

# The Borges Factor

## Critical Essays

### Summary

Jorge Luis Borges' literary work is one of the milestones in 20th-century literature. Many of the most influential writers have followed the trail blazed by his aesthetic experiments. Yet it is not easy to grasp in discursive terms the root of Borges' creative personality. *The Borges Factor. Critical Essays* brings together attempts at a multifaceted look at the bearing Borges' writing has nowadays and takes a closer look from various perspectives at the literary novelty present in it.

In the opening essay of this volume, *Borges – Pessoa – Lispector. Library – ruins – garden*, Wojciech Charchalis proposes a stroll through literature following the trail of visible and concealed affinities between the characters in the essay title. The two essays that follow, Ewa Kobylecka-Piwońska's ("*Kill Borges!*" *About the author of "Fictions" in Argentinian Literature*) and Barbara Jaroszk's (*The Friendly Shadow of an Uncompromising Grandfather, Jorge Luis Borges' Presence in the Most Recent Argentinian Prose*), present complementary perspectives on Borges' unflinching presence in recent Argentinian literature, and also the way in which subsequent generations, in particular today's, coped and cope with the uninterrupted influence of this master. Borges' "conservative anarchism" and his political views, which were often difficult to comprehend (and to accept), are described by Marta E. Cichocka in her essay "*Pompas de la palabra, parlamentos*" – *Borges and Politics*. Zofia Grzesiak, on the other hand, attempts to present the less perceived 'pataphysical' context and dimension of the legacy of this irrepressible creator of paradoxes (*Borges and 'pataphysics*), while Tomasz Pindel ponders whether the more explicit expression of the comic side of Borges' writings and that of his younger friend Adolfo Bioy Casares remain attractive for present-day readers (*The Humorous Mr Bustos Domecq's Jokes: or Is the humour of the duo Jorge Luis Borges & Adolfo Bioy Casares still funny? Universalism Done Diffe-*

rently). Dariusz Czaja invites us to reflect on the character of the 12<sup>th</sup> apostle (*The Dark Side of Borges' Metaphysics. Looking through Judas*), and through a multilayered (in particular, theological, historical and metaphysical) reading of the story in question, reveals a thought-provoking affinity between theologians' current interpretational proposals and the writer's imagination. Alfons Gregori reveals another, fantastic trait of the author's poetics in a series of findings pointing to genealogical controversies (*Fantastic Borges: Taxonomical Controversies*), while Iwona Kasperska deals with Borges' work as a theorist (and more rarely as a practitioner) of translation, proposing highly suggestive translational reflections in many places in his works ("*Living means writing, means translating*". *Jorge Luis Borges's Translation Theory and Practice on the Periphery*). Agnieszka Flisek seeks the author's fundamental poetological device, and by concentrating her reflections on an analysis of his earlier stories, finds it in a repetition tinged with an inherent difference from the very beginning ("*The Universal History of Iniquity, or How a Difference Reveals Itself in Repetition*"). The aforementioned volume of short stories is embryonic in many respects and also constitutes the starting point for Arkadiusz Żychliński's evolutionary speculations in his essay *The Conspirators. From the History of Moderate Progress (within the Limits of Literature)* on elements of a literary constellation combining Borges with Danilo Kiš and Robert Bolaño.

This publication is one of few all-encompassing works devoted to Jorge Luis Borges in Polish-language literary criticism.

*Translated by Rob Pagett*