



From Borges to Paz

By R. Viswanathan

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Jorge Luis Borges's story "The Garden of Forking Paths" was the inspiration for the title of the latest report of the Inter-American Development Bank, "The World of Forking Paths – Latin America and the Caribbean Facing Global Economic Risks". The story is about the revelation of a labyrinth that had many paths which fork again and again providing many alternative realities. The Borgesian fiction is becoming a reality. In the current Latin American economic story, many labyrinths are opening: a European labyrinth, US labyrinth, Chinese and Indian labyrinths, too. Without getting lost in them all, the Latin Americans should play their part smartly and find their best way forward.

In the past, Latin Americans had suffered from dependencies for which they blamed external forces such as the Cold War and the *Washington Consensus*. They sought a new indigenous development model based on their own strengths and problems. They have found one in the *Brasilia Consensus*, a pragmatic and balanced combination of pro-poor and pro-market policies.

For the first time in history, Latin America is politically and economically strong, confident and autonomous enough to decide its destiny internally and externally. The region has withstood the recent global crisis without too much adverse impact and passed the test of its resilience against external shocks. The global rebalancing caused by the emergence of

the BRICS and the post-western world provide Latin America with the space and time to find its own place. So now it is time for this New Latin America to think and plan for the long term.

It is this new context which provides the background for the “Regional transformation in a new global context”, the theme of the World Economic Forum on Latin America to take place in Puerto Vallarta on 16-18 April, 2012.

Octavio Paz’s “The Labyrinth of Solitude” could be an inspiration for the Puerto Vallarta meeting. Paz has interpreted India to the Latin Americans through his book “Vislumbres de la India”. In his poem “A Tale of Two Gardens”, Paz makes a connection between his childhood garden in Mixcoac and the garden of his ambassadorial residence in New Delhi, seeing the complementarity between India and Mexico. There is a larger and long-term complementarity and potential partnership between the New India and the New Latin America, which could be one of the topics for the Forum’s meeting.

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