



The Mythmaker: A Study of Motif and Symbol in the Short Stories of Jorge Luis Borges

By Carter Wheelock

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Readers who are intrigued, though often mystified, by the intellectual fantasies of Jorge Luis Borges will find this book a revelation, a skeleton key to one of the most fundamental and baffling aspects of Borges's fictions: the pattern of symbolism with an inner meaning. Carter Wheelock's study reduces a number of literary and intellectual abstractions to concrete terms, enabling the reader to understand Borges's fantasies in ways that show them to be not so fantastic after all. Indeed, they are amazingly consistent and minutely accurate in their symbolic depiction of the magic universe of the mind.

Wheelock also discusses the affinity between Borges's philosophical idealism and his "esthetic of the intelligence," the relationship between these and the esthetic ideas of French Symbolism, and the influence on his fictions of the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám.

Why is it that this "writer's writer" from the Argentine—erudite, allusive, elusive—has attracted such international attention? In Wheelock's opinion, it is because he has symbolized in his short stories the fundamental form of the human consciousness, the functioning of the imaginative (world-creating) mechanism, and the eternal battle between form and chaos. *The Mythmaker* is concerned with elucidating the particulars of Borges's fictional works, but even as it does so it also reveals their universality.

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