



## CIRCLES AND MIRRORS HÉCTOR PÉREZ-BRIGNOLI

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Looking back, the beginning of our story appears like a movie: swans in the lake, the green of the trees starting to go, new friends, the intensive German course and the air of the golden fall.

Second sight: the Tuesday colloquia, the Thursday dinners, lectures, concerts, more friends, discussions, talks, new sounds and colours. Never a routine. Now I know that we started a never-ending dialog with many gods and many voices.

My personal project changed several times. But after my Tuesday colloquium in March the new outline came fast, like the spring flowers that were blossoming everywhere. Suddenly I realized that I was finding new paths to think the Latin American past and future. It was then that I began my new book and I am confident that the manuscript will be completed sometime during the next year.

I had always dreamed of the Library of Babel as imagined by Borges in his famous text of 1941. As is well-known, that was a library that contained all the books ever written

or to be written. The Wiko library, from my computer to the Weiße Villa, was the closest model of the Library of Babel I could ever imagine. Looking back now I wonder: was it real or just another dream?

At Sina Rauschenbach's initiative the kitchen of the Weiße Villa was our place to see movies and enjoy good conversations, including some wine and Spanish tapas. Ibrahima Thioub introduced us to Senegalese films and I will always remember our discussions and debates. I began to regard Latin America through the African looking glass.

Music has always been important in my life and Berlin is, of course, a musical paradise. But there was more than just music. In Berlin I experienced what could be called the immensity of memory. I remember Daniel Barenboim conducting the Alban Berg Kammerkonzert für Klavier, Violine und 13 Bläser at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden (June 14, 2009). The players were Karim Said (piano), Michael Barenboim (violin) and the soloist of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. It was marvellous, but beyond the sounds I could imagine the Bebelplatz on May 10, 1933. Just a short distance of meters and years. Suddenly I understood the T. S. Eliot verse: "Only through time time is conquered" under a new light.

We (Yolanda and I) are very grateful to the Wiko people 2008–09, the staff as well as the Fellows. It has been a wonderful year. We are walking now:

"Towards the door we never opened.  
Into the rose-garden."

Citation from: T. S. Eliot, *The Four Quartets*, "Burnt Norton" (1935).