CELEBRANDO LA CEREMONIA DE LA CONFUSION

BY FERNANDO ARRABAL: EXPLICACION

AND TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is twofold: to explicate and to translate into English Celebrando la ceremonia de la confusión by Fernando Arrabal.
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I. Explication

Celebrando la ceremonia de la confusión: the title informs the reader as to the theme of the work. Arrabal writes: "Todo lo que es humano es confuso"¹, and: "J'entends par confusion tout ce qui est contradictoire, inexplicable, inespéré...."² The confusion, the world of chaos, inspires the artist, and the artist puts his experience of confusion into aesthetic form. The role of the artist is delineated in these terms: "Si la confusion de l'artiste rappelle la confusion sauvage de la nature ou de la vie, nous nous trouvons en présence du seul être...qui éclaire la part la plus obscure de nous-même."³

The "ceremonia" of the title implies the opposite of confusion — order; but order in turn implies disorder. The ceremonial represents man's attempt to reconcile contradictions; to act out human ambivalencies; to mediate between the known and the unknown, the rational and the irrational, order and confusion. Arrabal writes: "Tandis que lorsque nos actes s'ordonnent en cérémonial, pour des choses même très élémentaires, alors nous débouchons dans 'la réalité'."⁴ It is by the ceremonial that we express our humanity which is characterized by confusion and the accompanying need for order.
For Arrabal, order is law; confusion, anti-law. Confusion is predominant.\textsuperscript{5} What relates to world, relates also to psyche -- order representing the rational part of the psyche or consciousness, and confusion the irrational subconscious.

\textit{Celebrando la ceremonia de la confusión} is a celebration of life; or of the continuum of birth, death and rebirth. The celebration also contains the initiation of the artist ("mi llegada al arte bajo la presidencia de la memoria"\textsuperscript{6}), and the quest for immortality, for immersion in cyclical time as demonstrated in \textit{El viaje}. The myth of the birth, death and rebirth of the hero gives Arrabal's work archetypal significance and form. The rebirth pattern, giving \textit{Celebrando} a structure of meaning, is contained in the circular, mathematical frame of the narration as illustrated in the following diagram:
La glorieta

El viaje

Laberinto

La giganta

La biografía

a) Nacimiento
b) Amor
c) Arte
d) Anatomía
Arrabal's intent is demonstrated by the diagram. The thirty-six labyrinths related to the 360° of a circle. The circle traditionally suggests wholeness. It is a symbol of the self or psyche and of the cosmos. Arrabal's circle is divided into four sections of nine labyrinths each. Each of these sections also forms a circle since the artist returns to the point of departure, the square, each time. His return to the square after traversing nine labyrinths at a time relates to the nine months, the period of gestation, which he spends in the giantess' body in Capítulo sexto. Thus the idea of rebirth is contained in a simple perspective diagram representative of the framework of the novel.

Arrabal's division of the circle of thirty-six labyrinths into four also suggests the four phases of life making up a cycle; i.e. in nature, the four seasons; in human life, the four stages as outlined in the four parts of Mi biografía, the chapter structurally and thematically central to the book. Nacimiento, Amor, Arte and Anatomía represent birth, youth, maturity and death. The division into four further suggests the four elements -- earth, air, fire, water; the four parts of the psyche -- reason, intuition, sensation, feeling; the four points of the compass; and the space-time quaternio -- height, depth, width and time.
In *El viaje*, the chapter balancing *Mi biografía* in the diagram, the artist travels through curved space, going through transformations and returning to the same points over and over again. The circular structure of the narrative thus represents the cycle of rebirth and metempsychosis.

A hermetic definition of God which states that "God is a sphere of which the centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere," meaning that each point of the circle contains the centre and the circle is infinite, becomes in Arrabal's *Celebrando* a definition of the artist-narrator, or Arrabal himself, and in a particularized sense of "el hombre pánico". "El hombre pánico" is described by Arrabal in an essay of the same title as a man characterized by his love for contradiction and confusion, his belief in relativism and his negation of middle-class morality and traditional values such as religion, patriotism and beauty. "El pánico" is derived from "pan" meaning everything and also from the god Pan, "un bouffon qui déchaînait les rires puis inspirait la terreur." First and foremost under a list called: "Temas y fuentes del hombre pánico", Arrabal lists: "Yo." Thus each chapter, each labyrinth, begins with "Yo", with the artist-narrator or Arrabal himself; and the search in the book is relative to the many facets of his self.
The labyrinths are deforming mirrors reflecting these facets. The deformation, like the transformation of the hero in Celebrando, is the reality; for deformation is a product of the fourth dimension which enters the spatial labyrinths -- time, or "el azar" which together with memory is a chief part of the creative process: "el artista crea sirviéndose de dos valores: a) memoria: en forma de biografía, dessensibilidad, de inteligencia, de imaginación. b) azar: es decir, de confusión, de inesperado." 10

The labyrinths thus form a kaleidoscopic view of the self. The constantly-changing images present a sphere of infinite possibilities, which is part of the relativist thought pervasive in Celebrando, and reflected in the changing image of the giantess: "Vi a la giganta metamorfoseándose según el punto en que la miraba." (p. 202)

The internal rhythm of the narrative is established by repetition and verbal echoes. Each chapter in the square serves as a focal point for the subsequent group of labyrinths and finds an echo in Mi biografía.

The narrative begins with the artist's arrival in the square, which is symbolic of birth into the social world. The square, packed with pilgrims, children, orchestra members,
and soldiers and goats, provides the social setting. The first "ceremonia", the dance of the pilgrims and children around the giantess to the music of the orchestra and their act of worship and offering, is later echoed on the individual level in the chapter Nacimiento, where the father plays the harp and children sing songs in honour of the newly-born. The ceremony is also a mock religious ceremony. The giantess, centre of worship, is possibly "una imagen proyectada". (p. 10) The mock aspect of the festival is intensified by the invocation of the mythical figure Perogrullo, speaker of inanities and platitudes, and the singing of nonsense songs.

After the narrator has gone through the first series of labyrinths, he arrives back in the square to witness another ritual. A battle takes place between the orchestra which symbolizes order -- the mathematical order of music; and a troup of disorganized and unruly soldiers, which symbolize chaos and the confusion of war. Confusion wins (anti-law being predominant) -- the floating orchestra is brought down to earth and integrated in the confusion dominant in the square. The mock religious ceremony continues as pilgrims and soldiers present the giantess with offerings "con pruebas tales de humildad que resultaban por el contrario, llenas de descoco." (p. 53)
These first two scenes in the square, preceding the first two sections of labyrinths, represent the first two phases of human life -- birth and youth, characterized by activity and conflict. The social context of the square can also be interpreted on the psychic level -- the turbulence of the square representing the chaotic nature of the unconscious part of the psyche. Thus, the rituals in the square are personal as well as social.

Capítulo tercero, La glorieta, introduces the next phase of Celebrando, Mi biografía. The description of the goats in "la glorieta", some of which "poseían... en la punta de los cuernos, bolas de oro," (p. 93) is echoed in the description of the goat drawing the cart in Nacimiento, which "llevaba bolas de oro en la punta de los cuernos." (p. 97) The recollection of the birth of the children from the giantess is echoed by the birth of the child in Nacimiento; and the mock Eucharist in the square ("la grasa se almacenaba [y las migas y la mugre] en torno al pedestal" [p. 95]) by the meal of the parents ("alimentos particularmente pringosos....Las migas rodaron por las sábanas." (p. 99) Repetition and verbal echoes are part of the unifying principle of the novel.

In Mi biografía, birth is not restricted to the section Nacimiento alone. The pattern of rebirth is present in each of the four sections. The birth of Amor is described in the terminology of birth trauma: "temblando
en la oscuridad esperando la pesadilla." (p. 102)
In Arte the chess figures enter a sphere which suggests rebirth. In Anatomía the artist is "recreated", which is also a form of rebirth, in the painting or in the artistic definition of himself, which is imitation: "no ves que el cuadro de que me hablas es tan solo un espejo?" (p. 109)

In Capítulo cuarto, La glorieta, the artist plays chess with a stranger. The outcome of the chess game is "confusión" as winner -- the chessmen are toppled by one of the children in the unruly crowd. As demonstrated in Arte, the chess game is a metaphor for art; and thus the third phase of labyrinths begins.

The fourth section of labyrinths is preceded by the death of the children, pilgrims, soldiers, ñoríñesta and goats. The ceremony here is the ancient ritual of sacrifice so that rebirth may take place. The sacrificers kiss the foot of the giantess, the female archetype who presides over the cyclical movement, before they fall over the cliff. On one level, this represents the disappearance of the social context as the individual is preparing to re-enter the mother image in order to be reborn through her. On another level, the deaths of the people in the square represent the deaths of warring emotions in the narrator himself, who is now ready to be integrated with the giantess.
giantess. The male principle is integrated with the female principle. In *El viaje* he is reborn through her and recreates the cycle eternally.

The scenes in the square and the sections *Mi biografía* and *El viaje*, with the giantess and Arrabal in the centre, provide the basic thematic and structural framework for the novel.

The labyrinths revolving within the circle of the narration reflect on smaller scale the circular structure of *Celebrando*. An analysis of individual labyrinths is necessary to further explicate the meaning of the novel.

The question arises as to why Arrabal chooses "labyrinths". In doing so, he draws from a long literary and cultural tradition; for the image of the labyrinth, like the image of the sphere and the circle, has become deeply rooted as one of the most dominant symbols in man's consciousness. In literature, the first explicit labyrinth is found, not surprisingly, in the myth of an artist. The Minoan maze constructed by Dedalus is a work of art, an exercise in imagination. The labyrinth serves to house a half-human, half-animal monster, the Minotaur,
symbol of man's dual nature. Thus the Minoan labyrinth contains the symbol of human ambivalence. The myth of Dedalus' labyrinth suggests the modern interpretation and use of the labyrinth as symbol for the unconscious, for the dark and irrational parts of the psyche.

Moving from Greek mythology to Christian mythology, we find the Minotaur replaced by Satan in Dante's *Inferno*, a labyrinth consisting of a descending spiral made up of nine circles. Again, the artist (Virgil leads Dante who leads the reader) has access to the labyrinth and knows the way out. Dedalus' labyrinth is physical. Dante's labyrinth is physical and mental, as it represents the infernal and celestial journeys, as well as a mystic *inward* journey. Both labyrinths revolve around the idea of the irrational unconscious.

In twentieth-century literature, a literature deeply imbued with psychological awareness, the labyrinths are generally implicit -- for example, Strindberg's drama presents a psychological labyrinth of obsession and torment; Kafka's prose, an intellectual labyrinth of dialectics, of a polemic between the rational and the irrational. Both of these writers have influenced Arrabal. In Arrabal's drama, for example, *Los dos verdugos*, a play dealing with
haunting obsessions, is comparable to Strindberg's The Father and to Kafka's The Trial; and El laberinto which begins with an epigraph from Amerika, to Kafka's labyrinth of guilt and judgment. The influence of Kafka as evident in Celebrando will be discussed in detail later.

Unlike Strindberg's and Kafka's labyrinths, Arrabal's labyrinths in Celebrando are physical and visual. The labyrinths as paintings and mirrors are four-dimensional. Height, width and depth (the artist, like Alice Through the Looking Glass penetrates the mirror) are experienced in time. Time, or "lo inesperado", "el azar", as Arrabal calls it, floods the spatial labyrinths. The labyrinths are like stage plays of which the artist is originator, director, and in which he is actor and spectator.

The labyrinths are closely related to the Dedalus labyrinth, if we accept the significance of the Minotaur as being symbolic of deformation, confusion. The confusion is experienced through form, for confusion which is formlessness cannot be experienced by itself. Hence the "ceremonia" precedes "la confusión" in the title. Order and confusion are complementary parts of one experience; and, although confusion is predominant it is only through "ceremonia"
that it is truly experienced — "Tandis que nos acts s'ordonnent en cérémonial...nous débouchons dans la réalité."

The labyrinth-content is "lo inesperado", "la confusion"; but the labyrinth is a formal construct, and in *Celebrando* the implicit or explicit circular structure of the individual labyrinths repeats on a small scale the circular construct of the entire narration.

Concerning the labyrinth, C. G. Jung writes:

In all cultures, the labyrinth has the meaning of an entangling and confusing representation of the world of matriarchial consciousness, it can be traversed only by those who are ready for a special initiation into the mysterious world of the collective unconscious.13

Jung's observation helps to explain Arrabal's labyrinths, which are emanations of a common centre — the giantess or the matriarchial figure. Matriarchial consciousness dominates the square, or the social setting where the ritual of the worship of the giantess takes place. The giantess and the labyrinths, like the centre and each point of the circle in the hermetic definition of God quoted above, contain each other. Thus the giantess
appears in each labyrinth as mother, lover or "she", and in the artist's memory "los laberintos y la giganta se entremezclaban." (p. 202)

The initiation in the labyrinths under the presidency of the giantess, who is "la memoria", is the initiation of the artist, the artist who draws from memory to define himself (Mi biografía) and to create.

Arte begins with: "La memoria presidía." (p. 103) Memory is central to the labyrinths. Memory is part of the structure of meaning presented in the rebirth myth; for the resurgence of memories is parallel to the process of rebirth of the artist in Celebrando.

Laberinto primero, Cuadros blancos, deals with perception and memory. Cuadros blancos is a fable resembling a fairy tale -- including a castle, children, queen and king (the artist is seated in "'el trono del monarca!" (p. 15) This is a miniature version of the whole of Celebrando with the giantess-queen, the narrator-king and the children in the square. The incident of the children falling from the cart in the first labyrinth foreshadows the children's fall into the abyss in Capítulo quinto, La glorieta.
The fairy-tale aspect of the fable is part of the transposition technique used by Arrabal in the entire narration. Events and characters are transposed to a level characterized, as in the world of fairy tale, by the magic or the "unreal" to present a world of fantasy and dream which is characteristic of Arrabal's world of fiction. In addition, transposition creates a realm where the abstract is personified: memory is the giantess, but the giantess as symbol is also more than memory.

The meaning contained in the formal story of the first labyrinth directly concerns memory -- both personal and general (i.e. taking in the life of all humanity); as an inseparable process from the process of perception and knowledge.

The first group of paintings encountered by the artist in the labyrinth represent mythological scenes. Since myths are stories common to all mankind and expressions of a common psychic substratum, they indicate general memory, the memory described in *El ancla*:

...la memoria de mis padres y la de mis antepasados e incluso la de la humanidad. (p. 61)

The last two paintings revealing or echoing what the narrator saw at the beginning of the labyrinth on his way to
way to the castle refer to personal memory. This is the process of memory: an image is retained and stored in the brain and by chance once more projected outward.

The scenes perceived outside and inside the castle mirror each other, pointing to the fluidity between perception and memory, a thought expressed in *Matter and Memory* by Henri Bergson (whom Arrabal read during his investigations into the process of memory)\(^\text{14}\): "...we cannot say where perception begins and memory ends."\(^\text{15}\)

Another parallel to the concept illustrated in *Cuadros blancos* is a painting appropriately called *La Condition Humaine* by René Magritte, the surrealist painter to whom Arrabal acknowledges great indebtedness.\(^\text{16}\) *La Condition Humaine* depicts a room in which a canvas is placed in front of the window. On the canvas is a landscape representing the view from the window covered by the canvas. *La Condition Humaine* presupposes that we perceive a world of images. The image transmitted into the brain is a replica of the image perceived outside, but this is perceived in the brain. Explaining the painting, Magritte writes: "we see the world...outside of us, though having only one representation of it within us."\(^\text{17}\) Similarly, in *Cuadros blancos*, the paintings are representations of what was seen outside.
Memories are successive births and rebirths of images in the brain. The mind begins at point zero, "cuadros blancos", and using memory and imagination forms shapes, colours, lines, images: "'auydándome con la memoria'...a fin de que la imaginación me permitiera comenzar a ver poco a poco el color!'" (p. 16)

The last sentence in the labyrinth: "Todos iban vestidos siguiendo una moda infantil de hace varios decenios: las niñas con miriñañques y los niños con futraques deterciopelo" (p. 16) describing what the narrator sees on the canvas, is a word for word repetition of the description of what he saw on the way to the castle at the beginning of the labyrinth. Thus the end merges with the beginning. The circular frame of the labyrinth is the aesthetic principle which encloses and so subjects to order the changing or becoming aspect of life -- it is the "ceremonia" of the "confusión".

In El ancla, Arrabal further examines the process of memory. The labyrinth is a result of his researches into "los mecanismos de la memoria" described in El hombre pánico. The three theories which intrigued him most were:
1) la memoria era una red eléctrica...
los recuerdos materializados por trenes
de impulsos girando en circuitos cerrados;
2) los recuerdos están consignados en un
soporte; algo así como los discos o las
cintas magnetofónicas; 3) la memoria es
química....la sustancia que serviría de
soporte a los recuerdos...deriva de un
ácido nucleico, de la misma estructura que
el ácido en el núcleo de las células
materializa el programa a partir de cual un
ser vivo es capaz de fabricar otro ser
semejante a él.

Thus in the labyrinth, the narrator retreating into
his mind dicovers "un aparato semejante a una diminuta
central eléctrica....dentro de ella mis recuerdos giraban
en circuito cerrado" and "mi memoria se conservaba en
discos...y también en cintas cubiertas por un líquido
impresionante." (p. 60)

The fable, however, does not stop at a physical
description of the brain as a well of memories.
The narrator's "éxtasis" is created by the discovery that
everything is connected by "hilos finísimos." (p. 61)
When he goes back to the initial scene, the subject of
Fragonard's painting, La Gimbette, he understands the
scene in terms of those fine threads:

Frente a mí la niña con su perro,
a su vera el ancla. Y comprendí.
(p. 61)
"El ancla", which is the title of the labyrinth, moors memory. The narrator is now able to connect his visual impressions. The picture is no longer an isolated incident. Realizing that the memories which he thought to be very important are in relatively small "paquetes" compared with those which he thought were unimportant, he realizes that the significance of each thing is relative and approximated only in terms of the "all". This is reflected on a larger scale throughout the novel in that each labyrinth is related to the whole and derives its meaning from the whole.

Insight into memory indicates insight into knowledge; for knowledge is dependent on reason, which in turn is dependent on memory, the preserving faculty:

...viendo mi memoria veía el espectáculo del conocimiento y de la crítica del conocimiento. (p. 62)

Henri Bergson's thought: "Consciousness means memory", pervades Celebrando. In El ancla, the narrator's discovery regarding memory elevates him into a state of heightened awareness: "era sublimemente consciente." (p. 62)
He is now able to handle memory:

...comprendí que no era nada más que una diminuta figurita de porcelana que se alzaba en la palma de mi mano. (p. 62)

"La Gimbette" fits into his hand. The memory has now become materialized; the painting has become transformed into a statue.

Again, this labyrinth is circular, beginning and ending with "La Gimbette".

The artist's journey into his brain to examine his physical memory is paralleled by a more symbolic and archetypal journey in La cara. The narrator loses his identity ("perdí mi cara" [p. 125]) in order to find, via many identities ("cara de gato, cara de Maimónides, cara de rayo, cara de Alicia en el país de las maravillas, cara de marinero, cara de Ramón Gómez de la Serna, cara de esfera, etc." [p. 126]), his true identity. This quest is symbolized by a return to the sea, from which life is generated.

Water, his "elemento", according to Jung, symbolizes the unconscious.²¹ Arrabal uses water in this sense. In El mar, for example, he writes: "el mar
There are different planes of memory," writes Bergson, "the largest includes all our past, and is the plane of dream." Jungian and Bergsonian thought are fused in La cara.

The ship, appropriately called La Memoria, conducts to the origin, to the "YO" reflected in the undersea grotto. The origin is also the end of selves both on personal and general levels -- "mis antiguas caras casi podridas por el agua" (p. 127) for water destroys identity, the individual is submerged in the general, in the whole, which at the same time creates the fulfillment of the individual "Yo".

This is explained by the phrase: "la supremacía [del] agua 'como elemento destructor por autonomasía'; for "autonomasia" can be taken to mean both calling the general by the particular and calling the particular by the general. "Yo", the particular, comes to stand for all or for the general, being the sum of "antiguas caras".

The artist's immersion into water is symbolic of both birth and death. The water of the undersea grotto to which the voice of the woman calls him indicates uterine life. The narrator retreats into the womb in
order to be reborn. This is part of the entire process of Celebrando in terms of a succession of rebirths. La cara, once again, is circular, beginning with the mirror on the balcony and ending with the mirror in the grotto.

El hijo de Cronos gives another variation of the memory theme. The labyrinth serves as an expression of Arrabal's theory of art -- art as product of "la memoria" and "el azar". This central point, which according to the narrator "era capaz de iluminar el enigma del arte" (p. 163) is voiced by the lecturer:

La obra del artista...es un fruto de la unión del tiempo y de la memoria. La memoria representada por la biografía del artista y la historia de la humanidad y el tiempo por el futuro, es decir, por el azar. (pp. 162, 163)

In El hombre pánico, Arrabal illustrates his theory on time and memory by the following diagram:

```
                   PASADO          FUTURO
                   (memoria)       (azar)
                  /                 /
                /                 /
              /                 /
            /                 /
           /                 /
          /                 /
         Presente
         /                 /
       Imaginación   Voluntad   Etc.
       /                 /                 /
     Inteligencia   Recuerdos   (la confusión, lo inesperado)
```

(Previsible, Memoria: estadística)
The past is memory and the future is chance -- both inundate and compose the present. Faculties such as imagination and intelligence are aspects of memory; imagination being the "facultad de combinar los recuerdos" and intelligence, the "facultad de servirse de la memoria." 25

Time is becoming or "duration", as in the thought of Bergson. The past and the future are joined by memory. Memory, however, is not part of a deterministic process, for time is flooded by "el azar", "la confusion", "lo inesperado". Again Arrabal's thought parallels that of Bergson, for whom memories are "essentially fugitive" and become materialized only by change, either when an accidental determination of our bodily attitude attracts them, or when the very indetermination of that attitude leaves a clear field to the caprices of their manifestation. 26

The àThèsàrtist uses all his faculties -- imagination, intelligence and will, and keeps himself open to change (time) in order to create.

The lecturer's comments on art in El hijo de Cronos is illustrated by the painting remembered by the narrator picturing Cronus, son of time, and Mnemosyne (Memory) and their nine daughters, "The Muses". The Greek myth,
to which Arrabal refers, concretizes the abstract by means of personification. Memory becomes a particular woman; time, a particular man; and the arts, "nuevas niñas hieráticas," (p. 162) their offspring. Memory is visual -- the abstract mused upon by all mankind is formed into visual identities in the myth.

Arrabal parallels the mythological personification with his own; for the lecturer is also "El hijo de tiempo". His words, the words of time, are disregarded by the young in the audience. Also, the audience personifies confusion, as it generates "un auténtico tumulto con gritos, siseos, risas..." (p. 162) through which time (the lecturer) moves imperturbed, undistracted, "con naturalidad." (p. 162) The lecturer's speech is produced "automáticamente" as he explains to the narrator. His notes give only a semblance of order; the speech is open to chance.

The flashback technique used in El hijo de Cronos, as well as in several other labyrinths, has particular significance. As the narrator looks at and listens to "el hijo de tiempo"; his mind goes back to his memory of the painting in his kitchen. He sees, listens, and remembers: the present flows into the memory, the memory into the
present. The shift from time to memory, that is the shift from the first paragraph describing the figure of time to the second paragraph describing the memory of the painting to the third paragraph describing time, etc., illustrates in internal movement the concept of art as being the product of time and memory, as the labyrinth as an aesthetic work is created.

The labyrinth is circular. The reader begins with the lecturer who is "el hijo de Cronos" and ends with "el hijo de Cronos" of the painting.

"La vida es la memoria"27 is expressed in these labyrinths and in Celebrando as a whole. In Candelada, the artist grasps the nature of memory intuitively. In this labyrinth, the search for the self again takes place on both the personal and general memory levels; just as art itself is created from both the artist's personal history and the history of mankind. This is signified in the narrator's reaction to the spectacle of eyes on the wall:

Era feliz viendo tanto ojo sobre la pared que imaginaba serían de todas las personas que he visto. Quizá también los ojos de todos mis antepasados y los de toda la humanidad. (p. 185)
The narrator identifies himself with the bird which enters his room. Both, "llena de encanto", watch the spectacle, "sensible a ciertas miradas." (p. 186) When the bird is consumed by fire, the narrator experiences "un brusco dolor de cabeza" (p. 186) which disappears as the bird's ashes are removed from the fire.

It is through his own identification with the mythical bird of rebirth that the narrator comes intuitively to grasp the mechanism of memory. The act of rebirth is a transcending or transforming act: the bird appears not exactly as before, but "más enhiesto y hermoso que nunca". (p. 187) The process of memory is a cumulative process, an enriching process. The narrator concludes: "...comprendí el mecanismo de mi memoria, de mi ave Fénix." (p. 187)

The phoenix is depicted in two similar paintings, both called *Arrabal Sauvé par le Phénix*, which are part of a series of paintings planned by Arrabal and executed by two figurative painters, L. Arnaiz and R. -G. Crerps. The series, featuring Arrabal as central subject, is decorating his apartment in Paris, and has been used for illustration in the French edition (*Fêtes et Rites de la Confusion*) of *Celebrando*. The paintings, *Arrabal Sauvé par le Phénix*, represent Arrabal being carried off by the phoenix into
the sky from a valley of graves from which some of the occupants are seen trying to escape. Arrabal, wearing glasses, is naked except for a white diaper-like cloth around his thighs. The phoenix carries him as the familiar stork carries an infant. The series of paintings, pervaded with self-mockery, adds to the dimension of humour of Celebrando.

The rebirth of the Phoenix in Candelada is complemented in other labyrinths describing the narrator's own rebirth. El mar, for example, can be read as descriptive of physical birth. The artist, like the fetus, is immersed in water:

El agua me cercaba y parecía que ni me mojaba. (p. 30)

As he approaches the rocks, he turns to discover:

...el mar no era de agua, sino de sangre. (p. 30)

Similarly, the fetus turning and approaching the pelvic bones becomes immersed in blood as the birth is about to take place. The blood in El mar not only evokes the pre-natal state but also death -- the blood is also
symbolic of the artist's blood. The sea "simboliza el sueño y a veces la pesadilla" (p. 29); or pre-conscious life. "La pesadilla" is the nightmare of both birth and death, as well as the nightmare of love -- "esperando la pesadilla" (p. 102) in Amor.

In La jaula-esfera, the artist experiences another kind of rebirth preceded by disease. A spider's web slowly covers him. As the sickness advances, the woman sings nursery songs in his presence, indicating his regression into infancy. The disease first brings about a separation from the external world: "Resolví no volver a salir; para ello me encerré en la torre" (p. 170); and finally from the woman herself: "Le dije que ya no podría abrir la" (p. 171) A period of incubation takes place before the rebirth.

The image of the "hilos sutilísimos" (p. 169) which cover him entirely until he is rendered immobile suggests not only the spider's web but also the caterpillar's finely-spun cocoon in which the transformation into butterfly takes place.

Having retreated into the tower, the narrator further retreats into the spherical cage provided by the woman.
In this womb, he is prepared for rebirth. The sphere, as already mentioned, indicates wholeness, integration. Male and female become reunited: "nos abrazamos, y me pareció que mi cuerpo se introducía en el suyo." (p. 172)

The disease, which was accompanied by the separation from the mother-image and the world, is healed; the artist is re-incorporated and reborn:

Cuando tocamos tierra, miré mi cuerpo desnudo, mientras ella abría la puerta de la jaula-esfera, y vi que la telaraña había desaparecido. (p. 172)

Arrabal's image of the sphere enclosing human beings is analogous to the spheres in Bosch's Garden of Delights, a phantasmagoric garden of transformations. Arrabal's labyrinths have much in common with the dream worlds of Bosch and Brueghel.

La jaula-esfera echoes the ending of La cara, and points towards Capítulo sexto, La glorieta, where Arrabal is incorporated into the giantess in order to be reborn through her.

Another important labyrinth dealing with the rebirth motif is La oscuridad. The narrator is born from a world of darkness into a world of light.
On one level, his sense impressions in the darkness can be interpreted as indicative of life in the womb -- "la oscuridad", "un sonido acompasado", "excrementos medio líquidos" and "un olor particularmente hediondo" (pp. 173, 174) suggesting the darkness in the womb, the mother's heartbeat, the placenta and the smell of blood.

Arrabal also hints at another kind of rebirth. -- resurrection; for the artist emerges from darkness after three days which in addition suggests the three days of darkness preceding the birth of the new moon. Creation, or the birth of the world, is suggested by the phrase "llegó la luz." (p. 175)

Also the dark labyrinth is representative of the land of death: "Tuve la impresión de que la muerte me acompañaba con sus velos blancos y su horca" (p. 175); and of the underworld with its dog-like animal, the hyena. The death-birth cycle is parallel to the dreaming-waking cycle. In this sense, the switch from darkness to light represents the artist's awakening from nightmare. Jung's observation: "Day and light are synonymous for consciousness, night and dark for the unconscious" is relevant here.
Most important of all, the labyrinth itself is descriptive of the artistic process; that is, of the power of transformation inherent in the creative process. The apprehension and experience of confusion is transformed into a vision of order, into an aesthetic whole: the hyena is transformed into the beautiful woman; the dark labyrinthine passages into her house of six rooms joined by a central passage; the unrecognizable sound into the ticking of the clock; the abominable stench into the fragrance of perfume; and the half-liquid excrement into honey. The transformation itself, however, is unexpected, part of "el azar". The act of turning on the light switch is accidental, unpredictable. With "llegó la luz", the artist re-enacts the act of creation: the transformation of chaos into cosmos. He deals with metaphor, image, parable, with sets of correspondences. Thus the aspects of the dark labyrinth and of the house have total metaphorical identification. The artist is "Jir-Hon-Eya, gran sacerdote..." (p. 104) He deals, like the priest, with corresponding levels -- the physical and the metaphysical.

On another level, the corresponding experiences of ugliness and aesthetic order suggest relativism and subjectivism, as the visions are entirely dependent on point of view.
Another aspect of the artistic process is related in La esperanza, the labyrinth describing the artist's initiation. In La esperanza, while the artist's portrait is being painted; that is, while he is being formed or "recreated", words appear on his body: "DESEO", "DESTINO", "MUERTE". (p. 31) The narrator discovers words on his fingers and lips, which point to his destiny as a writer. The tree bearing hands instead of fruit in the first part of his recurrent dream further points to his destiny -- hands being the instrument for writing.

The initiation in La esperanza leads to the artist's recovery of his ability to sleep. This becomes clear when regarded in context of the rest of Celebrando. The artist's "DESTINO" is to dream; for he forges art from the symbols he draws from dream. Again, Arrabal's thought coincides with that of Bergson, who wrote: "dream is the largest plane of memory." Sleep, then, is a kind of "MUERTO" from which the "DESEO" is born over and over again.

The last sentence in the labyrinth: "Miré el cuadro que y vi, mi imagen dormía, que yo dormía en el retrato" (p. 34), suggests that he is dreaming his initiation, for the portrait is a mirror; and by extension suggests that he is dreaming that he is dreaming his initiation. This echoes the last
phase of his recurrent dream:

...me preguntaba a qué nivel, es
decir, si soñaba que soñaba o si
soñaba que soñaba que soñaba. (p. 33)

During his initiation, the artist penetrates the innermost chamber of dreams. Dream, however, is a reflection of waking life. In Crickett, the narrator says:
"Que va a ser un sueño...es la pura realidad." (p. 65)
Dream and reality are a fluid continuum. One mirrors the other. Art derives from this continuum. Concerning his theatre, Arrabal writes: "J'appelle mon théâtre: théâtre réaliste jusqu'au cauchemar, mais le cauchemar compris." 30

On the subject of dream and art, Paul Valéry writes:

L'univers poétique...présente de grandes analogies avec ce que nous pouvons supposer de l'univers du rêve. 31

Arrabal, influenced by French Surrealism, identifies the dream state with aesthetic vision. He states, in fact, that much of his fiction is shaped directly from his dreams. 32 Thus in Celebrando the artist-hero, who draws
from memory and dream to create, fears and realizes the loss of these faculties: in El vampiro he loses his memory; in Botticelli, his faculty of dreaming; in El gallardete, his sleep and consequently his capacity for inventing in dream. The opposite takes place in El diluvio. The artist standing by the window retreats into his mind, into a world of reverie where he creates a personal version of Sleeping-Beauty, only to return again to self-awareness in front of the window. The labyrinths are four-dimensional spaces reflecting the mental spaces of the artist.

Dream experience is visual -- this explains the visual aspect of the labyrinths. Their dream content, however, is rational. The visual symbols (the "paquetes" of memory, for example), analogous to dream symbols and deriving their power from their resonance in a common psychic substratum, are the artist's tools and are subject to a rigidly-controlled aesthetic structure.

The most dominant symbol in the aesthetic structure is a symbol belonging to the world of artifice -- the mirror. The mirror in Celebrando is the mirror of transformation, the containing form of "lo inesperado", the portrait of the artist, the mirror of Narcissus and the mirror of Alice Through the Looking Glass.
In using the mirror image, Arrabal draws from a long tradition in religion, philosophy and art. In religion, the Scriptures gave rise to the concept of *speculum sine macula* — the mirror as symbol of purity, wisdom, truth, God and His all-seeing eye. It further symbolizes the *unio mystica* or relationship between God and man; which, in the field of art, found a correlative in symbolizing the relation between the artist and his work.

The static religious symbol became in the philosophical and artistic traditions a symbol of self-knowledge and of the transience and illusoriness of man and the world. Also, traditionally, the enigma of the mirror lies in that the reflected reality creates a confusion between what is real and what is illusion.

In art, the mirror has been used in the mimetic theory as a symbol of art itself. We find in Plato: "take a mirror and turn it around in all directions. In a very short time you could produce sand and stars and earth and yourself...."

Arrabal's use of the mirror image plays on various aspects of the traditional meanings of the mirror. Mirror reality in *Celebrando* reflects a world of changes, illusion, subjectivism, Narcissism and artifice.
The labyrinths, which themselves are mirrors of the facets of self and of imagination, contain internal portraits and mirrors. In *La cara*, the artist's search ends (or begins?) in front of "un gran espejo con una inscripción que rezaba: YO." (p. 127) In *Anatomía*, the painting *Mi Anatomía explicada* is a mirror reflecting the private symbolism of self. The painting referred to is an actual painting, *Anatomie Expliquée d'Arrabal*, illustrating *Fêtes et Rites de la Confusion*. In *El ganguino*, the artist, like Alice, penetrates the mirror to discover another world; and in *El vampiro*, a portrait of the artist pictures a man looking into a mirror which deforms the reflected reality:

> En el cuadro el hombre con el ataúd se contemplaba en un espejo barroco. Su imagen no reproducía exactamente la escena; en el espejo se veía el cuerpo del hombre, pero no la cabeza, ésta figuraba entre sus manos donde normalmente hubiera debido estar el ataúd. (pp. 26, 27)

Again, this is an actual painting, *Arrabal décapitant Narcisse*, included in *Fêtes et Rites de la Confusion*.

The mirror in *El vampiro* brings to mind the deforming mirrors in Goya's *Caprichos*; which, however, unlike Arrabal's mirrors, have a social purpose -- the unmasking
of hypocrisy. The distortion is not in the mirror-image, but in Goya's figures contemplating the mirror.

The myth of Narcissus pertains to Celebrando, but without the traditional negative moral contained in its symbolism of the mirror-reflection. The water-mirror in Ovid's Narcissus myth, by dividing the self into perceiver (subject) and perceived (object), symbolizes a tragic subject-object dichotomy and a confusion between reality and illusion.

In Celebrando both the image contemplating itself in front of the mirror, and the image reflected back by the mirror, are subject. The mirror does not present a dualistic world of reality and illusion, but a monistic world of multiple reflections at the centre of which is "YO" or the Arrabal-giantess pair in the centre of the square.

The symbol of the mirror is assimilated in the circular process of Celebrando:

\[
\text{eye} \rightarrow \text{mirror} \rightarrow \text{eye}
\]
The eye, perceiving the image in the mirror also sees how the reflection is thrown back in the pupil. It is both organ of perception and mirror: "En la gigantesca retina de su ojo me miré: reflejaba mi imagen con precisión." (p. 200) Similarly, the artist and his art are like two mirrors facing each other.

In the labyrinth, Los espejos, the image of the mirror is connected with memory and chance. As the artist becomes aware of two reflections of his face in the woman's sun-glasses, he hears her voice:

La memoria se bifurca y el artista la multiplica. (p. 135)

At the moment of her speaking, "se bifurca" pertains to the reflections in her glasses, and "el artista la multiplica" is later concretized when the artist perceives the multiplication of his image in the mirrors of her body:

...todo succuerpo era un espejo destinado a reproducir mi imagen indefinidamente, deformándolo como si fuera un caleidoscopio. (p. 137)
Her body is a metaphor for Celebrando or the work of art itself -- the labyrinths reflecting a kaleidoscopic view of the self. Similarly, the image indicates the process of perception and memory: we perceive and remember fragmentary and distorted images, from which we create entities.

Referring to "la memoria y el azar", the woman says: "[ellos son] mil veces entrecruzándose." (p. 136)

This abstraction is concretized by the image reflected by the mirror in the artist's dining room. "Lo inesperado" invades the labyrinth when the mirror in the dining room reflects, not the image of the perceiver, but a projected image composed of the blending of images in the artist's memory of the children's songs:

...el espejo del comedor...no reproducía mi imagen...reproducía la imagen de un individuo armado con una escopeta de casa, con una peseta de papel en el bolsillo y una calandria y un ruisenor en el morral. (p. 137)

From aural memory -- the children's songs and the woman's voice, the narrator creates and projects visual images or forms. By destroying the mirror, the woman
ceases to be the vehicle for self-projection. The phantasm, "lo inesperado", vanishes from the labyrinth as it entered.

The essentially enigmatic characteristic of the labyrinth is part of the subjective and relative aspects of Celebrando, which in turn is part of the experience of the breakdown of traditional value systems, which has opened up the field for more and more personal symbolism in art.

Basically, the significance of the mirror in Celebrando lies in the fact that memory is a reflection of phenomena distorted in time. Therefore, memory and chance are "mil veces entrecruzándose". The work of art, product of memory and time, reflects the phantasms of the mind.

Arrabal's mirrors and portraits in the labyrinths represent the mirror in the brain; for, as Magritte writes: "we see the world...outside of us, though having only one representation of it within us." This internal representation, however, is a fusion or "confusion" of things perceived and things projected; a fusion of past, present and future; of memory, perception and imagination.
The mirror, instead of representing the static, religious "Truth", represents subjective, changing "truth".

Subjectivism is reflected also in the narrator's vocabulary describing his apprehension of the world around him: "imaginaba", "creo", "parecía", "quizá", being the words most often used. The subject-oriented universe is specifically invoked by his comment concerning the marble image of the giantess: "...durante toda la tarde, estuve convencido de que se trataba tan sólo de una imagen proyectada." (p. 10)

Subjective, relative reality offers a world of infinite possibilities:

Cuando me movía, las posibilidades, las hipótesis se multiplicaban y cuando me concentraba se volvían infinitas.

(p. 10)

This aspect of Celebrando points to a comparison with Kafka. Both Arrabal and Kafka present a world of chaos, contradiction and relative reality. Illusory reality is the only reality and knowledge is relative.

The proposition: "las posibilidades se multiplicaban y cuando me concentraba se volvían infinitas," applies to Kafka's world, particularly to K.'s experience in The Castle and to Josef K.'s experience in The Trial. Both the castle and the trial implicitly raise the question of "una imagen proyectada".
However, from the common initial departure point of relativism, Kafka, and Arrabal in *Celebrando*, proceed in opposite directions. For Kafka's characters in search of objective truth, the experience of relativism and phenomenalism leads to negative nihilism and despair; whereas for Arrabal's character it leads to the subjective high-point of the ceremonial, the "éxtasis" experienced in the world of "the one and the many". In Kafka's labyrinth, the subjective, distorted view of reality with its infinite possibilities is a source of vertigo and metaphysical terror; whereas in Arrabal's labyrinth it is the source of vast richness.

Contrary to Arrabal, the experience of confusion and of chaos is reflected in the structure of Kafka's main works. There are chapters missing from *The Trial*, *Amerika* and *The Castle*; and the latter two are without ending. In Kafka's work, confusion is more involvingly "realistic" and vital than in Arrabal's consciously artistic constructs.

The most important influence of Kafka in *Celebrando*, however, is stylistic. Arrabal's prose is similar to Kafka's. It has the same sentence rhythm, the same simple, realistic and lucid reporter-like objective style to relate the dream-like, the "unreal" and "lo inesperado".
For example, Kafka describes objectively and factually Gregor Samsa's metamorphosis (*The Metamorphosis*):

> Als Gregor Samsa eines Morgens aus unruhigen Träumen erwachte, fand er sich in seinem Bett zu einem ungeheuren Ungeziefer verwandelt.  

(As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect).

This is paralleled by Arrabal's "factual" description of the unexpected:

> Por la pared, frente a mi cama, centenares de ojos se deslizaban mirándome. (p. 185)

An additional example for comparison is *El arquitecto*, which both in style and content (rumours and hearsay about the architect and the architect's absurd death), recalls Kafka's work (rumours about the castle officials and the judges of the trial, and the absurd death of Kafka's hero.)
The objective style of Celebrando finds a parallel in the cold and objective technique employed in Arrabal's figurative paintings to depict scenes of fantasy. The art of his paintings like the art of Celebrando is "très figuratif, mais porteur de folie et de démesure."\(^{39}\) The technique is similar to that employed by René Magritte who paints with realistic detail the unreal.

Another influence present in Celebrando is that of Lewis Carroll, whose world of humour, grotesquerie, nonsense songs and riddles, finds echoes in Arrabal's work. There are direct parallels: Arrabal, like Alice, goes through small doors bearing inscriptions, grows smaller and smaller in El diluvio, and penetrates a mirror in El ganguino. The confusion between dream and reality hinted at in La esperanza, La daga y la bandera and Crickett echoes Alice's conversation about dream and reality with Tweedledee in Through the Looking Glass.\(^{40}\) Both Arrabal and Alice penetrate a labyrinthine world in which the logic of the rational world is turned upside down. Arrabal, however, contrary to Alice, is not an outsider in the irrational world. In Celebrando the irrational sphere is not framed by the presence of a rational world of daily reality, which is the case in the two Alice stories.
The influences of Kafka and Carroll are, however, marginal. The human values portrayed in Celebrando are not derived from their fictional worlds, but from Arrabal's original world of "el hombre pánico".

"El hombre pánico [quien] toma parte en la actividad artística," derives from Arrabal's concept of "el pánico", which has for philosophical basis "el axioma: 'la vida es la memoria y el hombre es el azar'....El pánico...es una 'manera de ser' presidida por la confusión, el humor, el terror, el azar y la euforia." The panic vision centres on "la fiesta pánica", or the celebration of the ceremony of confusion. The title, Celebrando la ceremonia de la confusión points to the "Actividades del hombre pánico" as outlined by Arrabal:

--Arte
--Juego
--Fiesta

The mythology of the artist in Celebrando is a particularization of the mythology of "panic" man.

According to Arrabal's definition, "panic" man is drawn towards humour, the enigmatic, abnormality, deformation, contradiction and confusion; and he rejects "lo grave", and systems of morality which do not accommodate dissentsers. "Fantasmas del hombre pánico" include: "Paranoia..."
Megalomanía...Celos, fetichismo, necrofilia...Mitología...Mitomanía."44

All these aspects are reflected in Celebrando, which is pervaded with the humour and enigmas of the children's songs and riddles; with deformation ("La serpiente de cabeza de perro";[p. 73]); and contradictions ("aunque me voy, no me voy". [p. 30]) "Paranoia" is recurrent in the artist's fear of insomnia, in his awareness of eyes fixed on him in La gaviota y las gaviotas, and in his hallucination within the dream in Crickett: "Noté cómo comenzaban a tirarme puñales y vi varias sombras amenazadoras que se dirigían a mí." (p. 64) "Megalomanía" is present in the persistence of the self-portrait in Celebrando, in the "panic" stress on "yo". Megalomania is the subject of Arrabal's painting, Arrabal combattant sa mégalomanie, which represents Arrabal as knight mounted on a horse. From the sea in the foreground, rises a hand with a glass toasting Arrabal. The dominant aspect of Arrabal's paintings is the pervasive self-irony. The sense of the ridiculous and the grotesque directed at the self is part of the panic "manera de ser".

"Celos, fetichismo, necrofilia" enter labyrinths such as La fuente de la juventud, El diluvio, Las siete tréboles and the chapters in the square describing the pagan rituals
around the giantess. Dominant characteristics in Celebrando are: "Mitología (todo lo que se ama)" and "Mitomanía". Myth and fairy tales reccur in various deformations. The myth of Adam and Eve is parodied in Las serpientes; the fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty, distorted to include necrophilia in La fuente de la juventud, a labyrinth which also distorts the myth of Pygmalion; the tale of Count Dracula, divested of romantic aspects in Grupo O, rhesus negativo; and the ancient myth of the killing of the dragon, re-enacted by the artist in La daga y la bandera, as he thrusts a dagger into the chest of a man "[quién] llevaba en el bolsillo superior de la chaqueta un pañuelo rojo con un dragón en el centro." (p. 38)

The myths and fairy tales retold and distorted in individual labyrinths reflect the encompassing myth and fairy tale of Celebrando as a whole: the rebirth myth and the fairy tale of Arrabal-king and giantess-queen. The characters in Celebrando, like the characters in the world of fairy-tale, are two-dimensional, lacking in depth.

"Leur monde est celui des métamorphoses et du possible infini: le rêve"45 writes Alain Schifres of the characters in Arrabal's theatre, which applies also to the characters in Celebrando. The giantess, as mentioned, recurs as
monumental image in the square; and as lover, mother, 
fortune, queen, Venus and memory in the labyrinths. The 
other characters encountered by the artist are children 
and a man who reappears as artist, poet, architect, god -- 
all of which are reflections or projections of the artist-hero 
himself, just as in fairy tale and dream the characters 
are projections of the hero or dreamer.

Arrabal's originality in Celebrando rests in his 
particular fusion of fundamental archetypes, myth, 
fairy tale, dream and personal obsession. In this way, 
for example, the giantess is the mother-lover archetype, 
the goddess of myth, the queen of fairy tale, the 
anima-projection of dream and the expression of Arrabal's 
obsession with the mother, an obsession evident in his 
drama, particularly in Los dos verdugos, El gran ceremonioal, 
and El arquitecto y el emperador de Asiria.

In her multiple roles, the giantess expresses the 
duality of the female archetype: malevolence as well 
as benevolence. In La transformación, for example, she 
asks for the artist's soul; in Los ojos she prevents him from 
reaching his soul; whereas in La vela de la bella, the 
image of the flight of the ethereal veils suggests the union 
of their souls.
The duality of the female is expressed also in Arrabal's paintings; for example, *Arrabal laché par la Femme*, depicts a miniature Arrabal dropped from the large hand of a gigantic female suspended in the sky above a freeway; whereas, another painting, *Arrabal adoré par les Géantes* represents Arrabal surrounded by three benevolent females.

The giantess' roles of "memoria" and matriarch in the square are related, since personal memory, drawing from childhood centres on the mother-image. Arrabal, who had no father from the age of three, speaking about his work, says: "...ma mère a une très grande importance.... maitenant, je cherche à savoir ce qui s'est passé dans mon enfance." This is also reflected in Arrabal's painting called *Arrabal tenté par l'ambiguïté* which represents Arrabal and his wife, both nude, who have exchanged their bodies. Arrabal explains: "C'est le rêve d'ambiguïté que font, je suppose, tous les maris." In the painting his mother appears "sous la forme d'une harpie. On sent là que je l'aime de plus en plus." The culminating ritual in *Celebrando* is the realization of the Oedipal dream. Having passed through the initiation rites in the labyrinths, the artist, in *Capitulo sexto*, is incorporated into the giantess. On one level he enters
her as tiny infant in order to be reborn through her; on another level the union indicates the marriage rite of king and queen: "estaba vestida de reina" (p. 199); "allí estaba yo con una corona, con un manto real y un cetro de oro." (p. 200) His entry through the eye is symbolic of sexual union. 49 "Ella y yo solos," (p. 199) echoing "ella y yo nos encerramos solos" (p. 102) in Amor, indicates the wish-fulfilment dream of romantic love. On another related level, Arrabal's union with the giantess points to a mystical union with the soul or anima-figure. Jung's observation: "the image of 'soul' somehow coincides with the mother-image" 50 is relevant here.

Through the ceremonial act of rebirth, the artist passes into the world of immortality. The meaning of the rebirth cycle in myth resides precisely in the desire for immortality. The artist's flight through curved space and circular time and his metamorphoses and immortality represent the ultimate illusion of Celebrando.

El viaje falls into two parts. In the first part, the narrator's perpetual circular journey from giantess into labyrinths into giantess results in eternal recurrence, which is, in effect, a static situation that leads nowhere, except to the same points over and over again. The second part, describing the artist's flight through space and
time suggests progression in addition to the returning to the same points over and over again. The circle is extended into an ascending spiral. Through this process memory is enriched: "mi memoria se enriquezca." (p. 202)

El viaje has archetypal, philosophical and artistic implications. The archetypal wanderings in the labyrinth are transformed into the journey in the cosmos -- both are symbolic of a journey towards the self or centre of being. The centre of being is realized in a multitude of beings: "y soy gato, y ave Fenix, y cisne, y elefante y niño y viejo." (p. 202) The theme of El viaje is common to Arrabal's theatre, of which the dominant characteristics are circularity and the transformation of the characters.

Philosophically, El viaje as part of Celebrando demonstrates what George Poulet calls "the richness that relativist thought discovers in the cosmos!"

...for every place and every moment offers to man a new point of view. As he places himself therein, he perceives around him, a universe no less infinite than the universe glimpsed in the next place or in the preceding moment. So much so, that the world being composed of an infinity of places and of moments, is an infinity of worlds, all infinite, that the human consciousness apprehends everywhere and always.51
El viaje describes the artist's perpetual reinvention of his own being and his capacity to annihilate concrete time and space by moving in the limitless sphere of the imagination.

Arrabal's painting, La Naissance d'Arrabal, depicting Arrabal coming out of the mouth of Arrabal coming out of the mouth of Arrabal coming out of the mouth of Arrabal, etc., is relevant to the process of Celebrando, which is a circular process consisting of the constant reinvention of the self, and, finally, expressing an aspiration to infinity and to immortality.

Concerning his paintings, Arrabal writes: "Ces tableaux se présentent comme des cérémonies plates. Des cérémonies immobiles." The ceremonies are the ceremonies of life, of confusion and of art. The painting, Arrabal célébrant la Cérémonie de la confusion, depicting Arrabal at the chessboard (metaphor for art) with monkeys (evolution of mankind) and books bearing the title Pan in the background, serves as the central illustration for Celebrando.

In conclusion, within the circular framework of Celebrando, Arrabal creates a mythology of the self, of the
artist and of "panic" man. The mythology is personal, individual; but it is framed by a universal mythic structure -- the rebirth pattern and its technical expression, the circularity of 

Celebrando. The personal is expressed in the contents of the labyrinths, which are analogous to hypnagogic dream and the impersonal in the myth. The unifying images in the pattern of 

Celebrando are the circle (symbol of the self); the mirror (in front of which the search for the self begins and ends) and the labyrinth (the space wherein the search takes place); all of which are human "root" symbols and which together function as a substructure connecting 

Celebrando as individual work of art to the aesthetic tradition.

Within the aesthetic framework of a circular quest, which is, in point of fact, a traditional framework, lies the "confusion" represented by "panic" values; that is, the displacing and relativizing of myths, the contradictions and distortions of "panic" man's relativistic world, and "la fiesta", or the ceremony of confusion which is the ceremony of life, of memory, and of art.

Celebrando as a whole fulfils Arrabal's definition of art, which finds its basis in Greek mythology:
Celebrando is a fusion or "confusion" (that is, intermingling) of personal ("la biografía") and archetypal ("la historia de la humanidad") symbolism; of personal dream and obsession and of myth; of personal and general memory. Memory is part of time. It both acts on and is acted upon by the flux of change. The main characters, the giantess and Arrabal, and the main action, their interaction, are the fictional expression of the thought: "La vida es la memoria y el hombre es el azar."^54

As a work of imagination, Celebrando exemplifies the narrator's observation: "todo lo que mezclándose entre sí produce la imaginación" (p. 26)! for it is the blending of dream, fairy tale, myth and ritual, all of which are part of personal and collective memory.

However, contradictions arise when Arrabal's ideas and theories are viewed in the context of the actual work of art, Celebrando. Time is "el azar", "lo inesperado", but it is also a structured, mythic, cyclical time. The abstract, memory and confusion, is concretized in the consciously controlled constructs of the labyrinths and the square. By expressing the abstract in visual
images, Arrabal gives it form, and so removes it from the realm of confusion and chance. This is most obvious in *El ancla*. Art itself is created from "lo inesperado" and "la confusión", but its realization in rigidly controlled form presents a contradiction. *Celebrando* with its mathematical form, its cyclical structure of meaning, and its system of internal echoes, is part of Arrabal's concept of an ideal play: "...la composition en sera parfaite. En reflétant le chaos et la confusion de la vie." But although its composition is perfect, and although it reflects the confusion represented by "panic" values, it reflects the chaos and confusion of life theoretically rather than realistically. *Celebrando* is the expression rather than the fulfilment of Arrabal's theories.

Finally, the basic contradiction lies in the title: *Celebrando la ceremonia de la confusión*. The stress is on "ceremonia", the meeting point of art and life, and implying order as well as disorder. The contradiction, however, is precisely part of the confusion, as understood by Arrabal: "J'entends par confusion tout ce qui est contradictoire, inexplicable, inespéré...." The mystery of "la ceremonia de la confusión" is a human mystery.
Despite, or perhaps because of, theoretical and actual discrepancies within the work of art (which are part of the nature of art itself, which relies essentially on semblances and masks), this mystery resides at the basis of Celebrando.
II. Celebrating the Ceremony of Confusion translated from the Spanish.

The giantess was reclining on the monument, immobile. Her body covered the entire surface of the pedestal. The pilgrims approached with offerings and the children tried to climb up to touch her dress. The monument was in the middle of the square which was bare, without trees or benches.

A group of pilgrims started to sing:

Hey diddle diddle
The cat and the fiddle
Jumped over the moon
With a red balloon.

From where I was standing it looked as if the giantess were made of marble. Some moments before, however, it had seemed to me that I was seeing her shoes from the front and that her hair was blowing in the wind. During the whole afternoon on the previous day, I had been convinced that the whole thing was only a projected image. When I looked at her from different angles, the possibilities and hypotheses multiplied;
and when I stayed on one spot concentrating very hard, they became infinite. But at that particular moment, I was convinced that she as well as her pedestal were made of marble.

The pilgrims wanted everyone to be quiet. They were "hushing" everybody. A little boy went to the foot of the monument and said:

"Sonnet."

After a short pause, he recited:

There I met an old man
Who would not say his prayers.
I took him by the left leg
And threw him down the stairs.

An indescribable racket began to build up, preventing me from hearing the rest of the sonnet. Some of the pilgrims were hitting each other. Others were taking photographs.

On the first day of my arrival, perhaps because I was over-exhausted and full of nervous tension from the journey, I "saw" the giantess raise herself and make signals to me to approach. Because of her extraordinary size, her shadow fell over more than half of the square. Everyone was smiling
happily and I also smiled, as if we were sharing I don't know what secret. After I had slept and rested, I felt refreshed and happy and let myself be carried along by the jovial atmosphere (not devoid of threats) which prevailed in the square.

An orchestra, conducted by a man dressed like a king with a sceptre and royal mantle (perhaps he was a real monarch), ascended in a balloon and struck up a melody with a strong rhythm dedicated, I was told, to the giantess.

The people started to dance wildly to the music.
I looked around me until I noticed an archway with a sign:

LABYRINTHS

As I went towards it, the pilgrims were singing:

Lavender's red
Roses are blue
If you'll have me
I'll have you.

They also sang:

A madman and a madam
Told me one day:
Not all are that are
Nor are all that may.
A couple went up to the statue and presented a bottle containing a rabbit to the giantess.

When I reached the archway, I found a large wooden door with the same inscription: "Labyrinths" and also "First Labyrinth." Obviously it had been a long time since the door had been used, since it creaked as I pushed it open. Before closing it behind me, I looked at the giantess once more. She was smiling at me perhaps with slight malevolence.

Everything was dark and the clamor in the square was scarcely audible. Immediately I saw the entrance to the labyrinths; or rather, to the first labyrinth. On the wall I saw:
As I was walking towards the castle a cart crammed with children came speeding down the middle of the road. It was impossible to tell what was pulling the vehicle. A cloud of dust prevented me from seeing whatever it was; probably, I thought, a runaway horse. The children squealed with terror.

In front of me rose the half-ruined castle. One of the walls was undamaged except for the upper part. Where the turret used to be, there was a naked woman covered by her long hair and with her hands bound together. The cart continued rolling until it crashed against a tree. There was a great commotion and the children spilled to the ground. All of them were dressed in the children's fashion of some decades ago: the girls in hoop skirts and the boys in little velvet suits. I realized that the carriage was not pulled by anybody or anything.

I climbed to the first floor of what was left of the castle and ran into her. Now she was neither bound nor naked; she wore a costume elaborately decorated with lace.

FIRST LABYRINTH
WHITE PAINTINGS
and ribbons, with a very low waistline and a low neckline with a bow in the middle. A bow of impressive size.

Without greeting me, she told me that she had a collection of pictures that I "must see". I think that she used the word "marvellous" to describe them. She appeared distant and bewildered to the point that I wondered if she were drugged.

She took me to one of the drawing rooms. It was untidy with useless gaps in the walls where the windows used to be. The floor was covered with dust.

"This is my collection of paintings."

I looked at the collection carefully. All the paintings were exactly the same, depicting perfectly white surfaces. I assumed they were the creations of some unknown student of Malevich. There were not even traces of shadows -- they were totally white.

Then she explained them to me. Each picture represented a characteristic story or scene: Venus in the garden, Apollo with a dove on his head, the shepherdess and a peasant girl, Greek masquerades. As she explained the pictures, her face changed. It looked as if she were living each painting. Her
eyes sparkled enthusiastically.

"Notice the shadow of her hand on the vase. What a masterpiece!"

Then she added:

"Now I shall take you to the throne room. There I keep the best painting."

She told me that the canvas in the throne room contained the secret of her life. Her voice was almost a whisper and, of course, full of emotion.

"Don't you think that the best one in this room is the one with the legs of a galloping horse?"

"Yes, I agree," I said.

"Everyone says so."

With a great air of mystery, she conducted me to the throne room. She led me as if I were blind until I sat down in what she called: "the monarch's throne." Everything was completely dark. The seat was most uncomfortable. I was slightly frightened.

Before drawing the curtains aside, she told me that I was going to see a picture that at first sight would seem to be a blank surface. According to her, I had to look at it very thoroughly, "using memory as help" (this she repeated several
times), until my imagination would enable me to start seeing the colours little by little. In this way, the painting would cease being white by first turning greyish and then little by little taking on the colours and lines of the scene.

I could have sworn that her comments were broken from time to time by sighs. She was at the window drawing the curtains aside when the room lit up.

My surprise was immense. There was not one painting but two: one was the portrait of a naked woman on top of the ruined castle where the turret used to be, covered by her long hair and with a rope tied around her wrists; the other picture depicted a cart that had just hit a tree. The children were spilled to the ground. All of them were dressed in the children's fashion of some decades ago -- the girls in hoop skirts and the boys in little velvet suits.
Illness forced me to stay at home. The doctors could not diagnose it. The symptoms were simple: fatigue, dizzy spells and delirium. My eyes and my mind were so weak that, as I walked around, it seemed as if the house were moving.

Shortly before I fell ill, the swan, although he had a pond on the patio, started to spend the days in the rooms of the house. He followed me everywhere. At night, he slept on my bed and when he was cold he raised the sheets with his beak and got inside.

I had become very fond of him. When I went to take a shower in the morning, he came along and splashed around happily. Of course, in those days the water did not gush out as hard as it used to, possibly because the pipes were not functioning properly.

The swan liked it when I scratched him under his wings. He made the most amusing sounds. One day when I went into the closet, I got a scare: there was the swan clinging to the wall in what seemed to me to be an impossible manner. Immediately he threw himself at me as if to embrace me.
The doctors had recommended a lot of sleep; but actually it seemed as if I were unable to bear the bed. My fainting spells occurred frequently and I spent days and nights as if unconscious.

Each time I fainted, the swan became more affectionate; he could not live without me. I began to suspect that he was drinking on the day when I left an open bottle in the dining room only to find it some hours later empty and knocked over on the floor.

I made some experiments with different kinds of alcoholic drinks and with wines of better and worse quality. There was no doubt: the swan drank from my bottles. What worried me was his pretense. Why did he drink behind my back?

One day when I went into the wine cellar, I didn't know what to think: more than half the bottles were empty and scattered on the floor! I was almost tempted to laugh. How could the swan drink so much! I fainted.

When I came to in the wine cellar, the bird was there with his wings around me and putting his long neck under my left armpit. He was making happy sounds.

I was so weak that I even believed that the walls were moving. I sat up and looked around. Twenty more bottles were empty.
I lay down and slept. When I awoke, I went around on tiptoe looking for the swan. I looked for him in the whole house and finally found him clinging to one of the walls in the kitchen. The sun was shining on it and I was able to look at it closely.

The wall was completely soaked with wine and then I saw that all the walls of the house were saturated as well as the floor; and the house was reeling, drunk.
THIRD LABYRINTH

THE TRANSFORMATION

I was very careful that the glass jar was always hermetically sealed. I had glued a sonnet to the glass with the title: CUMATEPAN which I had found in an old book.

Whenever we went out together in her car, since she drove very quickly and with her feet bare, I made sure that the jar would not be broken by putting it between my thighs which I pressed closely together.

At first I didn't dare to go into the water when we were at the beach. I could not run the risk of leaving it on the sand, abandoning it to whomever might step on it, steal it or break it; nor could I bathe with it since I didn't know if the lid would resist the dampness.

At night, I used to spend whole hours at a time contemplating it, looking at it very closely and meditating. When I concentrated on one of the particularities of its form (which was actually quite ordinary), I even found explanation for some of the mysteries.

Later I decided always to keep it tied to my body.
I didn't want it to be separate from me, nor to lose sight of it even for an instant. I decided that the ideal thing would be to tie a ribbon a little below the lid around the jar. But to which part of my body should I tie the ribbon?

For some time, I carried it attached to my wrist which is the centre of the will. Later it seemed obvious to me that I should attach it to my neck -- the centre of fire and perhaps of life. Occasionally, I simply tied it to my belt, thus rendering homage to human sordidity. For some weeks, I hung it on one of my fingers, changing fingers according to the circumstances.

Every time we went out together, she seemed enchanted by the jar. I remember once she came home unexpectedly and found me staring at the jar which was in the middle of the table, totally absorbed in it. She sat down and remained silently beside me. I think she was trying to imitate me.

Finally, as I had feared, she said to me one day:

"Give me the jar."

"The jar?"

"Yes."

I handed it to her unwillingly.
She went into the kitchen and started to make marmalade with its contents. I did not dare to reveal to her that my soul was inside the jar.
FOURTH LABYRINTH

THE VAMPIRE

Little by little I lost my memory. I forgot the most elementary things. I went around with my mind loaded with notes, telephone numbers and dates. All memories of my childhood, youth and adolescence had vanished completely.

My friend's collection of paintings was of the most unusual kind possible. No one knew how to paint the fantastic to appear familiar as he did. Looking at his work, I even imagined that I found the answers to some of the mysteries: suicide, anguish, faith, happiness.

The doctors advised me to take phosphorus pills to recover my memory, but it was no use.

To top it all, I forgot everything that had to do with stories, with life, everything which blending together makes up the imagination. On the other hand, the only things that I remembered were dates, names and numbers.

I was particularly interested in one of my friend's paintings. It was a picture of a man looking at himself in a mirror. In his right hand, he held a tiny glass casket (inside
which I could see a hand holding a bunch of keys and a ruined castle). Even though it was not yet finished, I guessed that it was going to be a masterpiece.

My friend, the painter, had come to live at my house ever since he had begun this painting. On the first day, he placed a sword on my bed and asked me to sleep on the right side while he would sleep on the left. I agreed even though I did not like his manner.

It seemed to me that as I lost my memory, the rest of my faculties, as might have been expected, deteriorated: my intelligence waned, my imagination dimmed and I was no longer able to love.

In the painting, the man with the casket was gazing at himself in the baroque mirror. The mirror did not reflect the scene in exact detail; for the head instead of being on the man's body was placed in his hands where actually the casket should have been.

Some days later, my friend told me that he had finished the painting and that he therefore no longer needed my hospitality for which he was very grateful.

Some nights later, I accidentally came across my friend under one of the bridges of the city. He was clinging to an
old female tramp, his lips pressed to her nape. The place stank of excrement and wine. I called him but he did not reply.

When I put my hand on his shoulder, he raised his head and looked at me without recognition and with inhuman anger. He immediately turned away and again pressed his mouth against the back of the old woman's neck.

I was on my way home when I decided to pass by his studio; actually, to take advantage of his absence.

Leaning against the easel in the middle of the studio was a portrait of the old vagabond woman sitting on a toppled pillar with a phantom boat coming towards her. The rest of the canvas was still white.

To the right was the painting with the casket in the man's hands that fascinated me so much. It was now finished. He had put a lion and a cow in the background. The central figure looked surprisingly like me.

I opened a little closet and found a shelf with a label saying: MEMORY RESERVE. On the shelf were several glass jars; each jar had a hand-written label and was filled with a cloudy liquid. On one of them was my name. Carefully I opened the receptable and drank the content. My infancy, my childhood, my youth and biography came back to my brain.
FIFTH LABYRINTH

THE SEA

I was lying on the water with my eyes closed and my body relaxed. The sea was calm; nothing stirred. It was fair weather at sea. When I had taught myself this position, I did not call it "playing dead" as I had heard children say, nor "floating", but "sleeping on the water".

"The sea symbolizes dream and at times nightmare..." he said.

More than once he had been seen at the beach, sleeping and stretched out on the sand in such a way that the water covered a corner of his mouth, one ear and all of one side.

In spite of keeping my eyes shut, I felt the sun above me. The water was all around me and yet it did not seem to make me wet. I heard no noise -- the beach was deserted. I remained still for several minutes.

When I opened my eyes, I was already close to the rocks. Someone was singing with a country accent:
Although I go  
I don't leave  
Although I go in words  
I don't go in thoughts.

Without moving, I examined the rocks and thought I recognized his face that seemed sculpted in bas-relief on a very high rock. Yes, it was him. He burst out laughing and said:

"Love is memory."

In fact, his head formed part of the highest rock and another rock next to it seemed to be enclosed in a cage. Down in the bay, reclining on the sea, I looked up at the heights.

I turned over, giving up my position, and it was then that I realized that the sea was not water but blood.
Whenever the painter spoke to me, he managed to wave his arms around without losing his natural calmness. He was a very conscientious man and what was most important to him in doing my portrait was the fact that he was earning a certain amount of money. He had an artistic conscience worthy of Velazquez but his slowness could have passed for laziness if you were not aware of his genius.

As the portrait progressed, letters started to appear on my body. The word DESIRE appeared on the ring finger of my right hand; and DESTINY and DEATH on the soles of my feet. It is possible that I alone saw these letters since they were drawn in such a way that they could be confused with the natural lines of my skin.

When I looked very closely, I found letters in the smallest places: between my fingers, at the edge of a fingernail, at the corners of my mouth.

The artist drew my portrait without taking the letters into account. We spoke little. While he painted, he seemed very withdrawn, but there was nothing affected or artificial in his
manner. It seemed as if he had only domestic matters on his mind. Sometimes he whistled a classical tune, sometimes a modern song.

I used to spend hours without moving, sitting in my chair and wearing only a pair of white pants with a belt. I amused myself by looking at my letters: FIRE was written in huge letters across my chest, my heart was decorated by the word WATER and an inscription appeared on each of my ribs—LINE, ADULATION, SEVEN, etc.

Sometimes the artist rested calmly. He was the image of comfort lying back in his chair with his legs stretched out wide apart and insistently playing with the hairs that stuck out of his nostrils.

Although I was suffering from insomnia, it often happened that a peculiar kind of drowsiness totally overcame me and I fell asleep beyond remedy. It seemed to me that as the painter's brush moved industriously across the canvas it also caressed whichever part of my body it was painting until I fell asleep.

When this happened, I always had the same dream although with variations that did not change anything basic. The dream was divided into three parts:
--during the first part (thanks to the symbolic explanations of the members of my body), I held the key to the realm of the fourth dimension, something which I was able to prove thanks (?) to a tree loaded with hands.

--during the second part, I climbed into a barge that had the shape of hope(?) and I rowed to a place where someone was waiting for me to cover my body with gold.

--during the third and last part, I fell asleep in my dream and asked myself at what level I was; in other words, was I dreaming that I was dreaming or was I dreaming that I was dreaming that I was dreaming, etc.

The three parts followed each other without a break.

When the painting was finished, the painter suggested that I hang it in the living room between two candles of different sizes. When he left, he threw an incomprehensible phrase at me which I think referred to the "survivor whom I would meet".

From that day on, I was no longer able to sleep. I spent nights and days awake. No matter how hard I tried, it was impossible to sleep.

One night, some weeks later, I heard the painter's voice calling me from the garden. I went down but he was not there.
In the middle of the garden, from where the artist's voice had come, there was a tree loaded with human heads, moving in the wind. I went closer to get a better view of it when I suddenly noticed that I was walking on the beach.

I saw a barge and climbed in without thinking about it. Its name was inscribed in red letters: HOPE. The sailor told me that I had to let myself be anointed with a special kind of ointment. I closed my eyes and felt his hands on my body. When it was over, I saw my image reflected in the sea and realized that his hands had covered me with gold.

I disembarked in front of my house and ran up the stairs into the living room. Looking at the painting, I saw that my image was sleeping: I was sleeping in the portrait.
As I got on the airplane, I thought I had forgotten something which was perhaps important. Yet, I had done the packing very carefully. I made several guesses. Was it a book, a notebook, something indispensible? I went through everything that I might have forgotten without finding the answer.

It was a six-hour night journey. As usual when in this situation, I fell asleep as soon as the plane left the ground. A short time later, the stewardess' voice, perhaps also the touch of her hand on mine, awoke me.

"Do you wish to dine, sir?"

I told her that I would like it if she did not awake me again during the flight. I was far too happy to be able to go to sleep easily, without the usual insomnia that plagued me at night, to let myself be distracted by dinner.

I was not exactly dreaming. I was in a particular state produced by the steady throb of the engines, the murmur
of conversations around me, the light and my slightly uncomfortable posture.

Sometimes the noise around me became a chorus and between dreams I heard songs from my childhood which I had believed to be deeply buried in oblivion:

The man in the moon
Came tumbling down
He went to the south
And burnt his mouth.

The whole time, I was wavering between dream and reality in such a way that I sometimes took the distortion for the reality. The sensations provoked by this state produced a pleasing physical excitement in me. All my thoughts were overwhelmed with adventure but also with threats.

During one of those instants of confusion and of an accumulation of different sensations, I "saw" the object I had forgotten. It was a red flag with a dragon in the middle which I carried with me as a good-luck charm whenever I travelled. After this first lucid vision, I fell into a series of intricate dreams which I would be quite incapable of putting into proper words.
My neighbour's voice addressing another passenger momentarily awoke me. But I was quickly dreaming again. I dreamed that I was lifted to the top of the airplane. Making every effort possible, I crawled back to the baggage room. After a few minutes of searching, I found my suitcase. I opened it. The box in which I kept the red banner with the dragon was on top of the clothes, but the banner was not there; instead, a sharp unsheathed dagger glittered on the red velvet.

I seized the dagger, kissed it and put it in my pocket. The strong odour of coffee woke me up.

We were landing. As we got closer to the ground, we were surprised to see the airport completely deserted. All alone, on one of the platforms, someone was signalling.

As I got closer, I noticed that his signals were meant for me. One of my former College friends, whom I had not seen for years, was beckoning me to come up to the control tower. I remembered that one day he had said something incomprehensible to me:

"It is difficult to distinguish the compromise of perenniality."
In spite of all the years that had passed this sentence remained fixed in my mind. What kind of compromise did he mean and to what sort of perenniality was he referring? Why this limitation, "it is difficult", that gave the sentence a greater reality?

I went up the stairs to meet him and arrived at the control tower. He was there in his black cape with the red velvet collar. In the breast pocket of his jacket, he had a red handkerchief with a dragon in the middle.

I went to shake his hand and without reason took the dagger out of my pocket. I stared at it not knowing what to do. Suddenly something irresistible was leading my hand. My mind spinning with confusion, I thrust the dagger into his chest as hard as I could. For an instant, I looked at the corpse. I was rushing down the steps as fast as I could when I heard:

One two three
He can't see
Carry on, carry on
You're the tree.

Suddenly the voice of the stewardess speaking to my neighbour woke me up. Thank goodness! It was a dream, a
nightmare, and I was still in the airplane. I looked at the time. There was still an hour and a half left.

I slept for the rest of the trip and only awoke when the stewardess said:

"Please fasten your seat belts."

The plane, now in reality, landed. The personnel led us to a side door instead of the main door of the airport. One of the passengers asked why this was so. The steward replied:

"A crime was committed an hour and a half ago. A man was found in the control room with a dagger in his chest."

I asked him for the victim's name and he gave me the name of my former friend at College.
Sometimes when I was about to say something, she would come out with it before I had time to let the words out of my mouth. It also happened the other way around. After a while, we realized that sometimes we were both thinking the same thing. At the time, a light very difficult to describe brightened the rooms of our house. In the back room lived Euripides the lion.

One day while I was thinking about the mechanics of memory, she immediately began to speak about the same subject. We examined the sequence of thought that each of us had followed. We had both proceeded in the same manner. In other words, during more than fifteen minutes we had both followed exactly the same train of thought. In the back room, the lion was romping about. We used to visit him in the evenings and when we stroked him he made a loud rumbling noise that sounded almost like a car engine.

We often examined what we had been thinking and it turned out that we spent long periods of time thinking about the same things. We tried to come to an understanding of
the exact process of this phenomenon. Three hypotheses came to our minds: either it was I who thought and "dictated" my thoughts to her, or vice-versa, or we were carrying on a mental conversation together while believing that each of us was thinking independently of the other. Euripides the lion wandered around in his room, the light changing the shades and tones of his body.

Later on, we invented other hypotheses most of which I have forgotten. One of them calmed us: perhaps someone was dictating our thoughts to both of us simultaneously. We looked into the possibility that he dictated to other people as well without coming up with a satisfactory answer. At night, when we visited the lion Euripides, he greeted us in the darkness with two luminous words spelled out in his eyes: LINE DEUS.

One day we thought we understood what our "mission" was to be: to attain continuous telepathy and to make it available to everyone in town. To do this, we carried out three series of operations. First each of us trained with cards in our respective rooms. At the end of two months we were able to read through the wall. The second operation consisted of pulmonary massages; and the third, of putting wire mesh around our rooms. Euripides the lion, happily wagging his tail, was walking on air in his room.
Finally we were able to communicate by telepathy all the time and we decided to make our researches available to everyone in town. Soon everybody acquired the faculty of telepathy. After the first period of euphoria, there was a period of degeneration characterized by innumerable and often vicious conjugal, family and social quarrels. Those who survived experienced great boredom which made communication impossible. Everyone was longing for the time when illusion, lies, deceit and intimacy had been the norm. Euripides the lion, secluded in his room, greeted us with leaps of joy and even licked our hands.

We continued our research and experiments. After many months of failures, false paths and frustrated hopes, we were able to give good news to the town. We had discovered the secret of communication: telepathy had to be abolished.

When we went into the room at night, we saw the lion's eyes in the dark. The words in his eyes had changed to POINT and DEI. We turned on the light but the lion Euripides was no longer there.
Although I could not see her head, nor her neck, nor her feet, nor her knees, I immediately knew that it was Venus at the moment of birth by Botticelli. There she was with her blond hair gathered and held by her hand over her pubis to cover herself. The other hand, with the same grace, was placed on her breast, the fingers slightly parted. Thus outlined against my window, Venus remained immobile for a long time.

The colours were too artificial to be ugly. This unnatural purity was inhuman enough to fill me with self-confidence. I closed my eyes and tried to go back to sleep.

When I awoke, Venus was once more gracefully outlined in the window frame. It had been a week now that every time I woke up during the night I had seen her there (and more curious still, it had been a week since I had not been able to dream). In spite of the darkness, I was able to tell the lower part of the greenish background from the upper part which was lighter.

Exactly seven days before, at nightfall, a man whom I had met on the beach came to visit me. He was middle-aged, with a round and smiling face with large fleshy lips, a broad mouth,
tiny wicked eyes and a wide nose. Although he was on the beach, he wore a jacket and an overcoat as well as a neat tie which stood out against his dirty, wrinkled shirt.

The part of his dress that attracted most attention was a fabulous shiny top hat, decorated with gold letters that I was not able to read.

He laughed good-naturedly and without a doubt he was happy. His broad face was covered with short, white stubble — a three- or four-days' growth of beard. During the whole time that I was with him on the beach and later at night in my house, I was afraid that he might kiss me, a fear which was quite unfounded. Why should he kiss me? Moreover, the only thing that would have bothered me was that his beard might prick too much.

When he came at night, he installed himself in front of the big mirror in the dining room. He had a slide rule, several compasses, sharpened lead pencils, ruling pens and other precision instruments in the pockets of his jacket.

Over my image in the mirror, he started to draw geometric lines to locate, he said, the hiding place of the faculties in my head. Some minutes later, the mirror was covered with Greek letters, straight lines, arcs and points.
At that instant, he came towards me in a way which seemed "obvious" to me and kissed me. His beard did, actually, prick me. As he came so close to me, I noticed a detail that had escaped me before: he wore his top hat almost over his eyes.

As if nothing had happened, he continued to explain "my head" to me. He was very sure about a triangular section situated on the scalp above my left ear. He said that in the centre of that triangle the faculty of dreams was located.

Suddenly he was very much in a hurry and he left as he had come but not before calling out to me as if it were a message:

"We'll be seeing each other!"

Lying on my bed, I again saw Venus with her radiant body. Suddenly an idea occurred to me: for a week I had been unable to dream...was it possible....

I ran to the mirror. As I had expected, there was a hole in my scalp above my left ear.

I left the house looking for the man with the top hat. Instinctively I went to the beach. From afar I sighted his unmistakable top hat. He was sleeping on the sand. As I bent over him, I noticed an expression of peacefulness and happiness
on his face. Without a doubt, taking advantage of my dreams, he was living the most passionate adventures....

I snatched his hat from his head, determined to get back what belonged to me. I remained stunned -- there was nothing in his brains; nothing above his brow. He was hollow. Undismayed, I examined the lining of the hat to which a little piece of my throbbing flesh was sticking.

When I had put everything back in order, I looked at the gold letters that shone on the hat.

They read: BOTTICELLI
CHAPTER TWO
THE SQUARE

When I had ended my visit to the ninth labyrinth, I found myself once more in the square which seemed to be more radiant and sparkling than before. It looked as if the giantess in the middle had grown. The children were screaming themselves hoarse, singing:

Idiot they call me
Tira lira lool
They live to work
I live to fool.

The pilgrims were resting at the foot of the monument and among them was the bottle containing the rabbit which I had seen placed there. The orchestra conducted by the man dressed like a king was still playing in the balloon above the monument.

I remembered that on the first day, as I got up, I had noticed several clusters of corpses hanging from the giantess' fingers. At such an early hour in the morning, it was quite possible that I was the only one to witness
that scene. Ravens had picked the flesh from the bones. Later street-sweepers came along and threw the skeletons into tank-trucks filled with seawater. In the water you could read the word "Hope".

When the people started to arrive at around eleven o'clock in the morning, not a trace was left of all that and the "festival" was ready to start.

I remember that a boy who was carried on the shoulders of a group of women got up on the pedestal and called out:

"A sonnet, dedicated to the giantess!"

It is possible that he said something that was more facetious; in any case, I roared with laughter when I heard it. I could not hear the first quatrain because of the uproar that began. But I heard the second one clearly:

Rub a dub dub
A lady in a tub
He catches a fish
Puts it in the soapdish.
Many began to clap and laugh insolently, others raised their wine bottles and drank in long draughts. It was impossible to hear the rest of the sonnet.

A group of soldiers came into the square and were greeted with loud clamor. Some of them gave the girls the eye if nothing worse. Some wore flashy blue uniforms with epaulets, sashes, gold braiding and medals. Their leader had much trouble keeping them in line.

They started to try to capture the balloon with lassos. A farcical fight began between the soldiers on the ground with their lassos and the monarch and his orchestra in the balloon above. The musicians were dumping sacks of sand on the soldiers to blind them. The people watched the scuffle, marking different incidents with crude laughter.

Finally the soldiers captured the balloon with a lasso, accompanied by the applause of some and the hissing of others.

Some of the bolder ones punctured the balloon. Then all of them began to cut the canvas into thousands of pieces which they offered to the giantess with such exaggerated gestures of humility that it looked more like a display of insolence.
At that point I noticed a small receding door at the bottom of the pedestal with the inscription:

LABYRINTHS - TENTH LABYRINTH

I reached it with great difficulty. The crowd was shoving me and some even tried to trip me. The door was very small. I had to crawl on the ground to get through. Once inside I saw:
I left the house without meeting anyone in the corridor, nor in the staircase, nor in the vestibule, nor in the street. The children were not singing, as they usually did at this time, a song that goes like this:

All the greedy ladies
Are feasting on donkeys
Cups full of daisies
Plates full of monkeys.

There was no one at the windows, no one on the balconies. The shops were open as usual but there were no shopkeepers nor customers.

I spent the morning walking through the city, along the avenues, in the squares and parks without meeting a soul, without anyone appearing. The city was entirely deserted, uninhabited, desolate.

And yet nothing had changed, or so I believed then: the same rows of houses, the same walls, the same driveways, everything was exactly as before. How could it be that on an ordinary day at eleven in the morning there was not a shadow of life?
For a moment I entertained the mad hope of finding the sidewalks littered with corpses; but no, there was no one, neither dead nor alive.

Only much later I noticed that on the horizon where you could usually see the outline of the mountain peaks, there now was something like a darkly coloured segment of a circle. This shape in the sky had no precise contours; the outlines were rather like gigantic gossamer threads spreading upward. It seemed unbelievable that whatever was on the horizon should suggest such a difficult image to me.

Three hours later, I noticed that there was no noise. Although the cars stood idle in the driveways, the traffic lights continued to function but silently. This sensation of "audible" silence was unbearable — I felt as if my ears were going to split. And to think that for three hours I had not noticed it!

The shadow of the apartment block which dominated the city because of its sheer massiveness not only reached across the street as was usual at this time of the day but stretched up to the third floor of the building across from it. The apartment block had grown: it was no longer a square block but a slender sky scraper.

Even the doors and windows had grown in length; they were no longer square but rectangular. Not only the central buildings
had "grown", but also the supermarket, the Central Bank and Building H were stretching up towards the sky as if they had been constructed by an architect student of El Greco.

On the horizon, the segment had expanded from the ground and now encompassed a vast band several hundred miles long. It was invading the whole of the southern horizon.

I climbed up to the platform of the Museum of Natural Science which overlooked the whole city with its telescope. I saw two more details that had escaped me before: on the flat rooftops there were enormous telephones with embryos and on the sidewalks lay an infinite number of bicycles in cages.

On the horizon, the large spot was still spreading up. Now you could see two enormous identical black holes.

I heard a voice which seemed to be coming from the entire universe at once:

"How do you like what I've done, papa?"
"I'm telling you once more! Put everything back in order or you'll see what's good for you!"

The dark area on the horizon emerged more distinctly and became recognizable. It was the huge head of a smiling boy; the two enormous holes were his eyes.

He put his gigantic "little" hands over the city and millions of puppets whirled down and life in the city resumed its natural course.

A stentorian voice, the same one as before which seemed to come from all eternity, exclaimed:

"Oh, what a boy! Making jokes all day long...! What will become of him when I'm gone?"
The naked child was playing with her little white Pekinese with black hair. She was lying on her bed. She held the dog caught between her feet up in the air so that his snout reached her knee. Almost like Fragonard's La Gimbette. She attracted the Pekinese's attention with a frog in her hand. The pup tried to reach the frog but was trapped between the girl's feet.

The child had her hair tied with a ribbon. Her golden locks and her smart little ponytail moved as she rocked back and forth. As far as I could see, she was on the threshold of puberty. The imprisoned dog wagged his tail and was "pedalling" between the girl's legs trying to free himself and catch the frog. It seemed to me that I heard her laugh. The frog also was struggling to escape.

As I was watching this scene, I felt that I had an apparatus like a minute electric powerhouse in my head. I had the impression that my memories were revolving in a closed circuit inside.
In order to distract myself from this thought, which I did not find altogether convincing, I continued to look at the girl. I noticed that her body, white like mother-of-pearl, was lying on a bed covered with flowers. There was also a tiny anchor with a rope that had become black from the moisture.

In spite of the opposition of my will, I glanced once more into my brain and this time I did not see my memories revolve in closed circuit; this time I thought that there was a well in my head filled with an indefinable liquid that impressed me greatly. I went towards the well and shouted. I "awoke" with a headache.

The naked girl was still there playing with her Pekinese almost in the same position as before, with her feet up in the air, her body stretched on the bed, her head resting on three white pillows.

Again I was side-tracked. I saw the well in my brain and my memory floating inside. I examined it for a long time.

My memory was conserved in discs inside the well and also in tapes covered with an impressive liquid. The discs looked like round cheeses put into oil so that they would not rot. My memory was within reach of my hand but
I was afraid to touch it.

My memory was distributed in different packages: there were some memories that I considered to be trivialities which were much larger than others which I imagined to be of great importance; and there I found not only the memory which referred to my own biography but also, in the odd parcels, the memories of my fathers, forefathers and even of entire humanity. And everything (discs, tapes, etc.) was interconnected by very fine threads. The different parts had an interdependent system which was so subtle that I was amazed.

I spent a long time almost in ecstasy and when I put my hand out in order to extract one of the discs, I felt a tremendous blow on my head that "woke" me.

In front of me was the girl with the dog; beside her, the anchor. I understood.

Voluntarily I turned my thoughts to the well and saw the liquid and my memory but now very clearly; and I realized how it was buried and how it emerged to the surface; and I knew that it was alive; and I felt the palpitation of the well which synchronized with the beating of my heart; and as I watched my memory, knowledge and
epistemology were displayed before me and I was sublimely aware.

I "awoke" and in front of me discovered the child with her dog, the frog and the anchor. But I realized that she was no more than a tiny porcelain figure rising from the palm of my hand.
TWELFTH LABYRINTH

CRICKET

Only a few spectators were watching the cricket match. They were older people. The children on the adjacent lawn were singing despite the angry hisses of the adults:

Lavender's blue
So are you
Lavender's green
You're the queen.

The bowler got ready to bowl the ball after a quick and violent run and the batsman, with his bat between his legs propped on the ground, was waiting with his eyes peeled. At that moment, despite of the enthusiasm with which I used to follow these games, my attention was suddenly diverted. I was still looking at the pitch and the wicketkeeper's position, but suddenly I remembered a dream I had had the night before:

I had dreamed that I was in a ruined theatre which smelled badly. The place was filled with rubble and scraps. The seats, however, were covered with polished leather.
On the stage, an opera soprano singer, surrounded by wire mesh and dressed like a medieval noblewoman, was singing a pointless song:

q The King of Spades
He kissed the maids
The Knave of Hearts
He ate the tarts.

The melody did not at all fit the words. The whole thing amused me. Then I had the feeling that all this was simply a trap into which I had fallen and that I was going to be the victim of the worst torments. I trembled with fear. I noticed that daggers were being thrown at me and I saw several threatening shadows coming towards me. I got up to flee. She asked me very calmly:

"Why are you afraid?"

"I'm terrified!"

"But why?" She laughed. "Don't feel so bad about such a little thing; remember this is not real life but a dream."

"But dream," I said, "is real life."
"Clap your hands together and you'll see that you're asleep and dreaming."

I clapped my hands and woke up within the four walls of my room with my hands together.

The cricket match continued. That week I went at two-thirty every day to watch the game between the city team and the E. C.

The batsman made a splendid hit. Two players were running after the ball while the batsmen ran back and forth along the pitch but the ball went out of bounds while the spectators applauded so moderately that they did not even manage to drown the children's voices:

The Lion and the Unicorn
Were fighting for a crown
The Lion beat the Unicorn
All around the town.

I thought about the dream again that I had had that night. It amazed me to realize that one mere clap of the hands had made me fall out of dream into reality. A little anxiously, I thought that perhaps now that I was "awake" a mere clap of the hands would be enough to take me to the "other world."
I was thinking about this possibility when, almost unconsciously, I noticed that the bowler was bowling the ball. The bounce against the bat sounded like an enormous crack in my ears, like a tremendous clap of the hands.

I whirled around frantically like a spinning top and when I "awoke", I found myself in the middle of a metallic, blue surface. I wanted to walk but instead I advanced by delightful little bounds in the air. I was a small red ball. And everywhere there were small coloured balls coming towards me. And suddenly they bounced against me and we amused ourselves like fools and I was buoyantly happy.
THIRTEENTH LABYRINTH

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

The poet was constantly pressing his belly with his hands. It seemed as if he were trying to find a way to ease his position. All of us had noticed how he became weaker every day.

The poet's house was overflowing with books, the living room table was littered with letters and newspaper clippings. Objects which everybody found very strange were meticulously arranged on the shelves. The paintings on the walls bore the signatures of the most famous and expensive painters of our times; in other words, they were the "best". When visitors left the poet's house, they said, perhaps unmaliciously: "It's a real museum."

Sunk into his armchair, the poet distorted his face in a painful, convulsive grin.

"Does it hurt so much?"

"It's not a pain, it's an unbearable sensation."
Then he added: "

"If this 'sensation' continues, I'll go mad."

"

The poet's martyrdom had begun a week earlier. Until then he had lived surrounded by a peacefulness that was characteristic of him. Because of his physical makeup (the poet was impotent), he had attained ancient wisdom. The only kind of raptures that he experienced were those inspired by his literary zeal which had made him famous. But, as he said in private:

"I don't know and I shall never know anything about the ecstasies of passion or other animal instincts. The poet," he said, "the artist must know how to describe and inspire in others those desires which he himself never experiences."

If he was not the most famous poet of his country (despite the small amount that he had written), then he was not far from being so. In a referendum of poets, he just missed obtaining a delightful royal award (I have forgotten its title).

It had been a year since he had made his habitual visit to the antique shop situated at the outskirts of the city to look for a rare object or painting which would ornament
some corner in his house. Since he was an old client of
the store, the proprietor gave him permission to go up to
the attic so that he could look for a bargain undisturbed
by anyone.

The first thing he noticed was a mannequin representing
one of the women in Bosch's painting, The Garden of Delights.
With delight he noticed that the mannequin, like its model
in the painting, had two big cherries on its head and was
naked. He examined her protruding eyes, her long and lank
blond hair — exactly as in the painting. He walked around
the figure and to his surprise and joy he discovered two big
daisies between her buttocks, just as was the case with
other female figures in the painting.

He bought the figure, which was of human size, and
put her in his living room. After a short while, he got into
the habit of speaking to her, showing her his house and
petting her. He defined his relations with her as "a
continuous spiritual orgy". We all noticed that he was even
forgetting his siamese cats.

Almost a year passed and one day, now a week ago, the
poet went to see one of his friends who was called the
"magician's apprentice." He was an affable and lethargic
man. No one, knowing him to be so unaggressive, would have
believed it of him that he had been thrown out of the
medical profession for "esoteric practices."
The poet explained to his friend that he had just finished re-reading *Sleeping Beauty*. He had come to the conclusion that the prince's kiss which awakened the princess was only a literary image. According to him, there was something more to it: what gave life to the dead princess was the internal warmth which, in the prince's embrace, was released into her.

"It's a plausible interpretation," said the 'magician's apprentice', "and it corroborates the necrophilia that I have always suspected in the story."

The poet declared that he could infuse life into his beloved mannequin in the same way. He begged his friend to give him his virility.

"I told you about my technique some time ago. Remember what I said. My treatment is based on hypothesis. I'm hopeful about it but I can't be sure that my method will be successful. And most important of all, I've never actually been able to practise it. To be quite frank, I would be rather worried about trying it out on you. It could be dangerous."

The poet took all the risks on himself. Nothing could dissuade him.
The 'magician's apprentice' proceeded with his system. In a tense atmosphere which lasted for several hours, the poet, lying naked on the couch, submitted himself to the treatment. His friend rubbed several kinds of ointment on him while muttering more or less coherent phrases. Finally he exclaimed:

"There we are!"

"It's marvellous, marvellous, marvellous," said the poet.

"But doesn't it end?"

"No, it's still going on. It's marvellous, marvellous."

Several minutes passed. The poet, as if ecstatic, continued to repeat "marvellous, marvellous." Worried, the former doctor asked him:

"But it's not possible. What are you still feeling?"

"An unending pleasure," said the poet in a voice broken with emotion, "pleasure that goes on and on...."

"I'm afraid I've failed," sighed his friend.
The serpent with the dog's head was peering from side to side. It even looked as if it were about to bark. At its side, the serpent with the cat's head was sleeping; pricking your ears you might have heard it purr.

One day, when a famous movie actress passed by, I noticed that her hair was a nest of entangled snakes. Sometimes, when I looked in the mirror, I fancied I saw some kind of enchanting snake on my face.... I realized that it was simply a proof of my wishful thinking and that there was nothing whatsoever resembling a snake on my face.

Rumours, which I did not believe for a single moment, were spreading around about the serpent-lion which was kept in an abandoned aquarium. It was supposed to be dangerous. This was not true -- when the children used to go to see it on Thursday afternoons they would find it playing quite happily by itself. Sometimes it even seemed to want to speak to them. They used to sing songs to it, clapping their hands:
Montezuma
Met a puma
Coming through the rye
Montezuma
Made the puma
Into apple-pie.

To keep it amused, the children would play with a trained fish-serpent and it was a sight to see the serpent-lion follow their movements like an "enormous cat". The children would throw the serpent-fish's head into the air which was supposed to fall down into its coiled tail. How easy it was to play with trained snakes!

Then the tables began to have legs shaped like serpents, and the chairs also, even the beds had baroque canopies decorated with snakes.

All kinds of lies went around. Some even said that the snakes were bringing us the rules of memory.

The city was changing to a colour between grey and green that fascinated me personally; while the serpents were turning multi-coloured, their bodies resembling living rainbows.
I used to enjoy watching them speckled with colour in the dining room while we were eating green and grey food from grey plates with green napkins. At that time, several dozen snakes, pink, light-blue, reddish-white and all other colours, were living in my house.

How often I used to look in the mirror with the mad hope of resembling them! And I was not the only one. It was not difficult to catch others by surprise carefully contemplating their faces in a mirror with the mad desire to be a beautiful, many-coloured serpent.

As was to be expected, soon abstract ideas also turned into serpents. Mental speculation remained on an extremely simple level, thanks to serpent-ideas and serpent-faculties. How easy it was, at last, to distinguish love from hate, good from evil, cleanliness from dirt, generosity from egoism. Soon it became impossible to lie. Flattery appeared grotesque, deception..., everything was immediately unmasked.

Serpent-ideas had the most diverse colours while our own thoughts were turning an even grey.
One day I was in La Florida listening to the children's songs. I was happy, resting on a bench and breathing the pure air of the park. Suddenly I heard a woman's voice calling me. I turned around. There she was, far more beautiful than the rest of the women. She was neither grey nor green; she was white and rosy. She had red lips, blue eyes, blond hair, firm round breasts, a narrow waist and soft curved hips.

She said to me:

"Eat this apple!"

Then she made a promise which I was neither able to comprehend nor interested in. Although I had just finished breakfast, the apple looked so appetizing that I bit into it. And ever since then not a single snake has been around.
He was carrying a pennant which had a frog in the centre. I could not make out the colour from where I was. The pennant was attached to a trident which he carried backwardly over his shoulder. The man looked like a giant who was thick-set and even very stooped. He was covered with hair.

I saw this man at dusk; and at night, when I was dreaming, I invented the lady of time; and the next night I invented death for its own sake; and on the third night, the temptation of the mirror.

Although I saw that man only once, he left me with an ineffaceable memory. I have not even forgotten his pennant nor his dirty fingernails. He had webbed feet like a duck. I could not tell if he had two horns on his head or simply two tufts of hair that were sticking up. His ears were large and pointed. His unkempt beard failed to hide his enormous mouth.
Every night while sleeping, I invented things. My inventions became more precise and very useful: I invented a clock that writes poems; the substance for petrifying hope; the rhythm that awakens the will; the dove that brings back lost memories; the telephone for communicating with the dead.

I was not able to efface the image of that man with his trident and pennant from my mind. With his left hand, he was stroking a billy-goat with two thick and almost round horns.

I no longer invented things at night. Insomnia took a hold of me and I spent day after day without being able to go to sleep. I regretted not being able to dream and invent.

I recalled what the man with the goat had said to me just before he disappeared:

"The sacrifice of the youth of good humour shall serve the eye of the master."

I still could not fall asleep, but it made me happy to think that some night I would dream once more and then I would invent the machine for going to sleep.
When I opened the door, I was surprised to see that the new postman had a blindfold over his eyes and was wearing a juggler's outfit. He handed a letter to me. Five stamps were stuck on it: the first one depicted an ear; the second, a hand; the third, a foot; the fourth, an eye; and the fifth, a nose. Each of these members was engraved on stone.

An hour later, as I was passing by the palace, I noticed that the workers were installing a bas-relief. It was in five parts which were replicas of the five drawings on the stamps. The sculptures were so perfect that the hand as well as the foot, the ear, the eye and the nose looked really human. The five motifs were framed.

When I arrived at the park, the children all around me were playing at guessing riddles:

Long legs, crooked thighs
Little head, and no eyes.
Another postman came along. (I asked myself how he had guessed that I was in the park.) He handed me a bulky and heavy package. I looked at him more closely. He also wore a blindfold over his eyes which apparently did not prevent him from seeing. He wore a starched shirt, a white tie and a neat full-dress coat.

The children were still telling riddles. While one group shouted: "Tongs", a girl with two stiff braids and a very short skirt said:

Thirty white horses on a red hill
Stomping, chomping, standing still.

The children shouted: "Teeth!"

When I arrived at home and opened the package, I found five little wooden boxes inside with a stone in each box. In order for them to look like the bas-reliefs at the palace, only the engraved human members were lacking.

Someone was calling at the door. It was the postman, blindfolded as usual. This time he had a rose in the buttonhole of his jacket. But more shocking was the cutlass which he carried in his belt.
I could not keep him from coming in. Without the least self-consciousness, he sat down in an armchair in the living room. He did not say anything. He contented himself with playing with his fingers.

I looked at him carefully. I was afraid he would attack me with his cutlass. He was wearing a silver earring with a word written in filigree: DESTINY.

Here we were, the postman and I, alone and silent in the room, looking at each other with distrust. Finally I decided to start a conversation:

"You know, at this time I usually go to bed."

"You want me to leave?"

He got up very dignified, without it being apparent that my diplomatic way of throwing him out might have offended him. He came towards me and took my hands. I was so surprised that I could no longer think. Then he kissed the palms of my hands with respect and left.

He had forgotten his cutlass. I leaned out of the window to look for him but he had already vanished in the darkness of the night.
The following morning, a new postman brought me a card with five stamps that seemed to be exactly the same as the last ones. There was one small change. The stamp with the ear now had a silver ring hanging from its lobe, with a word written in filigree: DESTINY.

Then I realized that the cutlass as well as my hands were covered with fresh blood.
The woman was high up on a circular platform which looked like a large plate. She was almost on her knees but in a graceful position. Several men with ruffs formed a circle around her on the ground. In spite of the height of the platform, the men slowly leapt up to her face, grazing her cheek with their lips.

Until dusk, like a ballet, the men with the ruffs leapt slowly in such a way that anyone would have thought they were flying. The woman on the platform, although she was naked, had a certain modesty about her which was not without natural grace. A green ribbon was tied around her right ankle.

The woman eyed me up and down without the least coquetry. She was radiant with beauty, with one hand placed on her breast and her knee concealing her pubis. It seemed to me that she was asking me to jump.

I tried. I don't know why I thought that I would be able to imitate the men in their ruffs. I jumped quickly and collapsed on the ground having hardly
left it. Nevertheless, something in me had flown right up to the beautiful woman's cheek.

At night when I turned the light off in my room, I saw her at the foot of my bed. She still wore the green ribbon around her ankle. She was wearing only a light veil which was almost ethereal, as if made of white smoke or wind. The veil covered her hair, her head and her entire body. It was totally transparent and so fine that it did not conceal her body.

She looked at me as insistently as before on the platform. She raised her hand slightly. I don't know what she told me. However, I replied. But I could not hear my own words and I never knew what I said to her.

For some minutes, we started a dialogue that I am incapable of transcribing since I was so bewildered that I could not hear what she was saying. When she asked questions, I believed that someone else was answering for me. This dialogue lasted for a long time.

The following morning, when I went into the garden, I saw her again high up on the platform with her circle of gallants. This time I was not content to look at her
from afar. I went closer. I put a ladder against the platform, climbed up the beautiful woman's face and grazed her cheek with my lips. When I started to go down, I let myself fall from the top of the ladder as slowly as if I were flying.

The following night she visited me again. We began another "absent" dialogue. After the first moments of confusion, I regained my consciousness. I tried very hard to listen to her and I was able to hear her as well as myself. We were calmly discussing the battle of fire and water. I was quoting arguments which had never come to my mind before and which seemed strange to me. I even cited confidently from texts I did not know.

The next morning, when I looked in the mirror, it seemed to me that an ethereal veil was covering my whole body, just like hers. As an additional coincidence, there was also a green ribbon on my ankle. I gave it a try and realized that I could fly like the men in the ruffs.

I went to the garden and saw her again on her platform, encircled as usual.

I unwound the ribbon and the veil which covered me flew away; then I took off the beautiful woman's ankle ribbon and her veil also left her body.
And I saw how both veils went flying off towards the horizon, like an embracing couple until they were lost in the distance.
On the sidewalk I found something small and green about the size of a caramel. I held it between my fingers -- it was an incredibly tiny human brain which appeared to "breathe".

It was not breathing, however, it was throbbing regularly. Ecstatic, I examined it. It seemed as if it were living in the palm of my hand.

Someone was watching all this. A dog. His head was looking over the mud wall with an air of infinite sadness. He was gazing at me or at the brain with human grief. Only much later did I realize which dog it was.

When I took the little brain into my hand, a humid spot remained on the ground. I stooped down to look at it: it was a dark spot. I put my finger on it and looked at it -- it was blood. With my handkerchief, I dabbed it up and as I was doing this it seemed to me that it was I who had dirtied the sidewalk.
I put the brain into an empty box of wax matches decorated with a yellow flower and put it into one of my waistcoat pockets. The dog, perfectly still, never ceased looking at me for even a single moment.

I don't know why I hid my discovery from her when I got home. While we were eating supper, a dog was barking most pitifully, but with such vehemence that it was almost comical. During the meal, she talked to me about Goya; who, according to her, "is the master of confusion and panic." I did not know she was referring to the dog when she asked me: "What can we do?" She clarified:

"What can we do to calm the dog down?"

She explained to me that it was a dog of whims and fancies and if no one gave it any brains to eat it would bother us all night. In spite of her casual way of speaking, I realized that she was worried.

Without thinking about the consequences, I rushed into it headlong; in fact, I handed the little brain I had found to her.

I heard her call the dog and tell him:
"Take it, my darling."

She even added: "Oh how my little boy loves small brains!" I also heard the dog devour them.

At that moment, I looked at myself in the mirror and noticed a small hole with a green stain around it in the middle of my forehead. I looked at it carefully -- the inside was hollow.

I took a pen-holder and inserted it into the hole -- yes, my head was hollow. Only I seemed to notice a body moving about inside. A body with its own life.

In order to find out what to expect, I stayed in front of the mirror for a long time.

A few minutes later, a miniature dog's head leaned out of the hole, gazing at me as before on the sidewalk, with the same expression as in Goya's famous drawing.
When I came out into the square again, a herd of goats was playing around the monument of the giantess. Each goat carried an egg between her thick lips and played with it the way I had thought only seals could do in circuses. Some of the goats had beautiful red hides; and others, golden balls on the tips of their horns.

Around the balloon the soldiers and the king's orchestra were crowding together. They exchanged clothes, making all sorts of elaborate gestures which made it look like a ritual of false modesty. The people welcomed this comedy with pleasure and some of the ruder ones shouted obscenities.

The monarch, very dignified, ripped the last balloon that had been attached to the big balloon. Thousands of cats escaped from it and started to run around the square, meowing in a way that sounded more like birds chirping.

I remember that two days earlier at ten in the morning, when the square was still empty, the giantess was lying
down with her legs stretched out on the pedestal. On the last stroke of ten, children started to come out from between her legs. It was a surprise to see little creatures of flesh and blood appear from between her marble thighs. The children were so small that they were crawling on all fours! Many of them fell off the pedestal, crashing to the ground. Astronomers herded the remainder together with whips and put them into a kind of cannon shell. They fired at the children with a cannon, which I had taken for a telescope. The shell disappeared in the sky. Only much later the pages of a book began to fall down from the sky.

Later the little girls were playing around the monument, joining hands to form a circle. All of them had pretty little braids and very short skirts. They sang:

Barber, barber shave a wig
How many hairs will make a pig?

The cats were now the size of bear cubs. The girls mounted them and raced around the square shouting:

Riddle:
If you add to it
It gets smaller
If you take away from it
It gets bigger.
Laughing loudly, they ran each other down and tumbled off the cats. One little girl took an egg out of her pocket and amidst the laughter of her friends smashed it against the head of a baby who was crying.

The pilgrims were also laughing, while they removed fleas from their jerseys with needles. Others set down offerings wrapped in newspaper for the giantess. Grease, fried bread crumbs and dirt were accumulating all around the monument.

Another girl said:

Riddle:
White field
Black flowers
One plow
Five oxen.

Her little friends hurled themselves on her and pulled her braids. And the little girl started to write and pointed at the paper, the letters, the pen and her fingers. Everyone was laughing except the little boy who cried. It seemed as if the giantess were taking part in the general mirth. But of course that may have been an optical illusion. As far as I could see, her face was definitely made of stone.
I looked at her marble hands. One of her fingers seemed to be pointing to a certain place in the square. It was in fact pointing at a half-ruined archway on which was written:

MY BIOGRAPHY

I went through the archway without difficulty and saw:
I was born in a large and rather dirty room. My father always insisted that I came into the world through my mother's brain.

On the day when I was born, they put me in a cart drawn by a goat and a panther. The goat had something diabolic about it and sometimes looked as if it were smiling. It had gold balls on the tips of its horns and golden hoofs. The panther had a hood over the head with two holes for its eyes.

As soon as I was born, my father put a crown on my head, a sceptre into my hands and a mantle over my shoulders. Then my father, who was blind, began to play the harp in the middle of the room.

Two children from the neighbourhood sang a song in my honour:

Sleep, my child, sleep
Your father guards the sheep
Your mother shakes the dreaming tree
There'll be dreams for you and me.
They gave me three turns around the room in the cart drawn by the panther and the goat. While my father played the harp, my mother smiled peacefully.

When the cart had gone around three times, my father did some balancing exercises on a stool. My mother, with her hands chained, smiled tenderly.

They tell me that I burst out crying at that moment. The cow and the panther licked my hands to soothe me. My mother said:

"Let memory bring my child to sleep."

My father repeated the same sentence, although slightly reversed. Actually he only repeated the sound of the sentence, no one could be sure that he had not said the exact opposite of what my mother had said.

My father groped his way towards me and kissed me first on the forehead, then on my stomach, then on my hands, my chest and finally on the soles of my feet. He bound my hands together with silver shackles. They say that I smiled while he did this.

My father played the harp again and my mother smiled again. I cried for the second time and the cow and panther
licked my hands. My mother said:

"Let chance respect the symbols elected by my child."

This time my father impudently changed the whole sentence:

"Let dance play the cymbals selected by my child."

When the ceremony was over, my father and my mother settled down on the bed to eat. It was a baroque bed with gold brocade and silk drapes. They ate very greasy food wrapped in newspaper. The crumbs rolled on the sheets. They wiped their faces on the silk curtains. They were laughing happily. When I cried for the third time, my mother said:

"Today he was born and already he has reached consciousness."
MY BIOGRAPHY

B) LOVE

In those days, when I told the mountains to move, the mountains moved; when I asked the river to flow backward, the river turned back on its course; when I asked the fish to fly, the fish left the water and began to fly.

I was always very hot or very cold but never moderate. It often happened that my heart was in an egg and that I did not get wet when I went into the water.

I could see my hands made of stone, my head of water and my legs of quicksilver. The doors did not lead anywhere and my blood started to tingle by itself.

Suddenly everything would be blue, and suddenly everything would be black. Suddenly everything would be green, and suddenly everything would be grey, and suddenly everything would be white, then garnet, then thousands of colours and then invisible. And I felt my body float or shudder.
Thousands of hands caressed my face and my whole body. They also caressed me on the inside. I did not need to dream nor to think about anything. And in my room was the sea and the waves came and went.

When I smoked my pipe, the smoke was red and his handkerchief became stained with blood. Often I forgot that I existed and I had to repeat and spell out my name and address to myself.

When I caught a glimpse of her face in the mirror, the whole mirror filled with her image. And I was she and her fingers were my fingers.

Then she and I would shut ourselves in alone and together and trembling in the dark wait for the nightmare.
MY BIOGRAPHY

C) ART

Memory presided. On her right was her daughter the Painting; on her left, Jir-Hon-Eya.

The horses ran swiftly in circles. The colourful knights were shouting at them and you could see the flash of their whips in the air. For some time everything was hidden in a cloud of dust.

Banners were flying in the grandstand. The madmen, in the meantime, were creating the black and white surface; far off you could distinguish the outlines of the castles.

When I concentrated very hard, I was able to see that there were actually only two horses -- a black one and a white one. The Queen, Marianne, dressed in black, was laughing. Eight black foot-soldiers escorted her, while the king was stroking his trained crocodile.

Only much later I realized that the horses were riding by themselves -- no knights were leading them.
It even looked as if they themselves were cheering and urging themselves on with whips. There were not two horses as I had thought, but four -- two black ones and two white ones.

In the grandstand, Queen Marianne's eight black foot-soldiers and the Painting's eight white foot-soldiers were waving their handkerchiefs. Then they put up a fence around the princes.

The madman finished constructing the surface with sixty-four black and white squares. They were arguing among themselves throwing proverbs at each other.

During the last time around, the horses were hardly recognizable. Only the cloud of dust formed a visible mass. Suddenly the cloud halted: it was a sphere.

The eight black and eight white foot-soldiers (perhaps they were only pawns), the four castles, the four horses, the two queens and the two kings entered the sphere.

The sphere flew away with the wind. Immediately the painter's blood splashed on the spectators.

After the ceremony, everyone congratulated the Painting (wrapped in her golden mantle with the crest of
the lion Euripides); and Jir-Hon-Eya, magician and high priest of this art.
When she came home, I showed her my painting, My Anatomy Defined and I explained it to her.

"In the centre of the picture is a portrait of my whole body. The two columns at each side are divided into seven pictures, each one representing one of the fourteen symbols of my anatomy.

"My head is symbolized by a battle-ship in a cage; my brain, by a beehive in which you can see the head of a man wearing a top hat; my eyes, by a sun and a Saratoga trunk; and my ears, by the top half of a floating head with the words: 'Mind, intellect, reason.'

"A dragon with seven wolves' heads and a sceptre lies at my feet. This dragon has wings. There is an opening in my body which extends like a gigantic seam from neck to groin exposing my heart, intestines and other organs.

"My chest is represented by the Colossus of Thebes which bears my name, my sex by the battlements of a castle with a large egg floating on top; my liver by a telephone with an embryo in the receiver; my intestines
by a bull's head and a chalice containing three vipers; and, surprisingly, what would seem to be my heart is symbolized by a chained heart with a bowler hat on top.

"I'm in a medieval house with pillars and arches. In the background is a glimpse of a landscape with gothic churches. The floor is of hard square tiles in geometrical patterns.

"My feet are represented by a centaur and an animal which is half-cat and half-fish; my hands by the world beside a man hanged from his feet; my legs by a chessboard horse in the middle of a field; my arms by two fingers pierced by an arrow; and my navel by a balance with eyes and watches in the pans.

"My face has a fringe of whiskers and pretends to be indifferent to the fourteen symbols. I look stern and my right hand is close to my mouth, almost as if I were holding a pipe."

When I finished my explanation, she asked me:

"Don't you see that the painting you're telling me about is only a mirror?"
CHAPTER FOUR
THE SQUARE

When I came out of MY BIOGRAPHY, the square was empty except for the monument and a small table with a chessboard and two chairs. I sat down on one of the chairs and placed the chessmen on the board.

I looked at the giantess. New possibilities appeared: in spite of her hieratic and petrified appearance it seemed as if she were of flesh and blood. Unless she was a projection of the imagination, a mirage. It is possible that she changed imperceptibly and that one could never actually capture the moments of transformation.

A short while later, two half-drunk men put a barrel of wine in front of me and sang:

Ding dong Bell
The drunks are in the well
Ding dong bill
The sober are up the hill

They were filthy and stained with wine. They wore
old and worn overcoats. Once they had put the barrel in front of me, they started to drink from it like animals. They stuck their heads inside and all I could see were bubbles exploding in the air. Then they pulled their heads out and laughed, half-dazed. There voices were hardly audible when they left, singing:

Thirty days hath September
April, June and November.

Suddenly a hand emerged from the barrel; then a solemn face. The person very seriously moved one of the chessmen, saying:

"Pawn four king."

I began to play with him. After the third move, he remarked:

"Bishop five knight queen. Ruy Lopez."

Saturated and covered to his chest with wine, my opponent, sitting on a seat which was probably at the bottom of the barrel, played with precision. From time to time, he plunged down into the liquid. Sometimes he even poured glasses of wine over his head.

I was concentrating so hard on that game that I
didn't notice that the square was again packed with people. When I lifted my head, I saw that I was surrounded by children who were sitting on their fathers' shoulders. They were making unbelievably rude remarks.

I was happy because I was winning. I had a brilliant combination in my head which would eliminate my opponent's knight and give me the victory, when one of the children climbed on the table and upset everything. He began to shout:

"Sonnet! Sonnet! Sonnet for the giantess!"

There was tremendous applause. The people roared: "Long live..." I don't know who or what. The child recited his sonnet at the top of his voice, but I only managed to catch the first three lines which were gibberish:

Uni quini fratres sum
Estoy nestoy puntos cum.

The crowd went wild with enthusiasm and the people surged forward to kiss the boy's feet. Some of them raised him by his shoulders and lifted him up to the giantess' feet.
My opponent was making signs at me to follow him. He plunged down into the wine barrel. Without second thoughts, I dove in behind him. At the bottom of the barrel, we found a door on which was written:

LABYRINTHS - NINETEENTH LABYRINTH

I went through the door by myself since my opponent had disappeared mysteriously and I didn't know where he was hiding. There, in the labyrinth, I saw:
Waking up, I opened my eyes, but I did not see the golden beetle in his glass case, nor the pipe on top of the dresser, nor the portrait of me on horseback fighting (for or against?) memory.

I did not see anything. Was I blind? I sat up in bed, leaned against the pillows and could not distinguish the room, nor the armchair, nor her waiting for me as usual at my side. I turned my head and could not see the door, nor the balcony, nor the little casket which was to contain my ashes, nor the cat, nor the books.

I stayed absolutely still for some time, sitting on my bed and leaning back against the pillows. I saw absolutely nothing.

Actually I did see something that looked like a greyish spot streaked with tiny, irregular red lines. I concentrated my eyes on this spot and realized that I could both focus more closely on it and draw away from it.

I decided to move on with my sight and crossed a round
pool in which a dark liquid was splashing. I reached the wall opposite me, which was also grey and streaked by undulating red lines.

I turned back and amused myself by crossing the pool several times -- it was actually a sphere. I was afraid to take the risk of looking at things. For some reason, I was afraid that I would not be able to get back to the place from where I had started and that my sight would be lost forever in an unknown place.

Because of this, I decided that the wisest thing to do was always to continue forward in a straight line. I jumped over the obstacle of the pool and found myself in front of a white mountain which seemed to be divided in two. Actually it was a smooth mountain ridge divided into two segments of a sphere, streaked with innumerable dark veins. It seemed to me that I was facing fanaticism.

I went on, crossed the mountains, but behind them was confronted with an unscalable wall.

Below the pool and the mountains, I had noticed an enormous oil pipe running down below. Trying to repress the fear that had seized me, I sought refuge in the pipe.
Then I realized what was happening to me -- my eyes were not able to see what was going on outside and I could only see into the interior of my body. The pool was the eyeball, the mountains were my brains and the oil pipe was the wind pipe.

This discovery filled me with happiness. I spent whole hours going over my body from top to bottom, from left to right, making new discoveries and at last finding out the symbol of each and everyone of my organs.

I marked several places for reference points along the way so that I would be able to orient myself and find my way back without getting lost in the labyrinth of my insides.

When I left the liver, I came across a pinky tissue encircled by a strange nerve. Immediately I understood: inside was my soul! Radiant with satisfaction, I started to cross the tissue so that I could look at my soul, when I heard her voice:

"What are you doing with your eyes open?"

I felt her hand on my cheek. And I saw the golden beetle in his glass case, the pipe on the dresser, my portrait on the wall.
No one was laughing; no one was jumping over the waves; no one was fooling around; no one was playing with coloured balloons; no one was swimming; no one was kicking his legs to raise foam. Not even the children.

Everyone stayed in the water some distance away from the beach. Only their heads, stern and solemn, were visible. The children also seemed withdrawn.

No one was floating on his back. Everyone seemed to be perfectly still, although it is possible that they were moving their legs so that they would not sink.

Low clouds were hanging on the horizon. A seagull, perched on a post a short distance from the shore, was as still as a statue.

The sea was grey, turning green and blue farther out. The only things standing out against this slightly rippled surface were the bobbing heads of the swimmers and the seagull on the post.
I imagined that the swimmers were wearing colourful bathing suits; perhaps the women wore bikinis and the children were naked.

Suddenly I noticed that they were all staring at me insolently with their eyes wide open. The sea was bringing the swimmers closer to the beach; and the impertinence in their regard was almost reassuring. Even the children were arrogant. Yet there was something pleasing about their insistent stares.

The seagull also fixed its gaze on me.

Everything, then, was in order and all might have ended well if it had not been for an irascible little man who was sitting beside me. He was reading a thick book called: *The Ladies Congratulate Him*. He ate one sandwich after another, licking his fingers before he turned the pages of the book. He was drinking bottles of warm coca-cola which he pulled out of his pockets.

As soon as he arrived, he wanted to make friends with me. He gave me a well-known picture: a razor slicing across an eye.

"Take it. I know you're an artist."
He got up and addressed himself to the swimmers with these words:

"When are you going to stop staring at my friend?"

It disturbed me to hear him shout like that and act as if I were his friend.

"Can't you see you're bothering him?"

The swimmers, perfectly still, were not interested in the little man's imprecations.

Suddenly he hurled a curse at them that almost terrified me:

"May your eyes get picked by the birds in the sky!"

The impassive swimmers were silently coming closer. Soon they were only a few yards away and finally a wave brought them on the sand.

They were not people but a hundred heads attached to cork legs. They were still looking at me -- the heads were alive.

The seagull fluttered his wings and gave a loud shriek that sounded like a lament. Immediately a hundred seagulls appeared on the beach. They descended on the heads and meticulously plucked the eyes out from their sockets, while I heard the old man's shrill laughter.
TWENTY-FIRST LABYRINTH

THE FACE

On the day that I lost my face, I woke up calmly and only noticed that it was missing when I saw the reflection of the front part of my head in the glass panes of the balcony. I remember that while I was looking at myself in the glass, there was an announcement on the radio saying that human footprints had been discovered at the bottom of the sea across from the beach.

The loss of my face created a feeling in me which is very difficult to describe. It was close to fascination. What was going to happen? What kind of face was I going to take on?

My first idea was to make myself a face of passion; or better still, of fire. I made several attempts which were not too bad. I succeeded in making a luminescent face which I could easily hide in public under a mask. I felt that I had given my face an air of slightly worn masculinity which delighted me. As I was putting the finishing touches on it, the radio announcer gave good news about the footprints found at the bottom of the sea. Apparently, due to the large crowds of curious people who gathered on the beach, a nightly excursion had been
organized to visit the area. He added that the ship was called "Memory".

When I had finished the face of fire, I saw a hind close to me which was possibly only a shadow of my imagination; but, nevertheless, I decided to look for another face.

For some weeks, I changed faces every day: a cat's face, Maimonides' face, a thunder face, Alice in Wonderland's face, a sailor's face, Ramon Gomez de la Serna's face, a spherical face, etc. Although it seems strange, I must admit that the more time passed, the more I missed my former face that had no history.

One night, as I was trying on a face made of water, the radio announcer again spoke about the human footprints at the bottom of the sea. Without thinking twice about it, I went to the beach. On the way, I thought that my face of water suited me very well. The idea of using it had been suggested to me by an old manuscript which, discussing the "five" elements, maintained that water "being the destructive element by autonomasia" was supreme.
The sailors were at the beach with their ship "Memory". They took me out on the high seas where they lowered me to the bottom with a flashlight in my hand.

There were actually human footprints at the bottom leading in and out of an underwater grotto. Inside the grotto was a chamber and with amazement I saw all my former faces almost decomposed by the water. The face of fire was already totally disintegrated. In the centre was a large mirror with an inscription that said: I.

I left the cave and checked the footprints. They were my own. At that moment, I heard a female voice coming from the cave:

A young sailor, mother,
Has stolen my heart.
If I don't marry him
I'll die young and a maid.

I returned to the under-sea cave, now convinced that I was back in my element.
Leaning out of the window, I caught sight of the empty beach far off. I took my pipe and lit a match. No matter how hard I tried, I was not able to light the pipe. I drew in and nothing happened. There was nothing wrong with the filter -- the pipe was drawing but would not light. It was impossible to smoke it. It began to drizzle.

It rained for hours. Then it looked as if hail were coming down. Actually, objects were falling from the clouds but without the force of hail. A little while later the window was covered with these objects that were coming down almost like a slow parade. I went out the door to see what they were: they were tiny coffins! It was raining coffins!

Before long, the ground was covered with minute coffins. I looked up and noticed that there were flowers and small funeral wreaths in all the windows.

In the distance, long black and mulberry drapes with gold and silver inscriptions which I could not read
from where I was, were hanging down from the walls of high buildings.

Usually at this time, I could hear the jukebox on the beach blaring the latest hits. Now, however, a funeral march was playing.

Tiny black coffins were still raining down. The deathknell was tolling. Seven revolting dogs passed by in front of me, playing together and biting each other's tails. There was incense in the air.

They were, after all, not dogs but seven small dragons. One of them planted himself in front of me and stared at me. Then he went away with the other six. They were very playful and I saw them disappear into the distance, jumping on top of each other and running after stones that they were kicking along.

I noticed an unbelievably tiny silver key on the floor where the dragon had stopped. Had the dragon left it for me? In any case, I picked it up and kept it.

Coffins were still coming down. The street was now covered with them. The bells were still tolling the deathknell and the jukebox continued to play a funeral march. The incense was suffocating.
I picked up one of the coffins to see what was inside. It was no bigger than a match box. I put it into one of my waistcoat pockets and went back inside.

It had stopped raining. Looking out of the window, I noticed that the street was getting empty as the coffins slid down the gutter into the sewers and soon not a single coffin was left. As if a spell had been lifted, the bells stopped tolling and the juke box stopped playing.

I placed the coffin I had picked up on the table next to the miniature silver key that the dragon (?) had left for me.

I tried to open the coffin. It was impossible. In spite of its small size, it had great resistance. With its lock, four bronze handles and baroque gilt trimming, it looked like an exact copy of a real coffin.

I understood. The key belonged to the coffin. It did actually open with the key.

Inside was a tiny glass casket and inside it was she, more beautiful than ever, immobile and dead, surrounded by flowers.
With the same key, I opened the lid of the glass casket. She was radiant with beauty. Carefully I put the coffin on a big wooden block in the middle of the table and put six small birthday candles around it. I looked at her with fascination.

Something in me, I don't know exactly what, suggested that I kiss her "like Sleeping Beauty". But she was so small!

Making an effort, I at least put the edge of my lips on her face. Immediately I was "seized" by a strange sensation and in a few seconds I became smaller and smaller until I was her size..., but she remained dead as before.

I did not question my transformation. I was inside the coffin, even inside the glass casket, together with her, on top of her. Suddenly the lid of the glass casket snapped shut. I was locked in.

Who had locked me in? It did not take me long to find out the answer. Outside the glass I saw seven dragons dancing around, laughing and mocking me.

I decided it would be best to resign myself to the situation. And luckily my pipe happened to be here!
I wanted to light it but could not. I drew in; the pipe was functioning properly. What was happening? I had become so distracted that I had forgotten to fill it with tobacco! I lit it easily and as I exhaled the first mouthful of smoke, I became aware of myself with my nose pressed against the window pane, watching the rain.
TWENTY-THIRD LABYRINTH

THE MIRRORS

She arrived in the afternoon with her pack of cards, books, games and sat down in a rocking chair on the balcony to sunbathe. I sat beside her in a wicker chair.

It was a sunny afternoon with a light breeze carrying the smell of the sea. A wolf dog was howling. She wore a pair of reflecting sunglasses. I didn't dare to look at her a second time -- once was enough to see the double image of my face reflected in her glasses.

At that moment she said: "Memory diverges and the artist multiplies it."

The children in the streets were singing:

Give us a thought, sir,
A penny with your thought, sir,
So round and fat I can run
Like the barrel of your gun.
They were jeering at someone, but I did not feel like leaning out of the window to see who their victim was.

The next day, as soon as she came in, I noticed that she was again wearing reflecting sunglasses. I didn't look at her face a second time. We sat on the balcony according to our usual ritual. Without knowing why, I was uneasy about something, and as I let my eyes roam over her body, I noticed a disturbing detail -- her fingernails, which she never polished, that day happened to be covered with a brilliant lacquer and my face was reflected ten times in the ten little mirrors of her nails.

I said something referring to memory and chance and I believe she added: "interwoven a thousand times." The revolting children in the neighbourhood were still singing in high-pitched voices:

Larks and potatoes
Nightingales and tomatoes.

The next day, as I might have expected, she showed up with brightly painted toenails as well, reflecting my face ten more times. As the days passed, more and more mirrors invaded her body. Finally her whole
whole body was a mirror destined to reproduce my image indefinitely and cutting it into parts like a kaleidoscope.

Almost at the same time that this phenomenon occurred, the mirror in the dining room by contrast no longer reflected my image. I made several experiments, trying to catch it by surprise, appearing casually. It was useless. The mirror reflected the image of a man armed with a hunting rifle, with a penny in his pocket and a lark and a nightingale in his game-bag. As an additional irony, the man in the mirror imitated all my gestures.

One afternoon while we were under the sunshade on the sun roof, I wanted to test her. I wanted to lead her little by little to the subject which bothered me but the first thing that came out of my mouth was:

"Did you know that your whole body has turned into a mirror?"

"Really?" she said, continuing to read as if she hadn't heard me. In the evening, she went through the dining room before leaving. In her rather slow and very sensual manner, she touched up her face in front of the mirror.
"What do you see in the mirror?" I asked.

"What do I see? Me, of course!"

"When I look into the mirror, I see a hunter!"

"Oh? Let's see."

I stood in front of the mirror. The hunter with his hand on his head appeared, imitating my gestures.

"Look how he imitates me!"

Intrigued, she looked; then she took off her right shoe and with its heel struck the mirror until it broke. The hunter ran out of the mirror and disappeared into the distance.

I turned towards her; already her body had ceased to be a mirror.
TWENTY-FOURTH LABYRINTH

THE ARCHITECT

A rumour, which at the time I thought to be absurd, went around concerning the architect; who, it was claimed, had been seen at the same time in the auditorium attending the ceremony of the covenant and in the palace garden (in other words, almost three miles away), at the performance of the tragedy, The Adulterers' Punishment. According to the rumour, the architect had spent about two hours at both places at once, wearing the same black suit and holding the same ebony cane with the silver handle.

This was the first time that the people reacted towards him with hostility. Previously everybody had praised his youth, handsomeness, competence, seriousness and good manners.

I remember that for years he had shut himself into his house apparently without being in contact with anyone except his old maidservant. In town, they said that he spent day and night reading. More than once they pitied him:
"Too bad that such a handsome young man should
be burning his eyes out reading like that!"

One of the most respected old men predicted:

"He'll end up going mad and killing himself.
I know that type of brilliant young man very well."

Some months ago, he had started to appear in
crowded places, always well-dressed and with his
inseparable ebony cane with the silver handle.

It was immediately after the first rumour that I
made a discovery which was out of the ordinary. I was
walking along the cliffs by myself when I saw him on top
of a high rock reading what looked like a book of poetry.
When I got back into town, I was told that he had spent
the afternoon in the café at the square. They gave me
precise details -- he had been drinking coffee and a
green liqueur.

At night, a friend who came to see me from a town
some miles away, assured me that the architect had been
at a theatrical performance during that time.
Days later, the news exploded like a bombshell: the architect had the gift of ubiquity. After the usual excitement and irritation that such news produced, everyone became used to the new situation.

Without being surprised, we used to see him while we passed through the central park sitting on all the park benches leafing through various books, or occupying a seat in each and every row in the theatre, or going up the mausoleum escalators an infinite number of successive times.

Soon people once again saw the serious and educated young man in him and considered his gift of ubiquity as a sad faculty which "makes him suffer more than anything else."

Two months later, the phenomenon ended abruptly. The architect secluded himself in his house with the door barred. Empty bottles accumulated on his doorstep. At night his silhouette appeared against the light background of the thirty windows of his large house. Unkempt and wearing a dirty shirt, he made grimaces and contortions that filled his neighbours with fear.
One morning in April, the town was sown with identical corpses. On the park road, on the front steps of the library, in orchestra seat no. five in the theatre, on the roof of the city hall; a young man, hanged and dressed in black, was smiling.

The silver handles of an infinite number of ebony canes glittered in the first glares of the day.
TWENTY-FIFTH LABYRINTH

THE TOURNAMENT

We went to the tournament together. She wore a silk skirt and on her back shone the emblem of the golden jar. We sat down on one of the benches. It seemed to me that when the people saw her, they applauded and it is even possible that they shouted:

"The queen, the queen!"

She dealt out her Phoenix pack of cards. The people argued over them and some tried to fight. She was smoking cigarettes in a long cigarette holder. Before the tournament began, a little girl with a hood and a bouquet of flowers stood in the middle of the arena and said without further introduction:

"Riddle."

After a very short pause, in a voice almost indistinct because of her emotion, she added:

"What's always in front of us but we can't see?"
The audience burst out with applause. The girl smiled and kept pulling at her skirt. She drew a camelia from her bouquet, kissed it, and threw it to the audience. Thunderous applause. The child, now more confident, said:

"Riddle: What do the dead eat which would kill us if we lived on it?"

This time she recited so rapidly that she was almost unintelligible. Nevertheless, the audience applauded as frantically as before.

As soon as the girl withdrew, a greyhound and a man dressed like a medieval knight except for a rugby helmet on his head entered the arena. He had a scimitar in his hand which he brandished with great difficulty.

She clapped her hands and the tournament began. For some time it looked as if the greyhound were dancing on his hindlegs with the knight. The greyhound bit into his opponent's neck. They stayed joined together like this for a long time.

The knight fell on the ground and the greyhound stood listlessly over him. Some of the spectators started to yell:
"Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!"

The hound licked him until he revived. He sat up and took off his armour. Beneath the armour there was a small, delicate man wearing a black and dusty overcoat and hat. He slowly went towards the middle and played a melody on a harp that made almost all the ladies in the audience as well as most of his knight attendants weep. Then he said, while the hound was rubbing himself against him:

"The answer: the future and nothing."
Close to the beach, I had a little cabin where I used to spend hours reading. It contained one single room. Apparently it used to serve as a bathhouse for keeping things while the family went swimming. In spite of its small size, the room was always very well looked after; "like a little doll's house", perhaps with excessive cleanliness.

I could hear the waves of the sea from inside the cabin. The furniture was plain but not devoid of a dangerous luxury. There was a table, two chairs, a little cupboard; and in a corner, a washbowl and two towels--the remains of the cabin's former purpose. Most extraordinary were the four great mirrors that covered the four walls of the cabin.

When I arrived one morning, I found an animal, a careful mixture of hake, wolf, peacock and goat, playing on the floor. It was rolling happily on the towels which apparently the animal itself had put on the floor. Even though it did not pay the least attention
to me, I noticed that it had a magic look in its eyes:—
it's evil eye could have paralysed a child.

I decided to act as if I had not seen it.
Each of us went about our occupations — it slept and I read.

When I stopped reading, I looked up and saw that
the mirror on the wall in front of me did not reflect
the cabin; but, like a showcase window, displayed a luxurious room with pillars, classical paintings on
the walls and a fountain in a niche.

The next day when I arrived, I saw the animal playing around. It was a ganguin, a sierra animal believed to be mythical. According to a legend, whoever kills it finds his fortune.

Moments later, just as on the day before,
another of the mirrors on the wall reflected a fantastic room which might have been a bed chamber or a music hall. There was a silver-copied bed with the most stylish curtains and beside it a grand piano, surrounded by chairs which were upholstered with loud green silk.
During the next two days, the phenomenon was repeated until the four mirrors of the cabin reflected nothing but four rococo rooms. Although I knew quite well that they were only mirrors, the effect of the reflection was so powerful that I almost took it for reality.

When I arrived on the fifth day, the mirrors were still reflecting the four "phantom" rooms. But I was surprised not to see the ganguin. As I sat down to read, I heard a whistle coming from the right. In the phantom room on the wall beside me was the ganguin, quenching his thirst in the sumptuous fountain. He was moving his head. It looked as if he were calling me.

Without thinking about it, I went towards him. When I realized what I had done, I felt the freshness of the water from the sumptuous fountain on my hands.
His name was Lajos Forintos. He was not against nobility, but he had never wanted to use his famous uncle's title. Nevertheless, everyone knew that he was a Count. I got to know him one night when he was at the beach with a very beautiful black girl who was wearing a very tight bikini. He had no shirt on and only wore a pair of long beige pants. He also wore sunglasses.

He was a well-built young man, very handsome except for his two protruding canine teeth which distorted his smile.

It was a pleasure to watch him swim. He was able to do three hundred yards in fifty-two seconds, something which he would not have been able to do if he had stopped smoking two packs of cigarettes a day.

He was a very keen and dynamic dancer. He enjoyed living the so-called "modern life" but with
fanaticism and with a certain ease that was the source of his comfort.

In spite of his connections and opportunities, he had chosen an unexpected job -- he was night nurse at the Central Hospital. This was one of the best equipped medical centres that existed at the time, if not the best; and it had all the modern improvements of the times. Perhaps his job in the hospital guaranteed him the practice of one of his favourite postulates:

"I hate adventure."

When I had an attack of appendicitis, I was taken to the Central Hospital. The operation was uncomplicated. A few days later, I was already on my feet; but because of what I took to be excessive professional zeal, the surgeons continued to keep me under observation for a few more days.

I was feeling very well. One night I decided to go to see my friend. He was not in the nurses' room. I looked for him without success on the first floor. When I opened one of the doors on the ground floor, I saw him. For some reason I didn't say anything, but watched him without him being aware of me.
He opened several hermetically-sealed doors. Were they refrigerators? On the shelves were rows of bottles filled with blood and labelled according to their blood group. My friend looked at several bottles before he found one that said: "Group O, Rh-negative".

Putting rubber gloves on his hands and taking every prophylactic precaution, he gave himself a blood transfusion in the arm. When he was finished, he meticulously cleaned himself with alcohol and put everything back in its place.

He closed the door of the refrigerator and did not seem in the least surprised to see me.

"Oh, excuse me. I didn't know you were ill. Can I help you?"

"No, I'm alright," I replied.

He explained to me that he had to give himself a blood transfusion every night. His organism demanded it. While he was speaking to me, I noticed more than ever the abnormal size of his canine teeth. Then he added:
"You see, I don't want to fall into my uncle's grandiloquent romanticism."

"Your uncle's?"

"Yes, the Count's."

"What do you mean?"

"Count Dracula. You knew I was his nephew, didn't you?"
Coming out of the labyrinth, I was dazzled by the bright glare of the square and the white statue of the giantess lying on the pedestal.

The pilgrims, half-laughing and half-crying, were putting presents in front of the monument. Many of them offered their clothes, their shoes. In a short time a half-naked mob formed around the monument -- the men in their long drawers that were out of style, the women in cotton slips, the children completely naked or with sashes around their bellies.

One of the children went up to the monument and said:

"A sonnet for the giantess."

He seemed very serious and even precocious. The people were petrified by his appearance. A sepulchral silence followed and the Argentinian voice of the child was heard:
Idiot they call me
Tira lira lool
They live to work
I live to fool.

Rub a dub dub
A lady in a tub
He catches a fish
Puts it in a soapdish.

Uni quini fratres sum
Estoy nestoy puntos cum.

Mooncow bloomcow song
Ebbery debbery don.

I had expected great applause, but on the contrary, the people wept and some of them were beating their chests with stones. When the boy had finished slowly reciting his sonnet, he climbed up on the pedestal and kissed the giantess' marble foot.

Was the giantess looking at me with certain irony? I even thought I saw her head turn slightly towards me. Clearly I read two words in her eyes: LOVE and CHANCE. But soon they were effaced.
The boy, after kissing the foot of the giantess, ran off towards the back of the square. He disappeared. Everybody including me started to run after him.

At the back of the square, there was a cliff overlooking a narrow valley filled with chunks of broken rock. Below lay the child's body, a smile on its face.

Immediately everybody lined up to kiss the foot of the giantess. A ritual was initiated which consisted of kissing her foot, running to the back of the square and throwing oneself over the precipice.

Hours later, heaps of corpses were scattered on the rocks. All the pilgrims had crashed down and were lying at the bottom of the precipice in their underwear, looking peaceful; and among them were the soldiers with their hands folded on their chests; and the astronomers with extinguished pipes in their mouths; and embracing couples; and children; and the goats which had leapt gracefully over the cliff without dropping the eggs which they were holding between their lips; and the orchestra and the monarch.
Instinctively I turned away from the abyss. I went back to the monument and found a little ladder descending into the ground like the opening of a subway station. It had a sign that read:

LABYRINTHS - TWENTY-EIGHTH LABYRINTH

There I saw:
The speaker on the platform was reading his lecture. A large audience, mostly excitable young people, kept laughing and interrupting him with smart remarks. The lecturer was small, his hair was covered with dandruff and he looked stern but he made no gestures. He mixed his notes up as he spoke and paid no attention to his audience.

As I was listening to him, there appeared in my mind the image of a picture which was hanging in the kitchen. Since I was used to seeing it all the time, I had never really looked at it carefully. I remembered that it was an old painting which I had assumed at first sight to be a representation of a mythological scene.

At the end of twenty minutes a real commotion began to build up with shouts, hisses and laughter. The most daring in the crowd bombarded the lecturer with screwed-up bits of paper. One of them started to imitate him in the middle of a sentence.

I remembered that the painting in the kitchen showed a shepherd standing beside a woman. The shepherd
had a tall staff and the woman seemed to be naked. To the left were nine hieretic girls.

Despite everything, the lecturer continued to read his lecture impassively. When he stopped for a moment, I sighed with relief thinking that his torture was coming to an end. Some fools, hoping to cancel the rest of the lecture, began to applaud wildly. An incredible hubbub started. The lecturer looked for something on the table, found a glass of water and drank half of it quite naturally as if nothing were going on. He continued his lecture totally unaffected by the hostility in the hall.

It seemed to me that there were other details in the painting which I could not remember exactly. In the forest in the background, for instance, the horns of a faun might have been visible.

It was almost impossible to hear him but I listened to him with interest as well as I could. At one point he threw an idea in the air which aroused my attention.

"The artist's work," he said, "is the fruit of the union of time and memory. Memory represented by the biography of the artist and by the history of humanity; and time by the future, or, in other works, by chance."
The speech still lasted for another half hour. During the last minutes of his lecture, the speaker constantly looked at his watch. The lecture ended amidst the confused row of the majority and the moderate applause of a small part of the audience -- educated and older people. Without more ado, the speaker picked up his notes and calmly disappeared.

When I saw him the next day, I told him that a certain part of his lecture had interested me very much. He seemed surprised. I pointed out that to my mind his theory on the artist's work could cast some light on the enigma of art.

"What? I spoke about art?"

"Yes, definitely. Look at your notes."

He laughed. So I too had believed in his notes! He had no such notes; they were nothing but a pile of worthless handwritten pages that he always strewed over lecture tables and which he pretended to be reading.

"It looks more serious that way," he said.

"And so your theory...."
"You see, I talk about anything that comes into my head, to fill up the hour for which they hire me so I can pick up my cheque without scruples."

When I returned home, I looked at the painting in the kitchen. Below the shepherd was written: "Zeus, sone of Cronos"; below the naked Venus; "Memory", and beneath their nine daughters; "The nine muses".
TWENTY-NINTH LABYRINTH
BLOOD

At dawn the walls of my room, my house and the city joined together to form a great spiral. It cost me some effort to realize that this perfect spiral which led towards a centre was composed of the rooms of my house, the walls, corridors, streets and squares of the city -- all rearranged in a different way from which I was used to.

As I walked back and forth along the spiral, I started to recognize certain things -- a garden gate, the ramparts of a wall, and I smiled as I thought that if a stranger were to fall upon our city he would believe it to be nothing more than one continuous wall. Suddenly I realized how perfect this construction was and when I remembered that city as it used to be, it seemed without meaning, order or design.

One day I dropped a glass ball and noticed that the city was sloping -- the ball rolled away and disappeared for good. The first mysteries started to present themselves. How far would the ball roll? Where would I go if I tried to move on? Towards the centre or towards the edge into infinity?
Whatever the case might have been, here I was in the presence of a world whose perfect harmony was consistent with its inhumanity. Who was the great watchmaker who had produced such perfection? How would it be possible to live in a world different from this one?

I spent hours lost in thought, contemplating the order, perfection of line and mathematical simplicity, and greatly admiring the supreme architect who had designed such a marvellous world where everything had its place and nothing was out of order.

It was on a Friday that I discovered a small spurt of water coming out of the middle of a wall, about one and one-half yards from the ground. It seemed to be seeping through the wall. I took a drop on my finger -- it was completely transparent. I raised it to my lips. The taste was unmistakable -- it was a tear. Tears were oozing from the wall!

Not only was the wall in my room weeping but the walls of the entire city were shedding tears. At night I heard moans and shrieks and I also started to feel like crying but could not. Not a single tear dropped from my eyes.
A few days later, I noticed that the perfect spiral in which I believed myself to be living was not a spiral at all: there were countless zig-zags, bends and filthy corners that stank. Finally I concluded that the perfect spiral which I had envisioned during the first days was nothing but a maze of windings into which people ejected their excrement.

When I returned home, I saw that the walls had begun to leak blood. Threads of blood flowed from all the cracks and fissures. The city was bleeding to death.

I was beginning to faint. Powerless I dropped to the floor. Before losing consciousness, I was aware of someone listening to my heart. A voice said:

"Hurry. Get him to the hospital immediately for a blood transfusion. He's hardly got a drop of blood left!"
THIRTIETH LABYRINTH

THE SPHERICAL CAGE

My right eye was seeing less and less. I could feel the insect move back and forth but I didn't dare to do anything about it. The finest filaments were covering my eye. I hardly left the house any more and immediately got used to seeing only with my left eye.

She did not say anything to me and I was afraid she would realize what was happening. In order to hide it from her I always put my hand over my right eye when she was around. The filaments increased and started to spread over other areas. Sitting beside me, she was reading a book and from time to time sang a lullaby as if to herself:

Rock-a-bye baby
Ride a cock-horse
Rock-a-bye baby
Walk down the path.

I wore dark glasses when I went into the street. I was not brave enough to look into the mirror nor to wash myself nor to expose myself to a current of air that might tear the threads and who knows what else with them.
Soon a veritable web covered half of my face. I was perfectly aware of it. She, however, never mentioned my eye. Sometimes, as if she were in a trance, she would begin to croon a lullaby:

Rock-a-bye baby
On the treetop
When the wind blows
The cradle will rock.

I wanted to keep the peace. I decided not to go out again and for this reason shut myself into the tower. She visited me very evening staying until sunset. Every day she brought me two presents: a puzzle and a trained insect-eating animal. One day she also brought me a spherical cage over three yards long in diameter.

The sickness got worse, spreading over my whole body like a cancer. An enormous spider's web covered me from head to toe. I hardly dared to move. I felt the spider passing over my body and was afraid it might attack my insides.

I decided that I could not let her visit me while I was in this condition. When I saw her, I locked myself
into the tower, having killed all the insect-eating animals that she had brought me. I was afraid that their aggressive presence would anger the spider and that its revenge would be even worse for me than what I was enduring now.

That afternoon, when I locked myself in, she called me insistently. I told her that I could not let her come any more and she said she would be back the next day with a master-key.

Faced with such threats, I decided to make an end of it. I lifted the spherical cage onto the window embrasure. I locked myself in it, hurling the key far off, and let myself fall over the cliff below the window.

I lost consciousness. When I came to, the sphere was flying through the air and she was beside me with a blood-stained mole in her lap.

We were flying together for a long time and I heard a lullaby:

Rock-a-bye baby
The cradle is green
Father's a nobleman
Mother's a queen.
We continued to fly and fly and soon we were embracing each other and it seemed to me as if my body were penetrating hers and my skin were leaking everywhere.

We landed and while she opened the spherical cage, I looked at my naked body and saw that the spider's web had disappeared.
THIRTY-FIRST LABYRINTH

DARKNESS

Everything was completely shrouded in darkness and I could only hear a rhythmic sound. A long time passed. When I decided to look for the light, I stumbled against an animal which seemed to be bigger than a dog but which I could not recognize.

During the whole day, I groped my way from one side to another, perhaps passing by the same place several times. I was constantly aware of the animal near-by, which emitted a nauseating smell.

I thought that night was falling. Actually I was falling asleep. I lay down on the floor and noticed that the animal was doing the same. It's presence was almost unbearable. When I awoke, the animal's head was resting in my lap.

Contrary to what I had expected on waking up, I was still not accustomed to the darkness and, as before, I could not see anything. I walked in a straight line, perhaps covering great distances, perhaps always
rotating in the same place. The more efforts I made
to fling the stinking animal aside, the more impossible
it seemed ever to be able to get rid of it. I didn't
dare to touch it -- it stank like the devil and every
once in a while let out a sound like a human laugh
which was most repugnant.

Sometimes I came across openings in the wall into
which I was able to stick my hand and sometimes my whole
arm. The smell of whatever lay at the back of these
recesses nauseated me. Although I could not tell exactly
what it was, there was no doubt in my mind but that it
was semi-liquid excrement.

The animal followed me, sticking closely to my heels.
When I felt that it was within reach I gave it a kick.
It's almost human moan was odious. I felt like vomiting.

Judging by the time that passed, I figured out the
topography of the place where I was. I guessed that it
was a maze of passages, perhaps several miles long.
However, how could it be that from all points I heard
the same regular noise that came from up high?

I spent the second night once again with the animal
which stuck close to me. I realized that it was not
a dog but a hyena, because of its heinous smell.
I went to sleep. When I awoke, I heard the repulsive snore of the hyena. It was there, beside me, hoping that I would die from exhaustion so that it could feast on my corpse. I had the feeling that death was at my side with a white blindfold and hangman's rope.

I decided to get rid of the animal. I found a rock and struck the hyena's head long and hard enough to kill it. Then I went along the passages tracing the floor and the walls with my hands but I found only repugnant things.

Finally I touched a stone about the size of an orange which was wedged in the wall. It was round with a metallic point at the centre. Luck was on my side! The hyena beside me laughed almost humanly.

I pulled as hard as I could to get the stone out. Grasping it with my fingernails, I turned and pulled with all my might but without success. The stone was tightly embedded in the wall. After one of my efforts to pull it out, the piece of metal in the centre was pointing down. There was light.

There she was -- more beautiful than ever. She laughed, saying: "You've finally find the light switch?" I've been here for an hour watching you in the dark."
Her laughter was marvellous. It was her house -- six rooms joined by a central passage. I recognized it immediately, as well as the clock with its monotonous tick-tock and the jars of honey which she kept in the recesses in the wall. Suddenly I noticed that she was wearing the perfume that I liked so much.
In the Hospital of the Incurables there are cages enclosing flowerpots and the leaves of the plants coil around the bars. She rides along the passages on horseback. At times a door opens and you can catch a glimpse of only part of a man's face -- an eye and an eyebrow.

She rides along the passages on horseback, wearing a gown of white silk that covers her entire body. In the Hospital of the Incurables, there is a small girl who amuses herself smashing a small boy's nose; and an old man, half-dazed from drugs, who spends the day singing:

The lonely old gravedigger
In our small town
Old Simon, one evening,
Laid his daughter down.

He carried her
To the hole he had made,
And alone in the evening
To her rest she was lain.
The Hospital of the Incurables is an old building by the river divided into different sections. Some of the rooms are small forests where the sick can be seen completely naked among tropical birds with colourful feathers.

She was racing about on her horse and only stopped when she was at the door of the man whose eye and eyebrow were all I saw.

"The Hospital of the Incurables" is the most important painting in my library. It is a very small painting painted with the technique of the miniaturists. I know the characters in it. Sometimes I run into them on the street. The canvas has the peculiarity of transforming itself, of becoming "alive".

One day while I was on the beach, I saw the patient whose eye and eyebrow were the only things I knew, carelessly lying down with his legs spread wide apart.

What had seemed to me like peacefulness in the painting was actually no more than the art of living based on laziness. He was surrounded by finger-marked books which did not seem to interest him much.
I spoke to him. He yawned before answering me. Evidently he was not interested in anything but resting. When I described the canvas and the role that he played in it, he laughed good-naturedly. He asked me:

"What did she do last night?"

"Whom are you talking about?"

"The woman on horseback."

"Every day she stops in a different room."

"But what did she do last night?" he insisted.

"She stopped in front of your door."

When he heard this, he disappeared, leaving everything behind.

When I returned home, I understood that man's behaviour. The woman was still at his door with her white veils and something bulky under her arm. The drugged patient was singing:
Old Simon left the graveyard
As night draped the land
With his spade on his shoulder
And rake in his hand.

The townspeople they asked him
"Simon, what art thou at?"
"I'm a lonely old gravedigger,
"I've just buried my heart."

I was struck by an idea -- the rider on the horse was death and the package under her arm concealed a hangman's rope. He had realized this before me.

However, the following day I met the man in a brand-new car driven by a chauffeur. Flashing a vulgar-looking ring, he shouted at me:

"Thanks, thanks a lot for yesterday." He winked at me. "Thank goodness you gave me time to buy a lottery ticket!"

He burst out laughing and added:

"And we'll see if fortune ever stops in front of my door again with the horn of plenty under her arm."
The two of them, the alchemist and the poet, lived near my house. The alchemist on the first floor of the old house and the poet on the ground floor. They were distant to each other but courteous.

The poet used to work until late at night and at dawn he got up to take care of his garden. The alchemist was frequently seen on the beach, drunk.

The poet's wife was a little cripple with a child's brains. Every morning, the poet took her to the park in a little child's carriage and to amuse her he pulled faces at her and played on a drum. The alchemist's wife was a young and pretty blonde called Maria.

The alchemist told everyone that he was on the point of discovering the philosopher's stone. No one believed him, not even his wife; nevertheless he managed to live exclusively on borrowed money. The poet was incapable of asking anything of anybody; he cultivated his garden and raised hens. Some said that at dawn he
went on the mountain with a pair of scissors to cut herbs for salad.

One day, almost stupefied from drinking as usual, the alchemist started to work in his workshop. He claimed that alcohol enabled him to attain the lucidity of genius. After preparing many different mixtures, the alchemist extracted a small stone from the metal mortar. He picked it up with his pincers and leapt with joy. The steel pincers, in contact with the little stone, had turned to gold.

He started to shout:

"Maria, Maria! I've discovered the philosopher's stone!"

Drunk and full of joy, he jumped up and down and made little pirouettes while everything was turning around him. He went into the kitchen but could not find his wife. He went towards the bedroom and at that moment stumbled against a step and fell on the floor. The pincers flew out of his hand and with them the small stone.

The stone rolled as far as the poet's garden without the alchemist noticing it. For hours the alchemist and his wife looked for it in the whole house but without success.
The philosopher's stone had fallen beside one of the poet's hens, which swallowed it promptly.

Hours later, at dawn, the poet went out to fetch his eggs and he found himself in front of an incredible sight: one of his hens had laid a golden egg.

He watched the hen for a week. Every day it laid a golden egg. The poet, very happy, said to his wife:

"We'll be rich, Julietta, I've found the way."

The little cripple laughed, not because she understood what her husband was saying but because whenever she saw him smile she did the same.

The poet actually did become a millionaire thanks to the book he wrote, The Legend of the Golden Eggs, Which was translated and came out in pocket books all over the world; while his neighbour, the genius, died cursed and forgotten.
On the wall across from my bed, hundreds of eyes were moving and looking at me. They were sliding down from the ceiling to the floor. There were all kinds of them—large, small, beautiful and ugly, blue and black.... I saw them spread down to the floor where they disappeared.

On the patio, the bonfire was burning and from my bed I could hear the flames crackling and the boys shouting. The boys most certainly were amusing themselves by leaping over the flames.

It made me happy to see so many eyes on the wall and I imagined that they belonged to all the people I had ever seen. Perhaps they were also the eyes of all my ancestors and of all mankind.

From the patio came the laughter of the boys and the bright glow of the flames which illumined my room.

Sometimes only one eye was sliding slowly down the wall and it would look at me and I would look at it feeling satisfied and almost proud.
Suddenly a large bird entered my room and began to flutter in circles around my bed. It was a large bird but I could not recognize it. It looked like an eagle or vulture or condor. It seemed very affectionate.

It perched on the canopy of my bed and contemplated together with me the apparition on the wall. I did my best to remain absolutely still so that it would not be frightened.

For a long time, hours perhaps, we quietly shared an undeclared secret and we were filled with enchantment.

The two of us looked at the eyes and it seemed to me that the bird, like me, was sensitive to certain regards. The look of one particular eye made the bird utter a cry of grief.

All of a sudden it flew away. I put my head out of the window almost wanting to fling myself after it. It made three concentric circles around the fire and then dove straight into the flames. The boys were shouting with excitement.

I smelled and saw its wings and body scorch. At the same time, my head began to throb and while the bird was consumed my headache became most painful.
One of the boys retrieved the bird's ashes with a stick and put them on a rock. The pain in my head was relieved.

I saw that the ashes were moving. Finally they began to flutter -- a beak appeared, the head, the tips of the wings and in a short while the bird was reborn from its ashes. It looked more noble and beautiful than before.

I sat down and understood the mechanism of my memory, of my bird Phoenix.
Her hair dishevelled and her wrists bound together with a rope, the girl was tied to the tree. The hem of her black dress went up whenever she tried to free herself. Her hands were fastened behind her back to the thick tree.

I walked slowly through the woods towards her. She was alone and as I went closer I saw her better — her face was flushed with exertion and she had long and wavy, blond hair.

I stopped in a clearing still some distance away from her. Perhaps some boy had left her there. She looked unhappy but not desperate. Perhaps she was the prisoner of a rival gang.

Sitting on a tree stump, I tried to listen to see if some noise would indicate what was happening, but I only heard the murmur of the woods. The girl was barefoot. Her shoes were hanging from a tree. On one of her ankles she wore a silver chain from which hung seven clovers.
Three boys ran by. I hid in the underbrush so that they would not see me.

One of them said to the girl:

"Now we're going to torture you."

The little girl's smooth cheeks seemed rosier than before and her eyes were moist with fear. Her hair was even more dishevelled. Every now and then she turned her wide-open eyes towards her "friends".

The boys were cutting some kind of grass that I could not recognize.

"We're going to hit you with nettles."

The girl almost cried. She pleaded with the boys not to use nettles. She would prefer anything else: "anything but nettles," she repeated.

One of the boys held one of her bare feet and grazed it with nettles. The girl cried out and screamed:

"If you yell we'll smear your face!"
The girl kept groaning and I fainted. When I came to, it was night. I looked at the tree. Not a trace was left of what I had seen. The tree seemed thicker, higher and more dense.

An old woman with very long fingernails and a few long hairs on the tip of her chin came towards me. She wore a pair of round glasses with silver frames. Her face was very wrinkled. Her eyes, although half-sunken in their sockets, were looking at me peacefully.

In her hand, she carried a small bunch of nettles which she handed to me. Then she gave me a rope. She asked me to tie her hands behind her back. I don't know why I obeyed her wishes.

She asked me to remove her shoes and hang them on a tree, which I did.

She was breathing regularly and it seemed to me that there was a calm intensity on her white and wrinkled face. Without knowing why, I guessed what she would ask me to do next.

"Kneel down at my feet and rub them with the nettles."
Kneeling, I looked up at her for a moment. Her closed lips formed a funnel of wrinkles. She was breathing with some difficulty, perhaps because of her emotion. On one of her ankles she wore a silver chain from which hung seven clovers.

She moaned slightly and also cried.

"I'm hurting you too much. Do you want me to stop?"

"I'm not crying because of the pain," she said. "I'm crying because exactly seventy years ago at this very same tree some young friends of mine...."
THIRTY-SIXTH LABYRINTH

DRINKABLE GOLD

The dice were rolling on the green gambling table. These dice, however, were different. From where I was, I could not see the design on each face.

The players around the rectangular table were excited and tense. Although no one was smoking, a cloud of smoke was hanging over the table.

On my way to the casino, I went through the park and saw a tree with heads hanging from its branches almost like fruit. Peaceful, serene heads. They shone like gold in the dark.

The croupier was uttering words which made no sense to me:

"Dream."

"Afterlife."

"Hermes' book."

"Triple chain."

Etc.
The intersecting lines and dots on the green cover of the table also presented a mystery to me. The players were putting the chips down on it.

An employee asked me to join the game. Trusting to the confusion, I put my chips down without any plans and, of course, lost them one after another.

A short time later, I was able to make out one of the faces of the dice -- it was a golden beetle. I would have liked to play it.

The croupier continued to sing out mysterious words which produced wise reactions in the players:

"Ezekiel."

"The hanged man."

"Seven angels."

Etc.

I went to the window for a moment and saw the tree in the middle of the park with its golden heads. From where I was standing, it looked as if the heads were alive.
I returned to my place and continued to play. One of the players came over to me and without introduction started to speak to me. It was difficult to understand him even though he spoke in a very high-pitched voice and occasionally even shouted. But he told me such abstract things in such a strange accent that it was almost impossible to follow him. I looked at him carefully. He was wearing an immaculate dinner jacket and tie, but the collar of his jacket was covered with dandruff. His ears were filled with yellow wax.

Nevertheless, I understood that he was suggesting that I play the golden beetle. I admitted to him that I did not know how to go about it. He explained the method to me which was actually quite simple.

I started to play the golden beetle and immediately the croupier turned all sorts of objects over to me. I was winning and my "friend" winked at me from the other side of the table. We both smiled.

Then I noticed a detail that had escaped me before: he had golden hands -- they were shining peculiarly at the other end of the table.

The croupier continued to sing out the winning combinations:
"Lycanthrope."

"Cagliostro's elixir."

"Crown and sceptre."

Etc.

I went over to the window again. The tree with golden heads was clearly outlined in the middle of the park. But I also noticed several pairs of golden hands hanging from it.

I returned to my place and looked for my friend. I was uneasy for a moment because he was no longer there. Soon, however, I heard his characteristic voice and his loud laugh. He was surrounded by a group of people. He was winning a lot — a great heap of objects formed two pyramids in front of him. The croupier kept raking new winnings over to him. The women were congratulating him. He looked at me and winked again. Once more, we both smiled.

For almost an hour only he and I were winning, thanks to the combination of the golden beetle.

The croupier sang out:
"Minerva."

"Solomon's triangle."

"Ceremony."

"Drinkable gold."

A group of onlookers was standing around me and congratulating me. The ladies were becoming quite enthusiastic about me.

When I looked at his hands, I realized that they were no longer golden -- two iron hooks had taken their place.

Suddenly I felt my face go rigid. Paralyzed by confused fears, I didn't dare to look at myself in the mirror across from me. A golden beetle was slowly coming towards me.
CHAPTER SIX
THE SQUARE

When I left the labyrinth, I found myself in the middle of the completely deserted square. Only she and I. She, on her enormous pedestal; and I, very small, in the middle of the spacious square of white stone.

As I walked, I noticed my shadow on the ground. I heard or thought I heard her voice. Could it be possible that she might be calling me?

I raised my head and was dumbfounded and fascinated. The giantess was sitting up on the monument and looking at me. She was dressed like a queen and smiled.

I went towards the pedestal, climbed up the steps and soon reached her feet. I was no bigger than one of her toes.

I looked at her. She was laughing and calling me. I began to climb up on her. With much difficulty, I reached her right knee. While I was climbing, she continued to laugh and call. I got up on her thigh
and reached her waist. I went across her chest, continued up her neck, crossed her mouth and arrived at her left eye.

In the gigantic retina of her eye, I saw myself: my image was reflected with precision -- there I was with a crown, a royal mantle and a golden sceptre. I looked like a king.

At my feet, in the eye of the giantess, a door opened and a few steps brought me into the interior of her body.

I don't know how long I lived there, enclosed in her body.
THE JOURNEY

Now I know how much time I spent in her body — exactly nine months. After nine months, I came out of her brain wearing a crown.

But the giantess was no longer there and I was no longer the same as when I had entered her, and I began to live again, and as soon as I was conscious I glimpsed my blind father playing the harp, and the little carriage with the goat and the panther which took me around the room three times, and I heard the children's song and the sentences that were repeated, and everything happened very quickly, and it seemed as if I were advancing into the future very rapidly, and I observed my life as if it were the life of a stranger, and I foresaw everything that was going to happen, and soon I reached childhood, puberty, and adolescence, and I lived each and every moment of my life at dizzying speed, and I relived my love, my anatomy in the painting and my arrival at art dominated by memory, and I went to the square, and I saw the giantess change according to the angle from which I looked at her, and I went into the labyrinths going through all thirty-six of them one
by one, and the labyrinths blended with the giantess as
if by the past, and I kept rushing forward in time, and
I entered the giantess' eye and came out of her brain
nine months later; and when I thought that I was going to
stop travelling, my body was hurled into the future and
I sped through time, and now I am still rushing forward
in time, through future centuries like a flash of
lightning, and I live centuries in hours and years in
minutes, and I am happy because I am seeing and discovering
eternity, and my memory is enriched, and I see the bird
which takes a drop of the sea every hundred years, and
I see oceans dry up because of it, and I see every stone
on the mountains and every grain of sand on the beaches,
and I understand life, and am cat and Phoenix and swan
and elephant and child and old man, and alone and with
others, and I love and am loved, and I spend whole days
meditating, and I discover heaven and land, and I am
here and there, and I own the seal of seals, and as
I am hurled forward in time I feel ecstasy penetrate
my being never to leave again.
FOOTNOTES


12. Schifres, *op. cit.*., pp. 72, 97.

14 Arrabal, op. cit., p. 29.


16 Schifres, op. cit., p. 106, Arrabal tells Schifres: "...un peintre comme Magritte, je lui ai énormément emprunté pour mon oeuvre."


18 Arrabal, op. cit., p. 32.

19 Ibid., p. 33.


23 Jung, op. cit., p. 135, writes: "The cave is the place of rebirth, that secret cavity in which one is shut up in order to be incubated and renewed."

24 Arrabal, op. cit., p. 31.

25 Ibid.

26 Bergson, op. cit., p. 129.

27 Arrabal, op. cit., p. 33.

The following note appears at the end of the text:

"Les Tableaux illustrant cet ouvrage sont l'œuvre d'Arrabal en collaboration avec des peintres figuratifs doués d'une grande perfection technique.

"Arrabal leur propose un sujet c'est-à-dire une maquette où tous les détails sont minutieusement indiqués. "Les Peintres L. Arnaiz et R. -G. Criste exécutent les toiles en suivant étroitement les directives d'Arrabal."


Schifres, *op. cit.*, p. 97.


Schifres, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

41 Arrabal, El hombre pánico, p. 35.

42 Ibid., p. 37.

43 Ibid., p. 36.

44 Ibid., pp. 35, 36.

45 Schifres, op. cit., p. 92.


47 Schifres, op. cit., p. 112.

48 Ibid.

49 Jung, Symbols of Transformation, I, p. 268.

50 Ibid., p. 266.

51 Poulet, op. cit., p. xxvii.

52 Schifres, op. cit., p. 111.

53 This is the only painting used for illustration in the Spanish text.

54 Arrabal, El hombre pánico, p. 33.

55 Arrabal, Théâtre V, p. 8.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


