



Kant's Dog: On Borges, Philosophy, and the Time of Translation (SUNY Series in Latin American and Iberian Thought and Culture)

David E. Johnson

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Situates Borges at the limit of philosophy and literature. Kant's Dog provides fresh insight into Borges's preoccupation with the contradiction of the time that passes and the identity that endures. By developing the implicit logic of the Borgesian archive, which is most often figured as the universal demand for and necessary impossibility of translation, Kant's Dog is able to spell out Borges's responses to the philosophical problems that most concerned him, those of the constitution of time, eternity, and identity; the determination of original and copy; the legitimacy of authority; experience; the nature of language and the possibility of a decision; and the name of God. Kant's Dog offers original interpretations of several of Borges's best known and most important stories and of the works of key figures in the history of philosophy, including Aristotle, Saint Paul, Maimonides, Hume, Locke, Kant, Heidegger, and Derrida. This study outlines Borges's curious relationship to literature and philosophy and, through a reconsideration of the relation between necessity and accident, opens the question of the constitution of philosophy and literature. The afterword develops the logic of translation toward the secret at the heart of every culture in order to posit a Borgesian challenge to anthropology and cultural studies. "Johnson focuses not on Borges's uses of his philosophical references, but on how Borges can be brought into classical debates in philosophy, on time, identity, God, and so forth. His corpus of philosophers is novel in the context of Borges studies—we get Aristotle here more than Plato, Augustine and Aquinas, Maimonides and Averroes, Hegel and Kant, Agamben and Derrida. The effect is salutary: he shows how Borges's thought takes up, and participates in, some old (and some new) philosophical debates." — Daniel Balderston, Director, Borges Center, University of Pittsburgh, and editor of *Variaciones Borges* "Kant's Dog is a groundbreaking work that fills a long-lasting hole in Borges scholarship. Johnson beautifully brings together the discourses of literature and philosophy through Borges's work. He provides original and illuminating interpretations of some of the most important texts and problems in Borges's oeuvre." — Kate Jenckes, author of *Reading Borges after Benjamin: Allegory, Afterlife, and the Writing of History* David E. Johnson is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at the University at Buffalo–State University of New York. He is the coeditor of *Thinking with Borges* and coauthor (with Scott Michaelsen) of *Anthropology's Wake: Attending to the End of Culture*.

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