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Chaos and Cosmos

The Imaginary and the Political in Jorge Luis Borges

MARTÍN PLOT

Chaos and Cosmos offers a new and unique interpretation of Argentine essayist and fiction writer Jorge Luis Borges as a thinker of what continental twentieth century political theory called the political. While not a political writer in the traditional sense, Borges was indeed an author whose response to the advent of totalitarianism, in particular in its Nazi form, generated the most experimental, insightful, and rigorous short fiction and non-fiction political interrogation.

As is well known, Borges' writing went beyond originality; it created a genre of its own, and the Borgesian style is not limited to form. This Borgesian style fundamentally relates to how his response to the advent of totalitarianism led to sharp and philosophically sophisticated interrogations-in-fiction of the political, understood in this book as related to three main distinctive dimensions: that of the question of the forms of society, that of the relationship between the imaginary and the real, and that of the relationship between the same and the other.

Chaos and Cosmos introduces the reader to Borges as an experimental writer, as an Argentine citizen, as a thinker of global political phenomena, and as a South American Pragmatist. The book also makes incursions in a political theorizing of its own, intertwining an interpretation of Borges' essays and fiction pieces from the 1930s and 1940s with the central concerns of philosophers and political thinkers such as William James, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Hannah Arendt, Claude Lefort, Michael Foucault, Richard Rorty, and Judith Butler.

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Details Author TOC Reviews

In a remarkable exercise, Martín Plot reads Borges in the light of some of the fundamental questions of 20th century political theory, without detracting either from Borges' prose or from the finest understanding of contemporary political theory.

— **Claudia Hilb, University of Buenos Aires, Conicet**

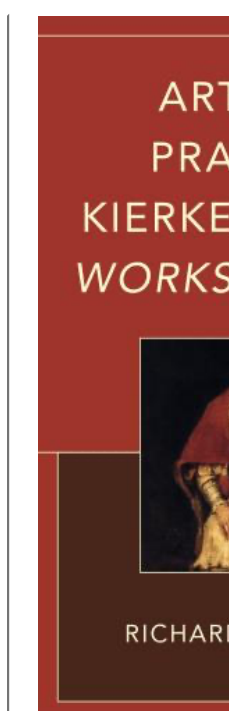
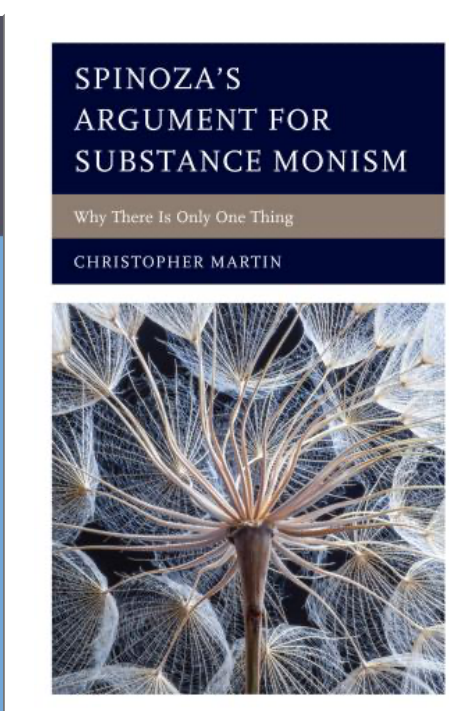
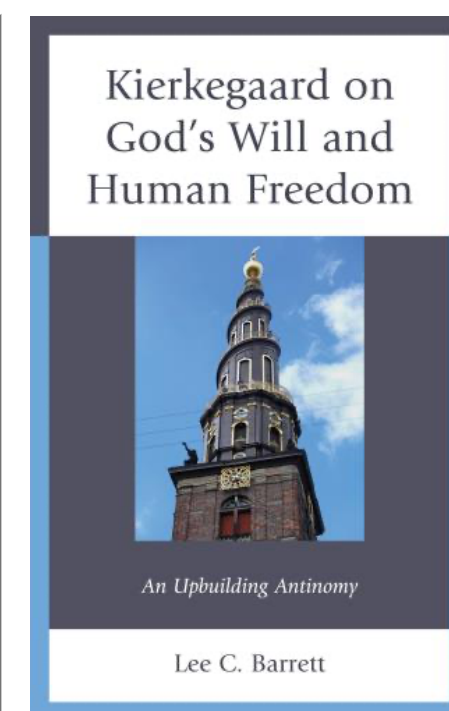
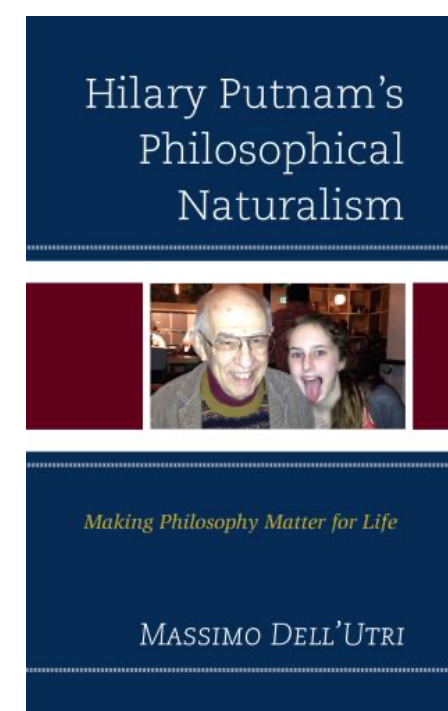
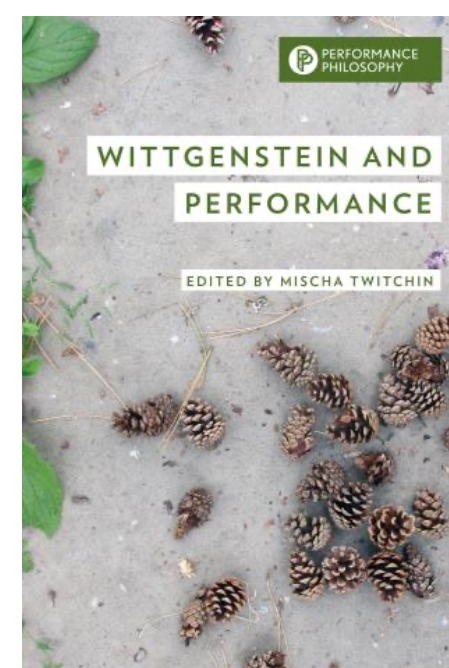
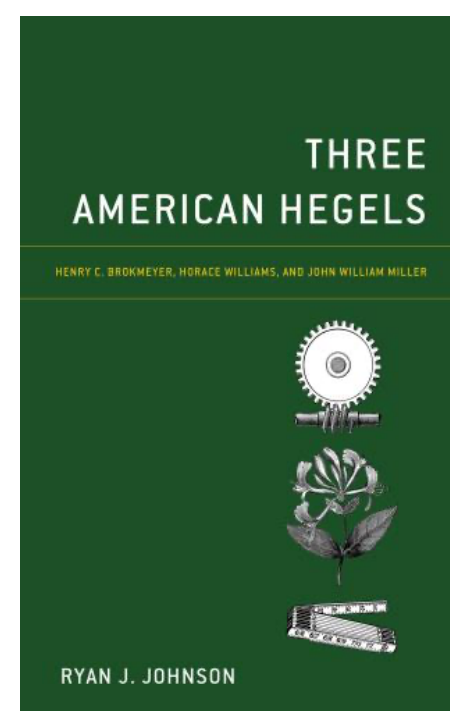
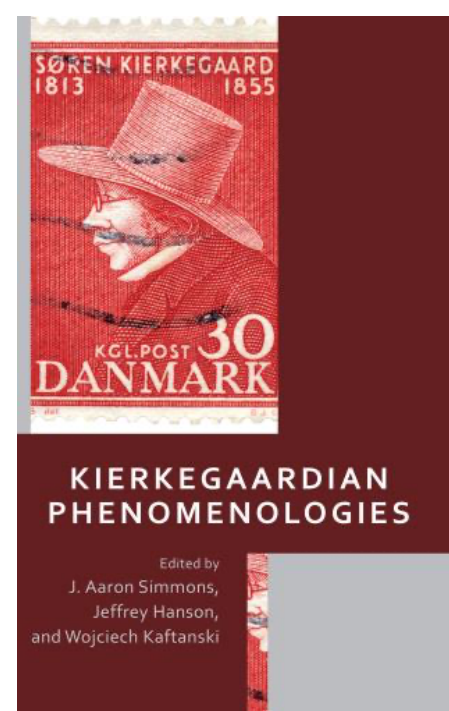
Throughout the postwar period, political thinkers in the Anglophone West have considered aesthetic works and ideas as either apolitical or anti-political. Much has been done in recent years to rectify this misapprehension. Few international scholars have contributed more to the radical rethinking of aesthetics and politics than Martín Plot, who in this volume, shows us how we can approach the writings of a master of twentieth century literature as an astute and engaged political thinker, through both the stories he wrote and the forms of writing he developed.

— **Davide Panagia, professor and chair of political science, UCLA**

Every reader of Jorge Luis Borges' stories and essays will be aware of the variety of philosophical themes and puzzles they contain. Martín Plot's achievement in *Chaos and Cosmos* is to show that underlying these fragments is a systematic philosophical position, a form of pragmatism that rejects epistemological, metaphysical, and political absolutes. Plot's argument is based on a well-informed and wonderfully insightful reading of a range of Borges' texts.

— **Ross Poole, The New School**

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