

A Universal History of Infamy. By JORGE LUIS BORGES. Translated by NORMAN THOMAS DI GIOVANNI. New York, 1972. E. P. Dutton and Company. Pp. 146. Cloth. \$6.95.

Historia universal de la infamia (1935) was Jorge Luis Borges's first adventure in the realm of narrative prose. He started as a poet (*Fervor de Buenos Aires*, 1923) and essayist (*Inquisiciones*, 1925). In the prologue to the 1954 edition he declared that the stories were "the irresponsible game of a shy young man who dared not write stories and so amused himself by falsifying and distorting the tales of others." But his originality lies in his style. He is a master of irony and allusion; his phrasing is so precise that it often borders the understatement. Thus his versions of Lazarus Morell's story (from Mark Twain's *Life in the Mississippi*), or the life of Billy the Kid, or of Monk Eastman ("purveyor of iniquities"), are real creations and unmistakably Borgesian.

The translation is impeccable. The prose of Borges reads in English as smooth and terse as in Spanish. In short, *A Universal History of Infamy* is a compact masterpiece in which the traits for what Borges is so widely applauded today are already present: his scepticism, his humor, his precision with words and his deep concern with human frailties.

Tucumán, Argentina

OCTAVIO CORVALÁN

Nahuelbuta. By MARIANO JOSÉ CAMPOS MENCHACA, S.J. Preface by FERNANDO CAMPOS HARRIET. Buenos Aires and Santiago, Chile, 1972. Editorial Francisco de Aguirre. Colección: Araucanía, 2. Pp. xxiii, 592. Paper.

Por senderos Araucanos. By MARIANO JOSÉ CAMPOS MENCHACA, S.J. Preface by FERNANDO CAMPOS HARRIET. Buenos Aires, Argentina and Santiago, Chile, 1972. Editorial Francisco de Aguirre. Biblioteca Antártica (Pocket), 20. Maps. Illustrations. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xvi, 306. Paper.

These books reveal the author's humanism and his deep feelings for the Mapuche and their past. They are chock full of ethnographic gems whose lustre is not marred by occasional attempts to show that the Mapuche believe in the True God. For example, and at random from *Por Senderos Araucanos* (p. 184): "They have an absolute faith in God . . . faith in His existence and His action; it is a loving and abandoned faith." Padre Mariano certainly puts his finger on the conservative and integrative force of *Mapuche* religion, but reads Catholicism into it—a travesty and a perplexing problem in cross-cultural comparisons. For a different point of view, one may read, *Hawks of the Sun: Mapuche Morality and its Ritual Attributes*, by the reviewer.

To my taste, *Nahuelbuta* is the better book, since it is somewhat chronologically organized and contains information about the Jesuit and Capuchin missions heretofore unassembled. In its preparation, the author seems to have done considerable historical research and a fair amount of fieldwork, enhanced by his speaking knowledge of Araucanian. It is a labor of love, a phenomenological study, written in a somewhat engagingly archaic writing style. Both books are enhanced by very good maps, illustrations, glossaries, and a useful bibliography in *Senderos*, with a detailed index in *Nahuelbuta*. And both are recommended to Mapuche buffs.

State University of New York, Stony Brook

L. C. FARON