

For Daniel Balderston, in
appreciation of his fine studies
on Borges

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IN AND OUT OF TIME
(CERVANTES, DOSTOEVSKY, BORGES)

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"El presente es perpetuo."

Octavio Paz

*"Time travels in divers paces with divers
persons."*

Shakespeare



IN the Western tradition of storytelling, time is as much a mystery as a revelation. Willingly or not, author and reader confront it. It is the writer's, the artist's, and the musician's indispensable abstraction, a recurrent measurement or focal point in their imagination. And the imagination in its basic, creative function manipulates, expands, or (in the Eastern tradition) eliminates time at will. In that enigmatic process human drives that are either difficult or impossible to control—love, hate, dreams, hope, ecstasy, sorrow—become the mind's vital accomplices. Time, in the spirit of Borges, is inevitably our plaything.

An exploration of the mysteries of clock, calendar, heritage, and future await the reader in the most revealing episodes of *Don Quijote* (for example, in the Cave of Montesinos and in the Duke's and Duchess's palace); in the amnesia epidemic and the extended existences of people and things in *Cien años de soledad*; in Dostoevsky's deepest thoughts on the perception of death in life in several of his novels; in the ambiguous circumstances of Borges's stories; and in

H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, a fantasy in which the Time Traveller describes his view of the world in the year 802,701 A.D.

Early in Part 1 of *The Idiot*, Prince Lev Nikolayevich Myshkin comments on the intensity and fullness of time experienced by a condemned man in Lyon who is scheduled to die by the guillotine a few minutes later.

In his story "El milagro secreto," and in characteristically circuitous detail, Jorge Luis Borges creates a representative yet unique protagonist who through his circumstances is analogous to the figure mentioned by Prince Myshkin. Jaromir Hladik is a Jewish writer in Prague who is arrested in his apartment by the German Gestapo on March 19, 1939, and imprisoned.¹ Ten days later, he is executed by a firing squad. Is Borges with Hladik taking up where Dostoevsky left off? Whether or not he had the Russian's text in mind, he clearly shared his curiosity over the mental effects of imminent death and came upon the imaginary event he needed as a literary counteraction to one of the terrifying realities of Nazi power before and during World War II. With Borges's timely encouragement, God grants Hladik's special request: a year's writing time to complete his unfinished play, *Los enemigos*, before the fusillade that will wipe him out within two minutes of that psychologically agitated yet intellectually serene prayer.

Singular as it was, Hladik's experience had important antecedents. Two of them are executions referred to in *The Idiot*. As is well known, Fyodor Dostoyevsky—then a political dissident in his twenties—was escorted to a scaffold in St. Petersburg for his own execution on December 22, 1849; but the sentence was commuted just before the appointed moment and later reduced to four years in a Siberian prison. So the author knew what he and Prince Myshkin were talking about. His reference to the execution in Lyon reflects his commitment to social justice. Dostoevsky's fascination with individual human depravities did not deter him from denouncing institutionalized capital punishment as the worst of crimes. The Prince declares: "To kill for murder is an immeasurably greater evil than the crime itself. Judicial murder is immeasurably more horrible than one committed by a robber" (23).

¹ World War II had not yet begun, but in March, 1939, Germany occupied Czechoslovakia militarily, declaring it—in Adolf Hitler's euphemism—a "protectorate."

But judicial murder is also appropriate food for narrative thought (as in three of the best known Hispanic-American novels: García Márquez's *El general en su laberinto*, Carpentier's *El recurso del método*, and Asturias's *El señor Presidente*); and, further on in *The Idiot*, Dostoevsky tells of a case in which a Borgesian kind of motif is clearly discernible. Keeping in mind Jaromir Hladik's postponable death, we hear Myshkin again during his first visit with the Yepanchin family.

The episode he recalls this time—that of a 27-year-old prisoner who is reprieved minutes before his scheduled execution—is the author's reliving of his own traumatic experience (and at the same age) in St. Petersburg. Myshkin's "acquaintance," whom he has met in Switzerland, recalls that the last five minutes he had to live "seemed to him an eternity, an immense richness" (63). Of those last five minutes he would allot two to saying goodbye to his fellow prisoners: two more "to reflect on himself," and with what was left "to look about him for the last time" (63). The reflecting and looking in his final minute entail a strange existential awareness. Ultimately "he would merely be *something*—something or somebody, but who, though? And where?" (63–64). His quandary is intensified at that point by the sun's gleam on the gilded roof of a church close by. "He couldn't drag his eyes away: it occurred to him that those rays were his new state of being, and that in three minutes he would somehow merge with them" (64). The sunlight image offers him his intimation of eternity.

However, there is a notable difference of emotions between Jaromir Hladik and Dostoevsky's figure, which could be taken as a clear reflection of the difference between their authors' characters. Whereas Dostoevsky's condemned man reacts temperamentally, Borges's protagonist surmounts his dread. In contrast to Hladik's role as intellectual winner and his consequent feeling of gratitude for a qualified lease on life, Myshkin's friend's reaction as the unequivocal loser is one of rage and resentment. With so little time left he is overwhelmed by the clash between his desire for survival and the certainty of his extinction. "What if I didn't have to die! If life were returned to me—what an eternity it would be! And it would be all mine! I would turn every minute into an age" (64). These reflections, like Hladik's, pointedly separate for each character the zones of mental life and physical existence. That is, they give us the paradox—dear to both Dostoevsky and Borges—of contradictory

spaces and times. In both “El milagro secreto” and the condemned-man episode in *The Idiot*, the longer period is poetically compressed within the shorter one. Thus, Hladik gets his year of writing time encapsulated within two minutes, and Dostoevsky’s figure imagines himself turning “every minute into an age.”² The phenomenon had come to light before, of course, in the Montesinos episodes in Part II of *Don Quijote*, when the knight emerges from the cave:

—¿Cuánto ha que bajé?—preguntó don Quijote.

—Poco más de una hora—respondió Sancho. (708)

Here, as in *The Idiot* and “El milagro secreto,” contradictory times are in play. Has a little over an hour passed, as Sancho Panza says? Or has the hallucinating explorer been down there—as he steadfastly claims—for three days and nights? In the knight’s and the squire’s fictional realm neither testimony need be denied. Each experience has been *lived* as described. The author was fully aware that physical and mental times do not necessarily coincide, that our intervals in a waking state or in a dream—though often thrown together in memory—can function independently of each other.

Cervantes’s art, like that of his intellectual descendant, Borges, is vibrantly visual: not in a sensuality of color, texture or landscape, nor in a precision of portraiture; but in the kinds of gesture and perception—often presented in dialogue—that intensify unexpected perceptions and capitalize on frequent invasions of the real by the unreal. It is visual in what could be called a choreography of situations. Dulcinea and the same two country girls with whom the Don saw her before (Part II, ch. 10) execute *cabriolas* across the dream stage of Montesinos. Much earlier (I, 8) Don Quijote collides spec-

² Cases of a perpetual present in “real life” are not hard to find. For example, astronauts regularly attest to a loss of sense of time caused by their altered bio-rhythms while in gravity-free space. Day and night merge, they say, and calendars and clocks are irrelevant when one is stationed or moving in orbit for an extended period.

The emotions can also be decisive in the suspension of time. Anne Morrow Lindbergh (1906–2001)—a talented testimonial writer as well as the wife and co-pilot of a celebrity—refers to the kidnapping and death of her first child in 1932 in this way: “Everything since then has been unreal. It has all vanished like smoke. Only that *eternal moment* [my emphasis] remains. I feel strangely a sense of peace—not peace, but an end to restlessness, a finality, as though I were sleeping in a grave.” (Quoted by Eric Pace in “Anne Morrow Lindbergh is Dead at 94,” *New York Times*, February 8, 2001, page A29.)

tacularly with one of the giants disguised as windmills. Later (II, 41) a magic voyage is staged (literally) in the Duke's palace. The notions of a real world and real time are displaced by the use of blindfolds and, with Sancho seated behind him on Clavileño, Quijote flies into virtual space, following the virtual route of Icarus, and his squire has no doubt that they have reached "la región del fuego," simulated by a group of stage technicians with burning tufts (*estopas*) suspended on poles near the travelers' faces.

As for the Cave of Montesinos, the question becomes not only how long Don Quijote is there, but what he sees, how extensive a space it is, precisely what and whom he finds (or thinks or dreams he finds) in it, and—beyond that—the multifarious suggestions of the knight's continuing will to believe in a lost world of fantasy despite the steadily emerging evidence throughout Part II of its non-existence. Don Quijote is seldom credited with the prudence or rationality of planning ahead, but on this occasion he has the foresight to buy a hundred fathoms of rope, which as a precaution will be tied around his waist for the descent. The long length adds mystery to the cave adventure at the beginning, an effect which is comically diminished on Quijote's trip back up, when his weight is felt only as the last 20 fathoms are being hauled in. Cervantes is discreetly showing us, with what seems to be only a casual detail, that the Don's subterranean wonderland is psychologically closer to reality up on the surface than one would expect. The excited adventurer, it should be recalled, has an energetic collaborator on the Montesinos project. The guide who has led him and Sancho to the cave identifies himself as a *humanista* and dedicated researcher (he is a cousin of the university student who appears previously [II, 19]). The guide ("el primo") is composing a book, *Transformaciones*, a most appropriate title in the context of the cave exploration to follow.³ The guide recommends wariness and urges Quijote to examine "con cien ojos

³ This work in progress (*Transformaciones*), we should note, is only the tip of the *primo's* bibliographical iceberg. Another of his projects is a treatise on *las libreas* (703 of them, no less), composed to cover all the levels of servant protocol and illustrated "con sus colores, motes y cifras." Then come *Metamorfóseos*, subtitled *Ovidio español* and *Suplemento a Virgilio Polidoro* ("que trata de la invención de las cosas").

Is Cervantes, who minutely parodies the chivalric style and motifs in the Cueva de Montesinos chapters and many others, also mocking in his description of these works the intricacies of academic writing in his era (and many subsequent eras)?

lo que hay allá dentro" (699). Indeed, as the knight undertakes his hallucinated exploration, there will be plenty for the hundred eyes to elaborate on.

Before he could take in the anticipated sights, Quijote recalls, he fell into a deep sleep and later awoke (or thought he awoke) on a meadow that surpassed in beauty anything that nature or the imagination could have created. He rubbed his eyes and pinched himself to make sure he was who and where he seemed to be. Before him was "un real y suntuoso palacio o alcázar, cuyos muros y paredes parecían de transparente y claro cristal," from which old Montesinos himself emerges and invites him in (703).

The imagination, I noted at the outset, manipulates, expands or eliminates time at will, especially when it works within the flexible dimensions of a dream. That is, in the time-and-space scramble that dreams set in motion, the imagination is freer to reconstruct things and make congruous the incongruous than it is in a state of conscious operation.⁴ Thus an emblem and flower of knighthood long gone—Montesinos's cousin and close friend Durandarte—is dramatically present in a large dream palace within a small cave, decorously laid out on a sepulcher. And his figure is not of marble, stone, or bronze, "sino de pura carne y de puros huesos" (704). Moreover, since living or dead he is there in *enchanted* form, Durandarte has no need to eat, or to relieve himself of "escrementos mayores" (709). Neither does he have to sleep, and he can listen and talk. Life enhanced by death, death transformed by life: literary enchantment has given Durandarte the best of both worlds.

Clearly, both Don Quijote and Prince Myshkin are enchanters, or would-be enchanters, in their own right; Myshkin perceives life sporadically, as in a series of trances, the way he wants it to be. Thus, at the memorable soirée near the end of Part 1, he finds in the

⁴ The time-and-space scramble that often prevails in Don Quijote's mind is also a factor in Graham Greene's amusing reincarnation of the old knight in *Monsignor Quixote*. Father Quixote is a priest from El Toboso faithfully accompanied throughout the book by Enrique Zancas (alias Sancho Panza), a Communist ex-mayor of the same town. The Monsignor's mental state evolves in the opposite direction of Don Quijote's, i.e., from rationality toward a lucid kind of madness. He lives his final hours in a delirium of feverish gestures and words, including irreverent remarks about a few of his fellow clergymen, a convoluted rendering of the Mass in Latin, and the solemn conviction that "a fart can be musical" (213).

tarnished Nastasya a Dulcinea of his own: "In you everything is perfection," he declares (148). Don Quijote and the Prince are also similarly subjected to frequent and diverse disillusionments, and each is progressively destroyed by a singular inability to cope with the less than ideal conditions of his contemporary world. Or, to put it another way, each persists in living his own (impossible) time within another (inevitable) time.

Circumstantially and psychologically, of course, Lev Nikolayevich Myshkin and the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance have much less in common. The former is generally docile and often childlike in demeanor, sensing that he cannot set things right in a world he sees (tragically) as beyond his control; and young women like the volatile Nastasya Filippovna, a rich man's ex-mistress, and the impressionable and candid Aglaya Yepanchina are strongly attracted to him. By contrast, Don Quijote confronts (comically) everything he believes is unjust or evil; he flaunts his chivalric book-learning and seeks out trouble with exuberant self-confidence; and he appeals to no woman as a possible husband or lover.

Nevertheless, as Alan Trueblood has pointed out in his lucid essay "Dostoevski and Cervantes," several characters in *The Idiot* discover a spiritual bond between the Prince and Don Quijote. In the first chapter of Part II, Dostoevsky has Aglaya Yepanchina leave (inadvertently) a love note from the Prince in one of her books. When she realizes a week later that the book is *Don Quijote*, she bursts out laughing "for no apparent reason" (198). Called "the poor knight" by Kolya and some others further on (259-62, 264-65, 267, 335), the Prince is repeatedly shown as vulnerable to the selfish or devious intentions of others, especially those of Parfion Rogozhin, his satanic moral countertype and Nastasya's eventual murderer. Both Myshkin and Don Quijote incite in their observers a mixture of ridicule and compassion. George Steiner reminds us that the Prince is "a composite figure with borrowings from Cervantes, Pushkin, and Dickens. His meekness, his unwordly wisdom, his immaculateness of heart—all of which are traits of the implicit Christ, are conveyed in the course of action" (293). These qualities—albeit in the comic dimension that Dostoevsky saw Don Quijote and in the tragically flawed (yet Christ-like) role that his own protagonist is destined to play—are also what give each character his aura of a timeless being. Having almost completed *The Idiot* in early 1868, he wrote to his niece that

in Myshkin he wanted “to depict the positively good man,” and “of all the good figures in Christian literature, Don Quixote is the most complete.”⁵ The underlying paradox that unites Quijote and Myshkin could be called a spiritual oxymoron. That is: each of them is, or feels he is, a timeless being forced (like Christ, both as Savior and Martyr) to live in a finite, contentious, time-infested world.

One of Borges’s predestined tasks may have been a creative reduction of Dostoevsky’s anti-epic gloom. Whereas the Russian seems driven to existential desperation in his life-and-death thoughts and the temperamental performances of several of his characters, Borges finds (with the assistance of the idealist philosophers he reads) a strange stoic (and aesthetic) consolation when faced with the same problems. The author of *El aleph* and *Ficciones* addresses us from a vantage point in his perpetual present; he is the master manipulator of Time in a variety of abstract playhouses.

Throughout his fictions and other prose, Borges works within a kind of intellectual immunity that lets him reach—in aesthetic and philosophical ways—spectacularly unreal yet persuasive conclusions. Accordingly, in two meticulous, mathematically documented essays, “Avatares de la tortuga” and “La perpetua carrera de Aquiles y la tortuga,” his rabbit-like Aquiles, even though he runs ten times faster than the tortoise can crawl, fails to win a handicap race between them. More precisely, the author makes it theoretically impossible for the race to end. In both pieces he utilizes Zeno’s “Second Paradox” of infinity: “Aquiles corre diez veces más ligero que la tortuga y le da diez metros de ventaja” (*Discusión* 97). Thus, while Aquiles runs those ten meters, the tortoise walks one; then, while Aquiles runs his next meter, the turtle advances a decimeter, after which Aquiles moves a decimeter, barely contested by the tortoise’s centimeter, and so on, *ad infinitum*. The result, then, is that there can be no result; the slowing-down process is unalterably progressive, and the end—the moment of the end—is perpetually postponed.

The time-suspension pattern is not limited to these two evocations of Zeno’s paradox. Borges follows it in the unfinished dénouement of “El sur”—“Dahlmann empuña con firmeza el cuchillo, que acaso no sabrá manejar, y sale a la llanura” (*Ficciones* 195)—and, as

⁵ Quoted by William Leatherbarrow in his Introduction to *The Idiot*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. xv.

we have seen, in the one-year writing permit devised for "El milagro secreto." It also prevails in "Las ruinas circulares," in the ongoing dream of "another" who, in the last sentence of the story, is found to be directing the narrator's existence.

Just as time is readily expendable, in several stories it is subject to division or multiplication, or to strange convergences in the characters' experiences. Thus, in "El sur," Juan Dahlmann takes his real or virtual train trip south to the lonely place on the pampa and arrives at the *pulpería* (*almacén*), where he is confronted by one of the rowdy gauchos. Borges suggests to the reader that the *essential* Juan Dahlmann—a hybrid of the timid, cosmopolitan reader of *The Arabian Nights* and the involuntary knife-fighter—is the one who accepts his fate as certain victim in the imminent duel with his offender. The essential Juan Dahlmann, of course, is literally and figuratively a dreamer, strapped to an operating table in Buenos Aires, who thinks (in the subjunctive): "*hubiera sido una liberación . . . , una felicidad y una fiesta*" (195) to die heroically in the time and style of Martín Fierro. Here, as in "El milagro secreto," Borges places his protagonist in two contrasting temporal scenarios: Dahlmann in the Buenos Aires clinic about to be anaesthetized; and Dahlmann as he departs with a borrowed dagger to face his aggressor on the pampa. These parallel outcomes evolve convincingly in the reader's imagination. The "closure" or *how* the story ends is strongly implied (timid and never having been in a knife-fight, Dahlmann is not likely to survive) but is unimportant in itself. Stated another way, the artistic and psychological impact of the outcome is concentrated in a tragic presentiment, which in turn is conveyed and intensified by the end's indefinite postponement.

Enamored as he is of metaphysical hypotheses, the author of *Ficciones* further exploits the potential of time in "El jardín de los senderos que se bifurcan" and "Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." In the former, Ts'ui Pen is the author of a mysterious manuscript—"un libro y un laberinto"—that are one and the same. As explained by the Sinologist Stephan Albert to Ts'ui Pen's great grandson, the manuscript entitled *El jardín de los senderos que se bifurcan* is a "chaotic novel." Not only is time its central theme, the work also activates Ts'ui Pen's image—"incompleta pero no falsa"—of the universe. It is a metaphor of Borges's concept of multiple times, including all the "possible ones" (just as "La biblioteca de Babel" contains on its shelves all books to be written in the future as well as those already

written). Ts'ui Pen believed, we recall, "en infinitas series de tiempos, en una red creciente y vertiginosa de tiempos divergentes, convergentes y paralelos" (109).

"Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" is Borges's clearest exaggeration of time. His story is based on the assumption that a temporal planet (i.e., not spatial or physical) can acquire existence through the will and imagination of a secret society of experts in the arts and sciences, directed in turn by "un oscuro hombre de genio" (19). There is an insinuation (20) that the secret society owes gratitude to George Berkeley, who in 1941 may have flipped immaterially in his grave when Borges carried the philosopher's idealism to the extreme of writing that on Tlon all is temporal and successive; nothing is spatial. Even the planet's languages have no nouns, and its objects exist only as visual and auditive phenomena. Further, those objects can be called up and disposed of in a moment, "según las *necesidades poéticas*" (21; my emphasis) of the observer concerned.

It could be said that "poetic necessities" are the main determinant in Cervantes's and Dostoevsky's as well as in Borges's elaborations on time. For Cervantes and his figurative "stepson" ("aunque parezco padre, soy padraastro de Don Quijote," he tells us in the Prologue) time is something dreamed in the form of adventures that are also explorations. Were the descent (inward) in the Cave of Montesinos and the incense-laden false flight in the Palace of the Duke and Duchess gentle parodies of the expeditions (outward) and colonial operations in the New World—a region possibly alluded to also in the chapters on Sancho Panza's governorship of the *Ínsula Barataria* (i.e., a colony questionably granted and questionably administered for what Cervantes considers a bargain price: *barato*)? Or is his tenure in office of just ten days—as he seems to suggest in his letter (a *carta de relación*) to Don Quijote (912–14)—more specifically another opportunity perhaps for Cervantes to criticize small-town corruption in peninsular Spain itself?⁶

⁶ In his note in *The Journal of Higher Education* Scott Heller refers to Diana de Armas Wilson's recent book, *Cervantes, the Novel, and The New World*, commenting that "Ms. Wilson is among the scholars trying to circumvent an us-versus-them scenario by calling for a 'transatlantic' literary study, reading Spanish texts in relation to the New World."

I am grateful to Carlos J. Alonso for referring me to Heller's note and Armas Wilson's book.

Cervantes, Dostoevsky and Borges, it seems clear, had concepts of time that illuminated a shared intuition—mainly psychological, but also intellectual and historical—that led their protagonists towards an ultimate stasis or inertia.

Borges's figures are left (like Julio Cortázar's Horacio Oliveira, poised on the upstairs windowsill of an insane asylum as *Rayuela* ends) suspended in fixed *tableaux*: Hladik stands before a firing squad whose bullets are speeding toward him; Dahlmann clumsily wields his dagger before the imminent fight; in Carlos Argentino's basement the poet-narrator of "El Aleph" has a "simultaneous" vision (i.e., fixed, free of time) of the universe that can be transcribed only in "successive" language (i.e., the prisoner of time); and the tortoise and Aquiles move slower and slower toward a standstill.

For Dostoevsky the basic metaphor is pathological. The "poor knight" in *The Idiot* gravitates hopelessly toward his final immobilization. His young life has the aura of a timeless existence enclosing a series of emotional dilemmas. The author portrays Russian society of his time as a convergence of fatefully outspoken, self-destructive individuals, subject in their dialogues and stage-like social encounters to choleric excesses. What appear to be momentary caprices or whims are really symptoms of deep obsessions. Temperament is the force behind their behavior. When Gavril Ardalianovich Ivolgin (Ganya) declares his love to Aglaya, she demands that he prove it by holding his finger to a candle flame (610). With Prince Myshkin waiting nervously in church for the wedding ceremony to begin, his fiancée, Nastasya Filippovna, catches the aristocrat Rogozhin's eye in the crowd outside and shouts "Save me! Take me away! Wherever you like—now!" (629). This is the same woman who, as the volatile hostess of the soirée in Part 1, had placed Rogozhin's intended engagement gift, a stack of 100,000 rubles, in the fireplace and as it began to burn promised to marry the first man to retrieve it. The culminating impulsive act, of course, will be Rogozhin's murder of Nastasya; a short time after her rescue, her savior will be her killer. On his discovery of Nastasya's cadaver, with the glaring-eyed Rogozhin as his guide, Myshkin enters his final phase of helplessness and no longer recognizes the people around him. The intelligent and sensitive "poor knight" who has so lucidly seen through the blustering pretensions of his contemporaries ends up as the consummate idiot, a Don Quijote in reverse, with no chance of recovering his reason. The intensity of his vision through most of the novel, like the

intensity of Don Quijote's chivalric readings, appears to have been the source of his mental deterioration.

From Cervantes to Borges the process of the disappearing hero in literature is unmistakable. Nevertheless, that decline has paradoxically coincided with an increase in self-curiosity that ranges from fascination to scorn. The preoccupation with self has brought author and characters psychologically closer together and has subtly provoked a sharper critical view of reality. Critical acumen, after all, is the foundation on which comedy is built, and Ortega y Gasset has correctly seen in *Meditaciones del Quijote* that comedy has for the most part displaced tragedy in the modern mind. "La transferencia del carácter heroico desde la *voluntad* a la *percepción* [my emphasis] causa la involución de la tragedia, su desmoronamiento, su comedia" (131).

The perception, to be sure, is what remains with us. Prince Myshkin has been unceremoniously returned to the Swiss clinic, and left in bed with glazed eyes and mouth open. Juan Dahlmann, unfamiliar dagger in hand, approaches his adversary (or dreams that he approaches him) on a darkened pampa. A sense of relative finality prevails in Don Quijote's case. The hero has died and Sansón Carrasco has written his epitaph. Yet the question persists: is the Knight's return and repudiation of magical adventure and his final calm self-recognition a spiritual triumph or a poetic loss? Should Unamuno, in his *Vida de Don Quijote y Sancho*, have used Quijote's death as the ultimate symbol of his immortality? "La muerte es nuestra inmortalizadora" (III, 253). The question itself—the fact that it has been asked—lends credence to Ortega's idea of perception: the images of Cervantes's, Dostoevsky's, and Borges's protagonists belong to our age as well as to their own. But the ultimate nature and significance of that survival is something that each reader has to determine.

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