ruins") also in Ficciones. Borges wants the reader to share his sense of irreality, and one effective way to help us along is by obscuring the boundaries between "real life" and fiction.

Still, Quain's most noteworthy and inventive work is a book entitled Statements. Quain wrote it in support of his belief that the conventional reader was essentially an endangered species: "There is not a single European (he reasoned) that is not a writer in potential or actuality." While Quain did admit that not everyone might see him or herself as a writer, or have the same initial facility for invention, he believed that the active, participating reader was the rule, not the exception. He therefore created his book, Statements, which consisted of eight beginnings of plots intentionally fouled up or cut short by Quain so that the readers could have the impression that they were free to salvage the plots in any way they saw fit. Quain takes reader participation about

as far as it can go- he begins with the plot, but lets the reader find the true meaning- even to the extent of taking the plot in any direction that he or she desires. This is of course the kind of fiction that Borges thinks is worthy of the new reader, and the writer who creates with that reader in mind.

Indeed Borges claims that the plot of, "Las ruinas circulares," which as I have noted relates to Quain's drama, was lifted from one of the plots in Statements. Clearly, Quain was satisfied to give the hints, the atmosphere, and then let his readers be free to "pursue their own flights," to paraphrase Whitman. Hence these two stories are Borges' equivalent to Whitman's prefaces and other prose about his poetic method; they map out the kind of reader that Borges is interested in addressing, and the indirect method by which he or she will be characteristically addressed.

Ronald Christ comments on how Borges' groundwork in the two stories discussed above affects the rest of his opus. Open-endedness, "asombro," the multiplicity of possibilities (with more than one correct solution possible), indirection, these are the trademarks of a Borges short story. "Borges takes pains to show at many forks in his work that while a character or persona chooses only one of the possible turns, the reader is invited not only to consider the road not taken, but

to consider the same road as both taken and not taken."⁵⁷ Christ's name for this technique is "alternate plotting," and he traces it through "Herbert Quain," and through Borges' essay, "Narrative Art and Magic," to such stories as, "The Garden of Forking Paths," and "The South." In "The South" there are at least two possible solutions as to what has happened to Juan Dahlmann, but preference is never given to either. In "The Garden of Forking Paths" the character Albert explains the theory of the book discussed in the story, but in so doing also helps to define Borges' method: "In all fictions when one man is faced with alternatives he chooses one at the expense of the others. In the almost unfathomable Ts ui Pen he chooses simultaneously all of them. He thus creates various futures, various times that start others, which in their turn will branch out and bifurcate in other times."⁵⁸

Christ makes some very convincing points in this essay and his connections of Borges to Barth, Pynchon and Coover are substantial. However he never recognizes Whitman's connection to this theory. Borges has adapted Whitman's ideas on the active, participating reader so cleverly that even one of the few critics who has seen Whitman's influence on Borges' prose on some level does not appreciate the important tie-in here.

Borges has always been a strange sort of aesthetic democrat because he has always found it difficult to conceive of many people reading his work. His anecdote about wanting to thank each of the thirty-seven purchasers of his book Historia de la eternidad is a good clue to the fact that he understood earlier in his career than Whitman did that the accomplice reader was going to be a rare person almost by definition, though membership was open to anyone potentially. Hence many years later in his introduction to The Book of Sand Borges denies writing either for the masses, or for a "select few," but instead claims to write, "for my friends and to ease the passage of time." With a little critical license the word friend can be translated to mean companion or accomplice. His group is not the "select few" because that would imply entry by status or education, neither of which will guarantee an appreciation of Borges. More fundamentally, Borges works on the premise that we as readers must "select" him, it cannot be the other way around. The only guarantee for membership is a willingness to participate in the work of art in an intimate if tenuous way with the author, for a shadowy, uncertain reward. Clearly the masses on the whole will be unlikely to make such a commitment, but individuals are ever eligible. As Whitman and Borges both believe, the potential is there for any reader to

be a coworker in the creative process. No one is uninvited, but few will choose a full, active participation. The few who do will almost naturally be deemed "amigos" or, in Whitman's terms, "camerados." Borges' characteristic open-endedness is an invitation to the readers to participate, to form their own questions and possible answers. His sense of the readers potential to affect the work of art, to "enrich" his work, as he has phrased it, is as persistent as Whitman's own sense of this potential, and it arises from a similar foundation.

Whitman and Borges both reject conventional notions of the writer-audience relationship. For example, Walter Ong suggests that creative communication is a one way process; the author takes on a character or characters and performs, the readers come as they are and witness the performance. There is no audience participation expected in the normal drama or film or story or poem; the audience is ever aware that what they are viewing or reading is unreal.⁵⁹ Whitman and Borges both reject the casual acceptance of the irreality of art; both try to obscure the borders between fact and fiction and between poetry and prose. They want the reader to be inside the work, they seek out active participation which their works are geared to.

This view of the reader as essential participant and not mere spectator relates closely to the ideas of

such twentieth-century philosophers as Martin Buber and Georges Gusdorf (since Borges read and lectured on Buber extensively this is not a great surprise). Buber argued that the reader had to feel addressed by literature, that essentially in reading a book we had to believe what Whitman said, "who touches this touches a man." Whitman and Borges both work under the premise that a you is essential to the completion of the work of art. Since their life philosophies are so closely aligned to their aesthetic principles it can also be argued that both seek the way to the self through dialogue and cooperation with the other. Both need the other to attain signification. "I require a you to become, becoming I say you," Buber tell us."⁶⁰ Relation is reciprocity according to both Buber and Gusdorf, and this reciprocity, the essence of relation, is constantly sought out by Whitman and Borges. Only the reader can return the book its sense of a real person, can change the "it" of the book back into a "you" in Buber's terms.⁶¹

Neither Whitman or Borges can be termed confessional writers. Their presentations of self are not highly specific recountings of inadequacies or emotions or neuroses that are typical of some modern writers. Though such confessional writing is often viewed as the height of honesty, because it seemingly leaves the self bare to the reader's examination, it is certainly

not ideal in a reciprocal sense, since the reader is given no opportunity to give his or her own sad story, in vivid detail, to the writer. Hence the more "honest" such writing is, the more it guards its writer from contact and response. Only in the type of composite persona that Whitman and Borges introduce into their work is a responding reader provided for. As Gusdorf noted, in perfect communication all sense of limitations is case aside.⁶² Gusdorf also reminds us that great literature needs a great audience. Borges and Whitman attempt to give that audience, that reader, every opportunity to reach their full potential. Luis Harss says of Borges: "Like Walt Whitman with whom he often identifies, he assumes a generic position where personal experience takes on an infinite and plastic ambiguity in which there is something for everybody."⁶³

Both Whitman and Borges bring their specific selves into their work only long enough to invite a corresponding venture of self on the part of the reader. It is wrong to assume that the work of either man is egocentric. Their work is in fact other-centered, on a reader sincerely and actively sought as an active participant, a traveling companion, who is often engaged by means of a composite persona who comprehends both writer and audience.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO

¹ Julio Cortázar, Hopscotch, (translated by Gregory Rabassa) (New York: Pantheon Books, 1966), p. 396.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 398.

⁴ In Hopscotch the reader is offered two ways to read the novel. One can read it straight through from Chapters 1 - 56 as a "regular" novel, or one can follow the alternate idea of interspersing the optional chapters that come after Chapter fifty-six in an order sketched out by the author in the beginning. These chapters fill in and enrich the meaning of the conventional narrative, but also draw the reader in first-hand to the art of novel making itself.

⁵ Louise Rosenblatt in her book, Literature as Exploration (New York: Appleton-Century, 1938) argues that, "The reading of any work of literature is, of necessity, an individual and unique occurrence involving the mind and emotions of some particular reader," (p. 32). She also goes on to say that, "Every time an individual experiences a work of art, it is, in a sense, created anew," (p. 133). Through these statements and others throughout her book Rosenblatt became a forerunner of reader response criticism, a view of the literary work as dependent on the reader's own creative responses. However, what Rosenblatt and most of the other reader response critics fail to recognize, or deal with sufficiently, is that author intention must play a critical role in the evolvment of any work of art. Whitman and Borges fully intend to attempt the creation of works that will allow for entry by the discerning and hard working "accomplice" reader. To suggest that all works of literature, no matter how didactic or how egocentric, are equally open to reader response or participation, or to suggest that all readers no matter how inflexible are equally open to the possibilities of dialogue with the author, is to deny the entire focus of the attempt that Whitman and Borges both consciously made to involve the reader in the work of art as coparticipant.

⁶ Rosenblatt agrees with Whitman's ideas here, though she makes no mention of Whitman anywhere in her text: "The study of literature can have a very real and even central relation to the points of growth in the social and cultural life of a democracy, (p.v, Rosenblatt).

⁷ Cowley, pp. vii-viii; Fieldler, pp. 55-56.

⁸ The linking of democracy to reader participation further suggests that truly reciprocal literature only became possible for most readers when hierarchical politics could be replaced by a democracy of equals. Jean Paul Sartre therefore argues in his book Literature and Existentialism (translated by Bernard Frechtman) (New York: The Citadel Press, 1964) that "literary glory... is a struggle against history, ...In short actual literature can only realize its full essence in a classless society," p. 154.

⁹ John Broderick, editor, Whitman the Poet, Materials For Study (Belmont, Ca: Wadsworth Publishers, 1962) p. 6.

¹⁰ Allen, The Solitary Singer, p. 133.

¹¹ Gusdorf, p. 88.

¹² Richard Maurice Bucke, Walt Whitman (New York: Johnson Reprint Co., 1970) p. 63. Gerald Prince in his article, "Introduction to the Study of the Naratee," in Reader Response Criticism (edited by Jane P. Tompkins) (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980) pp. 7-26, argues that the "naratee," (the fictional character who is being told the story within the story itself) can be the link between writer and reader. However, as Jane Tompkins notes in her introduction, Prince still views the reader as the, "flawed but reverential seeker after the truths of literary art," p. xiii. Whitman and Borges both go beyond the naratee; they allow the reader him or herself the possibility of active entry into the work. Through their personae they allow the reader to take on the rights of the author, even as they as authors take on the rights of a reader.

¹³ Burroughs, p. 143.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 180.

¹⁵ Traubel, p. 72, and p. 156.

- 16 Ibid, p. 174.
- 17 Ibid, p. 219.
- 18 Ibid, p. 436.
- 19 As quoted in Broderick, p. 63.
- 20 Horace Traubel, With Walt Whitman in Camden, (V2) (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1908) pp. 4-5.
- 21 Roy Harvey Pearce, "Whitman Justified: The Poet in 1860," in, Whitman: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1962) p. 51.
- 22 Charles Feidelson, "Whitman as Symbolist," in Whitman: A Collection of Critical Essays, pp. 82-88, p. 82.
- 23 Ibid, p. 88.
- 24 James Miller Jr., Walt Whitman (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1962) p. 51.
- 25 Leslie Fieldler, "No in Thunder," in Walt Whitman, (Penguin Critical Anthology, edited by Francis Murphy) (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 354.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Christ, p. 56.
- 28 As quoted in A Century of Whitman Criticism (edited by Edwin H. Miller) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969) p. xli.
- 29 Don Bogen, "I and You in 'Who Learns My Lesson Complete': Some Aspects of Whitman's Poetic Evolution," Walt Whitman Review, 25, (September 1979) 87-98, p. 97.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Thomas Rountree, "Whitman's Indirect Expression," PMLA 73, (December 1955) 544-555.
- 32 Eric Birdsall, "Translating The Hints: Whitman's Theory of Poetry," Walt Whitman Review 26, 113-123. p. 117.
- 33 Carlisle, p. xiii.

34 Ibid, p. xv.

35 For example, in "Song of the Answerer," the poet is not one who merely supplies "the" answer, instead he can "translate" the hints so that all people can receive them. In "Myself and Mine," Whitman is proud to posit, "unanswerable questions." In "To You" from "Birds of Passage," Whitman again employs direct reader address, "whoever you are now I place my hand on you that you be my poem." In "By Blue Ontario's Shore," which is essentially a poetic paraphrase of the 1855 preface, Whitman challenges his audience with the line: "Who are you that wanted to be told what you knew before?" The poem, "As I Lay With My Head On Your Lap Camerado," from "Drum Taps" by its very title challenges the reader to abandon his notion of the book as product, and to conceive of it as a person attempting to elicit an equal contribution from another person. In "A Song For Occupations," Whitman reminds us that even if we have never seen our own names in print that does not mean we, "are any less immortal." Finally, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" is a poem concerned with relation and reciprocity that suggests that it is through the reciprocal adventure of the poem that this unity is best divulged: "What the study could not teach, what the preaching could not accomplish, is accomplished, is it not?"

36 Gusdorf, p. 77.

37 "Salut Au Monde" is therefore the result of a conscious effort on Whitman's part to allow the reader entry into the work. While some reader response critics argue that there are no meanings in literature independent of reader response (see, for example, Stanley Fish, "Interpreting the Variorum," in Reader Response Criticism pp. 164-184) others such as Wolfgang Iser have acknowledged that the writer must consciously work to create a literature that allows for reader participation. Iser claims that the reader is the active co-creator of the work: "A literary text must therefore be conceived in such a way that it will engage the reader's imagination in the task of working things out for himself, for reading is only a pleasure when it is active and creative. In this process of creativity the text may either not go far enough, or it may go too far, so we may say that boredom and overstrain form the boundaries beyond which the reader will leave the field of play." (Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," in Reader Response Criticism, pp. 50-69, p. 51.) Iser is thus interested in the "unwritten" or implied part of the text, and is implicitly faithful to Whitman's notion that the author

must leave hints or half hints so that the reader can be left to "pursue his own flight."

38 Carlisle, p. 8.

39 Allen, p. 466.

40 Martin Green, from "Twain and Whitman: Reappraisals," as presented in Walt Whitman (edited by Francis Murphy) pp. 425-427. Green complains that, "In reading Whitman, therefore, despite moments of pleasure, a reader has to force himself to go against his nature as a reader."

41 Christ, p. 53.

42 Burgin, p. 26.

43 Alistair Reid, "Borges as Reader," in Prose For Borges, p. 94.

44 As quoted by Rodríguez Monegal, in "Borges, The Reader as Writer," in Prose For Borges, p. 100.

45 A. C. Dyson, "You Fictional Reader," Critical Quarterly 24, (IV) 5-27, p. 26.

46 Ibid, p. 12.

47 Ibid.

48 In "Walt Whitman: Man and Myth" op, cit. p. 714.

49 Ibid.

50 Borges made these distinctions between his sense of chaos and cosmos in a recent interview given to the New York Times. Speaking of the horrors of the present world Borges explained: "Those who think of it as a cosmos not a chaos maybe feel safe, I do not," Michiko Kakutani, "For Borges Public Acclaim is a Surprise," New York Times, Saturday, October 2, 1982, p. 15.

51 Norman Holland believes that readers replenish a text, so that meaning is a combination of the readers projection and what is already there. The reader essentially makes over what is already there in his own image, in order to understand the author's "identity theme." According to Holland a genuine goal of the literary work is the sharing and mingling of the identities of author

and reader. (See, Holland, "Unity Identity Text Self" in Reader Response Criticism, pp. 118-133. Hence what occurs in "Pierre Menard" is very much in line with Holland's theories. Both Whitman and Borges are ideal subjects for reader response critics because what they both attempted to accomplish is very much in line with what these critics believe is always happening in literature. It is therefore valuable to investigate the conscious means by which Whitman and Borges allowed for reader entry into the work. Certainly the author's awareness of the reader, and his intentions towards him or her must be given serious consideration in any discussion of the reader's ability to recreate or even create a work for the first time.

52 Both Whitman and Borges implicitly seem to have arrived at a theory of literature which suggests that truly great literature has always somehow allowed for an active or creative role for the audience or reader.

53 Kakutani, p. 15.

54 James Irby, "Some Notes on Pierre Menard," in Simply a Man of Letters- Panel Discussions and Papers from the Proceedings of a Symposium on Jorge Luis Borges at the University of Maine at Orono. (Carlos Cortínez, editor), (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1982), pp. 155-164, p. 156.

55 As quoted in Borges' talk "Simply a Man of Letters" from the book of the same title, pp. 1-24, p. 4.

56 P. D. James, "The Heart Pounding Pleasure of Whodunits," Kalamazoo Gazette, Family Weekly Sunday, August 22, 1982.

57 Ronald Christ, "Forking Narrative," in Simply a Man of Letters pp. 75-88, p. 76.

58 As quoted in Christ, "Forking Narratives" p. 82.

59 Walter Ong, The Barbarian Within (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962), p. 64, "the audience itself has no occasion or opportunity to speak."

60 Buber, p. 62.

61 Ibid, p. 91

62 Gusdorf, p. 77.

⁶³ Luis Harss and Barbara Dohmann, Into the Mainstream (New York: Harper and Row, 1967) p. 121.

Chapter Three

Persona: The Composite Self

Ronald Christ's article, "Borges Justified: Notes and Texts Toward Stations of a Theme," makes some very explicit connections between Borges and Whitman. In fact, Christ is one of but few critics who have seen important relationships between aspects of Whitman's literary theory and method and what could be viewed as adaptations of that theory and method in many of Borges' stories and sketches. More specifically, Christ claims that the Borges persona of those stories and sketches is derived in large part from Whitman's own use of a persona within his poetry.¹ Christ contends that both men, realizing the need for an "other" in their work to justify and clarify the self, decided to formulate and present doubles of their own selves in their work in order to guarantee a response. However, Christ's arguments do not take into account the importance that both men attached to the active participation and response of their audience. Christ sees the persona in isolation instead of as an active transitional device between writer and reader. Even though Christ explains how important a familiarity

with the work of Buber and Mead is in understanding Borges' use of persona, he still somehow fails to see that the use of persona in the work of both Whitman and Borges is grounded in the relation between writer and reader. So even though Christ is correct in his assessment of Whitman's importance to the development of the Borges' persona, and correct in pointing to Buber and Mead as prime elucidators of the meaning of persona in both men's creative work, he does not seem to appreciate that the persona for both men is often a composite of self and reader created for the purpose of dialogue, and by no means merely a double of the self.

Christ believes that Borges accepted the fundamental credo of both Buber and Mead; i.e. that the only way to find the self was through relation to the other. Mead explains that each person has to take the other into himself, has to learn to become an object to himself and see himself as others see him. In that sense a doubling of self is a sound first step on the way towards a healthy development because it entails viewing the self as an object. Christ argues that Borges needs precisely this kind of objectification in order to function as a writer: "In order for Borges to be Borges to Borges he must imagine an other against whose background he can stand out-the one literally a foil for the other."²

Of course to Mead the idea of a double self was only

a start towards a real incorporation of the other into the life of the self. To Mead there could be no self without society, or the "generalized other." However, Christ contends that Borges' society is the fairly exclusive society of writers, and that they are the only others ever even implicitly incorporated into his conception of persona. Hence, though Christ claims that Borges' method is practically a duplication of Mead's theories,³ Christ's actual interpretation of Borges' use of a persona causes Borges to appear to fall short of Mead's conceptualizations on all counts. To Mead, merely doubling the self would be insufficient to bring about a genuine sense of the "generalized other"; Borges could never incorporate the "me" representative of all of society against which to counterpose his individual "I" if that "me" were just a variation of his own "I." Furthermore, it seems far more likely that Borges' society is a far more inclusive one than Christ imagines, for Borges has always proudly been a member of the society of readers, and his persona is employed throughout his fiction to encourage the participation and membership of his readers in the creative process itself.

Christ knows that Borges admired Buber, read his work extensively, and even presented lectures on it. Christ feels that Borges was committed to Buber's notion that "all real living is meeting," but that Borges

believed that the ideal setting for such "meeting" was "through the written page."⁴ Borges longed to communicate, to "meet" in an authentic fashion, but Christ believes that Borges felt insecure about the reader's response. However, since Borges did see "meeting" as fundamental to his art, he had to create the respondent himself, the other Borges. Christ claims that "Whitman is the model for the procedure,"⁵ but that Borges went beyond Whitman in perfecting the model in the short sketch "Borges y yo." In that sketch, of course, we meet the "Borges" figure who guarantees the work of the "I" even though he is far from identical with him. A similar procedure is at work in many of Borges' stories as well: "In literature Borges becomes himself, a storyteller, by including an other within his own boundaries (recall Whitman 'I am broad, I contain multitudes,')." ⁶ Hence Christ contends that "Borges' work is essentially a lonely monologue with no real response possible." He also believes that Borges like Whitman is the only real character in his work, an admission that Borges has at times made himself.⁷

Essentially then, Christ's claim is that "Borges did not become the other, he doubled himself,"⁸ a lesson he learned in large part from Whitman. Christ thereby holds to the belief that persona in their works is essentially a presentation of an idealized or poeticized

version of self which stands in relation to no one other than the self. If this belief really were true, then Borges and Whitman could never be said to be genuine adherents to the philosophy of either Buber or Mead. Buber especially stressed the importance of the genuine other, the authentic you which made the I real. There is never any room in his treatment of self for the I merely to figment the you, nor are there any possible benefits derived from such a figmentation. Mead also insisted that the only way really to understand the self was to take on the role of the other, since man is the "role-taking animal."⁹ The essence of selfhood is contained in seeing the reality of the others and being able to incorporate that reality into a living sense of self. The society must constitute the individual as much as the individual constitutes society. Finally, both Buber and Mead would agree that the only way to talk to yourself is through the dialogue with others. The "meeting" cannot be "fixed"; the only real meeting, by definition, must involve a genuine other.

Actually, Christ is right in arguing that Buber and Mead help to explain the personae in the work of Whitman and Borges, but Christ stops short of comprehending the full range of implications that the former pair's philosophies have to the latter's pair's evolvment of persona in their creative work. As was made evident in

the previous chapter of this study, Whitman and Borges' concern for their readers is legitimate and pervasive, and their readers are, in fact, the genuine others in their work. To be a self you must be a member of a community, says Mead, and that community for both Whitman and Borges goes beyond their own selves merely, and even beyond the coterie of other writers. "This is the city and I am one of the citizens," boasts Whitman in "Song of Myself," and although Borges is usually less boisterous in making similar claims, neither man consistently denies relation merely to engage in sophisticated monologues. Their art, by their own definitions of art, would have been severely limited if no "other" were sought, if the reader were not invited to participate. By ignoring the importance of the reader in the work of both men, Christ misinterpreted the role and function of persona in both men's work.

Again the irony is that Christ is correct to assert that "Whitman is the model for the procedure" that Borges followed; however, that procedure is far more complex than a mere doubling of self. While Borges may be the only character in his work he often is precisely that, a "character" named "Borges" who, like the "Whitman" persona is actually a composite that can include both author and audience. The Borges persona is often a universalized reader or a specific individual who takes

on "everyman" status or capabilities. Whitman's representative, idealized "Whitman" is indeed a key source for Borges' implementation of such a persona.

A final important complication to the understanding of persona in both men's work is that Christ is also correct to argue that both men eventually sought to "become" their idealized selves. Late in both men's lives it became increasingly difficult to tell Whitman from "Whitman" or Borges from "Borges." However, it can be demonstrated that both men intentionally courted this "confusion," and that each of them could and did exercise control over and distance from their personae when it suited their goals to do so. Persona is a conscious and well-crafted device in both men's work, and there is evidence that both were consistently in control of their deployment of persona. In their creative work they employed persona as a device to include self and other under one heading, to allow for dialogue and communication between the two. In their early work especially, both authors relied upon the reader to complete the process. They did not see the self as sufficient to create the persona, they needed the readers' input into the composite. Only the older Whitman or Borges would attempt to "become" the personae without the readers' aid. However, if Mead and Buber are correct, then the only way that Whitman and Borges ever

really could "become" "Whitman" and "Borges" was through the creative process, through the audience's reading of their writings. Both Buber and Mead conceived of self as a process, not a substance. Hence the only opportunity to transcend the specific "I" and become the idealized or universalized "I" is through the communication process of the written page.

It becomes difficult to pin down the third member of the trinity precisely because persona includes the other two members and sometimes ostensibly "is" the self that presents it, for, in Mead's term, the individual constitutes the society as much as the society constitutes the individual. However, the individual always needs the society to form an integrated self. Hence Whitman and Borges' attempts to be the idealized self without the audience's participation had to fail by definition. That intriguing form of failure is the subject matter of the final chapter of this study. In this chapter an examination of persona within the work of art, where it functions as a unifier of writer and reader, self and other, will help demonstrate how Borges derived from Whitman the role and function of the final member of the trinity.

I - The Whitman Persona-

It is difficult to show that Whitman's creation of "Whitman" relied upon the reader for input and was set up to be a composite of self and reader because many critics have claimed that Whitman was virtually identical to the character in "Song of Myself," while many others have claimed that the real man bore no resemblance at all to his totally fictionalized creation. Before one can begin to advance a theory on the makeup of "Walt Whitman" it seems appropriate to establish a certain familiarity with some of the already advanced theories on who or what "Walt Whitman" was and is.

Whitman's "disciples," who often wrote under the direct influence of Whitman himself, saw little need to separate the man from his poetry. John Burroughs claimed that in Whitman, "the artist and the man are one."¹⁰ Burroughs speaks of an everyday Whitman who, like the figure in the poem, is charismatic and "adhesive." Edward Carpenter claimed that Whitman's own personality was the organic center of Leaves of Grass, "The ultimate form of his poems is the form of himself."¹¹ Richard M. Bucke also believed that Whitman was a great man, indeed he saw him as one of the greatest men of all time, and this man was one with his poetry: "With Walt Whitman his body, his outward life, his inward spiritual existence and his poetry were all one."¹² The self-possessed,

superably confident, happy, expansive, larger-than-life figure of "Song of Myself," "Salut Au Monde" and other poems was essentially the real Walt Whitman. None of the disciples would deny that the real man could not in fact do all the things the poetic character could do, but the essence of the character they found squarely in the person Walt Whitman. Of course, if their claims were true then the poet Walt Whitman would hardly need the reader to participate in the creation of "Walt Whitman," since he essentially would have been formed long before the poems were written.

On the other extreme are those who argue that Whitman could scarcely have been less like the character he created. Among the adherents to that position are critics as diverse as Esther Shepard, Leslie Fieldler and Jorge Luis Borges. Borges has stated in several places that there is little to no relation between the "Whitman of his mere biography and the Whitman he wanted to be and now is."¹³ Borges argues that the divine vagabond who is supposed to be the author of "Song of Myself" would have been incapable of writing it, or putting it through its many revisions.¹⁴ Fieldler argues that the real Walt Whitman was a "furtive, stubborn, half-educated, guilt-ridden individual," lacking the spontaneity, health, or adhesiveness of his portrayal, but somehow, "finally the master of the actual,

living by sheer will the mask he dreamed."¹⁵

Both Borges and Fieldler think positively of Whitman for having the ability to enact such a transformation with so little tangible resemblance to the character he forges. Others like Esther Shephard found only contempt for Whitman's "pose,"¹⁶ demonstrating outrage in Shephard's case, or bemusement in the case of Amy Lowell upon uncovering in Whitman the "disconcerting dash of the poseur."¹⁷ Fieldler and Borges, Shephard and Lowell, no matter how distinct in their attitudes towards Whitman, are aligned in their opinion that the character could scarcely be further removed from the real man. If this were true the attempt at a composite would be futile since Whitman would not be bringing his real self in any sense to the composite.

Hence, both seeing Whitman as virtually identical with "Whitman" or extremely different from him prevents the possibility of the "Whitman" character being a composite of self and reader. However, it is not especially difficult to argue against either extremist position because the standpoints essentially cancel each other out.

William James, in his book, The Varieties of Religious Experience lists Whitman in the section entitled "The Religion of Healthy Mindedness."¹⁸ He claims that Whitman had a personality, "organically weighted on the side of

cheer."¹⁹ For someone as astute as James to be thus misled, one would have to assume that there was more to Whitman than the weak, lonely, quiet individual that Borges and Fieldler describe. Both Gay Wilson Allen and Edward Miller argue that Whitman had at least some of the qualities of the created character, "Some of the characteristics the man Whitman actually possessed,"²⁰ argues Allen, and Miller asserts that indeed the "aura was real."²¹ Clearly though, Whitman was not always expansive, adhesive or optimistic; a look at the 1860 Leaves of Grass alone can dispel that notion. As Borges argues, one need only look at Whitman's journalistic writings or his day to day biography to understand that he was a real man with real failings and quirks. Even so, it is less than accurate to argue, as Floyd Stovall does, that the Whitman of "Song of Myself," is as much a literary character as any character in Homer or Shakespeare.²² After all, there are no characters named "Homer" or "Shakespeare" in the respective works of those two men.

Neither of the extremist positions can account for the simple fact that Whitman is in some ways very much like "Whitman," but in many other ways distinct. Whitman's persona-character is highly complex, and in some ways even goes beyond contemporary notions of what function a persona can accomplish.²³ Whitman's persona

allows the reader as well as the writer to wear the mask, both author and reader are invited to find themselves, and each other, within the composite persona-character "Whitman." James Miller is one critic who has caught the essence of what Whitman attempted to do, "The I in any one Whitman poem is not so much a personal reference as a fusion of several characters, a composite character who exists no place other than in the poem."²⁴ The last part of Miller's statement is especially apt; the character only exists with the reader's participation, and hence cannot really exist outside the poetic process.

Whitman is somewhere in "Whitman" but "Whitman" is by no means only Whitman, or as Miller puts it, "The I in Leaves of Grass is never simply the historical Walt Whitman, but it always embraces him and goes beyond to the ideal."²⁵ The persona "Walt Whitman" is both more and less complex than the historical person. He is less complex, obviously, because he does not have all of the characteristics, psychology or complexity of the real man. However, he is more complex because he is not tied to Whitman merely, but is open-ended enough to allow for all readers present and future to participate in his formation, to allow for the expansiveness needed to create the authenticity Whitman sought. James Miller is not alone in considering the "Whitman" persona-character to be a composite figure,²⁶ but part of the reason that

the "Whitman" figure has always been so controversial is because Whitman himself, especially in later life, was more than willing to contribute to the confusion over his relation to "Whitman."²⁷

However, even as Whitman often allowed the confusion to multiply, he also often enough made evident that he fully appreciated and could manipulate the differences between himself and his character. Walt Whitman was always somewhere in "Walt Whitman," but for the composite to be complete we as readers also needed to be given the chance to be somewhere in "Walt Whitman" too. Whitman was well aware of this fact, and he wrote poetry specifically geared to invite us to complete the persona by joining in it with him. "Walt Whitman," especially in poems written up to 1860, was meant to be both male and female, rich and poor, "of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise." "Walt Whitman" is a composite figure who only comes fully alive in process; on both a literal and figurative level, he can only exist when the poetry is read and accomplice readers are found, willing to become actively involved in his creation.

Whitman's full awareness of the distinctiveness of his persona from his person is revealed in both his poetry and prose. His personal correspondence sometimes allows us to glimpse this awareness. For example, Anne Gilchrist was an intelligent and well-read individual who was so

taken by the persona presented in Whitman's poetry (and perhaps unconsciously supplying her part only too diligently to the composite) that she wrote from England to propose marriage to Whitman, a proposal that included an ardent promise to bear his children. Whitman was so taken aback by the effect his character had had on Gilchrist that he carefully drafted a letter to her to explain to her that she had mistaken his creation for him. He explained, "I am by no means that benevolent, equable, happy creature that you portray."²⁸ More telling still was a letter Whitman wrote to be sent to M. D. Conway in November of 1867, that was then to go to his British publishers in order to fend off some bad press that he was receiving about his personal lifestyle. Whitman insisted in this letter that, "The author of Leaves of Grass is in no sense or sort whatever the rough or eccentric or vagabond or queer person that the commentators (always bound for the intensest possible sensational effect) persist in making him."²⁹ Interestingly, in both letters Whitman blames others for "portraying" him as someone who is just like his character, when it was Whitman himself who often aided in the presentation of such a portrayal.

Whitman's poems also offer clues to his own manipulation of persona. As E. Fred Carlisle points out, Whitman's "Calamus" poems, "Whoever You Are Holding Me Now In

Hand," and "Are You The New Person Drawn Toward Me?" both further demonstrate Whitman's awareness of the separateness of his persona and his person.³⁰ In the latter poem Whitman explicitly asks his readers such questions as, "Do you suppose you will find in me your ideal? Do you think I am trusting and faithful? Do you see no further than this façade, this smooth or tolerant manner of me? Do you suppose yourself advancing on real ground towards a real heroic man?" The implied answer to each of these questions is that each reader must reevaluate who he thinks "Whitman" is. Whitman has, as in a play, stepped out of character, which has the effect of making us more aware of the mask. However, if he wants us to participate, he must get us to join him not only in the "play," but in the character itself.

Leslie Fieldler has pointed out that both "Goodbye My Fancy" and "That Shadow My Likeness," are instances where Whitman separates the created character and the real man, except that in both of these poems favor and primacy are granted to the creation, as if it were somehow more real than the being that first created it. Of course within the realm of the literary work, and with the cooperation of the accomplice reader, in some ways the persona is more of an authentic and essential self than the finite mortal who helped give it life. The persona is enriched by any and all individuals who will

bring their own sense of self to the poems. Hence many of Whitman's poems work best when the persona is functioning as a catalyst between writer and reader, or as an opportunity for the audience to participate directly in the poem itself. When this occurs an open-ended poetry results, and an "I" is presented that is both intimate and universal at once.

Malcolm Cowley's reintroduction of the 1855 edition of Leaves of Grass and his introductory essay to the edition are both relevant to an understanding of the composite persona-character that appears in much of Whitman's early poetry. The 1855 Leaves of Grass has Whitman's earliest and perhaps most fully intact renditions of the composite figure. "Song of Myself," as well as "There Was A Child Went Forth," "Song of the Answerer," "The Sleepers," "A Song For Occupations," and "Who Learns My Lesson Complete?" are all more committed to the trinity concept in their original versions than in later editions of Leaves of Grass. For example, "Song of Myself," the first of the twelve then nameless poems of the original edition, was, as Cowley explains, a virtually anonymous poem in its initial publication. The book itself had no author's name, and the only clue to authorship was Walter Whitman's name on the copyright notice. Cowley asserts that the man in the frontispiece portrait (an actual daguerrotype

of Whitman) was the, "putative author but actual hero of the extraordinary book."³¹ Not to be confused with the Walt Whitman of daily life, this person was, a "dramatized or idealized figure." In 1855 he had, "no local or family background" (lines such as "of Manhattan the son," or "I thirty-seven years old," did not yet exist). Cowley sees the Whitman figure as a "representative figure, who by achieving union with his transpersonal soul had realized the possibilities latent in every man and woman."³² Cowley's republication of the 1855 edition serves to allow us a graphic look at how the original idea of the composite persona as something distinct from Whitman's person, though loosely based on it, was first conceptualized. Unfortunately this conceptualization was allowed to weaken as the years passed.

As noted earlier in this study, Don Bogen's article on "Who Learns My Lesson Complete," demonstrates how Whitman's revisions of that poem withdraw it from full reader engagement.³³ These same kind of revisions and deletions are also noticeable in some of the other 1855 poems. For example, in "There Was A Child Went Forth," Whitman deemphasizes reciprocity by deleting the final line, "And these become of him or her that peruses them now." In "Song of Myself," as Cowley notes, Whitman's intrusion of more of his personal biography weakens the

composite's representativeness. Whitman also tones down the character's potential for identification, as when he has an ancestor tell the story of the frigate fight in canto thirty-five, instead of telling it from a first person participant's standpoint, as in the original. Subsequent revisions of "Song of Myself" did tend to obscure somewhat Whitman's original intention of letting the character be an idealized everyman. Cowley actually believes that shortly after 1855 Whitman began to suffer a kind of "megalomania to such an extent that he was losing touch with the realities or at least the human possibilities of American life."³⁴ However, Cowley may go too far in that assessment. Though Whitman's increased unwillingness to keep himself separate from his "Whitman" character is apparent, even the 1892 version of "Song of Myself" presents a clearly composite character who is not meant to be merely Whitman. Also, Whitman, though at times thoroughly involved in playing the role of "Whitman," seemed always to recognize that the two were distinct.

The 1855 edition, aside from the copyright notice, mentioned Whitman's name only once, "Walt Whitman, an American, one of the roughs, a kosmos," which clearly was an invitation to see "Whitman" as a representative figure. As Borges has noted, Whitman thereby presented a hero fit for democracy because all of us could be

equally represented in the composite, even though there would still be one, single, heroic figure. Though subsequent revisions may have weakened the composite's position, the sense of the persona as composite and representative never left the poem. "Whitman" still claims to be "of old and young of the foolish as much as the wise." He still insists, "I am the mate and companion of people all just as immortal and fathomless as myself./ They do not know how immortal, but I know." The reason that the "I" knows is because the "I" is really a "We," the power and vision granted to the persona who is all of us. What the individual in isolation cannot do or see the idealized composite persona can. This character is therefore unique; instead of saying "We" while meaning "I" as his contemporary Queen Victoria was known to do, "Whitman" says "I" but means "We." Yet somehow the I also manages to stay intact and singular, and thereby is similar to Mead's consideration of the Me (plural) and I (singular) that exist in us all.

Hence no person need be "afraid of the merge" because it is a process from which we still emerge with our individuality intact, even as Whitman does. Yet the merge, the mix and union with others, is necessary for personal growth and for artistic meaning. "Whitman" says in canto sixteen, "I resist anything better than my own diversity." As in an analogous line later in the

poem, "I am broad, I contain multitudes," Whitman allows "Whitman" these obvious statements of plurality to invite us to uncover how we are as much "Whitman" as he claims to be of us. "In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barleycorn less." All men and women are equal to and invited to join in the composite.

"Whitman" in *Song of Myself* is made "divine... inside and out," by contact and convergence with the reader, or by the process of communication itself. He also insists that without the readers' willing participation they too will be diminished in potential, "I do not ask who you are,/ you can do nothing and be nothing but what I unfold you." The persona represents adhesiveness and the capacity for response. No one should stand in isolation. The persona is an idealized being, but not merely Walt Whitman's idealization of his limited self, but his conceptualization of a being who represents the potential for collaboration and expansiveness by himself and his readers.

Several other of the original 1855 poems employ a similar persona. "A Song For Occupations," which followed *Song of Myself* in 1855, also presents an open-ended persona seeking response. The original version contains lines later deleted in which Whitman opens his poem by telling us that he was "chilled with the cold types and cylinder and wet paper between us."

Clearly, to help circumvent the normal impediments between writer and reader, "Whitman" was created. The "Whitman" first person persona of the rest of the poem seeks to break down all barriers between poet and audience. He looks for reciprocity and equality. "Were I as the head teacher or charitable proprietor or wise statesman what would it amount to? Were I to you as the boss employing and paying you would that satisfy you?"

Whitman wants his readers to discard the old notions, the hierarchical set-up of writer over reader, or any hierarchical set up. The persona allows us to find a way into the poetry as equals. "Neither a servant or master am I"; all are called equally to bring their part to the whole, all insights all viewpoints, all occupations are welcome and needed within this poetry. The persona here informs us that he brings, "what you much need yet always have." The persona is a forum to allow individuals to communicate, to merge as one during the process of the poem. The entire relationship is reciprocal and equal. "If you see a good deed remarkable in me I see just as much remarkable in you." Neither the president or the rich or educated are better than "you" within the venture of the poem. It is relation that matters, and all are equal to it. The persona in the poem is nameless; the I is a composite of us all within the poem where we can all find a place.

The "I" of "The Sleepers" is at once intimate and universal. The persona in this poem can be intimate enough to present a scene in the poem's eighth section in which the people of all nations are, in sleep, all holding hands and unified. "Whitman" is the one and the many through the medium of sleep, which like death makes us all equal. And since all of us also dream we are all potential authors of the dream vision that is the poem. So the persona is at once intimate and universal, specific and diffuse, Whitman, but also any of the other readers ready to share the vision.

"Song of The Answerer" also more clearly involves a sense of who the persona really is in its 1855 rendition than in revised versions of the poem. The 1855 poem opens with six lines not present in later editions, in which the poem is explicitly set up to be the answer to the question, "How should the young man know the whether and when of his brother?" The poem to come is the answer to that question: "And I answered for his brother and for men, and I answered for the poet and sent these signs." What then follows is a definition and explanation of who the "answerer" is, in terms that do not necessarily place Whitman in that role more or less than any of the rest of us. The poem is written by Whitman in part to explain who "Whitman" is, and what the function of the poetic persona or "answerer" can and

must be. Hence the answerer has a "universal welcome."
 "The person he favors by day or sleeps with at night is blessed... He resolves all tounge into his own and bestows it upon men.... and any man translates, and any man translates himself also... He is the joiner, he sees how they join."

That compilation of lines from the poem collectively gives an apt description of the Whitman persona as he appears in the 1855 Leaves of Grass especially. The persona is he who unites writer and reader, hence he is the "joiner." The person he favors is "blessed" because that person can more readily enter into reciprocity, the source of all "real living" according to Buber. The persona brings with it a means of communication, the poem itself; hence he can be said to translate the language of the I and the you into a composite We that all then receive as their own tounge. This is only possible, though, if the readers are also willing to work, "and any man translates himself also."

Part of what the answerer reveals is that he does not have all the answers: "What can be answered he answers and what cannot be answered he shows how it cannot be answered." All people from all occupations, whether Jew or Gentile, mechanic or poet, see him as one of their own because they in fact help to comprise who is is, and they can thereby all see themselves in him. As long as

this is so, they will continue to bring their own selves to the work of art. In this light "Song of the Answerer," takes on a subtler shade of meaning. It is the explanation of a complex reciprocal relationship, instead of the ramblings of a braggart poet.

"Salut Au Monde" is of course the other poem where the persona is very clearly spelled out or created before our eyes. In "Salut Au Monde" the reader is invited to participate directly in the formation of the "Whitman" character-persona. The writer and reader join to form "Walt Whitman" and together ask their creation what this new union enables him to see and hear. Of course the composite I is capable of tremendous comprehension and expansiveness, and his litany of sights and sounds, "I hear the locusts in Syria... I hear the workman singing... I see the great round wonder rolling through space," all serve to demonstrate how limitless the potential power is when writer and reader join forces. The power of such union and its end results are well described by "Whitman" in "Song of Myself": "My ties and ballasts leave me, I travel I sail,/ My palms cover continents,/ I am afoot with my vision." This "vision" has been granted through an equal give and take by author and audience. "A kelson of the creation is love," "Whitman" tells us in "Song of Myself." Love, a reciprocal emotion, is what keeps the universe and each

individual integral. The "answerer" knows that we can only grow or gain insight while attempting the search together.

Whitman never negated or tried to dismiss the role of "Whitman" in later editions of Leaves of Grass, even if he diminished or confused his effectiveness through revision or deletion. For example, an "Inscriptions" poem, "Me Imperturbe," first published in 1860, again presents the "Whitman" character. We are warned of his presence with the line, "Master of all and mistress of all; "Whitman" is explicitly sexless and composite here. Yet the individual speaks through "Whitman" in the line, "Finding my occupation, poverty, notoriety, foibles, crimes less important than I thought." Even at this point, though, "Whitman" speaks for any individual within the composite who discovers that individual shortcomings are made insignificant by the dialogue and communion of the I and you.

Another well thought out feature of the final editions of Leaves of Grass is the consecutive grouping of "Salut Au Monde," "Song of the Open Road," "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," and "Song of the Answerer." All of these poems are poems of relation and ask the question of "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," "What is it then between us?" In each of them the composite character who has been all things good and evil as in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,"

or who acknowledges his relation to all other people, the "delicious burdens" he takes along with him in "Song of the Open Road," envisions a world where all is possible if the reader will acknowledge and help to formulate the possibilities. Time, distance and place "avail not"; the persona can become alive again and the person Walt Whitman can be identified only if the reader will participate in the poem. He or she can do so most directly by becoming the main character along with Whitman as in "Salut Au Monde" or "Song of the Answerer," or by realizing the process of self discovery through the other in both life and art as in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" or "Song of the Open Road."

Though by as early as 1860 Whitman had serious doubts over whether or not his invitation to the reader would ever be fully accepted, and though his later poetry reflects a frailer conception of the possibilities of communication, as in "A Noiseless Patient Spider," Whitman never did give up on his readers entirely, nor did he ever rescind his offer to them to become "Walt Whitman" with him. He knew that the attempt to be "Walt Whitman" without them would be doomed to failure because the persona, as he himself had defined it, needed to be a collaborative effort.

II - The Borges Persona-

It seems at first to be more difficult to link the Borges persona to Whitman's influence than it was to demonstrate that Borges admired and employed many of Whitman's ideas on the reader's role in the work of art in his own fiction. As has been noted, Borges has described the Whitman persona as a composite of Whitman and of every one of his readers, and he has consistently been recorded as an admirer of Whitman's experimental creation "Walt Whitman." However, the Borges persona does not seem to be that closely related to the "Whitman" character. The optimism, expansiveness, heriosm, or larger-than-life characteristics of "Whitman" are not evident in "Borges."

Even so, the narrator and/or main character of a typical Borges story does have a great deal in common with "Whitman." Indeed the open-ended, composite persona is at least as common to Borges' fiction as it is to Whitman's poetry. The "Borges" character or narrator or persona that appears with great frequency throughout his fiction is normally presented as a kind of universal reader, (an individual who is reading or being told the narrative line even as we are) or else he is a character who starts out to be a specific, everyday man but ends up having universal characteristics. There are even a few occasions where both kinds of figures appear in the

same story. In "El acercamiento a Almotásim," ("The Approach to Almotasim") "Borges" is ostensibly doing a book review and hence is no more the creator of the plot than we are. Meanwhile, within that plot the main character discovers that all men are the same man. In "La forma de la espada" ("The Shape of the Sword") "Borges" is being told the story by another man, even as we are, but this second narrator, John Vincent Moon, tells the story as if he were someone else because he has concluded, "I am the others, all men are the same man." So though "Borges" is not the "fleshy, sensual" optimist that "Whitman" sometimes is, he is still someone who invites the readers to imagine that they are as much the creators and interpreters of the story as the author himself. "Borges" as much as "Whitman" invites participation and entry into the work.

Borges also has allowed "Borges" to intrude into his everyday life and has left himself open to the question of whether or not he can distinguish Borges from "Borges." In "Borges y yo," he confessed that such a distinction was somewhat beyond him. Rodríguez Monegal has argued that over the past thirty years or so Borges has allowed himself to become "Borges" more and more; upon acquiring international notoriety Borges, "ceased to be a writer and became a seer."³⁵ By entitling one of his chapters, "The Old Guru," Rodríguez Monegal

clearly suggests that Borges, like Whitman, has allowed the authorial self to "be" him more and more. As Harss puts it, there is some doubt as to whether "Borges wrote his books or they wrote him,"³⁶ because "Borges" the authorial character and persona is created within the literature itself, even as "Walt Whitman" is. Both men allowed the second self to obscure the first, in part as a graphic argument in favor of blurring the conventional distance between fact and fiction.

However, Borges, even in writing "Borges y yo," clearly recognizes that there is a distinction between the real and the created self. Furthermore, Borges wrote Ficciones and El Aleph, which most critics consider to be his best works, before worldwide fame could influence him, and so he could more readily employ the "Borges" composite persona as an effective literary device. This composite persona is there to encourage participation and to escort the reader into the work by suggesting to the reader that he or she is as much the creator of the work as the author himself is. "Borges" does not share "Whitman's" "personality," but his goals are similar: to communicate with the reader through the work of art, and to confuse or even destroy any sense of distance between author and reader.

Thomas Lyons' article, "Borges and the (Somewhat) Personal Narrator," describes the Borges narrator who

appears throughout his fiction. In Borges' work we find, "an intruding, non-dramatized, often distant yet familiar first person narrator."³⁷ Lyons points to many devices that Borges employs intentionally to obscure literary distance and to cast doubt on historical reality. Lyons' notes Borges' use of footnotes (not typical of fiction) and his deployment of real people within his fictions (for example, Bioy Casares in "Tlón," and Rodríguez Monegal in "La otra muerte") as some instances of Borges' intentional confusion of the traditional borders between fact and fiction. The Borges narrator often claims to be as unaware of all the relevant facts and circumstances of a given story as the audience itself is. He does so to put himself on even footing with the reader. Lyons emphatically disagrees with critics who suggest that Borges is aloof or condescending within his fiction. Indeed Lyons contends that Borges' narrator attempts to be one of us: "the casual, humanized narrator appears throughout an everyman who you could fit the shoes of."³⁸

Borges wants us to be as close to the telling of the story as the author himself. He therefore presents a persona who is often as confused or puzzled as any reader would be, a persona presented as someone just trying to make sense of a confusing situation as any reader would. The creation of the full "Borges" persona is therefore a

two way endeavor, if we choose to let it be. Lyons argues that the Borges narrator always at least implicitly demands participation from his readers, instead of "passivity or marginality." Borges' persona brings us into intimate contact with the material. Just as Borges through the events of "El Zahir" becomes an everyman who is yet "partially Borges," we as readers become one with the everyman "Borges" too, and yet never cease to be at least partially ourselves.

The "Borges" narrator makes an appearance in the very first story of Ficciones, "Tlön Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." In it Borges sets up the narrative as something that began as a parlor conversation between himself and his friend Adolfo Bioy Casares. Of course the ensuing events of the narrative which lead to the uncovering of the secret world of "Tlön" help make apparent that it is really "Borges" we are dealing with in his role as universal reader, as he gradually comes to unravel the mysteries of Tlön along with us. Tlön is a world created on paper, a fictional world that by its pervasiveness stands, by the end of the story, as a threat to supplant the "real" world. Hence, in the very first story of Ficciones, the threat or promise of a Borgesian world disturbing or supplanting our world is presented but simultaneously assuaged by Borges' position as one of us. He does not take credit for the creation of Tlön, just

as he characteristically will not take credit for any of his other "fictions." He is instead an observer and commentator on Tlön, as any of the rest of us can be, even though Tlön has many identifiably Borgesian characteristics (such as Tlön's philosophers valuing "asombro," shock or surprise, over truth or verisimilitude). So the "Borges" narrator never takes credit for what the author, the man Borges, apparently created; he always suggests that it is equally the creation or problem of us all. Indeed when the narrator of this story announces that his part of the narration is about to end, ("Here ends the personal part of my narration") he insists that, "The rest is in the memories, (when not in the hopes or fears) of all my readers." He treats the world of Tlön as if it were as alive to us as it is to "Borges."

The very next story in Ficciones, "El acercamiento a Almotásim," was written so convincingly in the style of a book review that both Bioy Casares and Rodríguez Monegal have admitted to trying in vain to locate the novel in question.³⁹ Of course the proposed novel is an idea of Borges' that was never written, but by treating it as a real novel by a real other person Borges gets to take on the rights of a reader, to be "Borges" along with the rest of us. In the story itself, the main character is made aware that the search through others always leads back to the self. Borges has

explained in his comments on the story that this piece represents one man's realization that one man can stand for all men. Hence, "El acercamiento a Almotásim" has both the external "Borges" reader and the internal universalized character.

"Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote, and "Examen de la obra de Herbert Quain," discussed in detail in chapter two, contain two other fictionalized authors who are types of universalized readers, but they also are both presented by narrators who take on the rights of readers by examining the works of both authors along with us. Borges thereby attributes some of his best and most innovative ideas to other sources; he does not take credit but instead pretends to be just another reader or reactor to the ideas, a habit he picked up from Macedonio Fernandez, according to Rodríguez Monegal.⁴⁰ "Borges" has the opportunity to discuss Borges stories with us, or is it the other way around? (Is it Borges who discusses the creations of "Borges" with us?) In either case, the real creator of the original ideas in "Tlon," "Almotasim," "Pierre Menard" and "Herbert Quain," never overtly takes credit for these creations.

In both "La lotería en Babilonia" ("The Lottery in Babylon") and "La biblioteca de Babel" ("The Library of Babel") the first person narrator immediately begins his story with a statement that identifies him as a

representative self, an everyman who yet maintains the rights of the "I." Even the language of the two initial declarations is similar: "Like all the men of Babylon I have been proconsul, like all of them I have been a slave," and, "Like all the men of the library I have traveled in my youth, I have wandered in search of a book, perhaps the catalogue of catalogues." Both stories also involve variations on a similar theme. The representative, nameless narrator in the first story tells the history of the lottery by which all men are ruled, while in the latter story we hear of the history of the library and the quest for the eternal book. Hence both narrators weave parables of life itself, in the first case the world as chance, and in the second a world minutely organized to the last detail.

However, Borges has a way of making these obviously opposite approaches to life seem remarkably similar. In each case the various doubts about the supposed ruling mechanisms, the lottery and the library, are so prevalent that the quality of wonder and questioning seems to be the crucial human constant, regardless of whether chance or destiny rules. Both narrators are everyman in search of an answer that they will not find, but which they still must search for. Yet both men are also individuals who only implicitly speak for us all. Indeed the strange

settings and ruling metaphors of both stories do not encourage our immediate identification with either narrator. Borges has adapted from Whitman the ability to present an I that is really a large We, but never totally lacking in its individuality. Such an arrangement of course encourages us to place our own "I" into the composite as well.

Again and again Borges finds ways to not take credit for the story he has created, either by introducing a second source or by questioning the veracity of his own narrative and thereby encouraging alternative interpretations. In "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan" ("The Garden of Forking Paths") the narration of Yu Tsun is prefaced by "Borges," who claims that the ensuing narrative is a verbatim transcript of an uncovered diary whose first several pages are missing. In "El inmortal" the uncovered manuscript is supposed to be that left by the "immortal" himself, Joseph Cartaphilus. In "Funes el memorioso," though the narrator is recounting something from his own past he makes no claim to strict veracity, "This inaccuracy (a good thing it is that the reader is already aware) has no other plot than that dialogue of fifty years ago. I won't try to reproduce his words, lost now forever." So when "Borges" presents us with another's transcript the account is to be taken as verbatim, but when it is a firsthand account then its

accuracy is constantly open to question.

In "El muerto" ("The Dead Man") the narrator again says that he does not recall or know all the details of the story since the story was not something he experienced, so he apologizes to the reader in advance: "I don't know the details of his adventure; when they are revealed to me I'll have to rectify and amplify these pages." "Borges" forgets the exact circumstances that initiated his investigation in the story "La otra muerte" ("The Other Death") because he has "lost the letter" that started him on the quest for Pedro Damian. Borges rarely wants us to think of the narrator as reliable; he would rather have us offer our interpretations and points of view to the tale as it unfolds.

Borges even directly uses a plural narrator at times that on the surface may seem like an "editorial we" only, but, given the generally composite nature of his persona, may in fact mean more. In "La muerte y la brújula" ("Death and the Compass"), which is told mostly from a third person perspective, there are a few shifts to a "we" pronoun, as in the line, "None so rigorously bizarre, shall we say." A similar circumstance prevails in "Emma Zunz," another apparent third person narrative with the sudden shift to first person plural: "suffice it for us to say that that afternoon she went to the pier." So there is often an underlying "we" simultaneously creating

and interpreting the story even as it is otherwise being presented in a fairly straightforward third person format.

Even when "Borges" is himself a character in the story he rarely is any more in the know than the rest of us supposedly outside the story are. In "La otra muerte," "Borges" is fooled right along with the rest of us concerning Pedro Damían's past. He believes the initial story of Damían's cowardice even as we do since we have no reason not to believe it. The next time Damían is mentioned to "Borges" he interrupts to tell the speaker that he is already aware of Damían's cowardice. Hence he is as shocked as we are to discover that the speaker remembers Damían as a courageous soldier. Damían was somehow able to change his past through an act of will, but "Borges" is every bit as perplexed by this information as we are. After the fact, "Borges" offers several possible solutions to explain the strange occurrence, but he eventually admits that he is not even sure how much of all he has described actually happened and how much of it he may have imagined. We as readers fit in readily with "Borges" as confused, surprised participants in the uncovering of Damían's story, so much so that one is tempted to forget that we owe our sense of "asombro" to the creative mind of the author Jorge Luis Borges, who somehow has disassociated himself from his own invention.

Finally, there are several stories in which a

character begins a story as an individual, sometimes Borges himself, but ends up as a universal figure, an everyman no longer entirely or solely concerned with the problems or concerns of the mere individual. In "La escritura del dios" ("The Handwriting of God") the Indian priest, Tzinacán, is very much an individual; he is a high priest imprisoned by the hated conquistadores. His mind is very specifically bent upon revenge. He searches for the "handwriting of God" that will bring him the meaning of life itself and release him from his imprisonment. However, when he discovers what he seeks and becomes all knowing and all powerful, he no longer is concerned about the specific problems of Tzinacán, even though in some sense he still is Tzinacán.

In "El Zahir" Borges is jolted by the death of Teodelina Villar, a very specifically Argentine celebrity, and his concern for her is almost idiosyncratic. Somehow though, a twenty cent piece he receives for change the night of her funeral becomes for him the Zahir, an unforgettable object which eventually causes him to be in danger of losing all specific sense of self. Hence the coin has transformed him from Borges to "Borges,": "I am not he who I was before, but I still am allowed to recall and perhaps even relate what has happened. I am still, even partially, Borges." That passage in itself is a good description of what taking on the

literary persona entails. It implies a surrender of self (yet not a total surrender) in order to take on the others, to make the imaginative leap beyond the specific. Of course Borges is not as convinced as Whitman that this imaginative journey will bring happy results. At the end of "El Zahir" he is unsure whether the obsessed focusing upon the Zahir, the one object that has come to imply the universe, will lead to madness or a vision of God. The Zahir is, then, perhaps a symbol for the individual work of art, in which the author attempts to merge with the audience without a total surrender, with neither party ever sure of what the end result will be.

"El Aleph" has the same set-up as "El Zahir" - a woman that Borges loved has died - though this time it is someone he knew personally, not a stranger admired by reputation. In a very indirect way Borges' love for Beatriz Viterbo leads him to the Aleph, "a point in space that contains all the other points." While the Zahir was the one thing that implied the all, the Aleph is the all contained in one space. Hence the Zahir and the Aleph are a set, just as the lottery of Babylon and the library of Babel were- two sides of the same coin- to use the metaphor of the Zahir itself.

Borges has admitted that a central problem to the composition of "El Aleph" was to do what Whitman had

already done quite successfully, "the partial enumeration of an infinite aggregate."⁴¹ In trying to describe the Aleph, "Borges" is hampered by language and its linear flow, since the vision of the Aleph reveals all things simultaneously. "Borges" rival, Carlos Argentino Danieri, does not even consider this problem; his use of the Aleph is selfishly geared to the writing of a dreadfully exhaustive poem. However, "Borges" realizes, in the Whitmanic spirit, that mere listing is insufficient. Hence his catalogue presented in the story itself is far briefer and far more powerful than Danieri's poem. The final lines of it: ("I saw my face and my entrails, I saw your face and I felt vertigo and I cried because my eyes had seen that secret and conjectural object whose name usurps all men but who no man has seen, the inconceivable universe,") are a powerful statement of what the expanded persona is privy to. After viewing the Aleph all people and things seem familiar to "Borges"; he recognizes everyone he sees on the street. Instead of joy, however, this power frightens "Borges"; relation is not without its hazards. He has no assurance that a "kelson of the creation is love," the universe he sees is a confusing place in which idiots like Danieri win poetry prizes while genius like Borges' goes unrewarded. However, he cannot deny relation once he has seen the Aleph. In some sense the expanded vision

of the "Borges" persona brings Borges and his readers an expanded and augmented sense of confusion, but also an increased sense of sympathy for our fellow sufferers.

The "Borges" persona is, therefore, a composite character who is, as we have seen, either a reader with the same rights and shortcomings of the rest of us as readers, or else an everyman who represents us or contains us in his vision, especially if we see our own place in the composite. Borges' means of introducing this character to the reader are not always original. The idea of having a story be presented as a long lost diary or an old memory recalled are hardly new. However, in Borges these devices are all geared to a Whitmanic presentation of persona, a persona who is ostensibly the author, but is in fact a potential composite of author and reader.

Borges developed a far subtler "Borges" than Whitman's "Whitman," less flamboyant and less obviously larger-than-life. However, "Borges" is as apt as "Whitman" to invite the reader to take his or her place alongside him, to have the reader believe that he is a necessary part of the work in progress.

Persona helps encourage direct reader participation, which in turn is necessary to a true understanding and development of self. The reader joined to the writer creates a persona of seemingly unlimited vista and

potential, impossible without the cooperation of both.

Whitman and Borges chose to ignore or deemphasize the need for the reader in the formation of persona in their later years, and in much of their later work. Both found their personae so attractive that they attempted to become those characters without the reader's necessary aid. As we will see in the next chapter, trying to write too much "in character" weakened the potential for real dialogue in some of their later work. However, at its best the composite self, or persona, did serve as a unifying device, a "joiner" for self and other, writer and reader. Whitman and Borges never abandoned that potential, and it was in fact their attraction to it that caused both men to fall more readily into the respective roles of "Whitman" and "Borges" in their daily lives, especially once the notoriety of those characters began to overwhelm their actual creators. Even so, the persona who unites reader and writer and helps in the emergence of self is firmly established, and is still at work today, in some of the finest work of both men.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE

¹ Christ, "Borges Justified: Notes and Texts Toward Stations of a Theme," in Prose For Borges, pp. 46-81. p. 67

² Ibid, p. 49.

³ Ibid, p. 56.

⁴ Ibid, p. 51.

⁵ Ibid, p. 67.

⁶ Ibid, p. 56.

⁷ Ibid, p. 64.

⁸ Ibid, p. 56.

⁹ Mead, p. xx.

¹⁰ Burroughs, p. 104.

¹¹ Edward Carpenter, Days With Walt Whitman (London: G. Allen, 1906), p. 113.

¹² Bucke, p. 53.

¹³ As quoted in Borges' introduction to his translation of selections from Leaves of Grass, Hojas de Hierba, p. 21.

¹⁴ "Nota sobre Walt Whitman," in Discusión, p. 107, "the mere happy vagabond who puts forth the verses of Leaves of Grass would have been incapable of writing them."

¹⁵ Fieldler, "Images of Walt Whitman," p. 57.

¹⁶ Esther Shepard, Walt Whitman's Pose (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938).

¹⁷ Amy Lowell, "Walt Whitman and the New Poetry," in Walt Whitman, Ed. Francis Murphy, p. 223.

¹⁸ William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience A Study in Human Nature (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1923) p. 78.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 83.

²⁰ Allen, The Solitary Singer, p. 157.

²¹ Edward H. Miller, A Century of Whitman Criticism, p. xii.

²² Floyd Stovall, from "Walt Whitman and The American Tradition," as quoted in, Whitman The Poet Materials For Study, p. 162.

²³ Whitman's use of persona does differ somewhat from what such critics as Walker Gibson, Walter Ong and Susan Sontag have to say about persona. In his book Persona (New York: Random House, 1969) Walker Gibson suggests that a persona is always implicitly understood to be a character who will do the talking for the author. Whoever this character is greatly affects the message of the work because, as Sontag suggests, "the mask is the face," (as quoted in Gibson, p.v.). Gibson, therefore, views persona as a device by which the real author participates in a kind of role playing by means of a character, "certainly less complex than its human inventor." (p.4.)

Walter Ong argues that, in taking on the role of the other, in "realizing in a specially intense way one's identity (in a sense) with someone who (in another sense) one is not, remains one of the most human things a man can do," Walter Ong, The Barbarian Within (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1962) p. 54. To that extent, Ong is reminiscent of George Herbert Mead. However, Ong points out that persona is a one way mask, the author wears it, not the audience, which leads to the "curious one way nature of artistic communication."

So Gibson, Ong and Sontag all argue that the persona is a major way for an author to deliver a message, the persona itself being a large part of the message. Certainly Whitman's persona does fit that description. However, both Whitman and Borges' personae are unconventional in that they are used often as open-ended, two way devices to foster communication. Since persona for them is a composite of self and reader, unlike Gibson's definition of the persona as less complex than its creator, Whitman and Borges' personae can be more complex, since the attributes and impressions of each reader can be added to the composite.

- 24 James Miller, Walt Whitman p. 67.
- 25 Ibid, p. 158.
- 26 For example, John Kinnaid in "Leaves of Grass and the American Paradox," in Whitman A Collection of Critical Essays believes that the character in "Song of Myself" is three distinguishable personae at once, "Walt Whitman, (1) an American, (2) one of the roughs, (3) a Kosmos," p. 30.
- 27 Whitman's escape into "Whitman" was more pronounced in old age, but had begun much earlier. As early as 1855 in an anonymous review which Whitman wrote of his own Leaves of Grass that appeared in the United States Review Whitman enthusiastically sings the praises of "Whitman": "an American bard at last....unaware that there was ever hitherto such a product as a book or such a being as a writer," as quoted in Walt Whitman Francis Murphy, editor, (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1969). Clearly Whitman sometimes encouraged seeing the character and writer as one, and thereby contributed to the potential confusion between the two.
- 28 As quoted in Bucke, p. ix.
- 29 See, Whitman, The Correspondence (Vi) p. 348.
- 30 Carlisle, p. 18.
- 31 Cowley, p. viii.
- 32 Ibid, p. xxxiii.
- 33 Don Bogen, "I and You in 'Who Learns My Lesson Complete': Some Aspects of Whitman's Poetic Evolution," Walt Whitman Review 25, (September 1979) 87-98.
- 34 Cowley, p. xxviii.
- 35 Rodríguez Monegal, Jorge Luis Borges: A Literary Biography, p. 435.
- 36 Harss and Dohmann, Into The Mainstream, p. 103.
- 37 Thomas Lyons, "Borges and the (Somewhat) Personal Narrator," Modern Fiction Studies 19 (Autumn, 1973) 363-372, p. 363.

38 Ibid, p. 370.

39 See Rodríguez Monegal, p. 265.

40 Emir Rodríguez Monegal, "Borges: The Intellectual Background," in Simply a Man of Letters, pp. 175-190, p. 189.

41 See El Aleph and Other Stories, specifically the Borges commentary on the stories, appended to the end of the collection, p. 264.

Chapter Four

Persona: A Farewell to Self and Reader

As was noted in the first chapter of this study, there are certain parallels between the writing careers of Borges and Whitman. Both men labored in relative obscurity for a number of years before achieving their finest work in middle age. Both authors gradually went from these writing peaks to a final period of, "diminishing effectiveness,"¹ denouements that were surely augmented by their old age physical disabilities, Whitman's strokes and partial paralysis, and Borges' blindness. Both the elder Whitman and the elder Borges adopted similar writing strategies in their final years. Both men virtually gave up the attempt to communicate with the reader by means of the composite persona. Both authors instead opted to try to be that persona on their own, thereby at once masking or even obliterating their true selves within their work, and also eliminating the possibility of active reader participation. Whitman and Borges had both stressed the difficulty of the perfect reciprocal relationship between writer and reader. Perhaps in their declining years they did not feel equal to such a difficult venture, and so decided to take a more

conventional track. Perhaps also, both writers were disappointed by the lack of readers' response that they had received, and thereby felt compelled to present works that were less intricate and demanding.

In the last twenty or so years of their respective lives Whitman produced poetry and Borges created fiction which often appeared to be either a parody of their earlier work or a glaring contradiction to it. There is little if any venturing of self, especially in comparison to that earlier work. Any invitations to reader engagement are hollow ones because in both men's cases the notorious persona is now masquerading as the genuine self. There can be no real dialogue, by definition, without a genuine I and you. In their later work at least one of these two essential members is missing, and often both are absent. Only the persona, the mediating device, remains, except that now it is a sham device, inserted to replace the self, instead of functioning as a liaison between self and other. Both men decided to "be" the persona as much as possible, to accept the life of literary guru or savant both within and outside of the work of art. The elder Whitman plays the prophet, the elder Borges the detached storyteller; the questions and needs of the inner self are denied or sublimated. While their later work is not usually poor, it is basically a rejection of the trinity

concept, and thereby goes against much of the main thrust of some of both men's finest work. They each wanted to replace their imperfect selves with the persona purified through art, but their attempts were doomed to failure because the persona had no right to existence without the participation and communion of the self and reader.

Whitman made significant efforts to deny that he had not always been synonymous with the character "Walt Whitman" of Leaves of Grass; hence in later years he began to claim that Leaves of Grass was little more than his own personal story. In "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads," for example, Whitman claims that, "The driving force behind the writing of Leaves of Grass was a desire to articulate and faithfully express in literary or poetic form and uncompromisingly my own physical, emotional, moral, intellectual and aesthetic personality." He goes on to say that, "Leaves of Grass indeed (I cannot too often reiterate) has mainly been the outcropping of my own emotional and other personal nature--an attempt from first to last to put a Person, a human being (myself in the latter half of the 19th century in America) freely, fully and truly on record." What Whitman says in "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads" would be true enough if "Whitman" were saying it because that composite of America and its people is truly on record in much of Leaves of Grass. However, for Whitman to try

to have us believe that his own self, in all its detail, is what exists in Leaves of Grass is to deny that he ever attempted to use "Walt Whitman" as a representative figure, and to imply that the entire book is just one elaborately narrow self-glorification.

Hence this old age reminiscence challenges the validity of the "trinity" of self, reader and persona that is at work in many of Whitman's finest earlier poems. Indeed, by the time Whitman composes "A Backward Glance" one has to question whether he even appreciates and recognizes what his best work really is. In "A Backward Glance" Whitman claims that the Civil War had the greatest and most lasting effect on his poetry; however, most critics would now agree that the vast majority of Whitman's finest poetry was written before the Civil War. Even "Passage to India," usually considered one of Whitman's most important post Civil War poems, is in serious contradiction to all the poetic principles that informed his earlier work, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter. Perhaps, as Allen claims, Whitman was never the best judge of his own work,² or perhaps Whitman consciously rejected his earlier attempts because they had not met with the reciprocity he felt was necessary to their success. Instead he turned to a prophetic, bardic style of poetry in which the poet could be restored to a lofty position

and declaim poetic truths, instead of needing to rely on an audience to help supply them. He became the prophet only when his attempt at reciprocal poetry met with an insufficient response.

Whitman seemed to make at least a somewhat conscious decision to play the part of "Whitman" more and more both in and out of his poetry. This fact is nowhere more noticeable than in his conversations with "disciple" Horace Traubel. In these conversations the reader can sometimes catch Whitman shifting to "Whitman" in mid-sentence. For example, when Traubel mentions the writer Stoddard who had written uncomplimentary things about Whitman, Whitman's response is, "I do not blame him, but I am sorry for Walt Whitman."³ Whitman later recalls for Traubel an instance in which a man asked him if he were not "sorry on the whole" for having written the sex poems. Whitman's reply was, "Don't you feel sorry on the whole that I am Walt Whitman?"⁴ By this point in time Whitman feels that he is interchangeable with "Whitman," or at least he pretends to see no distinction between the two. Even when Traubel announces to Whitman that Mrs. Harned, Traubel's sister, has given birth, Whitman feels the necessity to bless her in "Whitman's" name: "Who could better realize what that means- who better understand- who more thoroughly rejoice in? Give the new mother my love- tell her I glorify her in my

thanksgivings- that Walt Whitman glorifies her- tell her that."⁵ Since Whitman himself never married or raised a family of his own, some people might feel that many others might, "better understand" what the birth of a new child signified. However, "Whitman," with his combined lusty manliness and reverence for procreation and motherhood could certainly lay claim to special insight and understanding of a mother's joy at the birth of her child, and so it is as "Whitman" that the old poet delivers his congratulations.

The elder Whitman wanted to be "Whitman" so much that he began to pretend that no imperfect being named Walter Whitman had ever existed. To try to accomplish such a feat, however, he had to resort to trickery or even deliberate lies. For example, Traubel once questioned him on the various styles he had gone through in clothing and behavior throughout the years, stages documented by Chase⁶ and others, but denied by Whitman: "I always dressed as I do now and spoke and acted as I do now- that's all I know about it- that's all I can tell you."⁷ Of course there still exists physical evidence in the way of photographs and portraits to show that Whitman is lying to Traubel in this instance, and we also have Kaplan's word that Whitman actually suppressed certain photographs which he felt did not fit in with his final self portrait as benevolent seer.⁸

His biographers also tell us, as does Whitman himself, that the poet destroyed many letters he felt might conflict with the persona, letters, "too sacred, too surely and only mine to be perpetuated."⁹ Whitman sought to wipe out those aspects of the self that were unattractive or inconsistent with his final image of himself. Unlike the poet of "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," or "Song of Myself" he is no longer willing to admit that he is no better or worse than any other man or woman. He goes so far as to "assiduously revise every page,"¹⁰ of Bucke's 1883 biography, and to also edit the manuscripts of O'Connor and Burroughs.¹¹ It is little wonder that those "disciples" found Whitman and his poetry to be as one, since Whitman himself was there to insure that their opinions would not conflict with his own.

Whitman, as Fieldler explains, attempted to enact an inverted book fraud by counterfeiting the author instead of the book, "Whitman had only to become in public life the person he invents, that is to say to counterfeit himself rather than the text."¹² However, such contrivances have left Whitman forever open to attack from people such as Esther Shephard or Harvey O'Higgins.¹³ And as much as Shepard's invective seems mean spirited or narrowly focused, she does have at least one telling complaint, "No one except Walt Whitman

himself requires that an artist should be what his poem is."¹⁴ Whitman's problem is precisely that; he tried to become "Whitman" more and more in his later years. As a result his earlier poetry, written at a time when he more often kept himself distant from "Whitman," is also misunderstood as an attempt at self-aggrandizement. The open-ended, reciprocal nature of that poetry is thwarted to some extent by the attempt of the later Whitman to deny the distinction between himself and "Whitman," a distinction that is crucial to an understanding of his pre-Civil War poetry. The elder Whitman seems to want to leave us only two choices; either to condemn him as a fraud or to admire him as a prophet and sage, a literally larger-than-life character. However, his earlier work is too important and too clearly distinct in its use of "Whitman" as an agent of reciprocity and engagement to allow us to give in to the sales pitch of the "good grey poet."

As Fieldler suggests, Whitman needs to be rescued from "parody as well as apotheosis,"¹⁵ because much of his best poetry is a human and sincere attempt at dialogue. While it may be true that "the legendary person he had created and released had taken a life of its own and could make strange conversions long after the poet's death,"¹⁶ it is equally true that the only real chance for dialogue between Whitman and future

generations is in those poems where Whitman includes a genuine sense of self. Only then can the persona be employed to invite the participation of the reader on a poetic journey with that self.

In the past few decades Borges has also renounced his earlier approaches to fiction and gradually disengaged himself from his art, leaving behind in his work only that disinterested observer "Borges." Borges has patterned his old age disappearing act on Whitman's so closely that he can sometimes be caught referring to himself as a "garrulous old man."¹⁷ Characteristically though, Borges' escape has been more subtle than Whitman's. Whitman tried very noticeably to equate the self and persona, to pretend that his self was extremely important and that the marvelous "Whitman" character, was, in fact, that very same self. Borges, perhaps in part because he saw the obvious problems in Whitman's plan, opted for a less noticeable ruse. Borges claims to be truly unconcerned with self and yet "resigned to being Borges,"¹⁸ until death might bring oblivion. However, what Borges is really resigned to do is no longer to venture the self in his works, not even in the understated way that he once did, and instead to let the "Borges" character stand for him both in and out of his art.

In Ficciones and in El Aleph Borges had a subtle

but ultimately powerful inclusion of self in most of the stories, and the "Borges" character or narrator was a means also to get us involved in the work. In El informe de Brodie and El libro de arena the trick devices for reader inclusion are still there, but Borges himself usually is not; he has little personal stake or genuine venture into the work himself. He has allowed "Borges" to take over almost entirely, and has thereby shut out both self and reader, even as Whitman did. As Rodríguez Monegal points out, there came a time when Borges irrevocably became "Borges": "By being 'Borges' he had obliterated himself, he had finally ceased to matter."¹⁹ Borges gets away with this escape more successfully than Whitman, that is he attracts less attention to it, because he has learned from Whitman's efforts, and perhaps from those of other authors whose personae he has studied.²⁰ More importantly, Borges had never made huge claims for the self, in fact he had negated the self's autonomy throughout his work, even while subtly including the self throughout it. In his later work all Borges had to do was continue to deny the self's importance while now really refraining from personal venture into his work. However, even though this decision has caused less controversy than Whitman's analogous choice, it still remains as full a rejection of reader engagement and the overall trinity concept as Whitman's was, and it leads

generally to a weakening in the complexity and richness of the creative work that the elder Borges produces.

The Borges of Ficciones and El Aleph was a simultaneous observer-participant who invited us to share those same roles. The Borges of the later fiction is most often a disinterested observer only, who neither himself attempts participation nor invites ours. Borges is now fond of saying that he has finally found his voice, but ironically his later work is characterized by a loss of personal voice. Like Whitman, he seems unaware or unwilling to admit that his later work lacks the richness or value of his masterpieces. How else can one explain the fact that Borges claims "La intrusa" to be his finest story or that El informe de Brodie and El libro de arena are his best books of fiction? These books no longer risk the self or reveal its vulnerability; they are, like Whitman's later work, more safely conventional.

Walter Ong has claimed that James Joyce is a better writer than Edgar Allan Poe, in large part because of the greater personal detachment that Joyce achieved from his work.²¹ Ong's thesis, in simplified form, is that the greater the personal detachment one can achieve the more likely that one's art will be praiseworthy. Gay Wilson Allen approves of a similar criterion when he claims that "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" and "Passage to India" are among Whitman's best works because they are

among the few where he achieved this ideal detachment.²² The elder Borges claims that a fine compliment to give an author would be to say that he wrote in "an almost anonymous style."²³ However, too much detachment leads to disengaged art, art with no sense of immediacy or importance. The ideal that Whitman and Borges had instead uncovered was that an author should seek to be "both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it," to be both observer and participant at the same time, and to invite us to do the same. In their later work, however, both men refuse to renew this sense of art as process, which they had come to treat as a reflection of life itself. As Georges Gusdorf has said, the genuine effort must never cease because, "at the slightest relaxation the new form degenerates into formula. There comes a moment when the power is lost, when style seems an empty imitation of itself, a whole jumble of conditioned responses in which the person is the victim rather than the master."²⁴ Indeed Borges freely admits the self parody of his later work, and Wallace Stevens is only one reader who noticed Whitman's frequent attempts to "write like himself."²⁵ When Whitman and Borges gave up the renewal of self within their art they allowed for their work to be devoid of self and devoid of an active accomplice reader.

While there is no general accord as to exactly when

Whitman's poetry began to lose its genuine sense of self and its active invitation to reader participation,²⁶ certainly "Passage to India" is a keynote of the shift, particularly since it is often regarded as one of Whitman's last major poems. As Roy Harvey Pearce notes, Whitman's overall failure as a prophetic poet, and more specifically his failure in "Passage to India," is largely a result of his turning away from his main poetic strengths: "Whitman fails as a prophetic poet precisely because he was such a powerfully human one."²⁷ Pearce questions the validity of the human situation in "Passage to India." He believes that one of the poem's final phrases, "O daring joy but safe," amounts to a contradiction in terms. Whitman wants the joy of the venture without the genuine risking of self that occurred in such poems as "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" or "Song of the Open Road." Whitman's poetry up to and including his 1860 edition of Leaves of Grass had frequently warned the reader that the journey was neither guaranteed or safe, though it was necessary for growth. In "Passage to India" he seems to be convinced only too ardently that the real venture is indeed too risky, so that a "safe" one must be substituted.

As Carlisle notes of "Passage to India," Whitman offers no real invitation to others nor seeks relation or reciprocity; he "expresses merely a vague, abstract

willingness to suffer because of the joy it will bring."²⁸ Whitman seeks to stack the deck in his favor, to offer hollow guarantees based on his own inflated heroism, a heroism totally unrelated to his earlier democratic ideals or the notion of an I-you dialogue expressed in earlier poems. Indeed, a study of "Passage to India" will reveal that its form and message both run counter to the trinity concept as expressed in poems such as "Song of Myself," "Salut Au Monde" or "Song of the Open Road."

In conventional poetry the poet expresses himself to an audience of listeners or readers. This implied hierarchy of poet to reader was what Whitman tried to dissolve, especially in his poetry from 1855-1860. Whitman's poetry of that time period sought the equal meeting of the I and the you to form together a composite "I" to redirect the meaning and intent of the creative act. When Whitman turned away from this premise he did not always merely revert to the conventional relationship of poet to reader. He was so impressed with the power of the composite "I" that he sought to be that "I" without any aid. "Passage to India" is the most direct result of that later attempt. In it Whitman tries to be the larger-than-life poetic hero he had known could only be possible with the democratization of literature. Ignoring that fact, Whitman poses as

"Whitman" the poet-prophet who does not need others in order to achieve vision and mastery. In earlier poems Whitman had almost always admitted that if his answers were not our truths as well then they were "nothing or next to nothing." Now, however, he and his soul, with the help of God, can find all the answers by themselves.

Instead of addressing another person in "Passage to India," the only "you" addressed in the poem by Whitman is his own soul. Indeed, "Passage to India," is, in some ways, just a rehash of "Salut Au Monde," except that the you of the reader has been replaced by the soul, so that a true dialogue has given way to an actual monologue. Even the styles of the two poems are similar; "Passage to India" has a succession of "I see" and "I hear" passages just like "Salut Au Monde," but unlike "Salut Au Monde" in which "Whitman" was created before our eyes by the joining of the I and you, in "Passage to India," Whitman, with no one's aid claims a vision equal to that of the "Walt Whitman" of the earlier poem. So the poet in "Passage to India" is the inflated, pompous figure that Whitman is often accused of being. He was always rescued from that accusation in earlier poems by the realization that the claims that were made for "Whitman" were made for us, and indeed potentially by us, in the process of the poem. However, since "Passage to India"

has no mention of the other, no invitation to the reader, one can only assume that the claims that Whitman makes in the poem he makes for himself alone.

When the "poet" within Whitman's poetry was as dependent for his existence upon the readers as he was upon Whitman then all claims made by that poet seemed potentially reasonable, since in the perfect communication all sense of limitation is lost. However, the attempt by Whitman the man to be the poet-prophet by himself is, in "Passage to India," a distorted picture of a non-existent self. The poet in "Passage to India" is seen as the "true son of God," who will make all things right and understandable for the rest of us. The poet therefore has in this poem reestablished his position of superiority over the others; the reader has no role to play other than that of an impressed listener. Whitman suggests the propriety of hero worship; in addition to himself he points to Columbus, "history's type of courage, action and faith," and there is no suggestion that we are all his equals. Whitman approves of the "efforts of heroes" and of their effects, and is implicitly pleased that his own heroism, the greatest of all, that of the poet-prophet, will also, "fill the earth with use and beauty." If all of this were not undemocratic enough, Whitman "tops" it by an out-and-out rejection of the others. He says to his soul, "We can wait no longer/

Let others deprecate, let others weep for sins, remorse, humiliation./ O Soul thou pleasest me, I thee."

"Passage to India" was not the first poem in which Whitman communed with his soul, but his past doublings of self had usually led to the conclusion that "a kelson of the creation is love," that sympathy and equality were the universal truths. In "Passage to India" he implies that he has waited too long for the others to come round, and so now he will "go it alone" with God's guarantee of safe passage. He feigns generosity by saying that he will suffer for the others ("For others sake to suffer all"), but this is just a weak Messianic comparison, another way to glorify the self at the expense of the others. Unlike Christ, though, Whitman has given up his bonds to humanity by having no part in the dialogue of man. God is his answer now, he alone insures perfection in a way that the others, by definition, could not. Whitman has lost both his sense of adventure and of personal venture, as well as most of his trust in the reciprocity of relationship. He looks instead for the "daring joy but safe," which is one of the sadder lines in American literature, since it signals the defeat of one of the literature's most daring experimenters, who has decided to opt instead for safety and feigned superiority and equanimity.

Although Whitman's poetry on the whole probably

reached its peak around 1860, from time to time he produced poems that were not as unrealistically focused as "Passage to India." In "Prayer of Columbus," although the idea of full reciprocity has been abandoned, Whitman does present an honest appraisal of self. The poem is, from start to finish, an imaginative look into the mind of Columbus that is simultaneously a grippingly accurate expression of Whitman's own feelings. Whitman is certainly, in his own mind, every bit as much the "batter'd wreck'd old man" of the poem's opening. Like Columbus he is "old, poor and paralyzed," and he believes that his "terminus" is near, though in fact it was almost twenty years away. When Columbus laments, "The voyage balked, the course disputed, lost, I yield my ships to Thee," there can be little doubt that Whitman is also referring to his own poetic voyage, which at that time was at perhaps its lowest point, and the disputes and derision that his innovations had caused. He has lost faith in the reciprocal potential of his America. The only faith remaining is a faith in God, which certainly takes on a different form for Whitman than it would have for Columbus, but still signals a search for support from other worldly sources. Whitman's only hope, which he places on Columbus as well, is "the prophet's thought," the vision of "authors in new tounques I hear saluting me."

Whitman can only hope that he will later be recognized as Columbus was, as a great hero and explorer whose discoveries were not fully appreciated in their own time. Since Whitman has in fact received such recognition the poem has acquired added force since his death. Neither man received a tangible reward on earth, and Whitman could only look to the future. Hence in this poem Whitman's prophecy is accurate, but even so his use of a persona is along more conventional lines than in earlier poems, and there is no attempt to encourage reader participation. Columbus, and by implication, Whitman, are two unfortunate yet still larger-than-life heroes, who were virtual martyrs to their most worthy causes, the physical and spiritual discoveries of America. They are men that we as readers are encouraged to admire, but can in no sense be.

Of course Whitman's loss of faith in reciprocity dates back even further than either "Prayer of Columbus" or even "Passage to India." "A Noiseless, Patient Spider," first published in 1863, already reveals Whitman's loss of faith. A far more tenuous look at the possibilities of relationship is offered in this balanced two stanza poem, in which each stanza is made up of one five line sentence. Whitman compares his soul's searching to a spider's releasing of its web. So gossamer like are the potential connections, and so

uncertain the objects to catch on to, that the spider must constantly send its web out of itself to have even a chance to progress on its journey. The web of Whitman's soul may be, as James Miller suggests, the web of language,²⁹ which Whitman must ceaselessly venture, "seeking the spheres to connect them/ Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere O my soul." This poem succeeds in part because of its honesty; there is no hiding behind an impervious "Whitman" persona, as occurred in "Passage to India."

However, in poems such as "Passage to India" or "Darest Thou O My Soul" (from "Whispers of Heavenly Death") Whitman does get caught up in his attempt to glorify the self by equating that self with an idealized, inflated figure. As Martin Buber suggests, once the I has decided to turn its back on the you, "the ego occupies himself with my manner, my race, my works, my genius,"³⁰ which is exactly what Whitman does in much of his later poetry and prose, both of which deny the reciprocity of the initial venture. Yet in becoming so narrowly self-centered Whitman actually presents less of his real self in his later works, except for infrequent glimpses as in "Prayer of Columbus" or "A Noiseless Patient Spider."

The shift in Borges' work, away from an investment of self, and towards an implicit denial of the reader,

is not as immediately noticeable as Whitman's because Borges' initial inclusion of self had been somewhat understated, and he still ostensibly seems to be inviting reader participation even in his later stories. Borges merely claims that his later work is intentionally less complex and "baroque" and less reliant on "asombro" for its effect, hence ostensibly more straightforward and accessible.

Instead, most of the stories of El informe de Brodie and El libro de arena are merely more conventional and devoid of any real inclusion of self. The typical protagonist of the later Borges stories is less likely to be a man of letters than was the case in Ficciones or El Aleph; Borges identifies far less with these later characters. Borges is aware that his later work is, like Whitman's, based on a deliberate decision not to pursue the writer-reader relationship, and no longer to allow the self to be vulnerable or approachable. Still he pretends that his later work is, if anything, more accessible, and he has even convinced some critics that such is the case. The real difference is that Borges in his earlier masterpieces pretended to be just an observer, but was really simultaneously a participant. He was in many of the stories and so by implication were all the other observers, the other readers of the work. In later works he continues in the role of observer but

quietly slips out of the participant's role, just as quietly locking us out of a chance for active entry into the work of art. There can be no I-you dialogue without the I.

Most of the stories in Borges' later fiction have little of anything of importance to do with the person Jorge Luis Borges. He has succeeded in becoming nothing more than a teller of tales, and ironically, his work comes closer to failure the more he succeeds in his attempt to keep himself out of that work. Hence the really crucial difference between Ficciones and El Aleph on the one hand and El informe de Brodie and El libro de arena on the other is that Borges is more personally involved in the first two books, and more concerned with the reader's role as interpreter and participant than he is in the simpler, more imitative later stories.

While Borges often plays "Borges" for interviewers who are not really familiar with his work, whether it be a New York times reporter or a TV interviewer like Dick Cavett (as we have seen in earlier chapters) there are interviews with Borges in which he reveals more of his real self. For example, Fernando Sorrentino believes that in his Seven Conversations With Jorge Luis Borges he spoke to the man and not just to his representative "Borges." Borges himself seems to concur; he claims that talking to Sorrentino was for him a learning experience:

"Fernando Sorrentino knows my work- let us use that term- better than I do; this is due to the obvious fact that I have written it only once and he has read it many times, a fact which makes it less mine than his... Fernando Sorrentino is, in a word, one of my most generous inventors."³¹ Of course one should be wary of any Borges statement, but his respect for Sorrentino does seem genuine. For example, he admits to Sorrentino what he has admitted to relatively few others, that he knows that Ficciones and El Aleph are superior to El informe de Brodie. When Sorrentino begins to complain about the lack of complexity in El informe de Brodie Borges hands him his standard "Borges" line, explaining that he has tired of dealing with labyrinths and mirrors and has decided instead to write more direct stories. However, this sort of answer, which would satisfy one of Borges' less generous or well-informed "inventors," leaves Sorrentino unconvinced. He insists that the earlier stories are far superior and that he still much prefers them to anything in El informe de Brodie. Borges then admits that, "it is only logical for what I am writing now to be inferior to what I wrote earlier."³² Borges cannot bring himself to try further to deceive a true accomplice reader, even though most others will remain fair game to the "Borges" treatment.

Actually, Borges has explained, perhaps inadvertently, why El informe de Brodie and El libro de arena do not measure up to his earlier works. In a book entitled Borges on Writing, an entire section of the book is devoted to how Borges came to compose the story "El otro duelo" ("The Other Duel") from El informe de Brodie.³³ Towards the end of Borges on Writing though, Borges speaks in a more general way about literature, and implicitly denigrates the kind of story typified by "El otro duelo" itself: "Literature is not a mere juggling of words; were it not for the deep inner feeling literature would be no more than a game, and we all know that it can be much more than that."³⁴ What "deep inner feeling" can possibly be behind the telling of "El otro duelo," a story of two ignorant, bloodthirsty simpletons who participate in an inane, brutal final competition by seeing who can run farther after they have both had their throats slit by their executioners? Borges' only interest here can be in the actual telling of the story itself; no venture of self, no "deep inner feeling" seems possible for writer or reader. The same sort of criticism can be leveled at another story from Brodie "La intrusa," ("The Intruder") which Borges also speaks highly of. Where is Borges the individual in this tale of two heartless and cruel brothers who settle a potential conflict between them when one of them decides to murder

the woman who had inadvertently come between them? Neither Borges nor very many of his readers can be located anywhere in that story either. With no "deep inner feeling" then, by Borges' own definition, these stories seem to be "no more than a game." Generally the stories of El informe de Brodie and El libro de arena are readable and interesting, but they give one the feeling of being "just stories," instead of emanations of life that are close to both writer and reader.

The venture of self in Borges' earlier work is apparent to any discerning reader, and the pain of the uncertain years in which Borges composed these master-works also comes through clearly. Obviously, stories such as "El Aleph," "El Zahir," and "El sur" all have clear autobiographical connections. Stories such as "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote," "Examen de la obra de Herbert Quain," "Tlön Uqbar Orbis Tertius," and "El acercamiento a Almotásim" all deal with fictional authors and/or books that Borges has dreamed up himself, but has decided to present as the work of others so that his readers can share more completely in the actual creation of the work of art. Even stories with no apparent direct connection to Borges, such as "Funes el memorioso," "Las ruinas circulares," "La muerte y la brújula," and "La casa de Asterión" have very poignant autobiographical ties. Rodríguez Monegal, for example,

has this to say, "Like the Minotaur in "La casa de Asterion, Georgie had no idea of his uniqueness."³⁵ Such a connection is not mere fancy on Rodriguez Monegal's part; Borges himself has claimed that this story arose, "from feeling lonesome, from feeling useless,"³⁶ so that it has come to be seen as a "labyrinth of his inner self."³⁷

One of Borges' great strengths in his two masterful collections was the presentation of characters like Asterión, or Juan Dahlmann, Eric Lönnrot or Tzinacán, or even "Borges" himself, who all seemed so distinct but who were all connected to each other by virtue of all having some sort of vital connection to a "deep inner feeling" that Borges, by means of these characters, could share directly with his audience. Only in Borges' later work does he retreat almost exclusively into his character or narrator "Borges," and no longer concern himself with a venturing of self in his work.

One of the reasons that the later Borges frequently points out Whitman's inability to pass himself off as "Whitman"³⁸ is precisely because he was concerned about how successful he himself would be in a similar attempt to lose the self behind the well established persona, while simultaneously changing the rules by which that persona could come into existence. In his later work Borges feigns a greater concern for directness even while

his real self seeks complete escape from detection or confrontation both in and out of his work.

The preface to El informe de Brodie purports to map out Borges' new approach to fiction:

I have tried, I don't know with what degree of success, to write direct stories. I do not dare affirm that they are simple; there isn't on this earth a single page, a single letter that is, since all postulate the universe whose most notorious attribute is complexity.... I've rejected the surprises of a baroque style and of those that furnish an unexpected ending. I have preferred, in short, the preparation of an expectancy over that of a surprise. For many years I believed it would be allowed for me to achieve a good page by means of variations and novelties; now having completed my seventieth year, I believe that I have found my voice.

Borges claims that he wants to write "direct stories," but then goes on to say that he does not really believe in directness or simplicity. Implicitly, Borges is admitting that he does not fully believe in what he is now attempting, a simple or conventional story. He is suggesting that such narratives may rest upon false assumptions about both life and art. In fact, Borges claims to pattern El informe de Brodie on Kipling and El libro de arena on H. G. Wells; instead of surpassing their efforts, as he had frequently done in the past, he now seems satisfied with merely imitating them. Borges also pretends that his rejection of a "baroque" style and surprise endings has freed him from too much reliance on "variations and novelties." However, admirers of

Ficciones and El Aleph remember that the surprises in those stories were never merely tricks employed for shock value. Even in a story such as "El muerto," ("The Dead Man") about a "compadrito," Benjamín Otálora, who is not a Borges type, the shock he receives before he is killed is not merely a trick because it helps demonstrate an important Borgesian concept. Even when we think we are in control, as Otálora did, we may in fact be totally manipulated by others. This theme is repeated in poems such as "El golem" and "Ajedrez" and in the story "Las ruinas circulares." Borges' point, that there is never really any way to be sure of who is controlling whom, who is the creator and who the created, reverberates not only in these stories and poems, but in his overall approach to reader participation. So even a story such as "El muerto" helps to advance his overall aesthetic values, while it is simultaneously an entertaining and surprising narrative.

Virtually all of the surprise endings of Ficciones and El Aleph serve some sort of additional aesthetic or philosophical purpose. Borges uses "asombro" to jolt his readers into a realization of the world's complexity, and to invite us to take on the role of skeptical observer-participant along with him. So Borges' later attempt to disparage the aims of his earlier style is really too simplistic to be convincing. His claim to be

writing more direct and accessible stories is really a denial of his faith in the reader's ability to contribute his or her part. "La resignación de ser Borges," his supposed acceptance of being who he really is, is really a resignation of his responsibility as a writer to present the self for the purposes of examination and dialogue. He has decided instead to let "Borges" do all of the talking.

Actually, in terms of outward style only, Borges' later stories do not differ much from his earlier ones, but as Gusdorf noted, any relaxation of genuine effort will cause the form to degenerate into formula. A close inspection of the narrative style or point of view in the two later books reveals that again we are faced with no omniscient third person narrators, but instead with an array of first person narrators who tell stories that they were told by others, or have read, or that happened to them in the distant past.³⁹ So again Borges gives himself the rights of a reader, he again suggests that he is no more involved in these stories than we are, except that now that assertion is closer to the truth. Neither Borges nor his readers have a very personal stake in most of these stories.

Borges used the device of the unreliable or second hand narrator to mask his participation or personal stake enough to invite the reader's own active

participation. The suggestion was always that the work belonged at least as much to the reader as to the writer. In the later stories the point of view employed seems only to serve to distance us from the stories, not to encourage a confusion between the world of fact and fiction or to give us a sense of complexity or universality. Both author and reader seem to be restricted to the role of spectator, and we do not care very much about most of the participants.

Just as "Passage to India" was, in some ways, a weaker rendition of "Salut Au Monde," "El indigno" ("The Unworthy One") is partly a rehash of "La forma de la espada" ("The Shape of the Sword") and "El otro duelo" ("The Other Duel") of "Los teólogos" ("The Theologians"). "Los teólogos" is a story of two theologians and rivals so caught up in their religious differences that one of them ends up having the other burned at the stake as a heretic. The surprise ending reveals that upon the second man's death, also by fire, to God he and his rival "formed but one person." Of course such a surprise serves the additional purpose of having us recognize that even the most apparent opposites can be fundamentally indistinguishable, or that one person always needs the other for completion. In either case, the story again serves the additional aesthetic and philosophical aims; the surprise is not merely for the

surprise's sake. "El otro duelo" on the other hand, while also a story about two arch rivals (who are clearly very similar in their brutishness and their macho valor) does not seem to suggest anything but that these two men are curiosities whose fate is a kind of grim entertainment, both for us as readers, and for the men who placed wagers on their death race. Borges can have no personal stake in the lives of these men; they seem more foreign to him and to us then do the theologians. These two arch rivals do not invite reflection or self-analysis, their story cannot be expected to live on in the readers' minds. Borges' only connection to the story is in its telling, and our's only in being the audience to its narration.

In "La forma de la espada" a trick story is redeemed from mere trickery by the fact that the coward who has told the story from the hero's standpoint has done so convincingly enough to suggest that, "I am the others, all men are the same man." In "El indigno" the traitor, the "unworthy one," Santiago Fischbein, tells his own story with no attempt to hide or confuse his role as traitor. In some ways, though, Santiago Fischbein does come a little closer to Borges' self than most of the other characters in El informe de Brodie, especially in these lines: "We all resemble the image others have of us. I felt the contempt of the people so I despised

myself. At that time it was important to be valiant and I knew myself a coward. Women intimidated me; I felt the intimate embarrassment of my fearful chastity. I had no friends my own age." These lines could have as easily arisen from Borges' adolescence as from Fischbein's; both men grew up in an outer world of compadritos while being raised in a very distinct home environment. So "El indigno" has some of the elements of earlier Borges stories. "Borges" is recounting a story that was supposedly told to him years before by Fischbein, a story he now recalls on the occasion of Fischbein's death. Fischbein seems quite unlike Borges, but is in some ways a Borges type, an elucidator of the Borges self.

However, there is one distinction; Borges makes no attempt in "El indigno" to connect Fischbein's actions to the rest of humanity. Most readers probably do not empathize with a man who would deliberately betray the one person who had trusted him and given him respect. We cannot put ourselves in Fischbein's shoes because we are not invited to do so. Ferrari, the man betrayed, has no connection or relation to Fischbein; at no time in this story do we feel that one man can be all men, that Fischbein and Ferrari could be related or trade places. If Fischbein is meant to stand for Borges in any way it is for a Borges so impressed by his own sense of unworthiness that he believes now only in the lack of

relation between himself and others. Just as Whitman had seen himself as the separate figure aligned to the hero Columbus, Borges may be aligning himself here with the traitor Fischbein. He prefers to remain the unworthy one, with no intimation that the betrayer and betrayed are one and the same man. One man is merely one man; as Borges had poignantly admitted at the end of "Nueva refutacion del tiempo," "unfortunately, I am Borges." So even in stories in which the Borges self still makes an appearance there is no longer any attempt to connect or identify that self with all the others.

The stories in El libro de arena are, if anything, even less committed than those of El informe de Brodie. In El informe de Brodie the reader senses that Borges has yet to commit himself entirely to the abandonment of his old ideals. Hence in a story such as "Guayaquil," which deals with an old Borges favorite, the eternal return, the narrator, in typically Borgesian fashion, suggests that the only way to understand his situation is by becoming an observer as well as a participant: "Also to confess a deed is to cease being the subject to become a witness, to be someone who observes and who narrates and who no longer acted." In these lines Borges points to a typical narrative method of his finest stories, using "Borges" as a way to get the distance of an observer from his own feelings and actions,

and simultaneously letting us do the same thing. So in stories such as "Guayaquil" or "El indigno" aspects of the intricacies of point of view and plot that Borges had once handled so adroitly do partially reappear. In El libro de arena (The Book of Sand) the abandonment of the former style seems more complete. Borges' own comments on these stories in the afterword to the book or in interviews, reveal his lack of close relation to them. In speaking of the story "Ulrica" ("Ulrike") for example, he claims that the theme of love is normally absent from his prose, with "Ulrica" being the only exception. Readers of "El Aleph," however, know that Beatriz Viterbo is a much more realistic love interest than the Poeish heroine Ulrica. The story "There Are More Things" is an imitation of sorts of the work of Lovecraft, who is, as Borges tells us in the afterword, "a writer who I've always judged to be an involuntary parodist of Poe." When Borges then goes on to say that "There Are More Things" is the "lamentable fruit" of his attempt to write like Lovecraft, he is less guilty of false modesty than is usually the case. Borges is so desirous of escaping the concerns of the self in this volume that his virtual parody of Poe ("Ulrica") is insufficient; he must also parody a parodist of Poe in "There Are More Things."

Even a few of the more interesting stories in the collection such as "El otro" or "El congreso" do not ring entirely true. In "El otro" ("The Other") Borges literally talks to himself, which is, as we remember from Mead, the first step in really incorporating the others. However, in "El otro" Borges is satisfied to not go beyond the first step, thereby settling for monologue. "El congreso" ("The Congress") is, as Borges explains, a story in which there is a project, "so vast that it becomes confused in the end with the cosmos itself, and with the length of all days."

Borges admits that the ending of the story is something he himself has never experienced: "I have never achieved a similar revelation, I have tried to dream one." He further explains to Sorrentino that his purpose in the story "was to narrate something in which I didn't fully believe to see how it would turn out."⁴⁰ No author

should be faulted for experimentation, but Borges' latest experiments are far more conventional and cautious than his earlier ones. The imitations of Stevenson, Kafka, Chesterton, Kipling, Poe, Lovecraft and Wells that appear in his later fiction are not nearly as effective as his earlier stories that were influenced by these men but never directly derived from their work. El libro de arena too often opts for sensational or unlikely effects in place of the intricate metaphysical

miracles of the earlier stories. "Borges" has taken over more and more, to the virtual exclusion of Borges and the reader.

Borges has expressed his admiration for the oral folk tale because in such a story there is constant revision; each successive teller of the tale will replace, edit or delete information until the tale is virtually perfect.⁴¹ In this statement Borges expresses his old confidence that each reader who can also be an interpreter or creator of the work will successively enrich that work. In Ficciones and El Aleph Borges constantly tried to present tales with so many "forking paths" so many Herbert Quain-like "statements" that the readers could enjoy much of the freedom of the folk tale while getting a genuine authorial sense of self within the work. In El informe de Brodie and El libro de arena there seems to be far less opportunity for reworking any of the material, far less chance that these stories will live on in the imaginations of the readers. The style may be less baroque, but it is also less inviting, less open to interpretation. What really is left to the imagination in "La intrusa" or "Juan Muraña" or "El otro duelo" or "Ulrica" or "El soborno"? Borges has left himself out for the most part, so that the opportunity for dialogue is no longer present. By doing so he has denied his earlier trinity of self, reader and persona,

even as his model for the procedure, Walt Whitman, denied them in his old age. We are at least fortunate that Borges made no attempt to revise his earlier stories as Whitman did with so many of his poems; Borges has at least left his masterpieces intact, masterpieces in which the trinity really lives, and in which the blueprints for a new kind of reader response literature exist. These blueprints have indeed been useful to a new generation of both North and South American writers.

Borges is no more successful than Whitman in his attempt to keep his real self out of his art and still produce first-rate literature. The larger-than-life character of Whitman's poetry and the universalized reader-narrator of Borges' fiction do not function without an infusion of self and an invitation by example and by design to the reader to also add his or her part to the composite. Borges and Whitman did not produce all of their best work while utilizing the trinity concept, nor is all of their work after they abandoned it of inferior quality, but for both writers it was an extremely important guiding principle in much of their approach to art during the years in which they produced the bulk of their finest work. No matter what they later did to mask the real self behind a shallower version of persona, their works during their most productive periods still stand as examples of the

theory of the trinity elaborated perhaps to its fullest potential. Both men have acted out the role of literary guru in later life, but in their earlier works they had already left much of their impact as human writers in search of an equally human audience.

It remains for us as readers today to rescue these human writers from "both parody and apotheosis," and to create simultaneously with them the unlimited vision and insight that is only possible on the open road, or in the garden of forking paths. Even now these roads can lead to the dialogue of equals, and to the power and vision promised from both life and art within the uncertain and risk-filled venture of the search for the perfect communication.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR

- ¹ William Carlos Williams, "An Essay on Leaves of Grass in Whitman: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 147.
- ² Allen, The Solitary Singer, p. 385.
- ³ Traubel, With Walt Whitman in Camden (V.1), p. 55.
- ⁴ Ibid, p. 392.
- ⁵ Traubel, (V2) p. 236.
- ⁶ See Richard Chase, "Go Before and Embryons," in Leaves of Grass One Hundred Years Later.
- ⁷ Traubel, (V2) p. 52.
- ⁸ Kaplan, pp. 39-40.
- ⁹ Traubel, (V1) p. 339.
- ¹⁰ From Harold Jaffe's introduction to Bucke's Walt Whitman, p. 5.
- ¹¹ Edward H. Miller, A Century of Whitman Criticism, p. xxv.
- ¹² Fieldler, "Images of Walt Whitman," in Leaves of Grass One Hundred Years Later, p. 57.
- ¹³ See Harvey O'Higgins, "Alias Walt Whitman," Harpers (May, 1929) 698-707, for an especially virulent attack on Whitman as poseur. Higgins attempts to unearth the real Walt Whitman, who was, "neither sensual nor rough and rugged or truly health or lusty or even very masculine. He was in love with himself..." p. 704.
- ¹⁴ Esther Shepard, Walt Whitman's Pose, as quoted in Whitman The Poet Materials For Study, p. 160.

- 15 Fieldler, "Images of Walt Whitman," p. 72.
- 16 Ibid, p. 64.
- 17 Borges, "Simply a Man of Letters," p. 12.
- 18 "La ya avanzada edad me ha enseñado la resignación de ser Borges." ("My now advanced years have taught me the resignation of being Borges."), from the prologue to El informe de Brodie, p. 12.
- 19 Rodríguez Monegal, Jorge Luis Borges: A Literary Biography. p. 440.
- 20 Rodríguez Monegal notes that many of the essays in Otras Inquisiciones (Other Inquisitions) are about authors such as Quevedo, Hawthorne, Whitman, and Chesterton, and these essays, "all attempt to discover the actual writer under the mask or persona each of these writers created." Yet what truly mattered, "what truly concerned Borges, was the creation of the persona," p. 422.
- 21 Ong, The Barbarian Within, p. 56.
- 22 Allen, The Solitary Singer, p. 402, "Whitman himself was never to realize that when he was truly inspired as in his great elegy he was impersonal, timeless, universal."
- 23 As quoted in Fernando Sorrentino, Seven Conversations With Jorge Luis Borges, (translated by Clark M. Zlotchew), (Troy, New York: The Whitston Publishing Co., 1982) p. 124.
- 24 Gusdorf, Speaking, p. 75.
- 25 See Sorrentino, p. 13, and see the Wallace Stevens letter that appears in A Century of Whitman Criticism.
- 26 It has already been noted that Malcolm Cowley prefers the 1855 Leaves of Grass and that Roy Harvey Pearce prefers the 1860 edition. However, Howard J. Waskow in his book, Whitman, Explorations in Form (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966) claims that even "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," is still a poem of "indirection" which requires "intellectual alertness and imaginative faith on the part of its readers," p. 222.

27 Pearce, "Whitman Justified: The Poet in 1860," in Whitman A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 39.

28 Carlisle, p. 173.

29 James Miller Jr., Word, Self, Reality: The Rhetoric of Imagination (New York: Harper and Row, 1972) p. 27.

30 Buber, p. 114.

31 Sorrentino, p. xiii.

32 Ibid, p. 39.

33 See, Borges on Writing, edited by Norman Thomas di Giovanni, Daniel Halpern and Frank McShane (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1973).

34 Ibid, p. 164.

35 Rodríguez Monegal, p. 19. Later on Rodriguez Monegal says of "Funes el memorioso," ("Funes the Memorious") "as a person Ireneo Funes is another of those characters through which Borges reveals tantalizing fragments of himself" p. 383.

36 Ibid, p. 45.

37 Ibid, p. 47.

38 See "Valéry como símbolo," in Otras Inquisiciones or "Walt Whitman, Man and Myth," in Critical Inquiry 4 (June 1975) 707-717.

39 A brief look at any of the stories of either book will demonstrate that this is the case. For example, in El informe de Brodie, "El encuentro" ("The Encounter") is told by an adult from his recollections of something that occurred when he was a child of ten. "El otro duelo" and "La intrusa" are both stories which were transmitted orally to the present narrator by other sources. "Juan Murana" is supposedly told to Borges even as it is relayed to us by an old acquaintance of Borges who is telling the story to Borges to show him how real street toughs and gauchos acted. "El informe de Brodie" reverts back to the device of an uncovered manuscript which is missing its first page.

Most of the stories in El libro de arena follow a similar pattern. "La secta de los treinta" ("The Sect

of the Thirty") is supposedly based on a fourth century manuscript recently recovered. "Avelino Arredondo" is told in a fairly straightforward third person narrative style only to end with the line: "That's how it will have happened, although in a more complex fashion; that's how I can imagine it to have happened.") So again, most of the stories of these two books resemble, in their basic narrative set-up, the earlier stories of Ficciones and El Aleph.

⁴⁰ Sorrentino, p. 39.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 5.

Conclusion

Part of the ultimate fascination of making the connection between Walt Whitman and Jorge Luis Borges is in overcoming the ostensible differences between the two authors, differences that only serve to make the connection all the more intriguing. Borges' relation to Whitman seems taken from right out of a Borges short story. The two characters who seem so distinct turn out to be two sides of the same coin, or as Borges phrases it in "Los teólogos," "They formed but one person." Borges' adaptations of Whitman's trinity concept serve not only to enrich his own art, but also to help us see with much greater clarity how that concept informed much of Whitman's finest work. Whether or not Borges was ever consciously imitating Whitman is fairly unimportant; Borges' frequently stated admiration for Whitman's great experiment and his subsequent utilization of the same general format in his own fiction are reasons enough to conclude that Borges' debts to Whitman extend well beyond a few of his early poems.

Borges' typical modesty, more genuine than we can perhaps believe, may have prevented him from even admitting to himself that so much of his work is in the

Whitmanic tradition, for he may believe himself unworthy of such a connection. However, Borges' masterful stories and their subsequent influence on much of contemporary fiction are proof enough that he has in fact merited his role as disseminator of the trinity concept that he inherited from Whitman. As he himself explained during his talk at Michigan State in 1976, what he has done with the trinity has been "quite different, maybe as good but quite different." Ultimately, the quality of the work that Borges has produced with Whitman's trinity at work stands out far more than the philosophical differences between the two men. Borges' work, like Whitman's, allows for a universality that makes both men's work live beyond their respective settings of place and time. Every careful reader of Whitman or Borges is potentially as native to their works as they are, since each reader is invited to be an active participant and bring his or her own perspective to the work.

The long range effects of both men's work bring to mind an interesting point about the democratization of literature. A lack of complexity does not necessarily lead to a literature that is more truly accessible. When Whitman and Borges decide in their respective works to abandon the intricate workings of the trinity, their respective poetry and fiction becomes less complex, but

simultaneously less open to interpretation and creativity on the reader's part, hence less accessible to genuine reader participation. Borges may have recognized earlier than Whitman that opening up one's literature to the collaboration of all does not necessarily mean that large numbers of active readers will present themselves. Cortázar would later more explicitly, if chauvinistically, define the reader willing to participate as a "macho" reader, one willing to work harder and be less certain than the conventional reader. The democratization of literature, the conscious attempt to make literature a truly reciprocal art, counts on a kind of spiritual democracy and honest reciprocity that may be as uncommon as any genuine human relationship, no matter how many opportunities are afforded to the readers. The real democratization of literature is a democratization of intent, opening literature up to the potential participation of all readers; it does not consist of trying to write down to the lowest common denominator. The commitment necessary to genuine reciprocity is something that Whitman and Borges themselves retreated from later in life. Since this is so, one should hardly expect mass audience response as a requisite for even the most legitimately democratic literature. Many may indeed be called, but few choose to be chosen.

Though the connection between Whitman and Borges

should help elucidate the work of both men, ironically Whitman's status in Latin America, which is already considerable, may be open to a new branch of thought entirely. Whitman, as Borges himself notes in his book on American literature, is viewed as having his greatest influence on the "so called civic poetry or poetry of involvement."¹ Names such as Martí, García Lorca and especially Neruda are thought of when speaking of Whitman in Hispanic circles, just as the names of Sandburg or Ginsberg come to mind in this country. Whitman's own negations of himself as "artist," his insistence that his works should never be thought of as mere "literary performance," have helped virtually to guarantee that his influence would fall most on the rugged, political and "honest" poetry of this century. Whitman's role as literary theorist or innovator has been pushed to the background, except for his innovations in verse form and subject matter, in part by his own rejection of the role.

However, Borges has understood Whitman's intelligent, daring and often successful experiments and has found Whitman's theories coherent enough to utilize them as a basis for some of his own most carefully worked out theories and practices within his fiction. If we concur with the many accolades that Borges has received as an innovator throughout the world, and if we also admit

that Whitman was a real and fairly important influence on much of Borges' best work, then we can only conclude that Whitman has been a more important and influential literary theorist than most of us may have imagined before.

Within this country, perhaps many of Whitman's poems, including masterpieces such as "Song of Myself" or "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," or neglected poems such as "Salut Au Monde" or "A Song for Occupations" should be reevaluated with the trinity concept in mind. Though Whitman later backed away from a full commitment of self in his writing, he never really gave up on the possibility that future readers might start to "catch on" to what he had really been attempting to do. This hopeful glance at posterity is evident in "Prayer of Columbus," in his conversations with Traubel, and in his wistful wish spoken to Edward Carpenter that perhaps in fact he had "planted the seed."² Certainly if Borges could understand and utilize Whitman's great experimental construct, it is perhaps time for us also to give serious consideration to it.

Pablo Neruda and Borges are often viewed as very distinct writers, in large part because of their political differences. Whitman's clear influence on Neruda would almost seem to exclude him from any important influence on Borges. However, after all of this

discussion of Whitman and "Whitman," a way of seeing Whitman's just influence on both men is certainly facilitated. It seems clear that Neruda was more influenced by "Whitman," the bardic voice, the spiritual democrat, the poet of unlimited vista and unlimited hope and sympathy for the downtrodden. Borges has instead been a disciple of Whitman, the careful artist who attempted to bring a new sort of democracy to literature by including the reader actively into the work of art by means of that larger-than-life composite character, who in fact needs both author and audience input to be brought to life. Whitman's influence on two very different directions in Latin American literature is therefore no more difficult to understand, no more complex, than the very complexity of his experiment itself.

Both Whitman and Borges saw a vital connection between art and life. Both men wanted us to be confused, to stop making easy distinctions between the literal and literary worlds. Ultimately, even their final withdrawals of self are at least a further definition of that confusion, a final example of how difficult it is to tell the man from his creation. To create, to participate, to venture the self, to grow with and through others, this is the message both men present, albeit in such vividly distinct ways. Borges learned from Whitman

an approach to life as well as to art, or an approach to art that was an approach, an attempt, a venture into life. All real living may indeed be meeting, and the artist must discover a way to open that meeting, to extend that invitation, to as many other potential accomplices as possible.

NOTES FOR CONCLUSION

¹ Jorge Luis Borges and Esther Zemborain de Torres,
An Introduction to American Literature, p. 5.

² Carpenter, Days With Walt Whitman, p. 7.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Borges, Jorge Luis. El Aleph. Buenos Aires: Emece' Editores, 1971.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. The Aleph and Other Stories 1933-1969. Edited and translated by Norman Thomas di Giovanni in collaboration with the author. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1970.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. "An Autobiographical Essay." In The Aleph and Other Stories 1933-69. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1970.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. The Book of Sand. Translated by Norman Thomas de Giovanni. New York: Delacorte Press, 1973.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. Discusión. Buenos Aires: Gleizer Editor, 1932.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. Fervor de Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires: Emece' Editores, 1969.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. Ficciones. Buenos Aires: Emece' Editores, 1956.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. The Gold of the Tigers: Selected Later Poems. Translated by Alistair Reid. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1977.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. El hacedor. Buenos Aires: Emece' Editores, 1960.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. Historia de la eternidad. Buenos Aires: Viau y Zona, 1936.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. Historia universal de la infamia. Buenos Aires: Emece' Editores. 1954.

- Borges, Jorge Luis. El idioma de los Argentinos. Buenos Aires: Gleizer Editor, 1928.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. El informe de Brodie. Buenos Aires: Emece' Editores, 1970.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. Inquisiciones. Buenos Aires: Editorial Proa, 1925.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. with Esther Zemborain de Torres. An Introduction to American Literature. Translated by L. Clark Keating and Robert O. Evans. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1971.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings. Edited by Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby. New York: New Directions, 1964.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. El libro de arena. Buenos Aires: Emece' Editores, 1975.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. Luna de enfrente. Buenos Aires: Editorial Proa, 1926.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. Obra poética 1923-64. Buenos Aires: Emece' Editores, 1960.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. Selected Poems 1923-67. Edited by Norman Thomas de Giovanni. New York: Delacorte Press, 1972.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. "Simply a Man of Letters." In Simply A Man of Letters. Ed. Carlos Cortínez. Orono: University of Maine Press, 1982, pp. 1-24.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. El tamaño de mi esperanza. Buenos Aires: Editorial Proa, 1926.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. "Walt Whitman: Man and Myth." Critical Inquiry. 4 (June 1975) 707-718.
- Whitman, Walt. An American Primer. Boston: Small, Maynard and Co., 1904.
- Whitman, Walt. The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman (V2) Collect and Other Prose. Ed. Floyd Stovall. New York: New York University Press, 1964.
- Whitman, Walt. The Complete Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman. (2 vols.) Ed. Malcolm Cowley. New York: Pellegrini and Cudahy, 1948.

- Whitman, Walt. Hojas de Hierba. Translated by Jorge Luis Borges. Buenos Aires: Jimenez Editores, 1969.
- Whitman, Walt. Leaves of Grass. Secaucus, N. J.: Long-river Press. 1976.
- Whitman, Walt. Leaves of Grass the First (1855 Edition). Edited and with an introduction by Malcolm Cowley. New York: Viking Press, 1959.
- Whitman, Walt. Leaves of Grass and Selected Prose. Edited and with an introduction by John Kouwenhoven. New York: Random House, 1950.
- Whitman, Walt. Whitman The Correspondence (V.1) Ed. Edward H. Miller, New York: New York University Press, 1961.

Secondary Sources

- Allen, Gay Wilson. The Solitary Singer. New York: Macmillan and Co., 1955.
- Amur, G. S. "Whitman's Song of Man- A Humanistic Approach To 'Song of Myself.'" Walt Whitman Review. 18 (1972) 50-56.
- Barrenechea, Ana María. Borges The Labyrinth Maker. Translated by Robert Lima. New York: New York University Press, 1965.
- Bell-Villada, Gene. Borges and His Fiction. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981.
- Benevento, Joseph. "Whitman and the Eastern Mystic Fallacy." Calamus. 20, (June 1981) 12-23.
- Birdsall, Eric. "Translating The Hints: Whitman's Theory of Poetry." Walt Whitman Review. 26 (1980) 113-23.
- Britton, James. The Development of Writing Abilities. London: Macmillan, 1975.
- Broderick, John. (Editor). Whitman The Poet: Materials For Study. Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1962.

- Buber, Martin. I and Thou. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Scribner and Sons, 1970.
- Bucke, Richard Maurice. Walt Whitman. New York: Johnson Reprint Co., 1970.
- Burgin, Richard. Conversations With Jorge Luis Borges. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.
- Burroughs, John. Whitman, A Study. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1896.
- Carlisle, E. Fred. The Uncertain Self: Whitman's Drama of Identity. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1973.
- Carpenter, Edward. Days With Walt Whitman. London: G. Allen, 1906.
- Chari, V. K. Whitman in the Light of Vedantic Mysticism. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964.
- Chase, Richard. "Go-Befores and Embryons." In Leaves of Grass One Hundred Years Later. Ed. Milton Hindus. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955, pp. 32-54.
- Christ, Ronald. "Borges Justified: Notes and Texts Toward Stations of a Theme." In Prose For Borges. Eds., Mary Kinzie and Charles Newman. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974. pp. 46-81.
- Christ, Ronald. "Forking Narratives." In Simply a Man of Letters. Ed. Carlos Cortinez. Orono: University of Maine Press, 1982.
- Cohen, J. M. Jorge Luis Borges. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd. 1973.
- The Columbia Encyclopedia. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968.
- Cortazar, Julio. Hopscotch. Translated by Gregory Rabassa. New York: Pantheon Books, 1966.
- Daiches, David. "Walt Whitman: Impressionist Prophet." In Leaves of Grass One Hundred Years Later. Ed. Milton Hindus. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955, pp. 109-122.

- Dyson, A. C. "You Fictional Reader." Critical Quarterly. 24 (IV) 5-27.
- di Giovanni, Norman Thomas, David Halpern and Frank McShane, editors. Borges on Writing. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1973.
- Feidelson, Charles. "Whitman as Symbolist." In Whitman A Collection of Critical Essays. Ed. Roy Harvey Pearce. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1962, pp. 82-88.
- Fieldler, Leslie. "Images of Walt Whitman." In Leaves of Grass One Hundred Years Later. Ed. Milton Hindus. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955, pp. 55-73.
- Fieldler, Leslie. "'Walt Whitman: Portrait of the Artist as Middle-Aged Hero.' No in Thunder!" In Walt Whitman A Penguin Critical Anthology. Ed. Francis Murphy. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969, pp. 352-356.
- Fish, Stanley. "Interpreting the Variorum." In Reader Response Criticism. Ed. Jane P. Tompkins. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980, pp. 164-184.
- Gibson, Walker. Persona. New York: Random House, 1969.
- Green, Martin. "Twain and Whitman: Reappraisals." In Walt Whitman A Penguin Critical Anthology. Ed. Francis Murphy. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969, pp. 424-427.
- Gusdorf, Georges. Speaking. Translated by Paul T. Brockelman. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965.
- Harss, Luis and Barbara Dohmann. Into the Mainstream. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.
- Holland, Norman. "Unity Identity Text Self." In Reader Response Criticism. Ed. Jane P. Tompkins. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980, pp. 118-133.
- Irby, James E. "Some Notes on Pierre Menard." In Simply A Man of Letters. Ed. Carlos Cortínez. Orono: University of Maine Press, 1982, pp. 155-164.

- Iser, Wolfgang. "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach." In Reader Response Criticism. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980. pp. 50-69.
- Jaen, Didier Tisdell. "Borges y Whitman." Hispania. 50 (March 1967) 49-53.
- Jaen, Didier Tisdell. Homage To Walt Whitman. (Translated and edited by Didier Tisdell Jaen). University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1964.
- James, P. D. "The Heart Pounding Pleasure of Whodunits." Kalamazoo Gazette: Family Weekly. Sunday, August 22, 1982.
- James, William. The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study of Human Nature. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1923.
- Kakutani, Michiko. "For Borges Public Acclaim is a Surprise." New York Times. Sunday, October 2, 1982.
- Kaplan, Justin. Walt Whitman A Life. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980.
- Kinnaid, John. "Leaves of Grass and the American Paradox." In Whitman A Collection of Critical Essays. Ed. Roy Harvey Pearce. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1962, pp. 24-36.
- Kinzie, Mary. "Recursive Prose." In Prose For Borges. Eds. Mary Kinzie and Charles Newman. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974, pp. 5-45.
- Lowell, Amy. "Walt Whitman and the New Poetry." In Walt Whitman A Penguin Critical Anthology. Ed. Francis Murphy. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969, pp. 207-223.
- Lyons, Thomas. "Borges and the (Somewhat) Personal Narrator." Modern Fiction Studies. 19 (Autumn 1973) 363-372.
- McMurry, George R. Jorge Luis Borges. New York: Frederick Ungar Co., 1980.
- Mead, George Herbert. Mind, Self, Society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934.
- Miller, Edward H. (editor) A Century of Whitman Criticism. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969.

- Miller, James Jr. Walt Whitman. New York: Twayne Pub., 1962.
- Miller, James Jr. Word, Self, Reality: The Rhetoric of Imagination. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.
- O'Higgins, Harvey. "Alias Walt Whitman." Harpers. May 1929, 698-707.
- Ong, Walter. The Barbarian Within. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962.
- Pearce, Roy Harvey. "Whitman Justified: The Poet in 1860." In Whitman: A Collection of Critical Essays. Ed. Roy Harvey Pearce. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1962, pp. 37-59.
- Prince, Gerald. "Introduction to the Study of the Naratee." In Reader Response Criticism. Ed. Jane P. Tompkins. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980, pp. 7-25.
- Reid, Alistair. "Borges As Reader." In Prose For Borges. Eds. Mary Kinzie and Charles Newman. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974, pp. 94-95.
- Rodríguez Monegal, Emir. "Borges: The Intellectual Background." In Simply a Man of Letters. Ed. Carlos Cortinez. Orono: University of Maine Press, 1982, pp. 175-190.
- Rodríguez Monegal, Emir. "Borges: The Reader as Writer," In Prose For Borges. Eds. Mary Kinzie and Charles Newman. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974, pp. 96-137.
- Rodríguez Monegal, Emir. Jorge Luis Borges: A Literary Biography. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1978.
- Rosenblatt, Louise. Literature as Exploration. New York: Appleton Century, 1938.
- Rountree, Thomas. "Whitman's Indirect Expression." PMLA. 73 (December 1955) 544-555.
- Sartre, Jean Paul. Literature and Existentialism. Translated by Bernard Frechtman. New York: The Citadel Press, 1964.
- Sawyer, Roland D. Walt Whitman The Prophet Poet. Boston: The Gorham Press, 1913.

- Shephard, Esther. Walt Whitman's Pose. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938.
- Sorrentino, Fernando. Seven Conversations With Jorge Luis Borges. Translated by Clark M. Zlotchew. Troy, N. Y.: The Whitston Publishing Co., 1982.
- Stovall, Floyd. "Walt Whitman and The American Tradition." In Whitman The Poet Materials For Study. Ed. John Broderick. Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth Publishers, 1962.
- Traubel, Horace. With Walt Whitman in Camden (VI). New York: Mitchell Kinnerly, 1915.
- Traubel, Horace. With Walt Whitman in Camden (V2). New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1908.
- Vian, Cesco. Invito alla lettura di Jorge Luis Borges. Milan: U. Mursia Editore, 1980.
- Waskow, Howard J. Whitman: Explorations in Form. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.
- Welty, Ward. "The Persona as Kosmos in 'Song of Myself,'" Walt Whitman Review. 25 (1979) 98-105.
- Wheelock, Carter. The Mythmaker. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969.
- Williams, William Carlos. "An Essay on Leaves of Grass." In Whitman: A Collection of Critical Essays. Ed. Roy Harvey Pearce. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1962, pp. 146-154.
- Yates, Donald A. "Behind 'Borges y yo.'" Modern Fiction Studies. 19 (Autumn 1973) 317-324.
- Yates, Donald A. "The Four Cardinal Points of Borges." In The Cardinal Points of Borges. Eds. Lowell Dunham and Ivar Ivask. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968, pp. 24-33.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293105785343