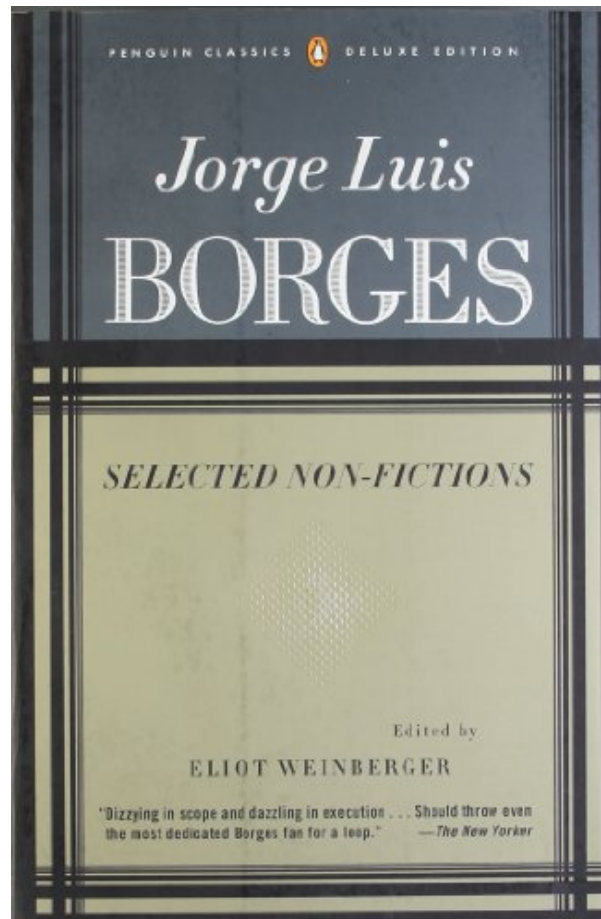
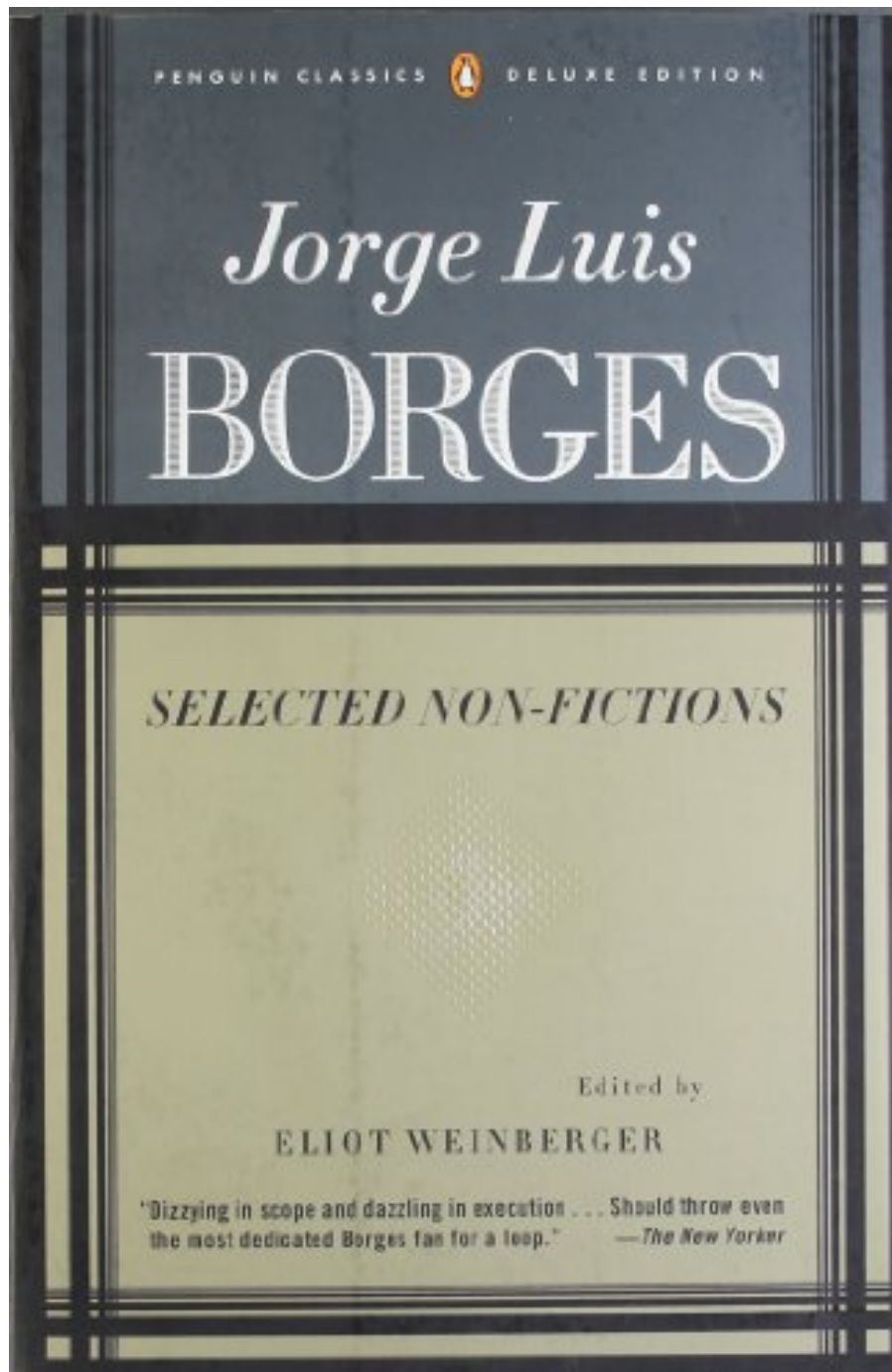


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It will come as a surprise to some readers that the greater part of Jorge Luis Borges's extraordinary writing was not in the genres of fiction or poetry, but in the various forms of non-fiction prose. His thousands of pages of essays, reviews, prologues, lectures, and notes on politics and culture—though revered in Latin America and Europe as among his finest work—have scarcely been translated into English.

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Across The Ocean - Another Labyrinth.

By david ewing

One of the most cherished items in my ever-expanding library is my dog-eared copy of "Labyrinths", complete with the coffee-, alcohol-, and bath stains which lend it almost as much character as the words within its covers. This new edition of Borges selected non-fiction will no doubt in the fullness of time reach a position of equal prominence on my bookshelves. The debate will forever rage as to whether Borges deserves that grandest(yet often all too hollow and ephemeral) of epithets - "Great Writer", purely by virtue of the fact that he never wrote anything of more than a few pages in length. But the pellucidity and erudition of his prose raises quality above quantity to an altitude from where we lose sight of the debate, thus rendering it redundant. Along with a number of essays already available elsewhere, including the seminal "New Refutation Of Time", this collection ranges in typical Borges style from film reviews (*King Kong*, *The*

Petrified Forest etc.), through dispassionate yet condemnatory meditations on Fascism, to his well-ploughed but ever-fruitful ground of literary rumination. His series of essays on Dante opened this reader's eyes-and heart- to the true heartbreaking nature of that poet's relationship with Beatrice, prompting a reappraisal of a book I gave up on fifteen years ago, halfway through "Il Purgatorio"; this summer, I've promised myself, I WILL read the whole of "Il Divina Commedia". Not out of a sense of duty, you understand, but because I WANT to. Therein lies the hub of Borges' greatness as a writer: his self-proclaimed greatness as a reader manifests itself on the written page as dizzying eclecticism and enthusiasm for allusion that moves the reader to explore not only new avenues of thought, but also a newer and more verdant landscape of literature than had previously been suspected to even exist. Sail with Borges and new continents, new constellations will rise before you. On a personal note I have Borges to thank for my discovery of Hume, Chesterton, the Pre-Socratics, St Augustine, Flann O'Brien, Thomas Browne, and so many others who would have remained permanently below my horizon otherwise. If you feel that reading a book should be an experience of expansion, of glimpsing new vistas, to develop a hunger for exploration, then this is for you.

39 of 40 people found the following review helpful.

Vastly enjoyable

By A Customer

In one of the pieces contained in this book, Borges claims that more than a writer, what he really was was a great reader. That was his vocation. Indeed, I do not know of anyone who read more widely, with more understanding, and with more contagious enjoyment than Borges. The pieces in this collection shine through with his delight for what has been termed "the aesthetics of intelligence": knowledge and abstract thought as art.

Borges, who never wrote anything long in his life, was the master of the short essay. Every piece is full of profoundest and most unexpected insights, whether it purports to be about Citizen Kane, Argentinian literature, or the Ars Combinatoria of Ramon Llull. I recommend this book very highly.

23 of 26 people found the following review helpful.

Something for everyone

By Daniel Fineberg

This is one of those books you can just pick up, open to a random page, and start reading. His essays, like his stories, are quite short, and he writes on an astonishing variety of subjects. A big movie fan before he went blind, he writes on "Citizen Kane", "King Kong" and "The 39 Steps". He writes on Germany as it descends into barbarism in the 30s and 40s. He shares his thoughts on a wide array of writers, from Virgil to Kierkegaard to Shakespeare, to his wonderful meditations on Dante, and into Dostoevsky, Whitman, Joyce, Kafka, Faulkner, even Bradbury and H.G. Wells. I've barely even scratched the surface. The companion collection is called "Collected Fictions", which is funny since the line between fiction and non-fiction is often quite blurry for Borges. But both these collections are highly recommended for anyone and everyone, regardless of familiarity with the author.

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