

These ambiguities, redundances, and deficiencies recall those attributed by Dr. Franz Kuhn to a certain Chinese encyclopedia called the Heavenly Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge. In its distant pages it is written that animals are divided into

- (a) those that belong to the emperor;
- (b) embalmed ones;
- (c) those that are trained;
- (d) suckling pigs;
- (e) mermaids;
- (f) fabulous ones;
- (g) stray dogs;
- (h) those that are included in this classification;
- (i) those that tremble as if they were mad;
- (j) innumerable ones;
- (k) those drawn with a very fine camel's hair brush;
- (l) etcetera;
- (m) those that have just broken the flower vase;
- (n) those that from a long way off look like flies.¹

—Borges, *John Wilkins' Analytical Language*

¹Really: “(n) those that at a distance resemble flies.”