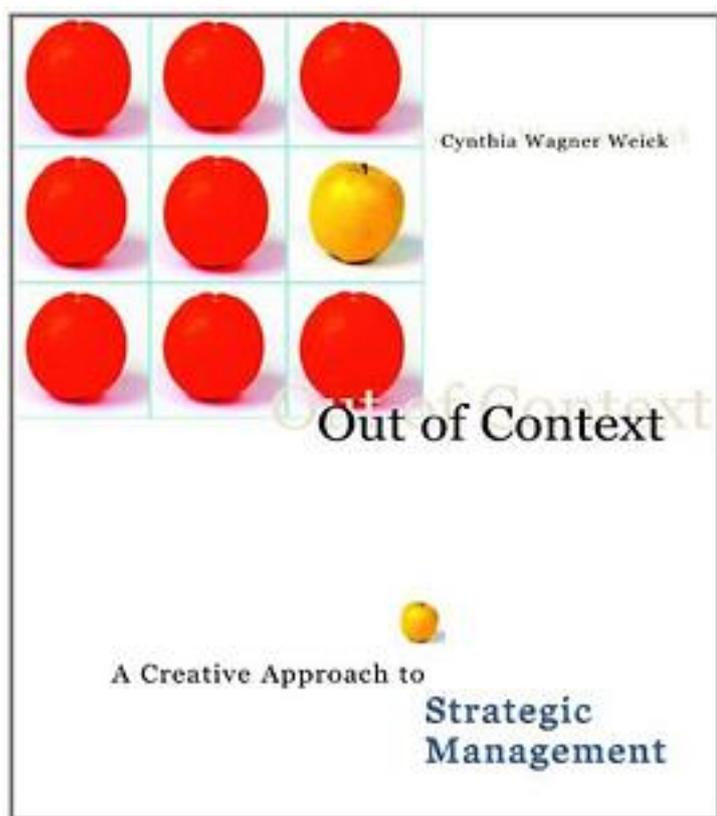


Out of Context



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*In Jorge Luis Borges's finely wrought, fantastic stories, so filigreed with strange allusions, critics have consistently found little to relate to the external world, to history--in short, to reality. Out of Context corrects this shortsighted view and reveals the very real basis of the Argentine master's purported "irreality." By providing the historical context for some of the writer's best-loved and least understood works, this study also gives us a new sense of Borges's place within the context of contemporary

literature. Through a detailed examination of seven stories, Daniel Balderston shows how Borges's historical and political references, so often misread as part of a literary game, actually open up a much more complex reality than the one made explicit to the reader. Working in tension with the fantastic aspects of Borges' work, these precise references to realities outside the text illuminate relations between literature and history as well as the author's particular understanding of both. In Borges's perspective as it is revealed here, history emerges as an "other" only partially recoverable in narrative form. From what can be recovered, Balderston is able to clarify Borges's position on historical episodes and trends such as colonialism, the Peronist movement, "Western culture," militarism, and the Spanish invasion of the Americas. Informed by a wide reading of history, a sympathetic use of critical theory, and a deep understanding of Borges's work, this iconoclastic study provides a radical new approach to one of the most celebrated and - until now - hermetic authors of our time.

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