

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN HYBRID COMMUNITIES:  
JOSÉ MARÍA ARGUEDAS AS SIGNIFIER

by  
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## ABSTRACT

Global migrations of the past century have forced many cultural groups to confront issues ranging from urban isolation to acculturated absorption. Major population shifts have resulted in the relocation of peoples of divergent backgrounds to convergent and crowded environs, and in the process, have forced individuals to grapple with their own identity. Peruvian author and ethno-anthropologist José María Arguedas personifies that reality. Indeed, I argue that Arguedas's fictional writings anticipated those dramatic changes and their consequences, and are emblematic of the cultural turmoil of 20<sup>th</sup> century Peru, which itself is a microcosm of issues that concern many Third World populations in the postmodern era worldwide.

While some critics argue that Arguedas's style rejects postmodern traits, I make the case that his work is transitional, moving from the modern to the postmodern and that from the outset his fiction contains integral structures that decidedly fall into the latter category. Furthermore, I disagree with other critics' evaluations of Arguedas's work as simplistic and utopic, and argue that it demonstrates a complexity of vision that presages emerging events. Components of that vision include his creation of a new hybrid language, his expression of complex hybrid identity constructions among the subaltern and the hegemonic in rural performance and societal interaction, and magical real elements of autochthonous cosmovision that are widespread today. The internalized tensions resulting from hybridities of heritage that impede self-actualization are central to

understanding his novels, informing the fractured postmodern personality. Further, I argue that Arguedas uses his personal experience of incarceration to reveal the prison as another fragmenting location of both the abject and the sublime. His final and most controversial work reveals postmodern society as a chaotic melding of modern-day capitalistic greed churning in today's urban vortex combined with ancient mythical performance as a comedic yet assertive language of cultural resistance, with the individual identity caught precipitously in the middle. Through his work, Arguedas is a prophetic signifier of the hybrid world with which we struggle today.

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## INTRODUCTION

During the latter half of the twentieth century, literary analysis experienced substantial transformation, as the focus on close readings melded with approaches weighted in literary theory and cultural studies. Largely due to twentieth and twenty-first century international diasporas and global economic pressures, discourse that confronts societal and personal lifestyle issues and perspectives from the exterior, via travel and exile writing, currently abounds, while other literary constructions and their readings, developed in communities at the hybridized fringes of society, have also moved to a prominent position. Globalization has amplified our perspective on cultural issues ranging from urban isolation to acculturated absorption. Although such topics are not new, their discussion has intensified in recent years. A seeming vortex of perspectives and approaches to contemporary literature and its study continually accelerates, attracting and creating new and differing possibilities from its combinations that mirror the complexity of life in this century, leaving the trajectory of the study of literature muddled and uncertain. Like the individual of the twenty-first century, the analytical examination of literature as an artistic form seems to have lost its *raison d'être* as a result of these various changes. The individual's identity has been called into question due to population growth and shifts, resulting in urban crucibles that connect peoples from divergent societal, geographical, and cultural locations in close proximity.

In this work, I argue that the changes that have occurred in Andean literature are reflective of the larger scene, and that one twentieth century Latin American author in particular, José María Arguedas, lived in a very personal way the societal, global, economic and political changes that scholars identify as the core of contemporary intellectual debate. That scholarly discussion focuses on global advantages and disadvantages that have contributed to the creation of new and powerful cultural, governmental, and financial dynamics that are reshaping local, national, and international modes of interaction. By examining Arguedas's work, we can see how he anticipated these dramatic changes and their consequences. The progression of Arguedas's writings intimately reflects his own personal, literary, professional, and political trajectory, yet also incorporates this global evolution. I have elected to examine José María Arguedas's writings as emblematic of the turmoil of twentieth century Peru and a microcosm of issues that concern Third World populations throughout the world not only during the years he wrote but now as well. Furthermore, Arguedas's work has had a greater impact sociologically than the writings of other more internationally recognized authors from his region. Hence, consideration of his works addresses the issues that confront literary studies today.

Understanding the context in which Arguedas wrote requires exposure to other writers that were influential to his work, its perspective, style, and message. The most prominent Andean contributors, principally drawn from the canon, include the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Juan León Mera, Clorinda Matto de Turner, Alcides Arguedas, José Carlos Mariátegui, César Vallejo, Jorge Icaza, and Ciro Alegría. Other well-known Latin American authors of his generation who peripherally impacted Arguedas's writing

include such “Boom” authors as Juan Rulfo, Carlos Fuentes, Julio Cortázar, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Gabriel García Marquez. While Arguedas read their works and knew these authors personally, his style is largely unique, manifesting his inherently proud Peruvian roots rather than turning to the influence of postmodern Europe. In contrast to the postmodern “Boom,” which brought fame and recognition to Latin American writing, with the exception of his final novel, Arguedas follows the straightforward, conventional narrative style reminiscent of earlier Andean writers. However, while conventional in narrative form, Arguedas’s voice, content, and perspective are unique and instructive of his cultural heritage and the changes occurring therein. While Arguedas abhorred the experimentation of some of his literary colleagues, his final novel surprisingly reflects a dramatic transition to a very postmodern potpourri of genres inspired by those writers.

Fundamental to Arguedas’s repertoire of topics, the indigenous figure prominently. Although his writings are not unique in that regard, a brief summary of the origin and progression of Andean literature focused on the indigenous and its key texts provides the context necessary to introduce and distinguish Arguedas’s works from those of his predecessors. The Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, who wrote *Los Comentarios Reales*, first published in Lisbon in 1609, is notable in that he is the first to write the story of the region from the perspective of a *mestizo*, the bastard son of a Spanish noble and an Inca princess. His representation of the grandeur and stature that should be accorded the Incan civilization bears an authenticity that other accounts lack while his narrative initiates the process of validating the indigenous. Later, *Cumandá*, published in 1871, by Ecuadorian author Juan León Mera, idealized the indigenous people to the extent of creating a kind of exotic and embellished stereotype, derived from Rousseau’s image of corruption of the

“good savage” (Rodriguez and Filer 122). Such was the style denominated *Indianismo*, the idealization and romanticizing of Spanish American indians.

Typically, Latin American letters treat the indigenous from two perspectives: realism or romanticism. However, *Aves sin nido*, written by Clorinda Matto de Turner and published in 1889, a self-professed sympathizer and crusader for the rights of the Andean Indians and openly anticlerical, seems to be a traditional text that falls into the category of romanticism as well as realism because of its *constumbrista* style. However, her moralistic reformist approach and sentimentality detract from a sense of Matto de Turner as a realist (Shaw 46).

*Indigenismo*, in which writers revealed the painful social plight of the indigenous peoples more realistically, superseded *Indianismo*. Reflective of this movement are works by Alcides Arguedas of Bolivia, Jorge Icaza of Ecuador, and Peruvians César Vallejo and Ciro Alegría. Within the new *indigenista/indigenismo*, realistic depiction showed that for centuries existence for the subaltern indigenous of the Andes changed little to none, whether under colonial feudal rule or live following national independence movements. The feudal *hacendados* merely became wealthy semifeudal, semi-capitalistic landowners in the newly established nations of the nineteenth century. Reflective of that perspective are *Raza de bronce*, published in 1919 by Alcides Arguedas, *Huacipungo* by Jorge Icaza, published in 1934, and *El mundo es ancho y ajeno*, published in 1941 by Ciro Alegría (Shaw 45). In *Raza de bronce*, Alcides Arguedas recedes from the sentimentality of prior authors and focuses on the land as fundamental to the world view of the Andean indigenous. It is the indian and his unrelenting bond to the land that is the common thread that binds these works. Icaza’s *Huacipungo* expands the theme of the

destruction of the indigenous lifestyle to include hegemonic landlords who sell out to North American companies, interjecting a new layer of capitalism in a traditionally socialistic society (Shaw, 46). While Ciro Alegría adds to the criticism of the *gamonales*, their hegemony, and their destruction of the traditional life style of the *indios*, he includes an additional component that will appear in José María Arguedas's works: the flight of the *indios* to other geographical regions in search of work, a decision that is even more disastrous (Shaw 48). Land and the *indio*'s visceral connection to the land is the dominant theme as he struggles against all odds to maintain a semblance of the communal agricultural existence that has been his focus for centuries. The hegemonic control the land for their own benefit and profit at the expense of the indigenous tenant farmers.

A second category involves works that are unabashedly Marxist in approach. *El Tungsteno* by César Vallejo of Peru, published in 1931, characterizes that perspective. Written while Vallejo lived in Europe, and intended for a European readership, the novel is a strong political statement promoting Marxist communism, exposing the abuses of foreign investment in the mining industry of Peru and its consequent destruction of indigenous communality as well as promoting a workers' rebellion in response to such treatment.

It is important to note that *indigenismo* was not just a literary movement. As political philosopher and activist José Carlos Mariátegui states, "Los 'indigenistas auténticos' —que no deben ser confundidos con los que explotan temas indígenas por mero 'exotismo'—colaboran, conscientemente o no, en una obra política y económica de reivindicación —no de restauración ni resurrección" (Mariátegui 219).

The *indianista* and *indigenista* works led into what some have termed *neoindigenismo*, a style unique to writings of José María Arguedas, the genesis of which stems from his own background. Born to *criollo* parents, his mother died when he was an infant, and his father soon remarried a woman of some means. The stepmother's antipathy for José resulted in him sleeping in the kitchen with the Indian servants who raised him until he was old enough to leave and live with other indigenous groups that befriended him. He traveled extensively with his father, an itinerant lawyer who wandered from town to town in search of work. Hence, Arguedas fits into the category of travel writers as one who became such due to living in exile from his own home, a state which was partially imposed on him and partially self-imposed. Arguedas has the unusual ability of writing from both sides of the social spectrum as well as along its continuum, having been raised as an *indio* while from a *mestizo* background, and yet actually belonging to neither.<sup>1</sup> Earlier authors were able to look from the outside into the indigenous world, but were unable to cross the boundary of what might be termed “authenticity” because of their own roots. While “authenticity” is a subject of much

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<sup>1</sup> The terms “mestizo” and “criollo” in Peru have mixed meanings. Generally speaking the *criollo* refers to persons of Spanish heritage who are born in the Americas while *mestizo* refers to a person of Spanish and indigenous blood. However, according to Mariátegui, “El criollo no está netamente definido. Hasta ahora la palabra ‘criollo’ no es casi más que un término que nos sirve para designar genéricamente una pluralidad, muy matizada, de mestizos....El criollo presenta aquí (en el Perú) una serie de variedades. El costeño se diferencia fuertemente del serrano. En tanto que en la Sierra la influencia telúrica indigeniza al mestizo, casi hasta su absorción por el espíritu indígena, en la Costa el predominio colonial mantiene el espíritu heredado de España.”(Mariátegui, *Siete ensayos*, 218). However, Mariátegui adds at a later point that “El criollo peruano no ha acabado aún de emanciparse espiritualmente de España. Su europeización —a través de la cual debe encontrar, por reacción su personalidad—no se ha cumplido sino en parte. Una vez europeizado, el criollo de hoy difícilmente deja de darse cuenta del drama del Perú” (Mariátegui, *Siete ensayos*, 219).

Mario Vargas Llosa expresses a deprecatory opinion of the Indian and the process of ‘mestizaje’: “Indian peasants live in such a primitive way that Communications is practically impossible. It is only when they move to the cities that they have the opportunity to mingle with the other Peru. The price they must pay for integration is high—renunciation of their culture, their language, their beliefs, their traditions, and customs, and the adoption of the culture of their ancient masters. After one generation they become mestizos. They are no longer Indians” (Vargas Llosa, “Questions of Conquest”). The term “cholo” is more commonly used by both Alegría and Arguedas to refer to mestizos who have become Europeanized, while “mestizo” retains its hereditary significance.

debate, at least it can be said Arguedas's writing genuinely springs from inside the *indio* community but is geared to a Spanish-speaking readership since most indigenous people did not read in any language.<sup>2</sup> His representations are equally unique for the sensitivity his persona brings to them. The purpose of this study, then, is to examine those representations and their contribution to the singularity of his style, a style that evolves to a tragic presaging of twenty-first century global issues that confound us today.

Before examining further the elements which contribute to Arguedas's unique style, it is important to locate the *Indianista*, *Indigenista*, and *Neoindigenista* genres in the larger framework of twentieth century Latin American literary trends. As indicated earlier, Arguedas differed from Boom contemporaries because he did not readily adopt the European "vanguardista" experimentation (Shaw 71). Nonetheless, his style did evolve in that direction, culminating in his last work which clearly is considered postmodern.

The earlier *indigenista* and regionalist novels typically followed a traditional linear development scheme reminiscent of Realist novels of the nineteenth century but at the same time reacted against them. The indigenistas held the creation and expression of a summarily Latin American reality as one of their objectives. That reality was tied to the rich and distinct natural landscape and environment of Latin America, often referred to as *la novela de la tierra* (Shaw 69). Gonzalez Echevarría is of the opinion that the genre was passé, and that there is a "myth of nature and its organic coherence" that passed its point of relevance due to a questionable correspondence between language and nature/reality. "This correspondence assures the close relationship between signs and

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<sup>2</sup> William Rowe names Guamán Poma de Ayala and José María Arguedas as the two fluent Quechua speakers whose work sought to fortify and expand an understanding of the Quechua native traditions by describing them in Spanish for the literate population.

things, between writing and the world. At the same time, however, modern literature is founded on a radical doubt as to whether such a correspondence exists, whether there really is a congruity between the world and the signs that presumably express it” (González Echevarría 44).

Hence, the trends of European Modernism expressed in the experimentalism of the Vanguardist movement of the 1920s resulted in a break with nineteenth century Realism in Latin America, a rupture that was obvious by the 1960s but began gradually as early as the close of the second decade of the twentieth century. Donald Shaw succinctly notes that the “chiasma” resulted from a difference of vision:

Writers in the Realist tradition were assumed to have (and believed that they had) some sort of privileged vision, an access to epistemological truth or a deeper, objective knowledge of how things are. Modernist authors, on the other hand, tend to privilege individual, subjective consciousness, a retreat from straight representation writing and, partly as a consequence, innovations in technique, which often require the reader to make a readjustment both to a different angle of vision on the human condition and new ways of figuring it forth (Shaw 70).

I contend that Arguedas bridges that divide with Realist protest literature that also is experimental.

Imbedded in Arguedas’s novels is a wide range of representations of his conflicted values stemming from his roots, emotionally truncated at an early age, and his personal aspirations, transmuted into his goals for Peruvian society. The breadth of representational modalities that he employs in his writing to express his thoughts reflects that expansiveness as well as the complexity of the familial hand he was dealt. Woven into his narratives are structures that reveal and are inspired by his personal sensibilities to his environment as well as to his conflicted inner being.

One such modality associated with postmodernism but which was also a central concern of Arguedas is a questioning of language and meaning. D. I. Slobin states that rather than representing ideas, language brings those ideas to the fore. There is no direct thought process or map that creates linguistic expression. Instead, it is a highly selective schematic map because central to language is the assumption that much of a message may be left unsaid due to mutual understanding between speaker and listener or those involved in a conversation (in Clark 18). Furthermore, the “schematic” among languages may vary, a reiteration of Whorf’s earlier statement: “Users of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars towards different types of observations and different evaluations of externally similar acts of observation” (221). Additionally, because grammatical requirements differ, the speakers express only that which is required by the language, and that may be different from what the person actually has in mind. The details selected may depend on the language the person speaks (Clark 18). (For example, in Quechua, the origin of the statement is important, indicating whether or not the statement is reportative, or the opinion or experience of the person speaking.) What is seen may vary, depending on the observer. Each word choice is indicative of a conceptual perspective selected by the speaker to refer to a specific idea or object based on a particular incident or occasion (Clark 21). As Foucault explains the phenomenon, “there can be no sign until there exists a *known* possibility of substitution between two *known* elements. The sign does not wait in silence for the coming of a man capable of recognizing it: it can be constituted only by an act of knowing” (Foucault, *Order* 59). That “knowing” may be available in a wide variety of representations in a breadth of cultures that convey meaning across a broad spectrum of mechanisms. I choose to call

those mechanisms languages. Those “languages” are signs of the multiple representations that Arguedas employs in his novels to illuminate the underpinnings of the culture in its profundity of feelings, attachments, meanings and ubiquitous stabilizers that the peoples of the Andes call up in identity construction.

Arguedas’s unique biography allowed him to write about his culture and country from the insider’s gaze. Given that meaning depends on the relationship between a sign and a concept established by some kind of a code, or representational system (language) based on social conventions, it is culturally and historically based. His intimate knowledge allows him to understand that culture. While ‘slippage’ in meaning will occur over time within that culture, it nonetheless remains of that culture (Culler, 1976 36). Because every signifier encoded with meaning must be interpreted or decoded by the receiver of that signifier, the process of the creation of meaning is as much dependent on the recipient as the originator. Interpretation of those meanings from outside of that culture may skew its signification of origin (Hall 33). Consequently, I have chosen to use a wide variety of representations or ‘texts’ inscribed in Arguedas’s novels as locations of knowledge that incite a deeper reading of their meanings as ethnographic interpretations of the fictional works of an author who was also an ethnographer. Additional support for the suggestion that Arguedas’s ‘neindigenista’ style stems from its ‘authenticity’ derives from the goal of maintaining an objective and descriptive mode in a discipline that requires a large amount of translation, interpretation, transposition and reconstruction of meaning. While collectors and ethnographers decode artifacts of all kinds, they encode meaning that is understandable to their own cultures, significations outside of the culture from which the artifacts have been derived. In addition to translation from the Quechua

recorded by Spanish priests, scribes further altered the essential meaning of the Quechua terminology to express indigenous phraseology in Spanish denotations and connotations, a derivative encoding.

The groups that inhabit the vast Andean region are varied, but commonalities across cultures derive from its location as the center of the Inca Empire of the 1500s and site of the resurgence of a large regional culture that has attempted to reestablish itself as an alternative power. One important example is the Great Rebellion led by Inca descendent Tupac Amaru II in 1780. Such efforts stem from a utopian perspective reminiscent of the perspective put forth in the Inca Garcilaso's *Comentarios Reales* of the area's indigenous heritage that many have wished to recreate, if not replicate (Rowe and Schelling 51).<sup>3</sup> An understanding of that utopian view allows one to more fully comprehend the representations of that world as portrayed by José María Arguedas's fictional works. For Westerners, utopianism is most commonly linked to Marxist political and economic philosophy. While there are similarities, the Andean utopian view maintains its own uniqueness due to a very distinct cosmology. Approaching indigenous Andean culture requires movement to that cosmological realm, a sense of time travel and vision of life and how it reveals itself that is foreign to Western thought.

In the indigenous Andean view, life meaning and values, embedded in quotidian rituals, maintain a sense of the past, which is infused in the present, while reasserting them and anticipating their transfer to future generations. The encoding of these representations is equally immersed in Arguedas's writings, serving as an alternative representation (obviously changed by its very articulation in a new form) of those traditions that reflect the complexities and uniqueness of that cosmovision. To read

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<sup>3</sup> Tupac Amaru II was an avid reader of the text.

Arguedas's works is to read Andean indigenous thought working to interpret Western culture, but one step removed. Arguedas finds himself in Homi Bhabha's liminal spaces, carving out his own representations situated between both cultures.

This work examines Arguedas's progression as a writer via his works of fiction to demonstrate the evolution of the Andean world as it was increasingly engaged by forces exterior to itself. With the twentieth century expansion of capitalism, led by the United States and other Western entities, life in the Andes, permanently altered by the arrival of the Conquistadores in the 1500s and the resultant Catholic and Spanish social hegemony and feudal economic dominance, once again changed dramatically, as the indigenous suffer greater losses economically and traditionally.

*Agua*, Arguedas's first and very brief narrative work, published in 1935, demonstrates the author's youthful anger and idealism in support of the Indian community in the early part of the century. *Yawar fiesta*, published in 1941, portrays the indigenous sympathetically but more realistically. Significant gains in sophistication and nuance are revealed in *Los ríos profundos*, published in 1958, which exposes the psychological and emotional incoherencies that the protagonist (and Arguedas, since the work is largely autobiographical) suffered being white but nurtured in his youth as a Quechua Indian from within that population. The novel is of the Bildungsroman genre and is an intensely personal and sensitive portrayal of the coming of age of a young man who struggles with Christian versus Quechua cosmology, white versus *indio* culture, upbringing, and social issues, while addressing peripherally environmental, economic, and political issues of the era. Additionally, a number of passages in the novel echo works considered to be Magical Realist in style.

Magical Realism, as a Latin American literary trend, developed from a view of reality that Guatemalan Nobel Laureate Miguel Angel Asturias describes as “una realidad que surge de una determinada imaginación mágica” (Lorenz 49). Shaw identifies the style as closely linked to and derived from a kind of primitivism related to Indian cosmology, mythico-magical in perspective (Shaw 91). That is to say, reality is seen through a magical lens; the two are inextricably linked. The perspective of the protagonist, Ernesto, in *Los ríos profundos* demonstrates Magical Realist tendencies while his earlier works do not.

Arguedas published *El Sexto* in 1961, a novel based on his year-long incarceration (November, 1937 to October, 1938) at the prison by the same name. The text is emotionally agonizing to read due to its graphic depiction of the most base of human acts among the prisoners. However, amid the degradation and degeneracy, Arguedas provides a lens into Peruvian political issues of the twentieth century, a topic he has not broached directly in previous novels. As a 26-year-old student at the University of San Marcos, Arguedas was imprisoned for participating in a public demonstration against the Italian fascist regime of Mussolini and the bombardment of republican cities in Spain by the Italian air force. He was sympathetic to the Spanish republican cause and distantly interested in left-leaning political action groups, the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana and the Peruvian Communist Party, both of which were illegal. The author uses the setting of the prison to discuss his differences with both political parties. He (as the protagonist Gabriel) finds himself caught between the extremes. Neither socially, nor politically does he fit in with the world around him, both inside and outside of the

prison walls. The text is a continuation of the author's personal and political development and vision complicated by his hybridized inheritance and upbringing.

In 1964, Arguedas published *Todas las sangres*. As a young student, Arguedas had been profoundly affected by César Vallejo's novel *Tungsteno*, a harsh criticism of foreign domination of the mining industry and its destruction of the indigenous communal economy and lifestyle. *Todas las sangres* also focuses on the mining industry, but reveals corruption and collusion on the *mestizo* level with foreign companies, at the expense of the subaltern indigenous population. In Arguedas's own words, the author tries to reveal "las masas segregadas" in the process of "incorporación a la vida moderna," utilizing the novel as a form in which to "penetrar hasta su médula, hasta la más honda intimidad de su raíz y de su proceso..." (Arguedas, "Primer Encuentro," *Kach* 32-33). Arguedas's portrayal is much more realistic and complex than Vallejo's earlier work. It is a lengthy novel and another step in the evolution of the author's personal experience of, and response to, Peruvian economics and society marching toward twenty-first century globalization.

Arguedas's final novel is *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*, a text in which the author catapults himself into the world of postmodernism in terms of complexity of literary style and theme. This is certainly his most controversial work, published posthumously in 1971. Many consider the novel to be unfinished; others believe that his suicide provides a definitive conclusion that allows the work and its message to live on as a symbolized by that act (Columbus 122). In *Los zorros*, as the novel is frequently called, Arguedas looks to the myriad of issues of globalization, albeit on a very local level, the coastal city of Chimbote in central Peru during the 1950s and 60s. His

approach is multileveled in the sense that the center of the novel revolves around ancient pre-Incan mythology, which Arguedas masterfully inscribes in the twentieth century setting of the text. The novel is gut-wrenching in its realistic depiction of the squalor, exploitation, and degradation of the indios who migrate from the sierra to the coast in search of employment. However, the work is not without hope, and that hope stems from mythology and the indigenous cosmovision. Surprisingly, the positive glimmer for the future of the indigenous populations, which prior authors seem to view as a dying existence overrun and obliterated by exterior hegemonic forces, originates in history that predates those events and attests to the strength of cultural roots that remain strong though buried in the past.

In addition to being a writer of fiction, Arguedas is well-known as one of Peru's greatest ethno-anthropologists, and most of his nonfiction writing is dedicated to preservation of the cultural heritage of the region. In 1966 Arguedas translated what has come to be known as the *Huarochirí Manuscript*, a compendium of myths, legends, and historical accounts written down by Francisco de Avila in 1608 who recorded the oral accounts from indigenous Quechua Indians at the time of the Conquest using Spanish linguistics and phonology. Arguedas translated the text from Quechua into Spanish, a work that he titled *Dioses y hombres de Huarochirí*. That endeavor formed the basis for the central motif of his last novel. He recounts the original myth of the foxes in the first diary, an introductory section to the narrative, and in so doing preserves the myth in a modern popular work exterior to the translated academic text. Hence, Arguedas revives for the public the myth that has been buried in antiquity. But equally or perhaps more importantly, he re-writes the myth in modern day terms, demonstrating its relevance in

today's global environment in addition to preserving the cultural artifact in a new form, reinvigorating and perpetuating the identity, heritage, and culture of the Andean indigenous groups of which that myth is a part. Arguedas instills in his novel a hope that while social, political, and economic change are inevitable, cultural hybridity does not necessarily imply extermination of a subculture. Preservation of the ancient cultures of the Peruvian Andes is necessary to identity construction of the peoples and for the debate and balancing of lifestyles that appear to be conflicting but, if meshed carefully, lead to a new definition that preserves the ancient and modern character of the region.

My discussion of Arguedas's own journey through the labyrinth of identity construction impacted by issues of hybridity, cultural repression, acculturation, transculturation, diaspora, and economic change and globalization, are all issues that have confronted and are the foci of the postmodern world. His journey into the postmodern follows the predominant focus of literary analysis postulated by W. K. Wimsatt Jr.'s "New Criticism" argument in 1954 that all literature is essentially metaphoric since it concretizes universal ponderables (40). Having lived the reality and circumstance of modern Peru, Arguedas writes highly metaphoric tomes of that experience. I demonstrate that José María Arguedas is emblematic of that process which impacts everyone worldwide in the twenty-first century. His life anticipates the problem that we struggle with today and expresses that struggle through the multiple and multilayered representations that he employs in his novels. This text follows that progression and demonstrates how his works transition into metaphors of the most profoundly disturbing factors that test today's postmodern world.

The organization of my analysis is structured around individual novels. Hence, the first chapter introduces Arguedas and traces his stylistic evolution from the modern to the postmodern. The subsequent eight chapters examine individual works in terms of their autobiographical, stylistic, and cultural contributions to the literature and society of Peru.

Chapter 1 discusses Arguedas's authorial progression from the Modern to the Postmodern, stylistic changes over time. Chapter 2 discusses the author's perspective and creation of a new language form in *Agua*. Chapter 3 looks at subaltern and hegemonic representation in *Yawar fiesta*. Chapters 4 and 5 examine *Los ríos profundos* from different perspectives. Chapter 4 examines the author's use of magical realism as an integral part of autochthonous cosmovision, while chapter 5 examines the duality of the protagonist's vision resulting from his hybrid heritage. Chapter 6 considers further transitions in *El sexto* related more to the political environment of which Arguedas had become aware as a university student, and examines the prison as a metaphor in postmodern theory. Chapter 7 discusses economic, social and political inequities and perspectives of representative populations in *Todas las sangres*, Arguedas's novelistic attempt to exhibit the complexity of Peruvian society and provide the underpinnings for sociopolitical and economic reform. A monumental task, it was met with little success which is discussed in the segment of this work. Chapters 8 and 9 reveal the major shifts in form and focus as Arguedas transitions dramatically to the structure and world of the postmodern novel. This unusual approach has received much critical commentary, both positive and negative. Past critics tended to dismiss the novel as chaotic and enigmatic because it was unfinished. I prefer to examine the work as a totality exhibiting a significant transformation of style. Chapter 10 discusses the importance of a cultural

feature that appears in much of Arguedas's fiction, the Scissors Dance; what it means to him and to his writing, and symbolically, to Peru. The final chapter, concluding the work, views Arguedas as the signifier of hybridity in a country, and draws together the various elements that contribute to that positioning in Peruvian society. Arguedas was a complex man who came of age in an equally complicated fusion of perspectives and cultures. His search for personal self-clarity has contributed significantly to the unveiling of a broad social identity which is his heritage. This literary disclosure holds great value for the region and is crucial to maintaining the nation's unique identity as well as its long-term development.

## CHAPTER 1

### ARGUEDAS'S JOURNEY FROM THE ANCIENT TO THE POSTMODERN: PASSAGES INTO HYBRID IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

Eclecticism is the degree zero of contemporary general culture: you listen to reggae; you watch a western; you eat McDonald's at midday and local cuisine at night; you wear Paris perfume in Tokyo and dress retro in Hong Kong; knowledge is the stuff of TV game shows....Together, artist, gallery owner, critic, and public, indulge one another in the Anything Goes — it is time to relax.

...this realism of Anything Goes is the realism of money....This realism accommodates every tendency just as capitalism accommodates every 'need' — so long as these tendencies and needs have buying power.

Lyotard 8

Understanding the narrative works of José María Arguedas requires a familiarity with the period during which he wrote. The twentieth century experienced a dramatic change in literary trends from what has come to be known as Modernism as it transformed itself into postmodernism. Beginning in the Western world, (Europe and the North America), that transition also had an impact in Latin America. A brief introduction to those periods helps to explain the context within and against which Arguedas developed his novels. Certainly elements of convergence exist between the two

literary periods, specifically the influence of science on human knowledge, the effects of expanding mechanization and urban life, and the failure of traditional Western social and cultural hierarchies (Gregson 1). The modernist period is generally thought to extend from the 1880s to the 1930s, while postmodernism followed World War II and the Holocaust, and in fact, is considered by many to be a reaction to that global event. The questions posed by a century of industrial, technological, and urban development, compounded by wars that rocked the world, generated a new world view, providing the underpinnings of the two literary periods: destabilization and uncertainty. In fact, the very threat of nuclear obliteration of the world as we know it with the events at Nagasaki and Hiroshima followed by the Cold War spawned an interest in what it actually means to exist, individually or as a society, one of the prominent tenets of postmodern thought (Malpas 34). The shift from the epistemological emphasis of modernism to the ontological concerns of postmodernism is fundamental to understanding the stylistic differences in texts of the two (McHale 10). Investigation into the nature of truth and knowledge is supplanted by an interest in the meaning and definition of existence. McHale suggests that postmodern fiction questions the kind of world being created in the text and who or what the reader may rely on to define that world (33). Since the examination of identity construction is inherently a part of that issue, Arguedas's lifelong pursuit of his own position in the Peruvian world, reflected in nearly all of his fictional works, fits that focus.

Francois Lyotard goes further, depicting both modernism and postmodernism as “presenting the existence of something unrepresentable,” suggesting that both allude to what a culture represses or excludes within terms of its quotidian mode of

communication (11). The difficult, disquieting, or agitating elements of the culture, typically avoided, are brought to the fore as a kind of challenge, subverting the status quo and invoking a kind of horror, awe, and simultaneous attraction termed “sublime”. In addition, Lyotard separates the modern from the postmodern sublime by identifying the former with a structure that is recognizable to the reader but absent the content. The form provides the necessary continuity to engage the reader. However, the postmodern “invokes the unrepresentable in presentation itself” (15). The reader is forced to work to comprehend the text both in form and in content, since there is no obvious or conventional relationship between time and identity in a traditional narrative or psychological sense.

The postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher; the text he writes or the work he creates is not in principle governed by pre-established rules and cannot be judged...by the application of given categories to this text or work. Such rules and categories are what the work or text is investigating (15).

Drawing on Ihab Hassan’s schema, the following is an abbreviated effort to compare modernism with postmodernism in order to clarify the positioning of each.<sup>4</sup> As is true of all literary periods, modernism began by questioning some tenets of its predecessors, specifically romanticism, naturalism, and existentialism, even placing in doubt some of the axioms of the Enlightenment. Modernism focused on its own time frame, creating a widespread self-consciousness of the period and its cultural conditions. Postmodernism has since taken that self-consciousness to a much higher level of sophistication.

Where a kind of closed form was typical of modernism, a more open or fragmented structure is typical of postmodernism. The former seems to synthesize and focus on a

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<sup>4</sup> Alita Kelley considers *modernism*, a uniquely Latin American literary movement, to also fit within the boundaries of modernist literature because those limits are so broad and the designation lacks a unique style that defines it (Kelley 72).

specific purpose, while the latter emphasizes a sense of play, dispersal and open-endedness. Whereas modernism bears a sense of boundaries that allow a narration to fit into a certain genre, postmodern narratives emphasize play between text and intertext that can be very difficult to categorize or limit. Modernist novels are available to coherent interpretation or readings, while postmodern works tend to defy a definite rendering. And finally, modernist works emphasize the Signified while postmodernist texts foreground the Signifier (Hassan 267-8). To be sure, this is a cursory comparison, but it does shed light on the general conception of the postmodern as fractious, fragmented, and disruptive of traditional formulations. Other descriptors of postmodernism include ironic, severed, playful, parodic, and simulative (Malpas 7). John Beverley and José Oviedo indicate that postmodernism is a term that places a new concept (postmodernity) in a specific period, positioning the egression of indicators of a new stage in cultural, technological, economic, and social components formulated in response to global capitalistic forces (3).<sup>5</sup> The immediacy, expansiveness, and simultaneity of the transmission of information in the latter half of the twentieth century in all such areas has resulted in the gradual eradication of political structures able to define and confine the multiplicity of cultural inputs at the local level (Canclini 85). In short, the boundaries typical of modernism are shattered by its sequel, the postmodern. Certainly well-known authors existed who wrote beyond the period of which they were chronologically a part, including Latin American writers María Luisa Bombal, and Jorge Luis Borges.

However, in general, the tendencies and period designations previously referenced do apply.

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<sup>5</sup> Fredric Jameson concurs by stating that the postmodern “is not just another word for the description of a particular style, It is also...a periodising concept whose function is to correlate the emergence of new formal features in culture with the emergence of a new type of social life and a new economic order” (113).

Many writers from Latin America spent time in Europe early in the twentieth century and were influenced by modernist trends such as Marxism, Freudian thought, Darwinism, and Surrealism. Such theoretical influences preceded World War II, the aftermath of which was to question and break with modernist tendencies. In Latin America, the residual colonial practices that had been maintained from the time of the Conquest impeded and skewed reception of Modernist ideas. While Western political, social, and economic models were certainly known in Latin America, efforts to repress such thinking predominated among members of the hegemonic in order to maintain the economic and political status quo that provided for their security as a class. Marxists, such as José Carlos Mariátegui, saw upheaval by the agrarian masses as the only way to assist the underclass to retake the lands which had once been their own. Political and social initiatives were designed to deny to the subaltern those educational advancements that enabled economic endeavors favorable to the hegemonic. It was not in the interest of the dominant class to allow such opportunities to those subservient to them. Hence, the past and the present converge in Latin America in ways unique to the events and progression of colonial dominance that has lasted for centuries (Quijano 211).

Growing up during those complex years, José María Arguedas was acutely aware of that confluence in which both past and present combine, existing together as a duality rather than as separate temporalities, since such a melding is particularly notable in Peru, where remnants of the ancient Andean world rub up against twentieth century capitalism. That duality is part and parcel of the difficulty of creating a concrete national identity in the region. Arguedas was determined to weave together the cultural strands necessary to

such a creation by displaying their inherent existing combinations, and, in order to do so, created his own hybrid language reflective of the oral tradition of the Andean highlands.

In “The Persistence of Center,” Alita Kelley maintains that Arguedas’s modality is completely opposed to postmodern stylistics (70). I argue that the Peruvian was an author of his generation, combining modernist and postmodernist characteristics. Kelley cites the desire to create an original literary voice as characteristic of the modernist movement in its broadest sense, a need to express oneself in a manner that transcends traditional Western literary structures (72). I suggest that such a desire is inherent in the writings of authors of all periods who attempt to move beyond the boundaries of their time in order to convey a unique perspective, and is particularly true of postmodernists. The gratification of producing an original voice is one of the drivers of authorial production. Arguedas is certainly among the modernists in the sense that he developed a completely unique approach in order to reveal the Quechua world to others. Writing from 1935 to 1969, his voice is categorically singular, moving beyond the language of indigenist authors who preceded him. Kelley points out that the author adamantly resisted the style that exploded during the “Boom” years of the 1960s as overly influenced by Western trends, which is absolutely true. Baudrillard and Lyotard both emphasize the economic focus of the writers of the postmodern era, of which the “Boom” was a part. Sales and consumption are paramount indicators of postmodern times.

The circulation, purchase, sale, and appropriation of differentiated goods and signs/objects today constitute our language, our code, the code by which the entire society *communicates* and converses. Such is the structure of consumption, its language, by comparison with which individual needs and pleasures are merely speech effects ( Baudrillard79-80).

Lyotard reinforces this point. “Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange” (1984, 4). Arguedas abhorred what he considered to be the artifices of narratives of “The Boom” and other postmodern works, considering them to be manipulations by “professional” novelists who write for money, a modern capitalist trait, separating himself from that classification by calling himself “provincial” (Arguedas, ZAZA 18). In the sense of emphasis on consumerism, Arguedas is not postmodern because his goal is decidedly not profit oriented.

Lyotard further notes that the postmodern movement is particularly distinct from modernist views of knowledge, a difference demonstrated through the type of narrative each period produced. In postmodern literary creations, one can understand the world and one’s experiences in a multiplicity of ways from a wide variety of different perspectives, using what Lyotard calls “metanarratives.” Modernity examined the world in terms of “grand narratives,” systems of beliefs about how the world functions historically and societally, establishing frameworks for society and progress within those structures. However, postmodernity identifies only two such narratives, speculation and emancipation (Malpas 37), both of which are ontological in focus. The former examines the legitimizing metanarrative of a subject, while the latter views education as freeing humanity from mystic credos, prejudice, and dogmatism. Knowledge “is no longer the subject, but in the service of the subject” (Lyotard, 1984 36). Again, the emphasis is on the subject, the individual, or the community, however large.

It is certainly arguable that Arguedas fits better into the modernist world because most of his fiction reflects carefully crafted linear narratives. However, Arguedas’s

continual quest for a language that could express his hybrid experience and reveal the complex identities in the rural Andean regions of Peru erases the boundaries between the two literary periods. His use of poliglossia, in fact, his very creation of a hybrid language for the purposes of expressing his concept of life in the Andean sierra, apparent throughout all his novels, certainly may be categorized as postmodern because it is a break from any style identified prior to his time. Arguedas's intertextual form coordinating the two languages, including traditional Quechua lyrics in Spanish text, as well as dialogic meshing of speech characteristics of the two, is absolutely unique.

Kelley recognizes Arguedas's commitment to artistic creation but distinguishes him from Postmodernists because of his alignment with nature and a written form that for him is absolutely natural. "Arguedas advocates the order he perceives as natural, and to describe it he prefers metaphors taken from the natural world" (Kelley 77). Arguedas not only feels himself to be one with nature, as do the Quechua, but he moves beyond the natural order by infusing magical powers with nature, also a Quechua attitude, a kind of magical realism typical of the Postmodern. Furthermore, Arguedas's melding of the Quechua language with the Spanish to foreground the hybridity inherent in a large sector of the Andean population was painstaking and persistent, and not at all a natural ability that he could easily pen. Kelley correctly identifies Arguedas's lyrical style in *Los ríos profundos* as the polar opposite of postmodern impiety and ridicule (76). The lyrical sections of the novel certainly reflect a deep-seated spirituality that is anything but impious. However, the novel does contain other postmodern characteristics. The fact that the work has no real denouement is reflective of the later style. Furthermore, the carefully constructed specularly into the world of the Quechua and their cosmovision,

expressed through personal introspection, falls into Lyotard's definition of the postmodern. Arguedas's desire to relate the sensitive and sensual life of the Quechua Indians who raised him was compounded by a need to define his position situated between the two cultures. The multiplicity of perspectives that he had to meld in order to create coherence from that complexity can only be considered postmodern.

Arguedas's final novel, *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*, published posthumously, is unique, diverging in style and tone from any of his earlier writings, demonstrating a new approach that clearly may be categorized as postmodern. The text is a conjunction of history, myth, fantasy, twentieth century political and economic parody and commentary, personal diary entries where the author himself becomes a character in the text itself; a study in how all factors fit together into an identifiable unity. The novel relies on a very sophisticated intertextuality which pulls the seemingly disjointed and fragmented elements together into a complicated whole. In fact, Arguedas himself termed the segments in his last novel "ebulliciones" or boilings, connotative of uncovering disturbing elements of the society he portrays as well as within himself.

Essential to addressing the various "languages" that José María Arguedas employs in his novels to create the hybridized fabric he envisions, is contextualizing that process in terms of the modern and postmodern worlds of twentieth century Latin America. Canclini reviews the period of the 1960s and beyond, explaining the transformations relative to political and economic approaches in Latin America, a region that continues to lag behind others in its adoption or creation of effective developmental policies given the expansion of global markets. In his review, Canclini observes that what had been interpreted as modernity has changed and continues to expand to a more inclusive

concept. Rather than accepting the mandated or decreed actions focused on urban societies and bypassing rural or inherited customs that seemed antiquated and static, a broader perspective has come to the forefront. Now Latin America is conceptualized as the very point of convergence both of the traditional and the modern, whose growth depends on a multiplicity of modes and factors for economic expansion. Such is the postmodern view, inclusive of a wide variety of genres and approaches. Canclini regards postmodernism as an expansion of modernity, including the very customs and traditions that modernists saw as obstacles and attempted to override. High culture, popular culture, and mass-based trends at all levels of sensibility, are included and valued in the postmodern conception of society (9-11). That amalgam of cultures and its promotion is dependent on purchasing ability. Those who have the financial and social position to travel, delve into that wide variety of offerings, while those who have been displaced, impoverished, or dispossessed by globalization, suffer from an absence of a sense of self-esteem, community and ultimately, personal security, because they are unable participate in that larger, more attractive world (Malpas 2). Therefore, one's world view and position within that arena is amplified or restricted depending on personal economic circumstances. Modern global capitalism and personal perspectives are at once inextricably intertwined, yet provocative of social exclusivity. Arguedas's fiction grapples with that world and its pressures, as he foregrounds the conjunctions, challenges, and opportunities that such a world provides in the Andean region he loved.

The intent of this work is to recapture Arguedas's personal and artistic progression into the postmodern, as well as to dignify those areas where he distinguishes himself from other writers associated with the period. I have followed this projection to

demonstrate that José María Arguedas's personal, artistic, and professional journey, expressed in his fictional works, has resulted in his becoming a signifier of hybridity and a metaphor for the complexity that is Peru's societal makeup.

AGUA: LANGUAGE CREATION AS A  
CONSTRUCTION OF HYBRIDITY

...let us suppose that a language, by whether it labels or does not label any specific mode of categorizing experience, cannot determine whether its speakers will think that way, but can either encourage or not encourage them to develop a labeled cognitive schema specific to that mode of thought.

Bloom 20

“¡Kachkaniraqmi! ¡Sigo siendo!” (Arguedas, *Kach* 7). In spite of everything, I continue being, I still exist with all the possibilities of growth and hope for the future, in a spirit of communion with others (Pease García 15). This Quechua expression, employed by Peruvian author José María Arguedas, exemplifies his life of *mestizo* lineage and Quechua cultural heritage, a reality that impacted profoundly his own identity construction. The two faces of the life and work of the author, represented in all of his narrative works, demonstrate a continual effort toward a reintegration of self which implies a prior integrity. That is to say, in order to “continue being,” one must first know what one has been or is; one must have a unique identity recognized by oneself. A predominant topic of postmodernity has been how one constitutes the identity of self, with the discussion focused on a new social intersubjectivity (Quijano 203). However, when an intersection of cultures exists within the individual, the construction of that

person's identity is complicated by its multiplicity. Many have spoken of the problematic of doubling oneself without losing oneself, but perhaps more important is defining oneself from the beginning when one's genesis is a hybridity. Globalization and the resultant diaspora demand consideration of and a response to this fundamental question since in today's world millions of individuals experience an ambivalent reality stemming from meshing several heritages. The situation of being part of two or more cultural worlds requires a new way of creating the identity that traditionally has been determined by a singular ethnicity or the childhood locale of that person. The life and fictional works of José María Arguedas focus on this conundrum. In this chapter, and those that follow, I demonstrate how the Peruvian author employs a variety of languages to express his personal voice as a person who grew up as a double, constituted of two contrasting cultures in conflict, the one hegemonic, the other subaltern, encountering and constructing himself amid the "scraps, patches and rags" of Homi Bhabha's liminal spaces (209). That multiplicity of representations is illustrative of the amalgam of influences and perspectives that comprise social life in the Andean sierra. To demonstrate that fusion, Arguedas actually creates a hybrid language to more fully reveal the complexity of that cultural web he called home.

In order to address Arguedas's variety of languages, one must first understand language as a system of signs that represents an idea. Orality is the vocalized representation of that social practice. Based on this definition, all forms of language are representations of a thought process performed or demonstrated in specific ways within a certain context. Semiotic creations that stimulate a perspective or perception by means of sight are forms of visual language, including writing. In the Andes, "cultura como texto"

(culture as text), forms an important part of the social system of the indigenous groups who inhabit the region, comprised of a multiplicity of 'languages' that create that 'text' (Howard-Malverde 4). According to Catherine Allen, pre-Colombian cultural expressions were woven together into one tapestry of materials, actions, forms and significations that were very different from the semiotic forms represented in western writing (74). Since the cosmovision of the Andean indigenous peoples is a consubstantiality, in which all substances and world objects have animated connections, and the mind does not separate itself from natural materials or other animated attributes, one must understand languages as codes of communication, not necessarily in a traditional written form (Allen 75). In this work, I also examine visual languages, musical languages, and representations of memory as semiotic constructions to delineate the polilinguistic world of the works of Arguedas and, as a consequence, the problematic of constructing an integrated identity within that context.

In *Agua*, Arguedas's first novel, a very short work, the reader experiences the author's attempt to create the expression of a lived hybridity in text. *Agua* is an embryonic work in terms of the author's style, and with respect to his own life. The text was first published in 1935, when Arguedas was twenty-four years of age. In his essay, "La novela y el problema de la expresión literaria en el Perú," the author describes the two classes of Peruvian society of the sierra, the *terratenientes* (landholders) and their families, and the *indios*. The former, because of centuries of dominance, are convinced of their superiority, while the latter attempt to maintain their ancient cultural heritage simultaneously with being forced to submit to the unrelenting malevolence and Christian fanaticism of the hegemonic. Finding himself between the two cultures, Arguedas

observes that the *mestizo* left the altiplano for Lima to escape becoming the foreman of the *terrateniente*. The *mestizo* is hated by the *indios* and despised by the owner because he is of neither class and is forced to become a wedge between the two as “slavemaster” of the hegemonic. Arguedas’s perspective, when writing *Agua*, was that there was no alternative that would not exacerbate the tenuous and despicable equilibrium maintained only by brute force. The author himself described his attitude as one of hatred at the time he penned the text, having lived in several villages during his youth where some 500 *indios* worked for each *terrateniente* (“La novela,” *Kach* 178).

As a young adult writer, Arguedas most often found himself eating in the kitchen with the owner’s lackeys and the hired indians, at times a guest of the town (178). His goal was to awaken the hegemonic reader to the suffering of the *indios*, and, with that in mind, he first wrote the novel using a correct and literary Spanish. Realizing that his portrayal was inadequate and false, a white-washed literary invention of a world that did not exist, he began to create his own language to reveal the Andean indigenous spirit, a language infused with the unique essences of that world. Hence, the language of the novel is a melding of two worlds, Spanish and Quechua, with the unique subtleties of their grammars that create a new aesthetic demonstrative of the way of life in the Andean *altiplano* (“La novela”, *Kach* 180-181). Written primarily in Spanish with Quechua words frequently interjected, he also incorporates the simple Spanish of a small number of *indios* who had some knowledge of the language of their conquerors. Fully aware that it was a fabrication, and that something would be lost through such a transformation, he believed that more was to be gained by focusing on maintaining the sensibilities of the native elements. Arguedas recognized the irony and problematic of his passion for song,

myth, speaking Quechua, and interacting with the indigenous population throughout his life, coming from the subaltern existence but later intellectually integrated into the world of the hegemonic, the very oppressors of his beloved Quechua people. While he focused on his roots in the sierra, he enjoyed life in the city with its Western emphasis, and, he attempted to create in print his personal existence somewhere between the two cultures (Arguedas, *Obras completas* 13). The task was particularly difficult since the subtleties of Quechua are such that even a minor alteration in a word itself dramatically alters its connotation, whereas in Spanish adjectives or phrases are required to effect such a modification.<sup>6</sup> Over a period of years, Arguedas developed his own hybrid style by using Quechua phrases in his texts, following the expression with an explanation in Spanish. Metalinguistic commentary highlights the literal language of the text. A clarification occurs once, while the phrase is repeated with subtle variations throughout the text. Examples follow:

*El varayok' había puesto ya la mesa para el repartidor del agua. A medida que Pantacha tocaba, San Juan me parecía cada vez más un verdadero pueblo; esperaba que de un momento a otro aparecieran mak'tillos, pasñas y comuneros por las cuatro esquinas de la plaza.”(Mak'tillos son muchachos. La palabra es diminutiva de mak'ta, hombre joven. Pasña es una mujer joven.) (Kach 56)*

Arguedas also infuses his works with Quechua folk songs to provide the reader with an awareness of the importance of music and song in the culture, as well as to demonstrate the musicality, plasticity and flexibility of the language itself.

Los picaflores reverberan en el aire.

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<sup>6</sup> Philologists have been surprised by the flexibility of Quechua, noting that for each Spanish or English word, the Quechua have three or four in their language. Moreover, the language has many voices to indicate that an action or object is described precisely. “...la rapidez del vuelo de una ave, el murmullo del follaje, el fragor de una tormenta y hasta el rostro o huella que deja en su tránsito algún ser animado...y que la lengua quechua que excede en energía, dulzura y concisión a las más culta de Europa es demasiado perfecta y en extremo rica\ (Anchorena, 154).

Las palomas dicen: *¡tinyay tinyay!*  
 Porque hay alegría en sus pechitos.  
*Taytakuna, mamakuna.*

The foregoing is a song in the form of a *huayno*, a traditional musical form of the Peruvian Andes. *Tayta* means father, *mama* mother. The suffix *kuna* indicates plurality: *taytakuna*: fathers, *mamakuna*: mothers.

Grammatically Quechua and Spanish differ, and those differences are reflected in the manner in which Arguedas combines the two languages, creating omissions that are awkward and seem uneducated in Spanish, but are not so in the indigenous tongue.

“...Principales tienen plata, pobre necesita más sus papalitos, sus *maizalitos*... *Tayta Inti* (sol) le hace correr a la lluvia; *k’ocha* agua no más ya hay para regar: *k’ocha* va a llenar esta vez para comuneros” (69).

The above examples of specific Quechua insertions and grammatical variations demonstrate the differences in linguistic structures between the colonizers’ language and the oppressed. The combinations and dissimilarities are intended to create a realistic ambience and dialogue that would likely be heard in the villages of the Andean altiplano. Additionally, the plot is full of ancient Incan cultural references that remain important in twentieth century Andean society. “Ya era tarde. El *tayta Inti* (sol) quemaba al mundo.” The dual modalities of language not only underscore the interwoven polyphonic and hybrid world of Arguedas’s formative years, but serve to indicate the difficulty of becoming an integrated personality. Moreover, Arguedas’s efforts reflect the complexity of Peruvian society during his lifetime, which also serves as an allegory of the global world of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Thus, Arguedas’s works anticipate and foreshadow today’s world of diasporas that have resulted in new cultural connections and

ethnicities in the “liminal spaces” described by Homi Bhabha in his seminal article “DisSemination” (209). If the postmodern literary critic focuses less on “what” a literary work means, and more on “how” it means it, Arguedas’s novels stand out as exemplary works of the age.<sup>7</sup> As a hypersensitive person, Arguedas expresses in his works impressions of a multiplicity of resources that mesh to create a powerful lens and audiophonic tool to access the heteroglossic world in which he lived. Furthermore, his use of such heterogeneity is an expression of today’s world in which the individual must establish his identity mediating a multiplicity of disconcerting and contradictory influences. Multifaceted voices that reveal themselves via musicality, visual aspect, performance, internalized mental images, and memories are apparent in all of his works, but with different emphases and purposes.

If, as Ian Gregson suggests, American poets like Walt Whitman initiated free verse to reflect the openness of American democratic society, and William Carlos Williams later used free verse to bring forth a truly American voice (28), the same may be said for José María Arguedas, who created a completely new form of language with the express purpose of giving voice to his own Peruvian hybridity, being of *mestizo* parents but indigenous upbringing. In so doing, he also opened up the possibility of dialogue with sectors of society not represented in twentieth century Peru: the hybrid or the *mestizo*, and the indigenous. Gregson cites such literary inventions for political purposes as anticipatory of postmodern thought (28). While Arguedas’s language formulation is not geared toward a political statement per se, it is motivated by the desire to express a social

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<sup>2</sup> As I have discussed in the preface, most of Arguedas’s works situate themselves more appropriately as Modernist because the narrative is linear and bounded. However, Arguedas’s creation of a new language to demonstrate the societal hybridity of the Andean highlands may be termed postmodern. Most critics would agree that the two categories overlap in a variety of ways.

reality and an interruption of Spanish hegemonic language to force it to acknowledge and draw into the cultural conversation the subaltern world of the Quechua speaking population. The emphasis is on linguistic effect to create, via a new structure of language, a new cultural perspective. He works to effectuate change through language, because that is where the power lies. Arguedas achieves his voice by breaking with the hegemonic tongue, an act of protest that results in his own literary self-definition. Such opposition is not so much in defiance of the Spanish language, but is in support of what he considers to be a more authentic representation of the hybridity of Peruvian society. By such invention, he creates a more inclusive language system, circumventing the hegemonic linguistic restrictions of Spanish which, by its omnipotence, silences the subaltern. Arguedas tries to breach the fault between the hegemonic and the subaltern by means of a new structure, *mestizaje* on the linguistic level.

In his discussion of language poetry and its relationship to the postmodern, Gregson identifies frustration as an essential constitutive element (31). He defines language poetry as that which is not specifically focused upon social institutions, but upon how language is impregnated and altered by the over-arching presence of such institutions (Gregson 28). I would argue that such discontent, deriving from similar origins, is equally inspirational of Arguedas's construction of language in prose form. The complexity of the form that Arguedas creates reflects the frustration and tension inherent in an attempt to create a new authentic voice, an authenticity that is impossible according to Foucault's post-structuralist conceptualization. Foucault's position that the dominant discourse imposes and limits the thought possibilities of the subject, dismisses as impossible an authentic, objective voice since the individual cannot position himself outside of his own

reality in time or place (Foucault 138). While authenticity and objectivity may be impossible, clearly a postmodern tenet, Arguedas works to approximate a Peruvian reality that had remained unexplored and unexpressed prior to his writings.<sup>8</sup>

Arguedas's fusion of style is in a very real sense a postmodern code. It neither reifies the dominant Spanish nor the ancient Incan Quechua dialect, but introduces a mixing of the two that bears tremendous political and social implications in Peru. Subverting the dominant discourse of bourgeois Spanish heritage, Arguedas projects a new hybrid code, challenging the existing power structures in defiance of the dominant norm and in an attempt to dismantle its hegemony. Although his "code" is focused solely on his fiction, it did inform the need for a new Peruvian politics of heterogeneity and hybridity to supplant the older national politics of hegemony and subalterity. His creation did not neutralize the hegemonic language, but it added a new voice to the political, social, and linguistic discussion of Peru as a nation. Perhaps Martin Lienhard says it best: "La historia del Perú moderno queda grabada en la multiplicidad y la complejidad de los lenguajes que se hablan en el país; al recrear literariamente el caos lingüístico, el caos histórico asoma en la puerta" (Lienhard 182).

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<sup>8</sup> Arguedas himself admitted that embedding Quechua in fiction that is primarily written in Spanish language was less than a perfect process or result. "Yo sé que algo se pierde a cambio de lo que se gana" (Arguedas, "La novela" *Kach* 183). Still, he believed that it was the only way to achieve the necessary balance between two cultures so inherently in opposition.

## CHAPTER 3

### YAWAR FIESTA: THE LANGUAGE OF PERFORMANCE AND THE PRESERVATION OF CULTURE

Performance represents a transformation of the basic referential...uses of language. ... in artistic performance...there is something going on in the communicative interchange which says..."interpret what I say in some special sense; do not take it to mean what the words alone, taken literally, would convey.

Baumann. 1977 8

In *Yawar fiesta*, Arguedas utilizes the plot line, centered on the performance of a custom dating back to the time of the Conquest, to achieve his goal of cultural preservation. The author assumes a hybrid and impersonal voice in the work, that is, in one sense, a "costumbrista" novel (novel of tradition and customs), since it deals with a traditional regional celebration, the *turupukllay* (Quechua for bullfight) in Puquio, a city of the Peruvian sierra. *Yawar fiesta* (*yawar* is Quechua for blood), both the title and the text itself, serve as a metaphor for the struggle between the hegemonic central government in Lima, and the local indigenous people of Puquio. However, the *turupukllay* as a practice demonstrates its own complexity since the celebration itself is a hybrid. Cattle did not exist in South America until introduced by the Spanish following the Conquest, and the bullfight originated in Spain. Therefore, the plot reflects the tension

between two cultures that are inherently in opposition vying for dominion over the area. While the two opposing forces struggle for control, the hybridized elements of the Puquio region become manifest.

The plot of the story is simple: the predominantly white and powerful authorities or *mistis* want to change the typical celebration of the town bull fight to a “civilized” style, which is to say Spanish, but the Puquianos want to maintain the traditional form of the region. The dispute reflects the conflicts that have developed as a result of modernization in the sierra.

While there are several characters that represent different sociopolitical groups, only don Julián Arangüena, a *misti*, *mestizo*, and powerful rancher of the area, distinguishes himself as a principal player. The novel is not developed as a plot with a protagonist. Rather, the story centers on the event of the bullfight and how the various groups react based on their different perspectives and traditions. One can understand the bullfight as a performance of visual language that expresses the hybridity of the society and the complexities that result from it, demonstrating two different heritages combined in one ceremony that the Quechua people consider to be theirs as do the hegemonic Spanish descendants. Both cultures embrace the ceremony that reflects, via their own traditions, the struggle for power. The fact that the people of the sierra conclude the bullfight by throwing dynamite at the bull is another sign of its hybridity, since dynamite was invented by the Swede Alfred Nobel in 1866 and later introduced in South America.<sup>9</sup>

The *turupukllay* has its own tradition dating back to the Conquest. Arguedas uses the bullfight to demonstrate the hybridization of the people of the sierra, a tenuous hybridity,

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<sup>9</sup> Black powder was used as an explosive in South America as early as the seventeenth century, but it, too, was developed in Europe and later introduced to the Western Hemisphere.

in which the two principal groups fight to control the society, the land, and the future of the region. Although Arguedas uses the twentieth century Puquian tradition in his novel, Peruvian readers would certainly be aware of the traditional classic performance of the *turupukllay* existing from the sixteenth century. In *Yawar fiesta* the narrator himself alludes to the older form as typical some twenty years earlier, while Puquianos also refer to it in a conversation with the Sub-Prefect, a representative sent from Lima to Puquio to govern the area. In the old-style bullfight, the Indians climb the mountain to catch a condor, the most venerated animal symbol of the Incan trinity.<sup>10</sup> The condor is tied to the back of the bull, and, trying to escape, wounds the bull with his claws and beak. The tragic event is, at the same time, a majestic spectacle in which the condor maintains his equilibrium using his enormous wings, while the bull, tortured, tries to rid himself of the bird tied to his back. Subverting the political and social power of the day, the performance is a metaphoric ritual in which the indigenous dominate the Spanish.<sup>11</sup> The presence of the gigantic condor with his wings extended and positioned on top of the bull inverts the long-standing class roles in the region. The hegemonic class of Spanish heritage is seen beneath the poor Amerindian class. The *maktas*, or young men, enter into the competition and a bloody battle ensues. Not infrequently some die, and typically the bull dies when other local men enter on horseback and spear the bull (Vidales 1).<sup>12</sup> The vision, semiotically, is the victory of the Incas/Quechuas/subalterns over the Spanish *gamonales* (powerful landowners also referred to as *mistis*), thereby subverting history

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<sup>10</sup> The Incan trinity consisted of the condor, the puma and the snake, the importance of which will be taken up in Chapter 8 (Vidales 1).

<sup>11</sup> Octavio Paz also refers to the importance of rituals as at least temporarily subverting the hegemonic order and the sense of regaining some power in *El laberinto de la soledad*.

<sup>12</sup> Carlos Vidales emphasizes that in the traditional form of the *turupukllay*, the *maktas* enter and throw dynamite, being careful not to wound the tied condor, which would be a horrible offense because of the spiritual value of the giant bird (2).

and recuperating native pride in the people's Incan heritage. The performance of this ritual is a display of indigenous solidarity in the community and a kind of catharsis. Arguedas dedicates his novel to this ritual as a signifier of empowerment for the indigenous, as well as an indicator of levels of subversion. Engaging such a focus, Arguedas designs the plot and the ritual itself to reveal his conception of cultural and social hybridity in the Peruvian sierra.

While the version of the ceremony in Arguedas's novel does not include the condor, the metaphor is maintained nonetheless. The subaltern world is victorious over the hegemonic forces. Also, in the novel, don Julián Aragüena donates his savage bull "Misitu" to the Puquianos for the bullfight and even tries to capture it himself, as a demonstration of his strength and courage. The act of contributing the bull is, in itself, an indication of the mixing of cultures and their mutual dependence, and the creation of a new hybrid social class arising in the muddied margins between the two predominant opposing groups, the fallout of constant and unavoidable frictions. Don Julián has his alliances with the other *mistis*, but he understands well the common people and greatly respects their pride, their manliness, their courage, and their ability to work hard, although he doubts that they can catch the wild bull. However, when they succeed, don Julián's respect for the indigenous rises to a new and higher level.

In the novel, the government in Lima wants to prohibit the *turupukllay*, the traditional bullfight, considering it to be barbarous. The substitution of a bullfighter trained in the Spanish style can correct such barbarity and establish a civilized ritual.<sup>13</sup>

Again, Arguedas demonstrates the continual fight between the hegemony of the

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<sup>13</sup> The notion of Spanish or European traditions as civilized as opposed to the indigenous customs as barbarous, and the European perspective of needing to civilize the native peoples is well described in Sarmiento's *Facundo: o civilización y barbarie*.

conquistadores and their descendants and the subaltern existence of the indigenous. But there is resistance to the Spanish bullfight and support for the hybridized *turupukllay*. Different from other authors, whom literary historians have categorized as “indigenists,” Arguedas selects situations specifically to demonstrate the importance of revisioning Peruvian society as a hybrid society that has created its own unique identity different from that of Incan history. While Arguedas, as an ethno-anthropologist, venerated the history of the native Peruvian culture, he reveals to the reader a society that has evolved into a complex multicultural entity, no longer existing as a society in binary opposition, the two polarized groups, Spanish and indigenous, of earlier “indigenist” writers. While many have considered *Agua* and *Yawar fiesta* to be indigenist works, Arguedas himself denies that categorization. He describes them as “novelas en las cuales el Perú andino aparece con todos sus elementos, en su inquietante y confusa realidad humana, de la cual el indio es tan sólo uno de los muchos y distintos personajes” (Arguedas, “La novela y el problema” *Kach* 175). Exemplifying the intermediary or hybridized position in *Yawar fiesta* is the sergeant, a government employee, who, while walking along the street whistles a *huayno*, an ancient indigenous regional musical form. When ordered to shoot a Puquiano, he refuses to do so, respecting the man for his bravery (*YF* 65). The sergeant’s preference in music and his disobedience to his government superior inform a hybridized position, different from the polarized attitudes existing between the limeños and the natives. He and other characters in the novel serve as prototypes of the social structure of the sierra in a novel that reveals a reality rife with tensions, balancing tenuous relationships determined by complex subtleties woven into its societal layers. In fact,

such hybridity has resulted in a vibrant and singular regional culture that maintains its strength and pride in the midst of the global changes of postmodernity.<sup>14</sup>

In *Yawar fiesta*, the trained bullfighter, Ibarito II, who has come from Spain, appears in Puquio, sent by the national government in Lima. Dressed in his luxurious and traditional toreador's outfit and carrying his cape, visually the literal affront to the local culture, he causes a reaction on the part of the commoners that is different from the ridicule they expressed on hearing that he was coming. They have derided him as lacking the necessary courage to fight in the *turupukllay*. However, his costume reminds them of the *danzak' del tankayllu*, the Quechua dancer who performs the ritualistic scissors dance, another semiotic visual representation of great significance to the Quechuas. "Tankayllu" also refers to an insect with a heavy body that buzzes as it flies over the fields, sucking nectar from the flowers. The *indios* believe that the *tankayllu* has special powers. Thus, the scissors dancer is representative of the union of the Quechua life that is integrally linked to nature. The dancer looks like the insect in the design of his costume, and the sound of his scissors sound like the insect's buzzing. The indigenous people are never far from nature, nor from their representations of nature. (The Scissors Dance is discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.) Their perception of the bullfighter, analogous to the "danzak" and, therefore, to the revered insect of the region, alters their negative and foreign view to a hybridized perspective, becoming more permissible because it approaches a recognized metaphor. The commoners want the plaza to be opened so they may enter and watch the foreign dancer fighting Misitu. The women begin the chant asking for mercy for the heart of Misitu while the *wakawak'ras* (traditional instruments)

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<sup>14</sup> To read more about this topic, see, for example, "To Be in Between: The *Cholas* as Market Women" by Linda J. Seligman.

play the *Wak'raykuy*, the sad traditional music of the *turupukllay*. It is an amalgam of cultural and social expression, voices of visual, memorial, and musical representation. The *Wak'raykuy* is oppressive to all of the *mistis*. The cape bearers and the *varayok's* (men of power, in the native culture, the "staff-bearers") look on, calculating, while the indigenous and *mestizo* children search for the place where the foreign '*danzak*' will make his entrance to fight Misitu.

One notices in *Yawar fiesta* the music, the voiced representation, as well as the visual representation. The '*danzak*' del *Tankayllu* plays his scissors of steel, a metal introduced in the Americas by the Spanish, while the Indians play the *wakawak'ras*, trumpets of the land, instruments made from the horns of the bull (again, also imported from Spain) that have a somber sound. The *wakawak'ras* announce the arrival of the *turupukllay*. Interwoven in that hybridity of visions and sounds is the tolling of the church bells by the Sacristan, announcing the bullfight. Even the fusion of sounds and musical representations, the materials that produce them, and the historical origins of the instruments, indicate a coalescing of cultures, proclaiming the hour of the bullfight/*turupukllay*.

When the bullfight begins, everyone looks to the bullfighter with interest and anticipation until he escapes, running to the safety screen in the bull ring to hide. The bullfighter of the *mistis* is not sufficiently courageous. However, the hybridity of the society again is revealed when don Antenor, the mayor, asks that el "Honrao" enter the fight, followed by don Felix de la Torre, who asks that Tobías come in as well, followed by "Wallpa", and "el K'encho", each "cape-bearer" representing one of the four sub-

communities that comprise Puquio.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the *mestizos* of high social position support the commoners in their desire to participate in the bullfight. With their entrance, the bullfight ends, one young man wounded and on the verge of death, and Misitu dead, his chest exploded by dynamite. The traditional celebration ends in Puquian style with the support of the local *mestizo mistis*. The Spanish bullfighter representing the hegemonic loses, while the indians win and dominate, but with the intervention of the powerful local *mestizos*. It is not only a festival of the natives. It has become a visually hybrid festival in a society that over time has converted itself into an amalgamation of people of different backgrounds, political interests, and perspectives.

The hybridity embedded in the plot is reflected in the written language that Arguedas uses in the novel. While the background language is Spanish, the author creates a new form that is a combination of Spanish and Quechua, developing a new textual experience for the reader. Not only does the reader enter the cultural world of the Quechua via the traditions that the author employs as central to the novel's plot development, but he also is enmeshed in the linguistic sounds and syntax of the indigenous culture. Arguedas wrote his novel with the distinct intention of interweaving the two languages to create a new hybrid language, a long and arduous process, a form that he first used in his short novel, *Agua*. His invented fusion of the two spoken languages was intended to awaken the reader to the depth, passion, beauty and uniqueness of the Quechua world.

The mixing of languages includes using Quechua words in otherwise Spanish sentences, sometimes with a footnoted explanation, sometimes followed by a definition,

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<sup>15</sup> The number four is of great significance in Quechua society, reminiscent of the grandeur and power of Tawantinsuyu, the Incan Empire, which consisted of four regions: Chinchasuyu (northwest), Antisuyu (northeast), Contisuyu (southwest), and Collasuyu (southeast). The center of the Empire was Cusco, which is situated at the center of the four regions.

repetition of expressions typical of Quechua culture, an unusual use of diminutive suffixes, frequent use of the gerund, and the insertion of unique elements of syntax.

Examples follow:

“Pero los pichk’achuris fueron siempre verdaderos punarunas, punacumunkuna; ellos tienen hasta pueblitos en las alturas...” From context the reader understands pichk’akuris to be people from Pichk’akuri, while Arguedas defines punarunas in a footnote: people (runa) from the puna (highlands). Punacumunkuna is not translated, but from context one surmises it to mean common people from the puna, since the suffix “kuna” is used elsewhere to indicate plurality and is explained: Taytakuna and Mamakuna meaning fathers and mothers. The reader is, therefore, led into understanding the language gradually, as one would learn a foreign language, but this language is a hybrid combining two languages that are grammatically and derivatively unrelated, as were the heritages of the persons who originally spoke them.

The use of adjectives and their diminutives is also unusual, as seen in the following example: “Y después lloraban los mak’tillos, lloraban delgadito, con su voz de jilguero” (122). Again, there is no explanation, but from prior experience the reader understands the meaning of the sentence. The fused text is unlike the jargon of other authors who are approximating colloquialisms or regional pronunciations. While Arguedas does create spellings of Spanish words and phrases to mirror their local pronunciation --“Yastá pues vintiuchu!” (And it’s now the twenty-eighth!)--, the dialectal changes are not as apparent or frequent as the actual language mixing. The text requires the reader to delve into the new hybrid linguistic world of Arguedas’s fiction. The fusion of languages, then

combined with the musical polyphony mentioned earlier generates a kind of “surround sound” adventure experienced via inscribed text.

The crucible then contains an overpowering mixture of stimuli acting on the reader simultaneously: the visual language via the bull and the condor, the scissors dancer and the Spanish bullfighter alike in uniform but each wielding a different, yet potentially lethal weapon, the auditory input of the clanging church bells, the deep and forlorn call of the bull’s horns, the crisp and rapid hum of the scissor blades, not to mention the terrified bellowing of the bull himself, combined with the flapping of the condor’s wings as he tries to escape, and the noisy, eager arrival of the locals at the bullring screaming for a local victory. With the addition of the syncretic written text, the fusion boils and the reader experiences the creation of the hybridized existence that is a newer and equally valid segment of Peruvian life that has gone undervalued, if not totally unrecognized. Here is hybridized performance expressed through languages of sound, vision, and rhetorical invention in all its excitement and rawness that foregrounds the composite existence of the twentieth century Andean sierra and its varying connections to the past, a cultural fusion that Arguedas exposes and, in so doing, works to preserve in a way that respectfully treats each heritage equally. The generative power of processes that occur as the result of interactions related to festival celebrations advances a restructuring and strengthening of social relationships given the opportunity to express themselves (Romero 52).

## CHAPTER 4

### *LOS RIOS PROFUNDOS: THE CONFLUENCE OF HYBRIDITY*

Languages are undoubtedly constrained in their expression of meaning, but they are by no means uniform: in every conceptual domain, there are significant differences in the categories of meaning to which words, bound morphemes, and grammatical patterns are linked. Where languages differ, human cognition must be correspondingly flexible, and there is no reason to suppose that just one mode of construal is easiest or most obvious ....  
Brown 317

The foundation of identity construction is an awareness of a common origin, a recognition of shared characteristics, or an approbation and acceptance of a mutual goal sought by another person or group. That mutuality creates a sense of solidarity or allegiance between individuals or among the group's members (Hall 2). While modernists began to question realist ideas of the self with the impact of Freud's writings and his focus on the unconscious, postmodernists extend the questioning further, suggesting that one's identity is not a stable central core that exists throughout life, but that identity is constituted performatively, by what a person contributes to the person's self (Gregson 41). Arguedas's quest for his own anchored unity throughout his life, but

most especially in his youth, is evidenced in his fictional works. That search is particularly palpable in *Los ríos profundos*, Arguedas's most personal, sensual and lyrical novel. While on one end of the spectrum, Arguedas develops a hybrid voice in *Yawar fiesta* (1944) that is impersonal, in his novel *Los ríos profundos*, published in 1958, his voice is profoundly intimate. His style matures significantly from one publication to the next. In the latter, the author's unique expression of the development of the protagonist's character is particularly notable. The plot is, in fact, an exploration of self-construction – how identity is thoroughly involved in issues of representation and thus is neither spontaneous nor natural. The novel, of the bildungsroman genre, and in this case almost an autobiographical sketch of Arguedas's youth, while drawing upon very personal and inescapably biased assumptions about the self, constructs a version of a self by exploiting the resources of 'writing' as a semiotic system focused on language and representation that manifest what the author deems to be real. The protagonist's actions underscore the identity that he is discovering and revealing to the reader. Nonetheless, it is a construction. The examination of self-identity and identity-construction are both themes that place the novel among the postmodern, while Arguedas's emphasis on the indigenous union with nature resists inclusion in that category (Gregson 54).

The novel deals with a young man, Ernesto, and his coming of age, including events of his maturation en route to enroll in a Catholic boarding school in the small town of Abancay, Peru, his experiences there, and his decision to leave the school. The visual languages of the novel are significant, but equally notable are the musical, aural expressions of language, and the influence of an interior language of memory as a motivator for Ernesto, events painted as indelible images on the landscape of his

experience. For Arguedas, music consists not only of that produced by the human being with instruments and voices. The music of insects, birds, the river, and other “beings” of nature contribute to a melodic and harmonious world. Indeed, some of Arguedas’s most lyrical passages describe that voice from nature. That enriching communion with nature is reflective of the author’s profound love for the sierra and his connection with the Quechua peoples of the region and their consubstantial cosmovision.

The three types of language are combined in the image of the bridge over the Pachachaka River, melding visual and musical representations while creating a cultural integration of voices. Arguedas describes the river as “el Pachachaca temido[ that] “([h]acia el este,...baja en corriente tranquila, lenta y temblorosa;... Parece un río de acero líquido, azul y sonriente, a pesar de su solemnidad y de su hondura” (*LRP* 68). ‘The awesome Pachacaca [whose] calm, rippling current flows slowly eastward.... a river of molten steel, blue and smiling, despite its solemnity and depth’ (Arguedas, *DR* 62). Ernesto contemplates the river from the center of the bridge over the river, supported by a cross of stone attached to a central column. The bridge modifies the beauty and force of the river. Here, too, the fusion of cultures occurs, in this visual representation of water colliding with stone. “Pachachaka,” the name of the river, is a Quechua word meaning bridge over the world, a name that has astronomical references important in Quechua cosmovision. However, the bridge of the Pachachaka River was constructed by the Spanish of great columns of limestone, and the water of the river, “marchaba bullendo, doblándose en corrientes forzadas. Sobre las columnas de los arcos, el río choca y se parte, se eleva el agua lamiendo el muro, pretendiendo escalarlo, y se lanza luego en los ojos del puente” (*LRP* 68). ‘...goes rushing and tumbling along the imposed channels.

On the pillars of the arches, the river breaks and divides; the water rises to lap at the wall, tries to climb it, and then rushes headlong through the spans of the bridge' (Arguedas, *DR* 62). The wild, natural, and animistic world of the Quechuas is impeded and dominated by the construction of a bridge by the Spanish, a strong and foreign structure. Raising the issue of the hegemonic dominating the subaltern, here a spatial image as well as an historic one, is indicative of postmodern concerns. The semiotic image of Ernesto, who has escaped from the school and its oppressive atmosphere, standing on the bridge over the center of the river, portrays indelibly the internal conflict that he feels because of his double heritage. The visual language is reinforced when he says, "Yo no sabía si amaba más al puente o al río. Pero ambos despejaban mi alma,....Se borraban de mi mente... las dudas y los malos recuerdos" (Arguedas, *LRP* 68). 'I didn't know if I loved the bridge or the river more. But both of them cleansed my soul....All of the mournful images, doubts and evil memories were erased from my mind' (Arguedas, *DR* 64-65). His own identity is a fusion of cultures as well, reflected in his mutual and simultaneous attraction to the river and the bridge.

In fact, standing on the bridge represents two attempts at self-recognition, first the river, then the bridge. Both fail to recognize a real completed self. Together, the two metaphors increase the distance required for any real recognition. Such resolution can only be achieved by a "bridging," an articulation of the two heritages. Ernesto is standing and speaking to himself in the center of the bridge – a complete presence of himself in a specific time and place. The image is reminiscent of Lacan's *mirror stage* but in an altered sense, in this case a fragmented sense of self. Ernesto's self is incapable of assuming an armor for its identity, unable to create a structure strong enough to promote

its development.<sup>16</sup> The surreal experience of looking into the mirror to see his father, his comprehension of his origin, his roots, and the closest person with whom he can identify, and coming to understand that it is someone else's reflection, is alienating. Consequently, identity becomes an Otherness. Ernesto feels extracted from the person he thought he was, and can only find refuge in the language and experience of his infancy. Or, alternatively, Ernesto is trapped in the equally alienating protection of that infancy, his Quechua adopted heritage. The wholeness of Ernesto is confounded by an Otherness that is written by a heritage that is not of his making but of which he is undeniably a part (the Spanish), as well as an Otherness which he would wish to claim but which is not his to adopt (the Quechua). His Self is imprisoned by a lack of representation, captured and immobile by its very lack of definition (Gregson 55). The bridge serves as a semiotic reminder of the split identity that Ernesto struggles to unite.

The language of memory is expressed through Ernesto's mind in a kind of interior monologue and contributes to the complexity of the novel. Again his identity construction is challenged when he arrives at the Catholic boarding school in Abancay. The students ridicule him for not knowing how to read Spanish well and call him "forastero" (foreigner, outsider). Immediately he understands that he is different from the other students who board there and is lonely in his ostracism. Additionally, critic William Rowe identifies a kind of equivocation in Ernesto's attitude with respect to the Catholic Church. Ernesto is very familiar with Catholic beliefs (his father is very devout), but, at the same time, his cosmovision is aligned with the Quechua. The

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<sup>16</sup> See Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience", in *Ecrits: A Selection*. Trans. Alan Sheridan, London: Vintage 1991 424.

hybridization of his personal views is particularly noted in relation to Padre Linares, the director of the school. Arguedas paints Padre Linares in an ambivalent way via Ernesto's thoughts. At times he fears the priest, and at times he sees him as a kind of beneficent father figure (Rowe xxxii). In one instance, Ernesto, discouraged and anxious, enters the church to pray in the way that his father has taught him. He tries to invoke the Christian spirit via Catholic prayer but without success. Finally, he begins to pray to the indigenous gods, prayers from the memory of his Quechua childhood, and his prayers bring him calm and encouragement.

The novel concludes with no distinct solution to Ernesto's dilemma of liminality. According to Rowe, the lack of a resolution of the two identities in the mind of the protagonist, who lives in an exterior Catholic world while the language (that is to say his interpretation that comes from his memory living as an indigenous person) enforces and directs his perceptions, is not a weakness of the novel. Rather, the conflict identifies the conflict of a person divided between two worlds. Arguedas, having lived the life of Ernesto, cannot write from one side or from the other, but has to write from a viewpoint that embraces both. That tension has no resolution in the novel, and therefore, emphasizes strikingly the difficulty of the hybrid cultural position.

Ernesto and Arguedas continue being, trying to "re-integrate" themselves, in a world that isolates and marginalizes them for being neither of the hegemonic nor of the subaltern culture. The disharmony painted in *Los ríos profundos* complicates the existentialist search of the protagonist. In order to arrive at a resolution in that search, Ernesto and Arguedas have to integrate an identity that connects those two worlds that exist in a liminal breach and an uncompromising discord. By means of his works,

Arguedas portrays life in the margins, attempting to create the bridge over that world, that Pachachaca. In so doing, he demonstrates as essential the recognition of the identity that originates and exists in the “liminal spaces,” as he writes from a middle point that he searches to define and value. Such consciousness not only permits the development of that identity, but supports the reintegration of identities lost by individuals who participate in the worldwide multicultural and multiethnic system of today. I refer to the words of Stuart Hall:

Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, we should think, instead, of identity as a ‘production’ which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. This view problematises the very authority and authenticity to which the term ‘cultural identity’ lays claim (392).

José María Arguedas fought to create his identity, the corroboration of his authenticity, in a world in conflict between two cultures, he himself being an entity existing between both. His works evidence the search for and construction of his identity, and his determination to demonstrate the importance of creating a new world with the goal of uniting the cosmovision of various interwoven cultures into a new perspective, valuing and preserving each, while, at the same time focusing on the future.

One of the most striking and elegant components of Arguedas’s perspective is his ability to reveal the indigenous cosmovision of union with nature, a perspective that further complicates his hybrid being. Man is not a separate and supreme entity that can dominate nature as the Conquistadores and their successors represent. Rather, man is one and equal with all forms of nature, each being alive and contributory to the wholeness of existence. As Ernesto touches the stones of the ancient Incan walls of Cuzco, his thoughts reflect that unanimity with life in all its forms.

“Eran más grandes y extrañas de cuanto había imaginado las piedras del muro incaico; bullían bajo el segundo piso encalado.... Era estático el muro pero hervía por todas sus líneas y la superficie era cambiante, como la de los ríos en el verano,” (Arguedas, *LRP* 11). ‘The stones of the Incan wall were larger and stranger than I had imagined; they seemed to be bubbling up beneath the whitewashed second story.... The wall was stationary, but all its lines were seething and its surface was as changeable as that of the flooding summer rivers...’ (Arguedas, *DR* 7). Ernesto feels the lines of the stone and imagines them to be alive. That sensation is rooted in the many stories of the ancient and great city of Cuzco that his father has recounted to him. His father does not experience the stones as imbued with life the way Ernesto does. The passage draws on the Incan belief that all elements of nature are alive, including stone, soil, wind, and water. In fact, when the ancient peoples were unable to move the enormous stones that they used to construct the walls of the fortresses and the city of Cuzco itself any farther, they called them “piedras cansadas,” tired stones, worn out by their effort to move themselves.<sup>17</sup> Such personification underscores the Incan and Quechua fusion of man and all forms of nature. The passage also confounds the segment of Ernesto’s persona and perspective that is of Spanish heritage.

At several points in the novel Ernesto restores himself emotionally from the psychic pain of abandonment by his father and his alienated life at the boarding school, and does so by calling into his thoughts life in the sierra that gives him encouragement and stamina:

Los peces de los remansos, el gran sol que cruzaba rápidamente el cielo,

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<sup>17</sup> César Vallejo’s last play, entitled *La piedra cansada*, is a reference to such a stone and to that indigenous belief.

los jilgueros que rondaban los patios donde se tendía el trigo, y los molinos que empujaban lerdamente la harina, el sudario, cubierto de polvo, de las cruces que clavan en las paredes de los molinos; el río aun así enmarañado y bárbaro, me dieron aliento (*LRP*, 62).

The fish in the pools, the great sun that sped across the sky, the goldfinches that hovered around the threshing floors, and the mills that laboriously ground out the flour, the dust-covered shrouds on the crosses hanging on the mill wall, the riverbed, tangled and wild as it was—all of these gave me courage (*DR* 61).

Civilization is not omitted from the scene. It is an integral part, consisting of the mills grinding wheat into flour, the Christian symbols of shroud and cross nailed to the mills, amidst the scene of fish, a wide sky dominated by the sun, finches, and a wild and tortuous river. Arguedas does not deny civilization; he places it in the untamed landscape where man and his creations share a common and mutually dependent existence with nature. Wheat is provided by nature as is the water to power the flour mill.

Néstor Canclini identifies the return (here, a reintegration) to premodern origins as a mechanism for decentering the trajectory of contemporaneity and its focus on the future (Canclini 79). Arguedas's inclusion of the premodern promotes an opening and broadening of the contemporary gaze that extends the breadth of culture to valuing Peru's ancient heritage while allowing society to move forward, a hybridized view as opposed to an anachronistic or nostalgic perspective.

## CHAPTER 5

### *LOS RIOS PROFUNDOS: EL HUAYNO, EL ZUMBAYLLU -*

#### MUSIC, MEMORY AND PERFORMANCE

One can believe, I do believe, that about the dry bones of print, words heaped up in paragraphs, something of the original spirit lingers. That spirit need not be lost to comprehension, respect, and appreciation. We are not able to revive by singing, or stepping over a text five times, but by patient surrender to what a text has to say in the way it has to say it, something of life can again become incarnate.

Hymes, 1991 11

In *Los ríos profundos*, the language of music fuses with the interior language of the protagonist, Ernesto. The conjunction, impressed in his memory, allows the youth a psychic place in which he can confide and gather emotional support after his father has left him at the boarding school in Abancay. Because his interactive experience is limited and fragmented due to his upbringing, Ernesto lacks the requisite social tools required to navigate the school system, an entirely new occurrence for him. Consequently, he relies on his memories from early childhood for consolation and direction. The *huayno*, a type of ancient song of the Quechua natives, which he often heard when accompanying his itinerant father on his journeys in the sierra, seems to be one such source of solace and relief. Rather than supporting Jameson's statement that postmodernism replaces "depth models for surfaces, simple or mosaic," here Arguedas, speaking through Ernesto, does

quite the opposite (Jameson 12). Ernesto longs for and in fact seeks out the depth and sensibility to meaning that his childhood and its experiences have inculcated in him, emotions that he conjures up to cope with a new world that he does not understand. The *huayno* is the mechanism for his inroad to that emotional state. In need of a rational type of metanarrative on which to draw, Ernesto turns to the Quechua cosmovision and lifestyle inculcated in him from the time he was a toddler. That world is indelible in his mind and absolutely real to him, not an artificial construct of reality as defined in postmodern thought. Arguedas's perspective is modernist in that regard, a dominant viewpoint in the novel. However, his fractured subjectivity and persistent search for identity integration is clearly postmodern. His search, then, is a hybrid, blurring the boundary between the two literary trends.

While the *huayno* is one of several performative voiced acts in the text, its importance cannot be underestimated. Foley and others refer to "registers" in oral performance, "an idiomatic version of the language that qualifies as a more or less self-contained system of signification specifically because it is the designated and sole vehicle for communication in the act of traditional oral performance," each culture having many such "registers" (15). Because they are unique to a culture, such registers carry associative, metonymic meaning in a very dense format. The simple words or phrases conjure up a complex, rich and allusive world because of their "way of speaking" and tradition. The *huayno* is one such "register" in Quechua language and culture.

Walter Ong identifies sound as similar to writing due to its durative qualities. Certainly sound is restricted in time, as Ong says, "existing only when it is going out of existence," but the formula [for example, the *huayno* pattern] creates a kind of

independence of the sound from time. That is, the perception of sound is extended beyond the instant in which the sound is produced because it creates a psychological impact that has a longer presence than the sound itself. Ong further suggests that this effect creates a limited type of writing due to the derived mental process (116). As a result, the register involved in such performances means much more than the words themselves, bringing into play the event of the performance as well as the referent of its tradition, providing access to a world much beyond the actuality of the event for those who are familiar with the form and can decode it. Foley calls it a kind of echo induced by the sound, but an echo that is not a sound. It is a creation of long-lasting meaning exterior to the text itself but accessed by its performance. Oral representation is a very economical mode of communication that is only available to those familiar with it, complete with phrases, background, gestures, that result in a type of “back-channel response” actuated by the metonymic performance itself (56). The inclusion of the various *huaynos* in the text of *Los ríos profundos* certainly emphasizes their literal meaning in the context of the novel, but, for the culturally informed reader, it provides a map to the deeper levels of meaning as well (Foley 57).

By incorporating the *huayno* in the text, Arguedas is performing dual tasks. He heightens the awareness of the time-honored form for the Spanish-speaking reader who may not have the cultural background sufficient to understand and benefit from the traditional implications. There is no “value-added” (Foley 59). However, Arguedas is attempting to cross cultural lines. While the referent may be unavailable to some, a few may have the cultural experiences which trigger the extended meanings. The meaning produced by that keying during a performance to a referent outside of the text or speech

act is called by Foley and others “word-power” (27). Performance recorded in text diminishes, but does not exclude entirely, remnants of performance. Arguedas contextualizes the representation of the *huayno* in numerous ways to increase the options for added signification beyond the words themselves. Certainly the full meaning of the performance cannot be duplicated in writing, but the contextual cues inform the scribed text and assist in retaining some of the word-power of the oral enactment (Foley 66).

Ernesto is familiar with the *huaynos* from locales throughout the southern section of Peru due to travels with his itinerant lawyer father. He not only is able to identify where a person is from by the *huayno* that person sings or plays, but he understands the mood that the physical environment of that region inspires in the music. The *huayno*, then, is not just a form a folk music typical of Peru; it is an integral element in the formation of the indigenous identity tied to a specific region.

As Paul Gilroy argues,

Narratives of loss, exile, and journeying...like particular elements of musical performance, serve a mnemonic function: directing the group back to significant, nodal points in its common history and its social memory. The telling and retelling of these stories plays a special role, organizing the consciousness of the “racial” group socially and striking the important balance between inside and outside activity—the different practices, cognitive, habitual, and performative, that are required to invent, maintain, and renew identity...[in an] asymmetrical cultural ensemble that cannot be apprehended through the Manichean logic of binary coding (198).

The *huayno* is the most popular musical form in southern Peru. Not only is the *huayno* a song, but a dance and a ubiquitous and admired poetic form. The rural *campesinos* sing *huaynos*, but *mestizos* in the cities also use the form, which became the most popular musical form of the indigenous people during the Colonial era. Its popularity derives from the fact that it can be danced in pairs. Since the Spanish imposed

restrictions on the indigenous peoples with respect to the location of their celebrations, forcing them to give up performance of some dances and musical forms, the *huayno* was danced inside a house or in other small and enclosed spaces. Hence, the indigenous peoples resisted loss of an important visual, musical, and commemorative cultural representation by performing the ritual out of the view of the hegemonic group. The *huayno* therefore serves as a form of identity celebration and preservation. When the groups improvise with lyrics and instruments, their performance serves further as an improvisational model – fluid, adapting to the circumstances -- yet it is grounded in the ancient, the historical, invoking emotive thoughts and images that preserve the very traditions that are under siege by the hegemonic.

The lyrics of a *huayno* are very sentimental with an intense use of metaphor, the style varying, depending on the region of its origin. The indigenous *huayno* typically is more stoic, somber, and simple than the *huayno* of the *mestizo*, which has a lighter, more melodic tone that appeals more to urban taste. In *Los ríos profundos*, Arguedas frequently includes examples of the musical form as emblematic and personally recuperative of the indigenous culture with which he so closely identified. Ernesto searches for *chicherías* (bars where corn beer is served) where the *huayno* is played and sung, regenerating the tender memories of trips with his father during which his father pulled together groups that played the violin and harp and sang a wide variety of *huaynos*. Ernesto, reacting to the music and to his memories after hearing a slow and emotive *huayno*, thinks to himself:

¿Quién puede ser capaz de señalar los límites que median entre lo heroico y el hielo de la gran tristeza? Con una música de éstas puede el hombre llorar hasta consumirse, hasta desaparecer, pero podría igualmente luchar contra una legión de cóndores y de leones o contra los monstruos que se dice habitan en el fondo

de los lagos de altura y en las faldas llenas de sombras de las montañas  
(Arguedas, *LRP* 178).

Who is capable of setting the bounds between heroism and the iciness of a great sorrow? With music such as this a man could weep until he was completely consumed, until he vanished, or could just as easily do battle with legion of condors and pumas, or with the monsters that are said to inhabit the depths of the highland lakes and the shadowy mountain slopes ( Arguedas, *DR* 172).

The youth mixes the musical language with nature. Here the anti-postmodern voice pervades, opposing the urbanized, civilized emphasis of domination and subjugation of nature, foregrounded mimetically by the bridge over the Pachachaka River. The musical voice encourages Ernesto, just as the view and sound of the river and its bridge inspire him. His existence and identity are hybridized; he is a postmodern being who cannot escape that duality.

The history of the *huayno*, actually a hybrid tradition, is also reflective of Ernesto's own complex identity. Traditionally, in the enactment of a dance, the borders that separate classes are represented in a performed ritual wherein identities are strengthened by the demonstration of their differences. One can understand the dance accompanied by its song and its instrumental music as a dramatized cultural form or a semiotic reconstruction of divisions in the culture. But the *huayno* has a hybrid heritage. Raúl Romero, supporting prior studies by Arguedas, argues that indigenous and *mestizo* ethnic musical dissimilarities have been key to their understanding. Instruments used in performance of the *huayno* include the harp and the violin, both brought to the Americas by the Spanish, while musical elements such as pentatonicism stem from Peru's pre-Hispanic past.<sup>18</sup> However, he further indicates that such similarities no longer are divisive along racial lines as they were in the colonial period. Instead, such divisions now refer to

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<sup>18</sup> Pentatonicism refers to the use of a musical scale that consists of only five tones, usually omitting the fourth and seventh tone of the diatonic scale.

aesthetic and cultural considerations, and those considerations vary from region to region. What may be considered indigenous in one locale, may not be regarded as such in another. Agreement or opposition may differ depending on context. Because of this variation, indigenous music may be performed by *mestizos* and accepted by both groups (Romero 22).

Martin Stokes argues that ethnic groups construct their identities through their music, a fact that is more related to forces among the groups competing for power, and groups that are moving toward definition. He suggests that musical performance and its reception by the audience has a socially valuable impact by which ethnic groups are constructed and energized (5). Stokes argues that "... the means by which ethnicities define themselves in music has to do with power relations extant among defined groups and those being defined," and singles out the recording industry as a powerful agent in the process of such distinction (20). With the continual migration of the indigenous from the Andes to urban centers, and in particular to Lima, new musical styles that combine traditional Andean music fused with popular urban music appear. Arguedas himself promoted the commercial recording of Andean music in the style of urban *mestizo* popular songs. The reception of such recordings was such that it caused an interest in Andean music and folkloric festivals associated with the regional music, since music and dance are integral parts of Andean festivals (Romero 46-53).

According to Hebdige and Adorno, one should not determine or define a class by its musical style since musical genres carry mixed and contradictory tendencies of the society in its totality and complexity (Hebdige 17, Adorno 69). In fact, subaltern groups appropriate ideas from the hegemonic culture (and vice versa), inverting their ideas and

signs into their own in order to create a new hybrid form. One can recognize the signs of the hegemonic culture in the new form, but such form constitutes a different and subversive entity (Stokes 19). While the hegemonic culture, by means of music companies and their various forms of distribution, tries to reappropriate the form, the subculture creates and demonstrates a new and different expression of the hegemonic sound. Therefore, the indigenous form, hybridized over time, still maintains its indigenous identity. Arguedas recognizes this conflation of influences in the *huayno* and uses the musical form in *Los ríos profundos* to demonstrate the fusion of cultures in the rural regions of the sierra and the high mountain plateau.

The *huayno* can also be identified as part of a current “pastiche” in musical compositions that may be characterized as classical in style or encountered in modern rock forms. Composers and musicians of postmodernity have turned to the past to create a unique sound expression of the newer global and hybridized culture. Arguedas’s use of the *huayno* and other traditional folk music patterns in *Los ríos profundos*, while reflecting his anticipation of the loss of old forms and anticipating the inevitable variations of those preserved, does not mimic the postmodern world of commodity exchange, but is a genuine appreciation for and attempt to maintain the ancient in face of that commodified world<sup>19</sup> (Jameson 18). He was determined to retain the traditional as he saw it morphing into postmodern forms. Such is also Ernesto’s focus in his attempt to construct a personal identity that meshes the old with the new, the indigenous with the *criollo*, understanding that such fusion is his and is the future of Peru.

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<sup>19</sup>Fredric Jameson discusses the commodification of aesthetics at length in his chapter on culture, pages 1-54.

Canclini views the amalgamation of the old with the new as a change in relations between “high culture” and mass consumption. That destabilizing of borders allows different societal classes to develop an awareness of and a taste for artistic and political innovations that occur in urban settings. The resultant melding is, effectively, the democratization of culture. Modern capitalism, dependent on industrial expansion, requires a constant increase in consumption, minimizing the exclusivity of certain musical genres reserved to the elite minority in earlier periods (58). However, Canclini acknowledges that the differences are again reconstituted when recuperated by competing cultural segments of a society (58). The resultant variation articulates a ‘difference’ that allows the older folk art form to retain its originality, confounding the dominant culture in its attempt to distinguish the constitutive elements of the original (Stokes 19-20). Consequently, representations of the current experience of, for example, the *huayno*, are hybridized versions of the ancient, connecting today’s world with the past, the urban with the rural, the hegemonic with the subaltern, and serve to preserve a rural cultural past of which many urban dwellers today are not even aware (Jameson 21).

The *zumbayllu* also serves as a contributor to the musical or sound sense of the novel and its extended meanings. The toy, a simple top fashioned from a gourd and spun by a string, is an important metonym, referential as a part to a whole, the whole being the fantasized life that Ernesto imagined in his infancy and connected to his father. Ernesto believes, because he needs to, that the sound of the *zumbayllu* will carry a message to his father, linking him to the only family who has shown any interest in him. Ernesto desires reunion with his father (in Lacanian terms the ultimate unity with his mother is an impossibility since she is dead, a surrogate mother has cast him out). His troubled

infancy results in a *mirror stage* that creates a fragmented “I”, incapable of constructing the “armor” necessary for Ernesto’s psychic development (Lacan 442). Rather than being alienated by his pluralized circumstances, Ernesto is fragmented, suggesting Arguedas’s a move from modernism to the postmodern (Jameson 14). Arguedas and Ernesto both are emblematic of the dissolution of the nuclear family and the existence of the centered subject dependent on that social structure that has morphed into a kind of decentering and uncertainty of existence. Ernesto is trying to hold onto a depth of meaning, but his very heritage challenges that possibility.

Additionally, the *zumbayllu* is a dual referent, representing nature and man’s dominion over it. The *zumbayllu* is created from nature and emits sounds from that world. It buzzes like an insect, yet is a hybrid, a product of nature that has been altered by man to become something that man manipulates, resonating in both worlds, a metaphor for Ernesto’s hybridity.

A very compelling feature that inhabits all of Arguedas’s novels, but most particularly *Los ríos profundos*, is his emphasis on the fundamental oneness of the Peruvian indigenous with nature. He promotes, even provokes that sense by connecting language, sound, and how man has transfigured such sounds. He introduces the sixth chapter of the novel with a discussion of Quechua suffixes and examples that demonstrate their usage. The suffix *yllu*, appended to other syllables to form words such as *tankayllu*, *zumbayllu*, and *pinkuyllu*, bears particular onomatopoeic qualities in terms of each word’s meanings. All are related to the sounds of nature. *Yllu* refers to the musical sound produced by small wings in flight. The *tankayllu* is a large, buzzing, harmless insect that flies about licking flowers. He is later imitated as the scissors dancer

whose rapidly and rhythmically clicking scissors echo the insect's sound. The *pinkuyllu* is a very large and specially designed flute with a powerful sound made from a rare jungle cane and played during indigenous festivals by honored, trained individuals. Only music of ancient epic significance is played on the *pinkuyllu*. The instrument is never used at Christian religious festivals, perhaps because of a Christian prohibition following the Conquest of what the hegemonic considered to be a threatening primitive practice (Arguedas, *LRP* 67). The *zumbayllu* is a toy, a top of Incan origin, which replicates the humming of forest insects. Ernesto likens the sound of the top to a chorus of *tankayllus* fixed in one locale. Hence, each word with its suffix, evoking a sound from nature, serves as a metonymical reinforce of the conjunction and inseparability of man from the natural world.<sup>20</sup> Arguedas resists, and in fact rejects, the postmodern emphasis of man as determinant of his world. For the author, man exists within a cosmos neither of his making nor which he can dominate. He exists as an equal to all parts of that environment. Still, *Los ríos profundos* demonstrates that tormenting that view, the author is haunted by the postmodern dilemma of the absence of a unified self that is “natural” to that community.

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<sup>20</sup> In *La utopia arcaica*, Mario Vargas Llosa comments that while some of the passages that Arguedas includes in *Los ríos profundos* are interesting, they add nothing to the text. I believe, on the contrary, that such passages demonstrate strong resistance to the developing postmodern sense of urban life as dominating the rural sense of living within nature.

## CHAPTER 6

### *EL SEXTO*: CONFRONTING THE ABJECT –

#### HYBRIDITY AUGMENTED

No beast is there without glimmer of infinity,  
no eye so vile nor abject that brushes not  
against lightning from on high, now tender, now  
fierce.

Victor Hugo, *La Légende des siècles*  
Yo no soy comunista...A un país antiguo hay que  
auscultarlo. El hombre vale tanto por las  
máquinas que inventa como por la memoria que  
tiene de lo antiguo.  
Cámac no está muerto.

Arguedas, *El Sexto*

By 1961, Arguedas had completed and published the work that reflects his year as an inmate at the infamous El Sexto prison in Lima in 1937-38. The book appeared on the market at the beginning of the prolific and very experimental Latin American Literary “Boom” years. While it is certainly not one of his better known works (in fact, very little critical commentary has been written about it), the text deserves attention not only because it absolutely does not fit into the “Boom” movement, but because it marks a different approach in the style Arguedas utilizes to recount the experience, and is an indication of transformative influences in the author’s personal identity construction. The two elements are profoundly interconnected, each informing the other. The work is written in a traditional linear form of plot development, the protagonist being a young university student named Gabriel, who has been involved in some dissident political

*activity* that has resulted in his incarceration. (Arguedas was jailed for participating in a student demonstration protesting Mussolini's support of the Spanish Civil War brought on by the visit to Lima of General Camarota, an envoy of the Italian fascist leader. Such protests were illegal) (Lastra 237). However, while the work is a novel, it transcends the fictional as a kind of *testimonio*.

Arguedas's reason for choosing a narrative form that does not situate itself among the experimental and complex forms typified by "Boom" narratives deserves attention. Although the plot is chronologically linear, it is not a traditional novel. Consideration of the socio-political scene at the time of the author's incarceration during the 1930s as well as that of the 1960s, the decade in which the work was published, may shed light on Arguedas's narrative approach. The military and the oligarchy controlled Peru at the beginning of the 1930s, continuing their domination for at least a generation. In fact, some analysts suggest that the government was actually a tripartite system in which the military and the oligarchy worked together to suppress the masses, represented by the APRA, American Popular Revolutionary Alliance, and the PCP, Peruvian Communist Party (Gilbert 62). Tactics included aerial bombings in which some 1000 Apristas were killed (Janda 544). In 1962, due to a political dispute against APRA, the military staged a coup-d'état and established a military junta. In 1968 another military coup'-d'état established a second military regime that lasted for twelve years (Orsini 1). Essentially, the "people" had no voice. Arguedas, then, brings to the reader the horrific personal experiences of that period of suppression. Essentially, he speaks for those who suffered those injustices, himself included.

Ciro Sandoval considers the work to be a *metatestimonio* (140). A brief discussion of *testimonio* will help to clarify that authorial position. John Beverley defines the *testimonio* as a book or pamphlet-length written narrative told from the first person perspective by a narrator who is the actual protagonist or witness to the important life events being recounted.<sup>21</sup> He further indicates that the form is still developing as a literary genre, and, therefore, its definition remains quite fluid (31). In Latin American literature, *testimonio* dates back to such nonfictional narrative texts as the colonial *crónicas*, national essays such as *Facundo*, and some Romantic biographies reflecting a liberal bent (31). Participant accounts of events, often of a political nature, that were not intended as literary works, such as Che Guevara's *Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, also contributed to the development of the form. Beverley identifies *testimonio* as definitively not fiction because the speaker and events recounted are real. Additionally, *testimonio* describes a difficult social situation in a society of which the narrator is a part, and therefore, the narrator is representative of the group involved. Because the *testimonio* arises from such a societal crisis, it may also be described as a "nonfictional, popular-democratic form of epic narrative" in which the narrator is the symbolic hero because he speaks on behalf of the community (Beverley 33).

While *testimonio* reaffirms the individual as subject, it does so in connection with a group struggle often associated with oppression or marginalization. To be included in the genre of *testimonio*, the work must indicate a need for social change, one that destabilizes

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<sup>21</sup> At times the narrator must be tape-recorded since s/he may be functionally illiterate or not sufficiently literate to write a long text. The tape-recording is then transcribed by a person proficient in those skills. Such intervention has been cause for much debate with respect to its "truth." One well-known example is *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia*, transcribed and edited by Elizabeth Burgos. Its authorship and validity were hotly disputed, particularly after Menchú received the Nobel Peace Prize for her expose of political and social oppression in Guatemala.

the reader's world (Beverley 41). If the account comes from one who has moved outside of membership in the group or class, the narration is no longer *testimonio*. As an inmate, Arguedas is a member of the oppressed, the prisoners.

*El Sexto* may be categorized as *metatestimonio* because the text's style situates itself somewhere between autoethnography and literature. The author is both writer and translator of ethnocultural observations and ideologies (Sandoval 699). The text is derived from a very real social event, even though Arguedas, as a writer, posits the work in a more artistic narrative form. While Arguedas considered himself to be a member of the social group that desired change, the indigenous, he was also well-educated, even at the time he endured imprisonment. Consequently, the work is revelatory of a period of historical and social unrest that is recreated as *testimonio*, but in an imaginative way. Hence it is a study of *testimonio*, a kind of looking at the genre from within, a complex vision that forces Arguedas to consider his own existence as witness, subject and writer, clearly a subjective hybridity. He writes from within and from without the experience. Arguedas does not present a singular vision of life in the prison. Rather, it is a multifaceted account in which the spectator is also a participant in the reality he observes and describes. The author combines many voices that affirm a broad spectrum of strata of Peruvian society condensing them in an attempt to construct a new approach to life individually and as a society. While the objective may be utopic, because Arguedas does not define a specific method for reform, the goal is not ideologized. The author reveals the coarsest details of prison life, while he exposes his innermost almost trancelike thoughts, a synchrony of stark contrasts which seem to be contradictory. He is both narrator and participant, real and fictional, writing in the first person. The "I" speaks

from a variety of positions; as the subaltern Other, the author/protagonist represents the collective first person, and from that perspective the work is testimonial (Sandoval 700).

The prison is a location of diversity housing the best and the worst of Peru. Among the inmates are the most depraved, the most punished by the oppressive social machinery and by the sheer misery of existence in the substrates of society as well as by police torture, but El Sexto also houses leaders of the workers' movements, political movements, and those who are merely victims of innocent and defenseless circumstance. The voice of the collective, therefore, is broad and complex.

The prison is divided into three floors of inmates, differentiated by their social, economic and cultural status. The uppermost level houses prisoners who are members of outlawed political parties, including Apristas (members of the conservative APRA, or representatives of the petty bourgeoisie whose goal is to take power from the hegemonic aristocracy), and Communists.<sup>22</sup> Gabriel, the protagonist, is celled on the third floor because he is a Marxist sympathizer, though not strongly political. The more militant political prisoners call him "apolítico" or "un soñador burgués e intelectual." The second floor houses transvestites, a hermaphroditic thief, assassins, illicit deal makers, and informants. They are the true criminals, even financially capitalizing on the degradation within the prison wall. One inmate charges others to view his very large penis. On the bottom floor are housed those of the lowest class, the "vagos", who wallow

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<sup>22</sup> APRA In the 1920s, the escalating influence of Marxism as a labor movement inspired the creation of competing mass political parties, of which APRA, the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance founded by Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre in Mexico in 1924 was one of the most prominent and was a populist movement against the ideology of the Communist Third International which identified a struggle against imperialism in Latin America as part of a larger international struggle against capitalism and in support of the Russian Revolution. Haya de la Torre identified independent historical needs of Latin America including enough capitalist development to carry out a bourgeois revolution arising from an alliance of members of the middle class as opposed to a socialist uprising instigated by the proletariat. Another was José Carlos Mariátegui's Peruvian Socialist Party, also identifying local needs but aligning more closely with Marxist ideals (Rowe and Schelling 152-153).

in the most debased forms of human existence. A closed system, the prison feeds upon itself, exacerbating the degradation of both the physical and mental potentialities within the institution.

Foucault's examination of the prison system and its effects, poses the following question:

...how were people made to accept the power to punish, or quite simply, when punished, tolerate being so. The theory of the contract (of being imprisoned or the right to imprison) can only answer this question by the fiction of a juridical subject giving to others the power to exercise over him the right that he himself possesses over them (303).

Perhaps the answer lies in Kristeva's understanding of the abject and its relinquishing of existential meaning. Life within the walls slides toward an ultimate state of inert uniformity, what Foucault terms "normalization" (701). They are "ninguneados" (nobodies), irrelevant, ignored, and worthless as humans, the "excrement" of society. While the floors and, therefore, the groups are separated, they are also connected by stairways and bridges, just as society's classes are linked in various ways, impacting each other. It is within these connections that the "abject" enters into the individual's and society's identity construction, and it is in that location that Arguedas, as Gabriel, struggles with his own abjection.

In *Powers of Horror*, Julia Kristeva locates the "abject" between the "object" and the "subject" in development of the psyche. If one is abject, one is neither subject nor object, and is the result of a reaction to an overwhelming threat which may originate exterior or interior to the self (1). Such a response may be equally attracted to and repulsed by that which is taboo, condemned. The abject bears one characteristic of the object, that of being in opposition to the *I* (1). Hence, if the object forces the *I* to exist

within an unrelenting desire for meaning, that opposition is maintained and the subject, then, is able to construct itself as a psychic whole. However, in the case of the *object*, the *I* is rejected, excluded from an acceptable mode of existence within which to search for meaning. Therefore, the *object* pulls the *I* to the location where meaning ceases, disappears, and the *I* exists amid the most debased suffering. It is that forbidden place which the *I* believes to be what is desired by the object.

In *El Sexto*, a Japanese prisoner defecates in a hole while Puñalada, a large black prisoner who is the de facto ruler of the prison kicks him, forcing the Japanese inmate to soil himself, resulting in loud laughter from Puñalada, while others say that that is just what the Japanese are accustomed to doing. Gabriel disagrees, stating that the Japanese man is simply defending himself by giving pleasure to Puñalada and the others, i.e., the object, giving to the Other what he desires. Incapable of acknowledging the meaninglessness, abjection serves to maintain the existence of the *I* that finds itself in that space. The object, therefore, is a form of sustenance for an existence that has no meaning.

On a societal level, Kristeva depicts abjection as a means by which aboriginal societies separate themselves from the status of the animal, taboos defining that distinction. That which is taboo is object. Foucault's seminal work on prisons and punishment applies here as well. Foucault notes that discipline is most effective when coerced by observation. Hence, prisons are architecturally constructed not so much to be seen or to look like a prison or fortress as to make visible those who inhabit it. The architecture, then, transforms those individuals by totally controlling their behaviors, knowing that they are powerless and constantly being observed, subjugated and exploited

(172). Most importantly, the prison is hierarchized from the top down, its functioning the result of a network of relationships within the prison itself. The three floors of El Sexto, with its sets of bridges and passageways, allow for techniques of surveillance via a very physical mechanism. Prisoners on the third level are able to constantly observe the *vagos*, on the first level. The hierarchy in itself gives power to those of the upper level, rendering the *vagos* by their physical location as less human. Further, the ability to constantly view the *vagos* is a punitive measure meant to ensure that the prisoners on the upper levels do not commit crimes such that they may be relegated to the lowest level, that lowest form of human existence. Thus, the open hierarchical architectural scheme introduces a valuing of individuals while it constrains each level to conform to certain behaviors. As Foucault states, “The perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes*” (183).

In *El Sexto*, all societal rules are trespassed because many of the prisoners exist in that space where meaning has collapsed. The *vagos*, unfed by the prison guards, are forced to lap up the peelings and seeds discarded from the putrid foods allotted those of the upper floors. Their existence is that of a forced dementia, the result of rapes, bestiality by the guards, syphilis, other illnesses, gangs ruling by terror, and informants who are ordered to swallow the excrement of the political prisoners. Those of the lowest level exist amid their own excrement, picking lice from their bodies, the constant source of ridicule and disgust of inhabitants of the upper levels and the guards. Taboos are absent and the *vagos* exist in total abjection. The *I* of the *vago* is a nothingness, a psychic nonexistence, excluded from any possibility of searching for any affirmation of its

identity as a unique being. The ultimate *abjection* is death, the totality of nonexistence. All borders that protect against the destruction of being have been erased. Kristeva portrays this stage as “something rejected from which one does not part.... it beckons to us and ends up engulfing us” (Kristeva 4). Death is the extinction of any kind of “being” in *El Sexto*. Arguedas describes the prison as a cemetery, in architectural appearance, in its filthiness, and in fact, since death there is a common occurrence. Portraying the sad, repetitive screaming of one of the imprisoned assassins, he writes, “Todo el Sexto parecía vibrar, con su inmundicia y su apariencia de cementerio, ese grito agudo que era arrastrado por el aire como el llanto final de una bestia” (30). The bestial reference is reflective of Kristeva’s *abject* as the subject not having achieved the separation from the animalistic.

The subversion of order, routine, structure, and ultimately identity, is the perpetrator of *abjection*. Hence, the in-between, the ill-defined, or the composite, finds itself in the location of the *abject*. Such positioning affirms the frailty of the very societal system that creates it. As Kristeva states, “Abjection...is immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady: a terror that disassembles, a hatred that smiles, a passion that uses the body for barter instead of inflaming it, a debtor who sells you up, a friend who stabs you...” (4). Further, *abject* is the discovery that one’s existence as a whole is an impossibility. Therefore, one’s own body is a nonobject, is forfeited (5). Kristeva moves from that nothingness to an inability to identify with anything, even “the shadow of a memory” (5). Hence, whatever that nothingness is, it is alone, circumscribed by an impenetrable fog of fear. While the text contains the totality of *abjection*, death, and all of its debilitated

stages, its opposite is also present: the Sublime, seemingly an impossible position in a penal institution.

To comprehend that alternative positioning necessitates examination of the meaning of the Sublime. Many philosophers have attempted to define the expansiveness and the intensity of the sublime, but, because it is unmeasurable, it is largely indescribable.<sup>23</sup>

According to Burke, sublimity moves beyond pleasure because it derives from pain. Pleasure induces a relaxing effect on the body, while sublimity tightens the body's fibers. He further identifies the sublime in situations that test one's safety – darkness, terror, death, occurrences that can be negative producers of such an intense response that they inhibit or preclude rationality (113-114).

While Immanuel Kant's notion of the sublime posits the term as undefinable, beyond phenomenal representation (103-117), Hegel suggests that the sublime is induced by a "little piece of the Real" (195). Because the mind cannot define the sublime, establishing some reference point to indicate what is transcended is essential. The signifier, then, is the representation of the lack, the inability to adequately signify the sublime (209). Žižek extends the relationship of object to sublime by stating that if one tries to approach it too closely, the sublime object becomes ordinary. Its sublimity can exist only in an intermediate state, experienced from a certain perspective that is an interspace (170).

The abject and the sublime converge in the writings of Julia Kristeva in her formulation of the sublime as separating from the abject. Particularly pertinent to this

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<sup>23</sup> Dionysius Longinus (or so he has come to be known since his actual name is uncertain) probably writing in the first century AD, authored an often referenced treatise on the Sublime, an important ancient work on aesthetics. In his treatise he describes the Sublime as beyond rationality. The particular context deals with the ability of the poet to invoke emotions that move the reader to a state of ecstasy combined with a sense of dismay, taking speech to a newer higher level of invincible power, inspiring a greatness of spirit that augments the meaning of the idea.

work is Kristeva's articulation of the two seemingly opposing emotional locations. According to the philosopher and psychoanalyst, the ambiguity of *I/Other* or *Subject/Object*, that arises may blur the distinction between the conscious and the unconscious, resulting in what she terms to be "a sublimating discourse ('aesthetic' or mystical') rather than a scientific or rationalist one." She calls this "exile" this "*deject*," a "*stray*" in situations where the subject might desire, strive to belong, or definitively reject an opportunity [i.e., joining the Apristas or the Communists]. Sensing a danger of a loss that the object represents, he sets himself apart, he strays, and in so doing he salvages himself. That movement outside of the present allows the *stray* to ground himself (Kristeva 8). He seeks himself, loses himself, and experiences the sublime, a state of indefinable and excruciatingly intense passion. He can then locate himself because of despising the *Other*. Abjection occurs if the *Other* takes hold, takes over the *I*. Through sublimation, the *I* can avoid being overtaken by keeping the abject under control. Kristeva identifies the sublime with the ecstasy of a fathomless memory, an overtaking of the emotion by a kind of refulgence, an intensity of the senses, a luminosity or an aura that moves beyond the rational or description. It is to that place, that experience, which the *I* "strays" in order to continue existing, resisting the abject. In that sense the Sublime is memory expanding because it triggers a series of perceptions that reinforce it, locating the *I* in a different space, an expansiveness that allows us to continue in the present by diverging to another place.

The inspiration for the sublime in *El Sexto* originates in the abject. Confronting the abject, the horror of life within the prison walls, engenders the sublime. Several times in the novel, Gabriel's emotions transport him to a different space, each invoking memories

from life outside the prison, beyond Lima, to locations high in the sierra. Following the brutal beating of one of the prisoners, a crazed piano player (“el Pianista”) who has been repeatedly sexually assaulted, dragged along the floor on the lowest level and left to die in the freezing rain, Gabriel tries to help him by rapidly descending to the bottom floor and giving him a bit of chocolate to eat and a sweater to cover his naked body. Trying to keep him alive, Gabriel rubs the Pianista’s legs; then runs to find some pants to cover them. However, Gabriel is confronted by a group of Aprista inmates who blame him for the Pianista’s death. By intervening, his actions have disturbed the social hierarchy and unwritten rules of the prison. The Apristas consider him to be a puppet of communist agitators. Gabriel is threatened and degraded by perverse verbal attacks, both of a corporal and political nature, actions meant to intimidate him into succumbing to the prison hierarchy.

Gabriel despises those who abuse the Pianista, but, according to Kristeva, the intensity engendered by the abject allows his mind to stray to the sublime. Earlier philosophers identify a similar connection. Edmund Burke suggests that the abject is sublime because of its overpowering horror. That horror within the prison evokes a mental shift beyond that dimension to an experience indelibly printed in his memory from his early childhood. Gabriel visualizes the forced march of captive condors, jumping forward through his native village, accompanied by whistles and rhythmical drumbeats. The scene is neither evanescent nor abbreviated, mentally recreated in all its beautiful and horrific detail. Gabriel is in tears, suffering for the captive birds that he calls *aukis*. Following that mental re-creation, Gabriel’s memory is then broken by a return of consciousness to the prison and the accusation that he has caused trouble by

tangling up the interactions of the three floors. Gabriel now is calm, and indicates that the floors are not separate. However, the others have forced different levels to be as castes. Gabriel has broken the barriers. The argument continues, political and social in nature, with attempts at re- establishing power within the prison. Still, Gabriel has managed to extricate himself emotionally from the fray. He is apolitical – neither Communist nor Aprista, seeing the irrational approaches of both. Hence he is accused of being a sentimental petit bourgeois, incapable of the strength of taking sides.

Contrary to Mario Vargas Llosa's evaluation of Gabriel as very proud, having feelings of moral superiority comparable to what the martyr feels with respect to his executioners, Gabriel does not regard himself as such (17). Rather, he manages to extricate himself from the abject, and from the threats of not joining sides, resulting in crimes of the abject, by moving to the sublime. The extreme pain of the abject stimulates his memory to transport him to a place where the intensity of emotion, the passion, the pain that he felt as a boy, absorbs him and allows him to escape emotionally from the abject world of the prison. His efforts to help the Pianist were, to him, only humane. He can withstand the verbal abuse that ensues because he has been able to move to the sublime which provides him with the strength to return, emotionally impenetrable.

Cámac, Gabriel's cellmate, is caught between the two positions and, therefore, is an inspiration to all, his eyes metonymic of the abject and the sublime. Cámac has one diseased eye that continually discharges a dense purulent liquid and one that is healthy and brilliant, almost radiant. His diseased eye is the embodiment of the "somatic symptom," as Kristeva calls it, which is akin to an alien in the body, a cancer that the subject cannot reject. Either the incomplete *I* moves toward the *symptom* and is overcome

by the abject, or toward *sublimation*, which fends off the abject. His healthy eye, metonymic of sublimation, as described by Gabriel, is crystalline, “ como ciertos manantiales solitarios que hierven en las grandes alturas. Hierven levantando arenas de colores, azules, rojas, blanquísimas y negras, que danzan alzándose y cayendo al fondo. Uno se mira en esas aguas mejorado, purificado...” (144).

A carpenter from the mining area of Perú, Cámac has been imprisoned for speaking out against the brutal treatment of the miners. There, in the altiplano, in the bitter cold, the workers sleep in huts with tin roofs. Cámac compares the workers of the region to the *vagos* of the prison. The gringos spit on them. He can only describe the “gringos” who control the mines as having no upbringing, uprooted from family and homeland because they are able to spit on the laborer to earn millions, like blood suckers. For Cámac, the “gringo” is the incarnation of evil, whose only allegiance is to violence and materialism, trampling the miners who work in the depths of the earth. Cámac also detests the “*cholo*,” the embodiment of the sycophant of the gringo, capturing the *indios* and forcing them to work in the mines. Here again is a reference to the abject since the *cholo* has sold his soul. Further, referring to Kristeva, the miners, are also the abject because are prohibited from any meaningful mode of existence. The *I* of the miners disappears (33).

Later in the novel, another horror of abjection occurs, an incident involving a somewhat effeminate boy, “El Clavel” ((The Carnation), whom Arguedas describes as seeming to be a sleepwalker. As his cellmate pushes the boy toward another prisoner who accosts him, the abject once again succumbs to the desire of the object. The cellmate, the abject, laughs as he does so. The blood that flows from the boy’s neck, forming a pool on the floor, is then lapped up by the *vagos* who are starving. Such are the symbols of

the insidious nature of the abject hierarchy. Cámac understands and explains to Gabriel that the event is a deal for money, no different from the business dealings outside the prison where money changes hands and humanity succumbs to greed. Life in the prison reflects life in Peru as its people succumb to the abject (greedy, the criminal) forces of capitalist gringos (52).

Arguedas's political critique is unveiled through the relationship between Cámac and Gabriel, a relationship that sustains hope, but eventually erodes. Cámac's leanings are communistic, having lived the oppressive life of the miner. At the same time, he has worked beside Aprista sympathizers. His allegiance is divided, as is Gabriel's, but his experience is much broader and more painful. He has fought hard for workers' rights, a test of strength and endurance that takes its toll. Early in the novel, Cámac remains strong and continues to resist, with a soul that fights for the workers and the oppressed poor. Gabriel is inspired by Cámac, the brilliance of his eye, and the conviction in his voice. The carpenter has allowed Gabriel to move away from the abject, who now believes he will be able to survive life in the prison. However, though Cámac is able to save Gabriel, he is unable to save himself, as the abject ultimately succeeds in overtaking him. He cannot finish the guitar that he has tried to fashion from a wood box, an effort which grieves him because he wants Gabriel to hear the songs that his father would have sung on the altiplano. Cámac's diseased eye sinks into its cavity and disappears, and his heart gives out.

The lens through which the two experience the abject has a reverse effect because it is a view from opposing ends. The relationship that develops between Cámac and Gabriel certainly demonstrates the possibility of erasing long-established class and ethnic

divisions as they are overridden by the relationship that develops between Cámac and Gabriel. While both are from the altiplano, they are of different ethnic backgrounds that have allowed for different life opportunities. The two are now connected by circumstance, and learn that they are both profoundly troubled by the degradation and victimization of the indigenous worker on the altiplano. Their perspectives converge, but at a conjunction forged from differing vantage points. While shared perspectives provide a basis for mutual support, their experience of the abject occurs through opposite ends of the lens. Cámac has experienced dehumanization from the inside in the outside world. Gabriel has encountered such dehumanization from the outside in within the world of the prison. That focus takes its toll on Cámac, the reverse of which animates Gabriel to work to help others within the prison walls.

La celda, sus paredes en que las chinches se escondían, el techo húmedo y bajo, quedó como iluminado.... Le cerré los ojos al minero. Estuve largo rato sosteniendo su cuerpo. Y nunca comprendí mejor la fuerza de la vida. Sus ojos cerrados, su cuerpo inerte, me transmitían la voluntad de luchar, de no retroceder nunca (145).

Cámac inspires the sublime in Gabriel, while the abject ultimately overtakes the humble carpenter.

Hybridity is inherent in the abject as it connects with the sublime. Both induce the most extreme expansion and experience of human sensibility. However, that hybridity is further augmented by the metat testimonial style employed by Arguedas. His understanding of the corruption of Lima society comes from his experience within the prison walls rather than from the politically or socially influential in the city, whose methods might appear to be more subtle though none the less corrupt. His inspiration for the future derives from the subaltern, not the hegemonic.

The discursive approach used by Arguedas to lay out the novel combines the writer, the observer, and the participant in one character, the protagonist. While the first person perspective is frequently used, the third person allows for longer descriptive passages relating the context as well as much of the action in which the protagonist does not play a part. The flights to the sublime that Gabriel experiences reveal a more lyric voice, a lyricism infused with profound pain as well as ecstasy. Gabriel's roots and his emotional ties exist on the altiplano. He reverts to Quechua when his feelings are strong, connecting instantly with the few other prisoners who also share the indigenous language. Though well-educated and a *mestizo*, his sympathies and his cultural ties remain with the subaltern. Intellectually he comprehends the thrust of the Marxists, disagrees with the Apristas, but positions himself in neither camp, his allegiances built on his assessment of the goodness of the individual rather than a collective stereotype.

Defying accusations of being a dreamer and indecisive by party members, Gabriel is determined to see the death of Puñalada, the black leader and assassin who controls the social system of the prison and instigates the most insidious sexual acts perpetrated upon newly arrived and innocent young inmates. Gabriel has not relegated himself to the abject in that decision. Rather, he has risen to a higher societal level. He wants to reform the prison from within, just as he sees the solution to the ills of Peruvian politics and society as solvable from within the nation's borders drawing on the nation's cultural history, rather than imposed from above or imported ideological positions. Gabriel cannot fit himself into any ideological category, nor does he intend to force anyone else to do what he cannot. Hence, Gabriel assumes a middle road, a liminal space, the ultimate hybrid position.

Contrary to the “normalizing” affects of prison life, Gabriel’s incarceration amplifies and further solidifies his personal identity through experiencing the abject and the sublime as an inspiring conjunction, just as Arguedas’s metatestimonial style pressures the author to examine his social perspective and positioning. Hence, the introspective plot development aligns and is reinforced by the unique form of testimonio that supports the subaltern group with which Arguedas identifies and calls for reform, but does so in a way that works to solidify his own subjectivity. Indeed, precisely because of the overpowering emotional pain that Arguedas endures in *El Sexto*, the experience strengthens his own concept of self, his identity.

It is important to connect the interior prison life in Lima with the exterior Peruvian society, not only at the time of Arguedas’s incarceration but later, during the time he actually wrote the work, to clarify the author’s utilization of the prison as a societal metaphor. Semiotically, the interior life of the prison is a microcosm of hierarchical rules, political pressures, and corruption and consequences in the larger Peruvian society. Arguedas had read other texts dealing with prison life and was particularly inspired by Dostoyevsky’s *Memoirs from the House of the Dead* (Lastra 237). Gabriel’s efforts to initiate reforms within the prison confront similar obstacles to attempts to reform the social and political structure outside. The social and political structure of the prison mirrors a much larger and similarly manipulated reality. On the highest level, the hegemonic, the wealthy *hacendados*, the socially and economically prominent *criollos* and *cholos*, control the political and governmental power structure, manipulating economic benefits to their advantage, just as the political prisoners maintain their party alliances and power resulting from such membership.

## CHAPTER 7

### *TODAS LAS SANGRES*: LIMINALITY AND HYBRIDITY REDEFINED

...what had seemed the historical predicament of the colonial subaltern can be made to become the allegory of the predicament of *all* thought, *all* deliberative consciousness...

Spivak 12

...migrants are defined by their otherness, as being people in whose deepest selves strange fusions occur, unprecedented unions between what they were and where they find themselves.

Rushdie 125

Arguedas formulated a grand plan for demonstrating the complexity of Peruvian society via his longest novel, *Todas las sangres*, published in 1964. Using linear narrative as the format for his revelatory portrayal of differing societal players, the author worked to unravel, or at least to display, the intersections and distinctions that contributed to the Peruvian societal problematic during the 1950s and 60s. As evidenced by his prior works, Arguedas wanted to create a kind of testimonial of life as he experienced it in the Peruvian world that he loved. Because, as he said, he had known persons like the ones he draws in *Todas las sangres*, he believed that his fictional portrayals were truly reflective of the Peruvian reality and would provide a format of the society that could impel broad representational social and political reform (Pinilla 203).

Studies of the subaltern generally attribute the failure of such groups to participate in political and societal decision-making to the overarching domination of hegemonic powers. The group's impotence is further predicated on a lack of consciousness or solidarity among the subaltern. However, that conclusion is drawn based on the concept of solidarity as defined by the dominant class and is, therefore, an "interpretive construct" of the hegemonic (Spivak 6). Dipesh Chakrabarty and Partha Chatterjee note that European constructed ideologies and praxes came to be regarded as a kind of gold standard by which all other cultures could be understood and controlled (Chakrabarty 285, Chaterjee 235). Subaltern cohesiveness as a political force is either not recognized or denigrated by those in power, because it does not fit the hegemonic definition of those terms. Moreover, the degree of solidarity within the subaltern is difficult to determine by those who are not part of that group since the subaltern are accorded no real voice. Not only what the subaltern say may not be valued and therefore disregarded, but it may also be entirely misinterpreted due to an alternate perspective held by those in power. Furthermore, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui points out that the discussion typically has occurred between *mestizos* and *criollos*, omitting, whether intentionally or otherwise, any indigenous representation (1).

Extending that idea to the printed page, Foucault sees the meaning of written discourse as coterminous with the socio-political scenario within which it originates, and must be evaluated in terms of "what was being said in what was said" (28). The origin of the statement and the benefit or damage that accrues to the originator in having made the statement, the subtext of the written word, must be considered for

there to be any real meaning. Using dialogue and interior monologue, Arguedas attempts to reveal the subtext of various groups in writing by creating representative characters to convey the varying perspectives of Peruvian society during the mid-twentieth century, unknowingly writing against the Manichaean perspective of many postcolonial or subaltern theorists who published years after his death. Combining Spivak's notion of the web of influences that comprise the "text" of an individual with Foucault's observation of the subtext, I examine the various identities of prominent characters in *Todas las sangres* to demonstrate that each is necessarily a hybrid. In fact, Arguedas's character representations in *Todas las sangres*, contrary to his goal of delineating social sectors, actually support Gayatri Spivak's observation:

...that which seems to operate as a subject may be part of an immense discontinuous network ... of strands that may be termed politics, ideology, economics, history, sexuality, language, and so on....Different knotting and configurations of these strands, determined by heterogeneous determination which are themselves dependent upon myriad circumstances, produce the effect of an operating subject (12-13).

All of the strands interweave to produce varying combinations of influences and pressures, resulting in differing responses to those multiple inputs at a given point in time. The hegemonic and subaltern identities are as much subject to these interactions as any other participant in the social structure. Text, context, and textuality reveal fusion and resistance on a wide spectrum through those characters, shedding light on the discussion of hybrid identity construction from a totally new perspective, differentiating this novel from Arguedas's earlier fictional works. Consequently, a selfconsciousness, whether group or individual, arises from the text of influences that have come to bear on that entity over time. That text, or what is

read, is then demonstrated in a time-space context in written form in the novel. How that written text is read determines its textuality, varies according to the reader, and is identified by that reader's interpretation (Silverman 1). The textuality, then, is based not only on an understanding of the text (webs of influences) of the individuals or entities, but knowledge of the context in which the novel is written. Interpreting the "text" of the individuals requires an awareness of the history and geography of the region as well as how the players have interacted with those elements over time.

Clearly the impact of the Conquest and the colonial lifestyle imposed by the Spanish colonizers affected the indigenous peoples of the Andes, a significant part of that group's "text". The Incas were a proud, progressive, and highly organized people, dominating most of western South America between 1200 and 1533 A.D., an era that was brought to a close by the Conquest, and its society demeaned and subjugated to the point of de facto enslavement. The impact over centuries is legend, and the indigenous "text" of the twentieth century derives from that experience. That historical subtext, omnipresent in the minds of the indigenous, shades in complicated ways their actions and interactions to this day. Therefore, linking that history with an awareness of the sociopolitical and economic influences in contention during the period in which Arguedas formulated and wrote the novel further informs the complexity of those identities (texts) and their interactions based on that context.

The 1950s and 1960s were turbulent years in Peru, economically, politically and socially. During that time Peru experienced the largest peasant movements in South America, changing the face of the coastal cities. After coup attempts by socialists and members of the APRA party, the government returned to its former dictatorial

conservative tradition, even embracing Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War and fascism in Italy and Germany (*Starn, Degregori, Kirk* 255). Peruvian intellectual and philosopher Alejandro Deustra openly blamed Peru's lack of progress on its indigenous population as a people who had ceased to evolve, were incapable of passing on to the *mestizo* any qualities that could be considered progressive, and stating categorically that the indian "is not, and cannot be, anything but a machine"<sup>24</sup> (Deusta 68), a statement anathema to the views and goals of José María Arguedas. The conservative government, backed by an urban professional class, sided with the United States and international lenders to assist in its march to modernity.

Two economic theories attempted to address the desire of the rising middle class in Peru to succeed on the global economic stage. Raúl Prebisch, an Argentine economic planner had put forth an economic theory that morphed into what came to be known as Dependency Theory, a notion that the economic world revolved around the First World, the industrialized countries, that the economies of countries dominated by Stalinist and his followers, known as the Second World, were stagnating, and that the remainder, the underdeveloped portions of the Third World were victims particularly of the First World nations. Buying raw materials from the Third World, converting them into desirable products, and then selling back to those same countries manufactured value-added goods for high prices resulted in increased impoverishment of the poorer nations at the expense of the wealthy (Barnes 254). Prebisch's solution was import substitution, control of production, and high international tariffs, all initiated at the hand of the central governments. Most Latin

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<sup>24</sup> Deusta's book was self-published and is unavailable. The work and this passage, translated by the author of the article, may be found in *The Peru Reader*, p. 255.

American countries, including Peru, adopted the model, but prosperity did not follow. A competing theory of the same period suggested that wealthy nations should extend aid in the form of money and commodities, loans, and business expertise to struggling nations, placing Latin American countries in the position of clients of the more developed nations. Projects that were developed under this model have been very strongly criticized for the ethnocentric approach of the Westernization model (Barnes 255).

In Peru, such economic theories were complicated by the Communist and Aprista political movements outlined in the previous chapter. While these political groups both professed to be working in the interest of the poor and indigenous population, their ideological views and stated methods for enactment of their agendas seemed diametrically opposed to each other. The communist element was convinced that revolution, the uprising of the masses of laborers to take over the means of production was the only solution to the feudal system that had controlled Peru since the Conquest. The Apristas were distrustful of the “Europeanness” of communism and felt that it was another form of exterior imperialism manipulative of what Peru was trying to build as a nation from within its own borders. Arguedas was familiar with these theories, but managed to set himself apart from each. His emphasis was highly sensitive to valuing Peruvian history and tradition as a principle focus for any restructuring of Peru’s future. Furthermore, while Arguedas pointed to the growth and value of the *mestizo* population as an important segment of the whole, others emphasized the pre-Hispanic and the Hispanic as the two pure sectors of Peruvian society. Arguedas saw himself as a *forastero* (foreigner, outsider) not only by birth

and his own personal upbringing, but in his effort to bring into the society and its discussion the voices of those who had been born of unions of the two disparate historic groups. While Arguedas recognized the importance of the two ends of the spectrum, the Hispanic and the indigenous, he worked to include transculturated elements in the mix, understanding that the current members who defined themselves as members of the original groups had mutated over the years, each absorbing elements of the other as well as more modern trends from the exterior. The gradual and inevitable miscegenation transformed Peru into a society of much greater complexity, with each group competing to maintain or advance the way of life it had come to know.

In 1963, with the rise to power of Fernando Belaúnde Terry supported by the Peruvian Armed Forces, José María Arguedas encountered what he believed to be an opportunity to genuinely reform Peruvian society. Belaúnde's proposal was to effect a "true Agrarian Reform," based on redistribution of land rights. Belaúnde was neither an Aprista nor a communist, neither a supporter of Dependency Theory nor an advocate of Peru's positioning as a client of more affluent nations. He had founded his own party, Acción Popular, and rose to fame carrying the Peruvian flag as his talisman. Arguedas wrote *Todas las sangres* as an impetus to sweeping social progress, which he believed might begin with what seemed to be transfiguring approaches under Belaúnde's rule (Cornejo Polar 188-189).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, Belaúnde was not strong enough to fend off the pressure of conservative, wealthy politicians, and his first period in office ended in bloody repression of indigenous groups and a strong turn to the right. He was deposed by a military coup in 1968 during a coup but was reelected in 1980 after twelve years of military rule fraught with economic instability and terrorist activity.

Reflective of the society, *Todas las sangres* is a complex novel because Arguedas attempts to represent the many divergent sectors of the Peruvian population to demonstrate their disparate goals as well as the possible moments of articulation where opportunities existed to develop a sociopolitical plan more inclusive of those competing groups. Such an approach bypasses the binary approach to discussions of the subaltern, and supports Homi Bhabha's famous conclusion that the resistance of the colonized subject arises at the margins:

The complex strategies of cultural identification and discursive address that function in the name of 'the people' or 'the nation' are more hybrid in the articulation of cultural differences and identifications –gender, race or class -- than can be represented in any hierarchical or binary structuring of social antagonism (292).

Sara Suleri identifies the deconstructive binary as Eurocentric and, like Bhabha, suggests that hegemonic forces (colonial historically) have been incapable of revealing an idea of nation that is neither of the colonizer nor of the colonized subaltern (12-23). Arguedas anticipates the argument that is put forth a quarter century after his death by understanding that the binary opposition merely reifies the colonial period, failing to address the complexity of the sociocultural reality of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The key challenge Arguedas faced in crafting his novel was in avoiding essentializing his characters. In contrast to his earlier novels, the author sets forth personalities from a wide variety of social sectors, attempting to capture within the character a perspective representative of each. The principal players are don Andrés Aragón de Peralta, his two sons don Fermín and don Bruno, Hernán Cabrejos Seminario, representing a foreign business consortium, the *mestizo* Gregorio

Altamirano, and finally, the indigenous Demetrio Rendón Willka. The larger indigenous population serves as a kind of collective character, and has its own hybridities that come to light via interactions with the individual characters. Each of the named “representatives” views the environment and opportunities in the Peruvian sierra through a different lens, its acuity skewed according to the individual or group’s own circumstances, and acts accordingly, revelatory of the competing forces within the larger Peruvian society.

At the beginning of the novel, the reader encounters the suicide of don Andrés Aragón de Peralta, the old *hacendado*, or *gran señor* who represents the dying remnants of the grandeur of the centuries-old colonial lifestyle. Prior to his suicide, he invites his servants, members of the indigenous population, to take anything and everything from his decaying residence when he dies. He also publicly damns his two sons, don Fermín and don Bruno, who have already managed, via deceitful means, to take over the real family wealth (other more productive parcels of land). Don Andrés’s loyalties have modified to side with the *indios* rather than his family. Such is Argueda’s introduction of what he sees as the hybridization and complexity of Peruvian social segments derived over time. Don Fermín, who has become involved in the mining industry, is emblematic of the new entrepreneurial capitalist. He is a hybrid as the son of a colonial *hacendado* who adopts western styles and visions and works to impose such on his landholdings while still retaining the absolute control of the *gamonal* in the face of foreign investors who work to rest that authority from him. Don Bruno is representative of the nineteenth century version of the large landowner, steeped in tradition and attempting to protect a lifestyle,

including his lands, his livestock, and the indigenous servants whom he controls, but also whom he admires. Such is his hybridity. Representing corporate interests is Hernán Cabrejos Seminario, an avaricious mining engineer of aristocratic lineage from Lima, an agent of the international consortium, Wither-Bozart. A secondary character, Gregorio Altamirano, a *mestizo*, finds himself victimized by the economic coalition formed between Fermín, Cabrejos, and the Consortium. But perhaps the most interesting personality is Demetrio Rendón Willka, an indian who has spent some time in Lima and has learned to speak Spanish, albeit brokenly. Rendón Willka serves as a bridge to the subaltern, the indigenous masses from which he has come and to which he returns with hopes of improving their life condition.<sup>26</sup>

The plot centers on the exploitation of the Apark'ora mine, discovered by don Fermín on the property of his hacienda. Arguedas chooses mining as a context because it was the predominant economic activity dating from the Conquest and revelatory of the socioeconomic tensions between Spanish colonial and indigenous interests. When the vein dried up, agriculture came to the forefront, but the return to mining is metaphoric of a desire to return to the old, more lucrative, colonial ways in a new era. Don Fermín's plan for the mine is supported by a modern international capitalist consortium, a contemporary imperialism mimetic of the Spanish Conquest, colonial domination, and subsequent human exploitation of the subaltern.

Unlike prior novels, Arguedas uses a system of interior monologues and dialogues in which the characters reveal their motivations and intentions, a kind of

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<sup>26</sup> It is likely more than a coincidence that Arguedas uses the name Willka. A Bolivian Aymara leader, Pablo Zárate Willca, fought to construct a new society that would recognize economic, social, cultural, and political rights of the indigenous. He and his followers were defeated in 1899 by tin barons and large landowners of the region. He is still revered by many and recent indigenous movements have used his name (Moldiz, 19).

self-characterization (Cornejo Polar 2007). However, such depictions are compounded by statements of others about those personalities. Don Fermín's sole focus is the success of his project at the expense of all else: "Agucémonos primero, en quienes sea posible de esa gente, el estímulo de la ambición; unos contras otros; y luego el predominio del individuo; que piquen el dulzor, o el veneno, de la ambición individual." But his greed for power and wealth ultimately will exclude the consortium since he wants to re-establish the greatness of Peru as a result of his own success. "Pretendo la grandeza del Perú a través de la mía." Much that the reader learns about Don Fermín comes from dialogues with his wife, who serves only to further solidify his position. They are both very flat stereotypical characters. He is greedy and ambitious; she beautiful and obedient. However, they are products of their environment who are aware of, and to some extent intimidated by, the dominance of international industrial groups whose wave they attempt to ride, with hopes of their own benefit.

Don Bruno serves as the reverse of Don Fermín, effectively the opposite pole of the binary, but is a much more complex character. Don Fermín's statements and actions reflect an obsessive focus on his goals and vision for modernization and personal aggrandizement, while Don Bruno is anchored in the ancient colonial traditions. Viewing modernization as a set of evil forces moving inland from the coast, he is determined to maintain the feudal lifestyle as caretaker of his servants/workers/slaves. Although Don Bruno is blond and blue-eyed and steeped in Christian practice, he is also a hybrid, not by design, but out of desperation. His inability to adapt to a world that has moved beyond his colonial lifestyle, results in his

clinging to his *colonos* and identifying increasingly with them in a desperate attempt to maintain his world as he knows and understands it. Therefore, Don Bruno positions himself between his *indios* and the other *gamonales*. The fact that he takes Vicenta, a *mestiza*, for his wife is evidence of that intermediary position. As the world changes around him, Bruno attempts to retreat to the past which he considers to be the natural state of man centered on the kind paternalistic landowner who cares for his *indios*, a “república de indios manejada por señores caritativos.” His hybridity is a self-defeating quandary that is his undoing because it is not malleable. While the character of Don Bruno is certainly more fluid than that of don Fermín, that fluidity embraces only a moribund cultural and socioeconomic vision.

Don Bruno’s foil is Rendón Willka. Where the former fails, the latter triumphs. Indigenous by birth, Rendón Willka is culturally a hybrid but, rather than being defeated by his hybridity, he utilizes that position to his advantage. After being expelled from a school where he is the only *indio*, he moves to Lima, where he lives for several years, learns Spanish, and is exposed to the more “progressive” and international lifestyle of the capital. When he returns to the sierra, he dresses in western clothing, but his comportment is defined by patience and tolerance, a characteristic that Arguedas identifies as typical of the *indio*.<sup>27</sup> Demetrio Rendón Willka represents a unique and very important hybridization, a melding of social and political approaches reflective of the ancient and the modern. The process by which he is hybridized is cultural, not ethnic. He speaks broken Spanish yet is fully fluent in

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<sup>27</sup>On receiving the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega prize in 1968, Arguedas stated, “Dentro del muro aislante y opresor, el pueblo quechua, bastante arcaizado y defendiéndose con el disímulo, seguía concibiendo ideas creando cantos y mitos” (Arguedas, *Katchkaniraqmi!* 585).

the language of the new generation epitomized by his character, and aware of the discord between the two systems. He understands the need for education, economic progress in terms of the mining and other operations, and realizes that the agrarian life, as lived by the *indios* for centuries, while beautiful and peaceful, only points to increased poverty and depravation. Contrarily, he understands the strength of the *ayllu* and the *mitas* that are remnants of the Incan society, in which groups coalesce to work together peacefully, effectively, and efficiently. Appointed by the Westernized don Fermín to be foreman of the mine workers, Rendón Willka uses his knowledge of the *ayllus* and their work groups to efficiently manage the system, dressing in indigenous style and speaking Quechua while bearing the *vara*, the indigenous staff of authority.

Rendón Willka is a *mestizo* by exposure, without being so genetically, an example of what Fernando Ortiz calls “neoculturation.”<sup>28</sup> Recognizing the benefit to the Indians of the sierra of formal education as well as adopting capitalist developmental economic models, he wishes to reveal the financial benefit of the mine to the indigenous living near the site. He is respectful of Peruvian indigenous traditions, an entrepreneur pragmatically, and both clever and charismatic. Like Arguedas, Rendón understands the importance of venerating ancient cultural values within a more modern context. As described by Don Fermin’s wife, “En ese cholo hay algo extraño. ...Es como el aire de estas quebradas profundas; como ese canto de pájaros que oí en los bosques....frente al abismo negro” (100). Arguedas sees as the

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<sup>28</sup> “Neoculturation” is a term coined by Cuban ethnographer Fernando Ortiz in describing another attributed to him, “transculturation.” Neoculturation implies a kind of adaptation to a different culture that results in a new cultural phenomenon, a new order of being (Ortiz 102-103).

only route to the advancement of Peru as a nation, the knitting together of those two worlds, inclusive of their liminal variations, a fusion that Rendón Willka embodies.

Cabrejos, is the personification of the insider connected to the outside and determined to exploit both. Born of a wealthy *criollo* Lima background, and an educated and accomplished engineer, Cabrejos is fully committed to the international Wisther Consortium that has identified huge financial benefits to be derived from silver mining in Peru. He regards the true businessman as one dedicated to the goals of his organization, a commitment that overrides any sentiment or social concern that may impede its trajectory, the Adam Smith archetype. He does not love Peru, but believes that those who are Peruvian-born have the right to benefit from the region's natural wealth. However, he sees the foreign consortium as the wave of the future, a global reach built on capitalistic enterprise. Cabrejos uses don Fermín for his own purposes. He does not want the consortium to destroy him, but does not trust him either. The engineer regards don Bruno as an antiquated relic whose power and influence must be destroyed, and Rendón Willka as an intermediary who is truly dangerous to the goals of international business development. He sees the *indios* as a population that has been segregated from greater Peru for centuries, a people united by ancient customs and language that needs to be split up and infused with the stimulus of individual ambition where they will compete against each other, the stereotypical Western capitalistic concept of economic progress.

Gregorio Altamirano exemplifies the saddest plight of the *mestizo*. The illegitimate child of an indian woman who was raped by a *criollo* whom she never saw again, Gregorio has no cultural group with which he can connect. *Mestizos* by

heritage are excluded by both the *criollo* and the indian population; they are “of” neither.<sup>29</sup> Typically, the *mestizo* tries to move up the social ladder by pandering to the *criollo* as his lackey, and is therefore, further maligned by the indigenous population as “cholo.”<sup>30</sup> Gregorio’s actions support that social positioning. His vulnerability due to a compromised identity construction allows him to be deceived by Cabrejos, succumbing to participation in a plan of subterfuge devised by the engineer. Cabrejos believes that such interference will diminish Rendón Willka’s influence with the *indios*. Unfortunately, Gregorio blindly submits to his own destruction.

Examining the subaltern population poses the challenge of attempting to understand it from the exterior. Since Quechua was not a written language, very few of the indigenous were literate, unable to record their daily lives in a preserved form that was easily decipherable.<sup>31</sup> Enduring centuries of oppression inhibiting any real self-expression, their true identities can only be imagined, a serious limitation inherent in discussing the Peruvian subaltern. However, having lived for years among the Indians, perhaps Arguedas provides a possible window into that identity. It certainly was his intent.

The indigenous population represented in *Todas las sangres* also bears its own hybridity. Rather than existing as one large group, it is split into two segments, the *comuneros*, indians who are not attached to a landlord or his properties and who earn

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<sup>29</sup> The plight of the *mestizo* in Latin America is perhaps best described in Carlos Fuentes’s novel, *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*.

<sup>30</sup> “Cholo” has a variety of meanings, the most benign of which is “mestizo”. Often, however, it carries the deprecatory connotation of social climber, one trying to move up in the social hierarchy.

<sup>31</sup> The “*quipu*,” a series of knotted threads used by the Incas served as a method of recording, but only those trained in the procedure of knotting were able to “read” the memory device.

their own living by being paid for their work, and the *colonos*, akin to slaves, who are attached to the *hacienda* of a landowner and who receive no compensation other than lodging and food provided by the *patrón*. Don Bruno's *colonos* are demonstrative of the subservience inculcated in that group over centuries of colonial dominion. The *colono* is submissive in every conceivable mannerism, including bowing, asking for "license" to speak, and addressing don Bruno as Hijo de Dios (Son of God) , Werak'ocha (Quechua for lord), or *patrón* (master). The *comuneros* regard themselves as a step above the *colonos*, speak a very few words of Spanish and tend to regard the *colonos* with scorn. While Arguedas portrays both groups as subservient and submissive to the *criollo* landowners who have subjugated them for centuries, he expands that view by exposing the reader to the inner governing apparatus of the *indios* far more than other *indigenista* authors such as Alegría and Icaza. The indigenous have their own governing body, a group of "mayors" (*varayok's*) or chosen authority figures who come together to call a "cabildo" or town meeting. There the indigenous inhabitants of the area may ask to voice their opinions. A consensus of opinions results in a decision on a given issue, a democratic approach. However, their efficacy as a decision making body is determined by the ability to complete their desired ends. While their voices are heard within their group, as Spivak would say they are not really heard, at least not from without. Hence they are subaltern. Like the others, they as a collective character are hybridized as well, their intrinsic nature altered over centuries by extrinsic hegemonic forces. Don Bruno has been raised to, and continues to treat them with Latin American paternalism and *caudillismo*, resulting in a subservience bred over centuries.

While traditionally the *indios* have been afraid of the mine, some have come to appreciate its value to their community, overriding their fears. Rendón Willka, dressed as an *indio*, leads the work crews, uniting them with words and culturally important actions that provide trust and a cohesive spirit. They are paid in goods, not forced labor. At the same time, Rendón leads the *indios* in prayer to the “Sagrado Pukasira,” the mountain, naming the powerful *wamaní*, nature’s gods of all the land, observing the traditions of rituals, dating back to the Incas. Such rituals are then followed by the repetition of the “Padre nuestro” en Quechua. The *indios* are of two religious heritages, combined in one body.

However, when an international group conspires with the government in Lima to take over the lands that the Indians cultivate, a broad-based *serrano* coalition pulls together. Landowners who have lost their wealth over time join with the local *mestizos*, the *comuneros* and the *colonos* to protect “La Esmeralda,” the land that the mining consortium is threatening to take over as well. The issue moves beyond a regional dispute between the indigenous and the local hegemonic, to the inhabitants of the sierra fighting the coastal powers and international forces intent on economically appropriating control of much of Peru. Here Arguedas imposes his view of the future, a coalescing of the various social groups to promote Peru as a unique political and economic entity, powerful in its own right and according to its own traditions. The various hybrid identities combine to form a fusion of those representations that becomes more powerful than any of them individually. Such is the situation as the novel concludes. Don Bruno and his *mestiza* wife bear a son, thereby contributing to the genetic hybridity of the area as well as tying Don Bruno’s

wealth to other social and cultural groups. The *comuneros* and the *colonos* unite against the outside economic aggression, demanding their rights to the land that has been theirs for centuries. The impoverished landowners also join the others in an attempt to preserve some semblance of the life that they have known in the sierra. The coalition, led by Rendón Willka, is uniformly opposed to the invasion and control by outsiders, whether urban dwellers from Lima or economic groups foreign to Peru. But the future is not to be a reestablishment of the landowner past nor a replica of an idealized utopia of the ancient Incan empire. It is a movement forward creating a new identity for Peru woven of the various interests and perspectives, each of which is a fusion in and of itself. Arguedas's hope is that the Peruvian identities he has attempted to foreground may lead to such a composite end.

The weakness of the novel is that Arguedas has attempted to reveal to those outside the sierra a world with which they may not be as intimately familiar as he, and in so doing, he has drawn the various players too cleanly, essentializing their positions.<sup>32</sup> He has created stereotypes that are overplayed in a plot that consequently seems implausible, however laudable it may be. Don Bruno's epiphany with respect to his love for the indigenous is too extreme. Don Fermín is a flat caricature from the outset, as is Cabrejos. Gregorio is so love-sick and desperate for social acceptance that he allows himself to enter into a plot that is transparently destined to result in his demise. Rendón Willka is too perfect, reminiscent of the melodramatic hero. The

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9 José Miguel Oviedo admitted as much at the Primera Mesa redonda sobre Literatura y Sociología. "Yo, por ejemplo, que tengo muy poca experiencia, que conozco muy mal la sierra del Perú, he podido tener una imagen muy concreta, muy cabal de ella y el hombre que vive en ella, de los hombres y múltiples tipos de hombres que viven en ella a través de la novela de Arguedas....creo que es una gran lección" que pertenezco a un país que es muchos países a la vez, que pertenezco a un mundo que es una suma de mundos, a veces cerrados y excluyentes. La novela (*Todas las sangres*) ha testimoniado esto" (Arguedas, *Primer Encuentro* 256-257).

ultimate character is the indigenous population, represented as a collective, who rise up after centuries of subjugation, intimidation, and deprivation, seemingly shedding their inculcated fear-based behaviors, to take back their lands. Such reductive essentializing of the characters detracts from the effectiveness of the novel because it assumes that the reader is not sufficiently sophisticated to draw conclusions from more nuanced portrayals. While I believe it would be an exaggeration to term the projection of his novel ludicrous, I do believe that Arguedas's unique personal investment in the Andean sierra perhaps blinded him to the importance of solidifying his characters by developing personalities that were more subtly portrayed. The group of ethnographers that so overwhelmingly criticized the work, did so on the basis that Arguedas did not use scientific or statistical data to support his social segments. In fact, basing his own perspective on his familiarity with the writings of philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey, he believed that his own intuition and life experience were equally as important as scientific data, if not more so,<sup>33</sup> and stated so at the Primer Encuentro de Narradores Peruanos in Arequipa in 1965 (Pinilla 199). The committee criticized Arguedas as "un intuitive," while, at the same time, crediting him with awakening its members to the Peruvian world of the indigenous, with which they were unfamiliar, even though the novel was an invention of a testimonial orientation. Because it was not totally realistic and lacked a specific ideological framework that would provide a basis for social change, the committee devalued its importance (Pinilla 187-188).

However, Arguedas could not endorse a specific ideology, believing such theoretical

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<sup>33</sup> Wilhelm Dilthey, a German philosopher (1833-1911) believed that the while the goal of the natural sciences is to arrive at axiomatic explanations, the goal of the human sciences is to understand human and historical life, requiring the engagement of internal experiential constructions and an understanding of external materiality (Stanford,1). With respect to Arguedas's argument, see notes from the proceedings of the meeting in Pinilla180-265.

systems to be abstractions too far removed from the validities of life as it is lived (Pinilla 191). Had Arguedas not been so insistent on the veracity of his character portrayal and the assurance that his personal life experience validated that perspective, and if the characters had been less transparent, that criticism may not have been so harsh. The author's resoluteness may have derailed the value of his statements by failing to allow room for supportive objective evidence.

Arguedas was devastated by the reaction of members of the round table that met to discuss his novel when it was first released. Perhaps he set himself up for that result because he was so heavily invested through his own personal history in the goals he hoped to accomplish with his longest novel. Perhaps he failed to recognize that his own hybridity is not unique; that it is inherent in all Peruvians by virtue of their interactions with other groups, not just their sexual practices, and that the identities that he has constructed are certainly problematic for each, but not uniquely defining.<sup>34</sup> Such recognition does not minimize the difficulties of developing a new broader political and socioeconomic system for the nation, but it may have allowed the author to put into print a work more effective in furthering that end.

The novel is an allegory of the growth of Peruvian society from colonialism to modernity, pointing to a commonality among social segments and purposes that render passé S. P. Mohanty's query "How do we negotiate between my history and yours?" (13). The postcolonial narrative is of necessity reactive and, in order to be

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11 Arguedas was disgusted that the others would not accept what he considered to be a reproduction of his own life, and stammered at the meeting, "¡Que no es un testimonio! Bueno, ¡diablos!, si no es un testimonio entonces yo he vivido por gusto, he vivido en vano, o no he vivido. ¡No! Yo he mostrado lo que he vivido.... Hay algunos elementos, sí, que no son exactamente sociológicos, que no, que no son un testimonio exactamente etnográfico. Yo no estoy esperando que aquí los etnólogos no lo digan, seguramente lo van a decir, y yo voy a confesar que hay algunas cosas que no son exactamente etnográficas..." (Pinilla 204).

meaningful, must examine the varied histories that contribute to its formulation. The dialogue between colonial imperialism and its effects is a continuing requirement in order to articulate a new approach deriving from an inevitable and necessary blending of alterities. However, the focus now must be on that miscegenation, not on a utopic past, the myth that likely never was a reality, but which has been created in support of its memory.

## CHAPTER 8

### *EL ZORRO DE ARRIBA Y EL ZORRO DE ABAJO:*

#### HYBRIDITY AS PERFORMANCE

The origin of meaning is never found in the relation between a subject...and an object produced for rational end...It is to be found, rather, in difference, systematizable in terms of a code...a differential structure that establishes the social relation.

Baudrillard 1981

Economic coercion is often dressed up in juridical reasons. Imperialism drapes itself in the legitimacy of international bodies. And, through the very hypocrisy of the rationalizations intended to mask the double standards, it tends to provoke or justify...a very profound revolt against the reason which cannot be separated from the abuses of power which are armed or justified by reason (economic, scientific or any other).

Bourdieu 1998

Arguedas was sufficiently dismayed and discouraged by the reaction to *Todas las sangres* to make a very dramatic structural and thematic leap with his last novel, *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*, an enigmatic paratactic work that can be understood only by examining it as a totality, rather than as a collection of segments included in one published text, a critical approach taken by many. This chapter illustrates Arguedas's design for portraying the postmodern problematic of

maintenance of identity and culture in the midst of dramatic societal change in Peruvian twentieth century culture as well as examining the hybridities of character, style, and context, to reveal an ancient performance embedded within the novel that is still relevant in today's society. Critical to that approach is the recognition that Arguedas forces the reader to live that postmodern dilemma via a structure and style that also fit into that contemporary literary category. Intrinsic to the discussion is a study of the paratactic nature of the text, consisting of diary entries, ancient mythological entries, and a contemporary narrative of a more traditional novelistic style. The interweaving of myth with diary and narrative in and of itself is a powerful hybridity in which the different genres must interact, confronting each other, thereby calling into question the importance of each. The apposition of the three forms forces consideration of the authority of each, a deconstructing force that plays among them. That questioning of authority inherent in the structure is reflected in the theme of confusion, chaos, and constant struggle between competing cultures that Arguedas portrays in the novel's argument centered on the interaction of two foxes.

While pivotal to the development of the structure, the role of the foxes also serves to challenge some elements of postmodern theory. The fox, a representation of a natural and "simpler" life form and time, enters into a contemporary reality in a fantastical manner from a mythical past, costumed and dancing, destabilizing the supposedly sophisticated, civilized, and mature culture of twentieth century urban Peru. Arguedas introduces ancient cultural structures into a world that has superseded them, both literally and textually. Such a confrontation of cultures brings to mind Walter Ong's understanding of the transition from orality to literacy and the originary and underlying

importance of spoken language. Ong stresses the permanence of the orality of language, a parallel to Arguedas's emphasis on the importance of ancient culture in contemporary Peru (7). The interjection of the magical fox of "popular culture" into the realist "high-culture" provokes a questioning of the latter as disingenuous and fatuous. Drawing on Ian Gregson's discussion, in postcolonial terms, the "magical" world of the colonized confronts the "real" world of the colonizers, forcing the colonized into a world that is absolutely unreal to them (77). However, the fox destabilizes the hegemonic by his articulation with and control of the twentieth century scenes in which he appears.

The complexity of the novel rests on the hybridity of its characters, setting, and structure. The juxtaposition of the writing of four diary entries with a plot line fused with the past by the interjection of a pre-Incan myth performed in the present, conflates linear and mythological time into a durative scenario that, because of its repetition has no beginning or end. There is no denouement pulling together the various strands of the plot, while there is a definitive end to the author himself when he commits suicide. However, even that is woven into the plot and continues after his death as he planned his funerary proceedings in anticipation of his demise. The absence of a plot resolution, however, actually contributes to the efficacy of the novel, and Arguedas's personal denouement augments the impact of the work. The author does not predict a solution to the societal issues addressed in *Los zorros*, as the novel has come to be known. In fact, through the use of what Mikhail Bakhtin terms heteroglossia, a melding of distinct voices in dialogue, the reader is opened to a polyphony of worlds that inform the complexity of economic and social problems in twentieth century Peru (Discourse, 334-335). Although characterizations may be realistic and a stabilizing element in a novel, the instability of

heteroglossic dialogue subverts the sense of a balanced and accurately drawn reality.

One voice is forced to confront and make itself available to the world of another distinct voice, defusing the unfettered power of the dominant culture. Arguedas challenges that single voice and perspective and forces it to include in the conversation others that have been minimized or totally absent in the Peruvian social dialogue (Gregson 34-35).

Furthermore, by imbedding Quechua language in his novels, which he does once again in *Los zorros*, myth and the narrative are forced into a dialogic relationship on two levels, textual and cultural, paralleling the notion that the world he portrays is an unfinished, fluid reality, still in the process of unfolding.

Arguedas's subtle and clever inversion of the theme that obsessed him throughout his life, the relationship of the colonial, hegemonic groups and the large Peruvian autochthonous culture that he knew so intimately, is revelatory of the resistance that the indigenous have maintained to acculturation to the dominant culture over centuries of colonial rule. This chapter discusses that approach and its subtleties, exposing a subtext that Arguedas intentionally wove into the larger plot line, that, when made available to the reader, clarifies Arguedas's purpose in writing the novel. While Martin Lienhard discusses the reversal whereby the subaltern move into the hegemonic world, inverting control of the conversation, he does not do so in terms of the depth of that inversion. My goal is to reveal a subtextual language imbedded in references to oral memory transmission devices of the Quechua culture that has been the core of one of the world's strongest and most persistent resistance efforts.

Contextualizing Arguedas's narrative argument is requisite to unravelling its complexity which, at times, borders on incoherence, an intentional effect demonstrative

of the chaotic world in which the novel takes place. The setting is Chimbote, a coastal city in which Arguedas spent considerable time researching the transformation of the area brought about by expansion of the local fishing industry. The location is unique for Arguedas, who positioned all of his earlier novels in the Peruvian sierra, where hegemonic coastal pressures were brought to bear in the high mountainous arena. In *Los zorros* the scenario is reversed, along with the societal forces in play. The traditional and cultural influences of the sierra invade and push back on the hegemonic coastal society. Moreover, the interplay of oppositions not only underscores the chaos that is Chimbote, but foregrounds the uniqueness of Andean thought processes because of the starkness of those contrasts (Lienhard 18).

An influx of foreign investments resulted in the creation of the world's largest fishmeal industry in Chimbote and consequent rapid population growth as *indios* migrated from the sierra in search of work. The development of that industry included with it all of the social, economic, and environmental problems associated with such astronomical growth: filth, corruption, fetid water, lack of sanitation and housing, and rampant disease (Foronda 129). Chimbote in the 1960s is illustrative of the difficulty of maintaining continuity of meaning in any society overwhelmed by new growth ensuing from an imposed and overpowering economic system controlled from outside the nation's borders and concerned solely with production and profit at the expense of workers' basic needs, cultural values, and quality of life. Demographers estimate that within the next 15 to 25 years, 70 to 80 percent of the world's population will reside in cities, and almost one-fourth of the world's population will be living in city slums (Archibald 91). The lower, informal classes, or, as Mary Louise Pratt defines them,

those of “the informal economy” living in “jobless immiseration,” are now challenging the upper or more formal classes for new definitions of cities and their politics, focusing on economic approaches, opportunities, and outcomes that benefit the many rather than the few (Archibald, “UT” 91, Pratt, “Virgin”). Arguedas’s novel examines the incipience of that movement in Peru, anticipating social and economic problems that most certainly were destined to become more pronounced over time.

In chapter four of the narration, Moncada, a crazed, poverty-stricken black man, approaches the Chimbote Social Club, an elite private club for newly arrived and typically foreign entrepreneurs and their cronies who have capitalized on the abundant anchovy population in the Chimbote Bay and surrounding areas to create the largest fishmeal factories in the world.<sup>35</sup> The scene is the first of many in the novel reflective of Bakhtin’s theory of the “carnavalesque,” which here serves to subvert the dominant ideology and literary language via the introduction of the grotesque (Lienhard 184).<sup>36</sup> The crazed Moncada arrives at the Chimbote Social Club and is confronted by the uniformed doorman, standing erect. Moncada’s address is deprecating, accusing the doorman of being a sycophant, a “cholo” to the “yankilandia” of Chimbote. His mixed expressions from popular culture disrupt the “high art” discourse of the traditional novelistic style, underscoring the subversion. The doorman tries to knock Moncada down, considering him to be despicable riff-raff (162-163). Metaphorically, Moncada challenges traditional literary and cultural definitions while ironically standing at the threshold.

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<sup>35</sup> From the 1960s through the 1980s, Chimbote was the largest fishmeal factory in the world, shipping its produce throughout the world as fertilizer. That industry diminished dramatically in the 1990s as a result of over-fishing, having a dramatic impact on contraction of the national economy. However, today Chimbote remains the largest fishing port in Peru.

<sup>36</sup> Bakhtin’s “carnavalesque” technique is apparent throughout the novel, particularly with respect to the appearance of the *zorros*, the discussion of which will be taken up later in the chapter.

The title of Arguedas's novel, *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*, derives from a section of what has come to be known as the Huarochirí Manuscript, a compendium of ancient memories of the inhabitants of the Andes that were recorded by Father Francisco de Ávila some fifty years after the Conquest.<sup>37</sup> Arguedas himself translated the manuscript from Quechua in 1966, titling his work *Dioses y hombres de Huarochirí*, the document serving as the impetus and inspiration for his last novel.<sup>38</sup> One of the myths in the Manuscript depicts two foxes recounting scenes they witness. That myth provides the focal point around which Arguedas constructs his novel. As mentioned earlier, while Arguedas's text contains many postmodern elements, it also challenges that genre. Canclini observes that one of the most pivotal elements in postmodern trends is a return to ritual without a basis in underlying myth. Since there is no prior contextualizing tale to order the new performance, the ritual does not serve to integrate a social or cultural group nor make particular reference to a historical art form. Instead, it is a ceremony bereft of any meaning other than the actions and self-focused "organic narcissism" of the performer (Canclini, 25). Rather than "living in the moment," where spontaneous acts are not historical, Arguedas avoids creating a pastiche of unrelated actions and connects his reader to his meaning via ancient mythology. By interjecting the myth of the two foxes in the novel and into the diaries themselves, Arguedas meshes the postmodern with antiquity, forcing the reader to confront the idea of escaping from one's own reality to enter into the thought process of an earlier culture, in postmodern terms, an impossibility.

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<sup>37</sup> The Huarochirí region of central Peru was inhabited by Catholic missionaries in 1570-71 with the intent of Christianizing the natives. Thus, certain elements of the manuscript reflect a Christian perspective, but the particular segment that Arguedas uses in his novel does not.

<sup>38</sup> Others have since translated the document, most notably Frank Salomon and George L. Urioste in 1991. Arguedas's translation is considered to be more lyrical. The Salomon and Urioste translation includes possible variations in meaning. Because this paper is focused on Arguedas, I will refer to his translation of the document.

The reader must look beyond the twentieth century world of rampant, uncontrolled, and foreign-imposed capitalism to grapple with a simpler world. Arguedas imposes the historical referent, clearly not a postmodern characteristic. However, he does so not in a nostalgic sense, but to reinforce the value of melding the old, that cannot be obliterated from formative history, with the new. The postmodern world, Chimbote, seductive as it is for the pursuit of power, money, technological progress, and global expansion, has its drawbacks. Arguedas forces the reader to confront the impending impact of the ontological disappearance of an important segment of Peruvian history and society, the indigenous peoples of the sierra. In so doing, he subtly poses the question, “Is resistance to that force strong or meaningful enough, or will that group’s alterity result in the total destruction of its sense of stability and value?”

The two foxes who appear in the Manuscript and again in Arguedas’s novel are representative of their respective regions, “up above” and “down below,” or metaphorically, the Peruvian sierra, where the indigenous population has lived for centuries, and the coastal region, dominated by descendants of the Spanish Conquest. However, the importance of the foxes transcends that metaphoric reference and is woven into the Pre-Conquest autochthonous oral modes of conveying and preserving meaning and cosmovision.

In discussing oral works committed to writing, especially when that text is a transcription of a nonliterate language recorded using a writing system of another language, various problems arise. First, nothing has been preserved of the performative aspects of information entered into the Huarochirí Manuscript; the transcribed words alone exist. In order to uncover a way of reading the Manuscript, one must examine

evidence taken from the prior, contemporaneous and ongoing oral tradition of the region. Some information may be drawn from other translations of the Manuscript, or from comparative evidence from other oral traditions, including their word-power, performance, and traditions (Foley 73). Furthermore, the players in the Manuscript must be examined in terms of their inherent significance within the culture itself.

A number of critics have written of the importance of the *zorro de arriba*, “fox from up above,” and the *zorro de abajo*, “fox from down below,” in Arguedas’s novel, and refer to the myth in the Huarochirí Manuscript, but portray the fox in terms of Western tradition, the fox of Aesop’s fables, the animal that is wily and by his wit invariably outsmarts others. Because the Huarochirí Manuscript does not derive from Western thought, I argue that interpreting the role of the foxes in the Arguedian novel requires an understanding of the fox according to Andean indigenous tradition and thought, and that the adoption of a European interpretation is a twentieth century version of colonial cultural hegemony. Therefore, this chapter examines the foxes of Arguedas’s final novel focusing on precolonial mythical interpretations and the impact that such a perspective has on the text. Understanding the nexus of the orally transmitted myth and Arguedas’s artful threading of the tale into his written work, *Los zorros*, is key to accessing the novel’s meaning. Thus, an examination of the Andean folktale, its transmission, and cultural value is a necessary point of departure to revealing that connection, because the novel relies on and utilizes the traditions woven into the mythology and folktales of the region.

According to Denise Arnold and Juan Yapita, “It has become increasingly clear that

individual Andean folktales as texts cannot be understood in isolation. Their words cannot easily be prised from their context, and the tale is inseparable from the act of telling and the ritual it accompanies” (9). Rosaleen Howard-Malverde and others have demonstrated how a multilayered intertextuality connects via performance within such domains as storytelling, music and dance, weaving and agricultural practices (Howard-Malverde 11, Arnold and Yapita 9). The ritual component associated with storytelling serves as a formalization of everyday life and its connection to cosmology and history (Rowe and Schelling 52). Along with orality, ritual is an additional means of encoding, a different kind of ‘writing’ that is “read’ and ‘stored’ through repetition of patterns commemorative of meaningful places and times of a society and their relation to the cosmos (Rowe and Schelling 53). Via rites and their artifacts, Andean native knowledge has been preserved even, at times, through partial disguise. According to William Rowe and Vivian Schelling, “Andean culture remains one of the most crucial challenges to the notion that modernization, United States style, is the destiny of Latin America” (53).

During the telling of the tales, time, place and gesture may refer to distinct social and ritual contexts, and the performers themselves are aware that each story or song that they perform is part of a much larger chain of tales and songs that are stitched together. Thus, there is an important aspect of intertextuality, due to the ordering and patterning of folktales into larger wholes (Arnold and Yapita 9). The interjection of the foxes of Huarochirí and their central role in Arguedas’s novel as performers, cultural messengers, and conveyors or interpreters of culture and cultural change, relies on that folktale tradition within Peruvian society. A review of evidence of the fox’s significance historically and culturally is imperative to that understanding. Additionally, the manner in

which Arguedas uses the foxes as a chronotope reflects the performative intertextuality noted above.

Andean indigenous folk tales position the fox as distinct from other animals. In order to understand its uniqueness, one must first understand the hierarchy of lower forms of animals in relation to humans. The animistic core of Andean indigenous cosmology includes both domesticated and wild animals, many of which are considered to possess supernatural qualities. While that is typical of many early societies, the importance of each animal is of particular consequence in Andean history, a fact that is born out in their folktales that demonstrate a significant hierarchy.<sup>39</sup> The fox is included in distinct social and ritual contexts that are performed when folktales are repeated. In southern Andean folklore, the fox is wild and unruly yet in his dealings with other animals almost invariably loses, contrary to the fox of Western lore. Nonetheless, regardless of how often he loses, he always comes back to fight again (Arnold and Yapita 11).

All animals are part of the Pachamama, the earth mother, and then are subcategorized according to their place of origin and dwelling. The cosmological connections of the animals are also related to their realm of existence. Birds reside in the part of Pachamama that lives in the heavens as the moon. The animals living on the surface of the land inhabit the earth realm of Pachamama. A lesser category is comprised of those earth beasts that live “inside” the earth (foxes, lizards, and snakes, considered akin to animals of the horned gods of the underworld)<sup>40</sup> (Arnold and Yapita 26). But the fox is

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<sup>39</sup> The four-legged animal depicted by the Nazca culture in the coastal desert drawings that can be seen from aerial views today, which some have identified as a dog, others consider to be a fox.

<sup>40</sup> Contextualizing one ancient tale of the condor and the fox in cosmological terms, the condor battles the earthly fox, the condor is victorious, the fox and the condor visit heaven, and then the condor abandons the fox. The sky and mountain realm, the domain of the spirit, is victorious. The fox falls from grace, journeys between the worlds, then provides for the earth by giving birth to the foods of the Pachamama, and returns to or is reborn in heaven. This is most emblematic of the fox’s position in ancient Andean culture was

also ubiquitous and serves as a messenger that links the three worlds of “ up above, ” on earth, and “ down below, ” managing to exist and move among the three realms, bearing news as well as informing himself of life in each.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, the astronomical presence of certain animals underscores their importance in Andean lore. Animals are aligned in the night sky in a distinct order. Anthropologist Gary Urton and others describe how people near Cuzco observe the black cloud constellations in the Milky Way, considered to be a dark river, and identify in it human and specific animal forms (Fagan 18). Traditionally, folk tales related to the constellations are told in the same sequence, starting at the top of the dark river in the Milky Way ( “ up above ” ) and descending downward ( “ down below ” ) with the fox in an intermediary position, a kind of *farsante* or trickster from the “ inside world ” (Arnold and Yapita 4). (The “inside world ” will be further discussed in Chapter 10.) Over centuries, then, the *zorros*’ appearance has been ubiquitous. The *zorro*’s mythological importance is underscored by the existence of the Temple of the Zorro, constructed as early as 2200 BC, a coastal site aligned with the *zorro* in the heavens. The *zorros* are “written ” in the night sky by the alignment of the stars, they later appear in translation in the Huarochirí Manuscript, and then resurface again in the Chimbote social scene in Arguedas’s novel, in a modern disguise. Throughout, the ancient and the

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recorded from oral accounts shortly after the Spanish Conquest and recounts a bet between the fox and the condor over which could tolerate the longest and most bitter cold of the high sierra. The fox loses the bet, and, on the verge of death, is carried to heaven on the back of his victorious friend, the condor, in order to meet God. Complaining to God about his terrible experience, the fox is oblivious to the exit of the condor that has tired of the harangue. Consequently, the fox has no way to get back to earth and loses once again. However, with God’s help, he braids a rope to descend to earth. Still, as he is descending, the fox cannot resist rudely commenting on the hook-nosed beak of a parrot that flies by. The insulted parrot bites the rope, severing it, and the fox falls to earth. As he hits the ground, his belly explodes, spilling out the seeds of the foods he ate in heaven. The seeds sprout and provide food for the earth’s inhabitants and, having provided for the inhabitants of the earth, the fox earns its right to return to heaven (Arnold and Yapita 5-16).

<sup>41</sup> The Andean fox is known to exist throughout the region and in the most extreme conditions, from the hot coastal or interior rainforest zones to the very highest and most frigid areas of the Andean sierra.

modern are tied together by the enduring astronomical presence of the fox in the night sky.

Arguedas's use of the foxes in *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* is multifaceted, appearing in the diaries in mythical references and as characters in the narrative portion of the text as well. The fox is durative and omnipresent, as is the ancient Andean culture which it represents. I argue that understanding the *zorro*'s presence and performance is crucial to grasping the range of meaning Arguedas wished to convey in the novel.

Derived from the folktales and mythology of the fox in Andean lore, that presence and the performative acts throughout the text provide a subtext not available to the uninformed reader. Moreover, the novel's unusual structure of narrative interrupted by the diaries also can best be understood in terms of the foxes and their roles in the text.

Coming from the oral tradition, the foxes of the Huarochirí Manuscript introduce that ancient form of popular art into the high art form of the modern novel. Their conversations are as humorous as they are profound, providing a sense of levity in an otherwise very painful drama. The intertextual adaptation is reflective of Bakhtin's description of "the carnivalesque" as a kind of communication model. If "carnival" can be envisioned as a space where vulnerability is displaced by shamelessness and bizarre acts, then the foxes' appearance in the twentieth century fishmeal plant at Chimbote fits well. A structured discipline is suspended as spontaneous, unstructured, and unexpected interactions take place (Emerson 163). While the scenes of the foxes may be perceived as exaggerated and ridiculous (as mentioned earlier, the *zorros* are often considered to be *farsantes*), they incite levity and a relief of tension, and serve as a constant reminder of a highly-valued mythological past known for its comical interplay of characters (Lienhard

17). Arguedas interjects a performative element that mixes ancient oral into modern written culture, as well as juxtaposing the ancient indigenous cosmovision that has been passed down from within Peru with a modern lifestyle and perspective imposed from without.

The heterogeneity of the narrative is expanded by the interjection of the diaries, an old European form of very personal communication. The meaning of the narrative chapters cannot really be understood without reading them in terms of their connections with the personal chronicles. Martin Lienhard suggests that the most convincing argument justifying Arguedas's use of the diaries to interject himself into the novel is that the diaries provide a stimulus, a kind of source of energy, that pushes Arguedas forward with the narrative. In the second diary, Arguedas himself states that he must gather courage to manage the indecency of the language, the description, and a form of novel that moves beyond anything he had written to that point (Lienhard 30). However, the *zorros* also serve as a kind of disguise for Arguedas, narrating intermittently the argument of the novel. In so doing, the author, via the *zorros*, is able to express himself in Quechua as well as Spanish, even though he is obligated to write the novel in Spanish for a hegemonic Spanish-speaking readership. Through the mechanism of the *zorros*, Arguedas puts into play the performance of the rituals linked to the oral tradition that he cherishes and is determined to preserve. In so doing, he creates an original structure for the novel that melds the ancient oral and collective traditions with the modern written and, hence, individually focused modes of communication reflective of the hybridized society which has generated it. The conflation of time further enhances the value of the

indigenous heritage in terms of the modern by effecting an expansion of time beyond the linear to the cosmic or mythical.

The four diary entries in the novel are written in a stream-of-conscious style, totally divergent from earlier writings. Personal and revelatory of his state of mind, in the diaries Arguedas comments on his considerations of suicide and the possible methods he might use. His continual references to nature, recalling the beauty of the high sierra, the fields cultivated by the Quechua people benefitting from the water from the mountains, and the farms and animals that sustain them, create what Claudette Kemper Columbus terms “sublime space”, a kind of world beyond the painful quotidian reality (116). Here he gains strength to move from thoughts of suicide to continue his personal struggle against the social status quo in Peru through his writing. He also addresses in personal and very critical ways works of other authors who are his contemporaries. In so doing, he distinguishes his work from theirs, suggesting that they are “writers-by-trade, by profession, writing for profit, rather than out of necessity” (Arguedas, *The Fox* 21). However, because of his defensive posture, he also demonstrates a sense of inadequacy with respect to certain writers who he deems more erudite than he. It is exactly that sense of inferiority inculcated in the *indios* by the oppressive hegemonic Europeans from the time of the Conquest that is the impetus for Arguedas’s writings. He is compelled to alter the vision he has of himself and which underlies the devalued lifestyle of contemporary Peruvian indigenous peoples. Thus, the diaries clarify and foreground the message that Arguedas conveys in the narrative portion of the work.

However, impelling the movement of that message is sporadic because of the psychic

barriers that Arguedas must overcome, just as effecting the transition to a more just and inclusive society is fraught with obstacles. The diaries parallel Arguedas's personal journey with the passage he envisions for Peruvian society. The interweaving of the two genres underscores the havoc of the social pressures rendered by foreign dominance and capitalistic greed at the expense of a slower agrarian lifestyle that has been all but obliterated.

The diaries are confused and confusing, the chaos in the author's private life underscoring the chaos of the narrative of life in twentieth century Chimbote. Arguedas concludes the first diary with ruminations of a sorrowful story of his encounter with a *mestiza* woman who had moved from the sierra to the coast, worked as a *chicha* bar waitress, and become pregnant, a fate that relegates her to a kind of no-man's land. Belonging to no specific race, and being pregnant, she has nowhere to go, so she climbs the hills out of the city on a road to nowhere to give birth to an orphan and a bastard – another who has no connection to society. She also has a sexual encounter with the author, another *mestizo*, when he was yet a child, accentuating the *forasterismo* that defines both of them, while catapulting him into what in Quechua terms is adulthood. Such is the prelude to meeting the Fox from Up Above and the Fox from Down below, who conclude the diary speaking of life from their two vantage points, the life down below being hot, sensual, and corrupt. The fox from up above closes with, “Así es. Seguimos viviendo y conociendo” (Arguedas, ZAZA 23). ‘That's the way it is. We go on seeing and learning’ (Arguedas, *The Fox* 26). Contextualized, the statement is particularly meaningful, emanating from the character of the adaptive, enduring, and,

apparently, mutable fox of the indigenous cosmovision. Such mutability Arguedas regards as the salvation and future of Peru, if structured to protect the nation's heritage.

The second and third diaries also appear as interior monologues or letters to intimate friends. The second diary, which follows the second narrative chapter, includes ruminations that again lead Arguedas into a description of the physical world of the *indio* of the Peruvian highland living as an equal and integral part of his natural surroundings. His mind streams through feelings of *forasterismo* in large cities that he has visited as a *serrano*, identifying himself as one of the Inca-descended highlanders who seem so carnivalesque and out of place in the city. His thoughts return to feelings of being from the world of up above, as in the story of the foxes, an allusion not yet explained in the text. The third diary interrupts the narrative after chapter four. In it, Arguedas engages in a kind of metanarrative musing over chapters he has written, takes jabs at Julio Cortázar, and addresses a giant pine tree in Arequipa, hearing its voice, communing with it as a live and animated being. Arguedas's connection with nature has been previously noted and is certainly one of his most memorable personal attributes inspiring his most lyrical passages. Again, he falls back on nature as a source of sustenance and rejuvenation, allowing him to move forward in writing the painful narrative, and sees that same force as key to the preservation of Peruvian culture and heritage.

The fourth diary, entitled "Último Diario?", implying that the author may or may not complete that section, foreshadows his suicide. The unfinished narrative is followed by the author's death and specific notes about the progression toward the suicide as well as his wishes for his own funerary celebration. The fact that the text continues as his last diary after the novel ends, suggests a continuation of life, even though the author speaks

of his own imminent death. Additionally, the conflation of present and ancient time in the novel, as well as the continuation of events after the suicide but written prior to it, create a sense of time that is nonlinear and enduring, however chaotic the disruptions to that perpetuity may be.

The connection of the diaries to the narrative is crucial to the integrity of the text as a whole. Arguedas reveals the painful *forasterismo* that has plagued him throughout his life, a liminal positioning that he identifies as key to resolving social issues of the future of Perú as its society blends along the Pacific coastline while the serranos move down from the highlands in an attempt to improve their economic situation. Both foxes, from up above and from down below, are watching, learning, and sending the message of the Chimbote world to the reader and to their indigenous peoples of the sierra who are trying to hold on to the values of their cultural traditions while they adjust to their new circumstances as time and place morph into a new world that melds history, cosmovision, and human necessity.

Arguedas's introduction of the *zorros* at the conclusion of the first diary places them, chronotopically, in an intermediary position. The fox folktales come from the oral tradition, are copied down in Quechua using the Spanish alphabet, since Quechua was not a written language at that time, and subsequently Arguedas introduces them in the diaries, an ancient method of chronicling that predates the novel. They appear yet again in chapter one of the narrative, at first in terms of the ancient Huarochirí text. Later, the *zorro de abajo* plays a prominent role in the third chapter of the narrative. The foxes continually resurface throughout the diaries and the story line. They never really disappear, nor have they historically. Arguedas merges the spatial worlds of the ancient

and the modern, an adherence dependent on the fourth dimension of time. That fusion results from the intermediary step of his personal world, revealed in the diaries. In like manner, the foxes move among their variously defined worlds, unveiling an ancient mythical perspective as they narrate events of the novel, comment on them, and perform them in a kind of strange dance. (That dance has mythological significance and will be discussed at length in Chapter 10 of this work.) The *zorros* fulfill the modes of conveyance of meaning described in ancient oral mythological transmission. That tradition artfully lives on in Arguedas's novel.

Arguedas introduces the Huarochirí foxes of antiquity in the first chapter where they talk of their prior association:

Este es nuestro segundo encuentro. Hace dos mil quinientos años nos encontramos en el cerro Latausaco, de Huarochirí, hablamos junto al cuerpo dormido de Huatyacuri, hijo anterior a su padre, hijo artesano del dios Pariacaca...(ZAZA 49).

This is our second encounter. Two thousand five hundred years ago we met on Latausaco Mountain in Huarochirí; we spoke to each other by the sleeping body of Huatyacuri, the son who was born before his father, craftsman son of the god Pariacaca (Arguedas, *The Fox* 53).

The dialogue continues with the *zorro de abajo* speaking of how the *zorro de arriba* told of the secrets that allowed Huatyacuri to conquer the challenges of his brother-in-law, a powerful man and, to some a demi-god, in contests of song and dance, Huatyacuri being assisted by the use of a small drum made by a fox. Huatyacuri also prevailed over other challenges with the support of nature and adherence to cosmological beliefs, while his opponent, in his arrogance, believed he could win in spite of them (Arguedas, ZAZA 50). The myth includes Huatyacuri's betrothal to the daughter of ManaÑamca, who has fallen ill and is cured by Huatyacuri when he tells the former that his wife has been

unfaithful to him and reveals the mode of betrayal. The myth will later reappear in contemporary form in *Los zorros*.

The fox from up above then recounts the Huarochirí tale of how Tutaykire, a warrior from up above and another son of Pariacaca, was stopped in a coastal region by a virgin whore who waited for him, legs and breasts uncovered, and legs spread. He then asks how life is in Chimbote, a section of that coastal region, previously introduced as an area of corruption. He also asks the *zorro de abajo* to sing like a duck if possible, at least for an instant. In so doing he is actually requesting that the fox from down below distance himself from the coastal corruption, to “rise above it,” to relate what is going on, after which the two can talk about what is necessary (Arguedas, ZAZA 50). The *zorro de abajo* speaks of the pestilence, fetid odors, and the melancholy of death, but also the *hervores*, like hot pots boiling and about to overflow, that sting, and turn acid, and then calm by force or sheer exertion. In explaining what he sees, he comments that he feels the corruption in the tips of his ears, a most sensitive and sensory part of his natural self, a reminder of his connection with nature and how totally devoid of that context Chimbote has become. His next statement is indicative of his abilities: “Y veo, veo; puedo también, como tú, ser lo que sea” (Arguedas, ZAZA 51). ‘And I see, and I don’t see; I can also, like you, be anything whatsoever’ (Arguedas, *The Fox* 55). Flexibility and adaptability in any world allow the foxes’ survival. While transculturation may be implied, it is not necessarily required. The fox may change his appearance to conform to the exterior rituals and habits of an alternative cultural vision, but substantively he may preserve his heritage and his belief system.

In the third narrative chapter, the *zorro de abajo* appears as don Diego, who supposedly has been sent by Mr. Braschi, an international entrepreneur from the United States who owns almost all of the fishmeal production plants in the world. He arrives in Chimbote to visit “Nautilus Fishing,” run by Don Ángel Rincón Jaramillo. The timing is significant: he arrives just before midnight, sporting a mottled gray mining cap, very narrow grey shoes with crude leather laces, and pants that are a singed or of a charcoal color (85).<sup>42</sup> His carriage is confident and conciliatory, evoking an atmosphere of familiarity that would occur among confidants. Don Angel continually observes that his visitor is short legged, with a mustache of long thin hairs.

Don Diego asks the appropriate questions to glean from the manager the fact that workers come from the sierra looking for work and are turned away while others are fired. Yet they keep coming. Not knowing how to swim, and wanting to go out on the fishing boats, they tie themselves to the docks and flail about in the water, trying to learn to survive. The two continue their conversation, and, because of the unusual approach of don Diego, don Angel relaxes and confides in him the deceptive, fraudulent, and duplicitous practices of the company and even of himself, in his personal life. Don Angel asks if he is providing the information that the visitor wants, and don Diego nods without speaking, but with a strange wide smile, which don Angel interprets as positive. Don Angel continues exposing his (and others’) cultural prejudices. Most of the *serranos* of the north speak Spanish, not Quechua, so there are no secrets that they can hide, and they are being converted, acculturated. But in the south, the natives are strange and have no interest in changing, and fighting them makes it worse (Arguedas, *ZAZA* 92). Rather than

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<sup>42</sup> The Andean fox is larger than the North American fox, more the size of a dog, with a tail that is a dark, or blackish in color. According to pre-Incan mythology, trying to escape to higher ground during a great flood, the fox’s tail was soaked by the water and turned black (Arguedas, *Dioses y Hombres* 31).

responding, don Diego continues to uncover the truth by asking questions. When a pause occurs, another question is posed or words of encouragement to continue the story are offered. Hence, the fox does not reveal himself, nor does he indicate agreement with don Angel. I liken Don Diego's action to Mary Louise Pratt's interpretation of the Andean indigenous people's encounter in a meeting with the hegemonic Spanish in "Apocalypse in the Andes," the Indians dressed according to Spanish style, appearing as if there were no Indians at the meeting.

If there were no Indians present, then the intended effect of this spectacle is lost: no Indians are present to be terrorized by it. If, however, Indians were present in disguise, they are determining the spectacle's meanings for themselves. Above all they control the meaning of their own presence or absence. Either they have refused to attend and be terrorized or they are able to be there without the Spanish being able to detect them. Finally... indigenous interpretive power seems to win out...(Pratt, "Apocalypse" 45)

Textuality is extremely significant in Andean folktales. Some tales concern descriptions of dress while others emphasize time and place. Wild animals are considered human only when they dress in human clothes --the condor with his white scarf and black jacket, or the fox with his red waistcoat. Thus, animals are humanized when donning woven cloth. The storyteller dresses the wild animals in human attire until the animals are outwitted by their intended sexual partner, at which time the storyteller then undresses them. Additionally, the animal suitors are human by night, but revert to their natural forms during the day. In domestic settings they are human, while in nature they retain their natural form (Arnold and Yapita 11). In the novel, the fox is present in disguise. As such, he controls the process and his manipulation of it explicitly.

It is also worth noting that in this scene, Don Diego moves his arms forward as if he were stuffing Don Angel's words into his belly to disgorge them at some propitious time,

like the fox disgorging seeds at the beginning of the rainy season in the folktale.

Metaphorically, the indigenous store “seeds” that will be revealed at a later date to “reseed” their heritage.

As John M. Foley points out, Arguedas’s imbedding of opportunities for the reader to draw on prior experience to give added meaning to the text, particularly in the case of traditional oral performance or performance in text, depends on the awareness of the reader or audience’s knowledge of traditional referents. Tradition is therefore a unifying context exterior to the performance or the text, adding to the richness and depth of the presentation. Audience or reader perception is more sharply focused as a result of the signs received during the event that facilitates the connection (6-7).

The conversation between don Ángel and don Diego continues, seemingly interminably. And although some have dubbed the *zorros* “chattering” (Archibald 100), I view the *zorros* not so much as loquacious as provocative of conversation. While the two foxes introduce themselves at the outset, the *zorro de abajo* later enters the narrative disguised as don Diego, and as such, coaxes don Ángel to reveal all. The latter at first is reticent to reveal information and supportive of the industry of which he is a part, but, with the carnivalesque tactics invoked by don Diego, he gradually relaxes. He relinquishes his “higher level or upper class” persona for one on the level with don Diego – the persona of the “lower level,” the ordinary people, and reveals the truth of corruption control, greed, and mistreatment of the innocent people from the sierra who come to Chimbote in search of employment. He has previously described Braschi as an eagle, flying high with a wide reach. Hence, the eagle’s emissary gradually yields his

corporate visage and descends to uncover the truth of “los de abajo,” and “tells it like it is” (Arguedas, *ZAZA* 92-93).

The approach of don Diego is another reflection of Bakhtin’s description of the “carnavalesque.” While the scene with Moncada at the social club was a means of subverting the dominance of the hegemonic, Bakhtin’s “carnavalesque” serves other purposes in the novel as well. According to the theorist, carnival dynamics promote the suspension of everyday anxieties both temporally and spatially. Relaxation is inspired by “holiday time” and “carnival space.” Since there is no seriousness expected, one is not subject to shame or embarrassment. While Bakhtin specifically refers to the grotesque body, the idea extends to the whole being. One does not need to be self-conscious or timid. Hence, there is a freedom that allows one to respond spontaneously and naturally, especially in language (Emerson 162-163). Don Diego’s pirouettes in don Angel’s office, his freedom of movement, and, in fact his very short legs and long jaw, his long, thick, and separated whiskers (a bit grotesque), not to mention his shiny topcoat, provide a sense of curiosity but also of relief of tension. Don Angel believes don Diego to be in Braschi’s employ, but finds him to be emotionally liberating in his freedom of action and his rather odd appearance. Not understanding why, Braschi speaks freely and openly to the strange, amusing “hippi ‘incaico” (*ZAZA* 118). When asked if he had ever worked in circuses, don Diego responds, “Jamás, todo el tiempo” (Never, all the time), a carnivalesque exchange that adds levity to the situation as well as indicating that don Diego is acutely aware of his surroundings and in control of the meaning he accords his visit to the Chimbote factory (Arguedas, *ZAZA* 118). Again Pratt’s words

with respect to interpretation come to mind since the disguised don Diego controls his role in the situation.

The performance further reminds the reader of the power of the disguise in Incan mythology. Don Diego, as the fox, metonymically bonds the present to the past, the surface costume to the depths of the ancient culture. In his movements, his off-handed remarks, don Diego displays what Foley calls “the central trope of word-power: metonymic signification,” representing the textualized Chimbote and the untextualizable whole problematic of globalization, via “the enabling event of performance and the enabling referent of tradition” (39). “Word-power” fuses metonym and meaning when the reader/audience perceives the link of performance and tradition. The scene is powerful precisely because of the appearance, timing, and role play of don Diego. Hence, the fox not only controls the scene in the sense that Mary Louise Pratt suggests in referencing the Indians dressed as colonists, but strengthens its impact because of the connection of the narrative present with the cultural past. He therefore signifies an important field of reference that is activated via his performance for informed readers (Foley 41).

While Arguedas has injected a playful element in the plot, (such experimentation is typical of the postmodern), he is deadly serious and the playfulness augments its socially recognized efficacy of mockery of capitalistic obsessions and corruption in the region. Moreover, intertextuality serves as a clandestine messenger of the permanence of indigenous culture and its resistance to obliteration by hegemonic forces. Don Diego directs the conversation to the worldwide capitalistic success of Braschi, saying that he and his colleagues not only fabricate fishmeal, but crazy and blind people as well, a dual

production. Not only does the international group produce consumer products, but a by-product: demented and damaged workers due to the deplorable working conditions. The owners have reached “donde no hay ni sol ni luna” (ZAZA 118) ‘where there’s neither sun nor moon’ (Arguedas, *The Fox* 123). Don Angel understands that Braschi has been very successful, but the entrepreneur does not understand don Diego’s cosmic allusion, a disconnect of meaning underscoring the impossibility of the two worlds understanding each other. The importance of where there is neither sun nor moon, where the world does not exist, where life does not exist, cannot be overestimated. References to that “location” are made in folktales told to this day in Andean villages. Another reference to that “nowhere” situated in mythical space, that absence of the Pachamama in its lunar representation, occurs in the novel where two defiled and rejected women, one a *misti*, the other a *chola* meet, ascending the hills, noticing the distorted reflection of the moonlight on the bay. Here again, the cosmological chronotope of indigenous mythology mixes with the modern to perpetuate the perspectives of the ancients in opposition to the immediacy of production and profit of capitalistic goals. Mythological references are so subtle that they may go unnoticed by the uninformed reader, a clandestine resistance to acculturation that is omnipresent throughout the novel. The blurring of the lunar refraction on the water is an indicator of the loss of traditional Andean life and culture, replaced by the predominance of the smoke from the new factories that are seen brilliantly in the polluted water. The ancient and yet enduring indigenous cosmic mythology so profoundly connected with nature is being destroyed by capitalism and the factories that feed it, but the fact that Arguedas threads the myth into the contemporary

scene promotes its permanence, inverting the scene to give preeminence to the ancient values.

The appearance of the foxes periodically throughout the narrative portion of the text continues to foreground the myth, inverting the social structure of *criollo* hegemony and indigenous alterity. Following the trip to the factory, don Angel takes don Diego to a strip club, where they encounter El Tartamudo (The Stutterer) and La Caprichosa (the Capricious Woman). The scene that transpires is one of metamorphosis as Tartamudo, astonished that he is granted what he begs for from the nude dancer, is transformed into a non-stuttering *zorro de arriba*. He later reverts back to himself, but for an instant is again a *serrano*, and understands that he has allowed the capitalist coastal region to corrupt him (ZAZA 128). The scene is the contemporary reenactment of the victory of Huatyacuri over the son-in-law and daughter of TataÑamca recounted in the first diary where the two, defeated, flee and the woman is turned into stone, her torso inverted and legs spread (ZAZA, 128, 49, *Huarochiri Manuscript* 59). The fact that he does not stutter when he “becomes” the *zorro* is a further reflection of the corruption and destruction of the Quechua culture and disappearance of the voice of its people in contemporary society. He is unable to express himself clearly and make himself easily understood in the new environment. The cultures clash and the hegemonic diminishes the power of the subaltern. However, here again, the subaltern character and the effect that power struggle has had on him results in his being foregrounded, creating a message that is an inversion of those powers.

Arguedas's intertextual plaiting, while itself a fusion, bears a larger message of the impact of that hybridity, one suggested by Pierre Bourdieu. In speaking of the rise and spread of the new capitalism, the philosopher states:

It is actually the permanence or survival of the institutions and agents of the old order undergoing dismantlement...and also all the social solidarities, familial or of other kinds, which make it possible that the social order does not sink into chaos in spite of the growing volume of the population which is made to live under precarious conditions (Bourdieu 3).

His comment refers to the movement toward a "pure and perfect free market" made possible by the "politics of financial deregulation" and the transformation of all measures counteractive to that end. Such obstacles include the nation, which, in its power, may manipulate the market via such localized mechanisms as labor groups, which have the power to manipulate salaries and advancement of workers, collective organizations such as unions and cooperatives, and even the individual family that has the power to influence the market (Bourdieu 3). While the industrialized Chimbote of the 1960s was still in its incipience socially, lacking formal organizations, familial memories and traditions, cultural heritage and values, remained in the minds of the migrants from the sierra and still do to this day, often perpetuated by metaphoric references in daily interactions as well as rituals both large and small.

The *zorros* survive and reappear in Arguedas's novel after having disappeared for centuries. However, Incan mythology and astronomy would suggest that they never really disappeared because they are perpetual survivors. Amid the chaos, corruption, illness, destruction and death that is Chimbote, the foxes manage to mingle with all levels of society. Even so, how, and to what end? The answer lies not in the traditional "trickster" interpretation of the foxes. Rather, the ancient indigenous view of the fox unfolds the

message and importance of the fox in Arguedas's text. At various points throughout the novel, both in the diaries and in the narrative itself, the foxes make reference to continuing, seeing, becoming aware of, and understanding. They speak in Quechua when referring to their ancient heritage and Spanish when referring to the modern world. They are flexible. While the *zorros* are bearers of the ancient language of nature, the soul, and the spirit of the world of the Pachamama, they comprehend the language of the modern world, its words focusing on details and minutiae. They find these newer words confusing, disabling a broader, more durative perspective, but they both have been "up above" and "down below" (ZAZA 49). The *zorros* can and have survived in both realms, both literally and metaphorically. As in the folktale, the fox has the ability to move among worlds and survive because he listens and learns. Referring to Pratt's argument ("Apocalypse" 45), the *zorros*, being disguised, have the option to adapt to the new culture. As don Diego, the fox from down below, a spirit from the past bearing its cultural meaning, has the ability to control the meaning of his presence in the twentieth century dialogues with don Ángel. Don Diego is therefore a bearer of ancient and indigenous interpretive power of what he experiences in the present. (Pratt, "Apocalypse" 45). As such, as Priscilla Archibald observes, the foxes of Arguedas's novel "are not figures of nostalgia but harbingers of the future" (Archibald 108).

The foxes complete the task of relating happenings of the peoples of above and below, the mountains and the coast. They come from another time and a different reality, and, with words that at times seem obtuse, symbolic dances that go unexplained, and other transfigurations, they seem to symbolize a fusion that is forthcoming. Thus, they weave the past of the indigenous people with the present of Chimbote and suggest

universal values by means of voices that communicate between both. Simultaneously, they also weave into the fabric of their tales the personal world of the individual via the diaries that combine both worlds in a venue that is uniquely and painfully personal, allowing the reader to viscerally understand the impact of the clash of old and new, traditional and modern, local and foreign. Arguedas creates a scenario akin to what Bakhtin terms “outsidedness,” the availability, due to a relation of “self-other” that allows for some surplus of vision because of another consciousness. Being outside does not mean isolation, security, or abstraction for the self. Rather, the author’s work occurs on the boundary between the self and other, giving a form to the life on the inside from the outside. As Volkova states, “If values in the world are confused and mixed, then in art they receive their definitive place thanks to the wholeness of the hero (even a potential hero) and to the creative context of the author” (Volkova 12).

In the last diary, Arguedas writes, “Los zorros corren del uno al otro de sus mundos; bailan bajo la luz azul, sosteniendo trozos de bosta agusanada sobre la cabeza. Ellos sienten, musían, más claro, más denso que los medio locos transidos y conscientes y, por eso, y no siendo mortales, de algún modo hilvanan e iban a seguir hilvanando los materiales y almas que empezó a arrastrar este relato” (ZAZA 244). “The foxes run from one of their worlds to the other; they dance beneath blue light, holding dry pieces of worm-eaten dung over their heads. ‘They sense things; they have clearer, more intense presentiments than the half-demented people who have been overwhelmed and are aware of it, and, therefore and not being mortal, they stitch somehow together and were going to continue to stitch together the materials and souls this narrative had begun to drag along’ (Arguedas, *The Fox* 258). Arguedas did not see himself as a professional writer.

He wrote, as did very few others, “ por amor, por goce y por necesidad, no por oficio..... Yo vivo para escribir, y creo que hay que vivir desincondicionalmente para interpretar el caos y el orden ” (ZAZA 18). ‘ for the love of it, for enjoyment, and because we need to, not because it is our trade... I live for writing, and I believe that in order to be able to interpret chaos and order one has to live de-unconditionedly ’ <sup>43</sup> (Arguedas, *The Fox* 21). Arguedas’s life is emblematic of his search to understand the chaos and order in his own life when he writes himself into the novel as the protagonist of the diaries of *los zorros*, concluding his search for order in chaos with his suicide.

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<sup>43</sup> Frances Barraclough translates the term to mean that “one must stop living as if one’s life experiences and the environment one grew up in have no effect on what one writes” (Arguedas, *The Fox* 21).

## CHAPTER 9

### *LOS ZORROS* AND THE END OF NATURE: THE OBSTRUCTION OF HYBRIDITY

...human beings can will backward as well as forward in time; willing backward occurs when we rearrange accounts of events in the past that have been emplotted in a given way, in order to endow them with a different meaning or to draw from the new emplotment reasons for acting differently in the future from the way we have become accustomed to acting in our present.

Hayden White 150

Characteristic of the postmodern is its focus on the urban and metropolitan. Lyotard strongly argues that immediacy of economic value, productivity, and efficiency of production has taken precedence over the grand narratives of modernism, now regarded as passé. The question (overt or implied) now asked by the professional, the State, or institutions of higher education is no longer “Is it true?” but “What use is it?” In the context of the mercantilization of knowledge, more often than not this question is equivalent to “Is it saleable?” And in the context of power-growth “Is it efficient?”...What no longer makes the grade is competence as defined by other criteria such as whether the approach is just or unjust (Lyotard, 1984 51). In fact, according to Fredric Jameson, the postmodernist focus is so limited to the urban space that nature as it

has been known now is viewed as Other because it is “nonhuman or the formerly natural,” a force to be dominated (Jameson 170). Chimbote reveals the horror and the unnaturalness of modern culture, as Arguedas confronts the postmodern by implying that nature in Chimbote has been superseded by the industrial quest for money (Gregson 118). Nature is all but obliterated.<sup>44</sup> Positioning his novel at a center of that destructive force, Arguedas reveals the power and dominance of the postmodern perspective and the consequent ruination of all that he holds to be natural.

Arguedas uses Chimbote as a synecdoche for the devastation of nature by international capitalistic groups who destroy the bay and its surroundings while they expediently extract the fishmeal that they will then ship abroad for large profit. All natural elements are in decay: the pelicans are dying because their food, the fish, have been taken out of the sea to be manufactured into fishmeal and exported. Furthermore, the indigenous are estranged from their natural environment and their spiritual ties with nature. Several characters illustrate this disenfranchisement, living in a state of psychosis. To quote Teresa Brennan,

...if nature is endlessly consumed in the pursuit of a totalizing course, then that course is dangerous for living; it constitutes a danger to one's own survival, as well as that of others. That, approximately, is the technical, legal definition of psychosis (174).

One woman, who has come from the *puna*, leaves the bay city to return to the *altiplano*. Pregnant, outcast, and scorned by all, she is going to give birth where life once existed for her, but she is now living death, and her bastard child will be ostracized from birth. Ironically, the bay should nurture women, as women traditionally are symbolically linked to water, both being the source of life. However, what was the virginal and quiet

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<sup>44</sup> Fredric Jameson identifies as characteristic of the postmodern a time ‘when the modernization process is complete and nature is gone for good’ (ix).

Chimbote Bay has become polluted; “la gran zorra” (zorrra being a vulgar term for vulva), the coastal region is the source of corruption. The high pristine mountain streams are deserted as the indigenous stream to the coast in search of work and become infected by its moral pestilence on their arrival. Asto, like many other *indios* who have come from the sierra, splashes about in the sea, day after day tied to the pier, trying to learn to survive in the water so that he can go out on one of the fishing boats. He, is terrified; this life is unnatural for him. Finally, having learned to swim and having earned enough money, he heads for the cheapest brothel in the city. His trip there is not for sexual pleasure but to find and pay to retrieve his sister, with the hope of returning her to a woman’s “natural” way of life, what Ian Gregson terms a “sane humanness” (123). The ocean has become a mistress; the brothels reaffirm that model. The destruction of traditional values and customs of the indigenous Peruvian lifestyle, inextricably connected to nature, parallels the decimation of the biological world, caused by capitalistic, urban artificialities, imposed by foreign enterprise for international gain. As mentioned in the previous chapter, don Angel, a disowned bastard child, has moved to the coastal city and joined the foreign organization as a manager in a fishmeal factory owned by foreign investors. As don Diego interacts with him, don Angel realizes how unnatural his adult existence is, and longs for the sierra world of his youth. Mentally and emotionally recapturing the experience of that happy childhood while watching and then dancing with don Diego, don Angel is gradually transformed into a *Zorro*, semiotic of a life more harmonious with nature. The stuttering of El Tartamudo is also unnatural. However, when he is returned to nature, he stops stammering. That reversion results from a mystical encounter with a *zorrra* into which he is momentarily transformed, the

*zorro* being the embodiment of the ancient Quechua culture so totally connected to nature.

Ironically, the fishmeal factory produces fertilizer meant to naturally enrich lands throughout the world, but its production kills all that is natural at its site of origin. It is a natural product, produced by unnatural means but with complete disregard for the natural world from which it is taken (the anchovies in the bay) and in which it is produced (the town and people of Chimbote). Thousands of anchovies are killed as they are sucked into a tube from the deck of a ship, and ground up in a bloody flow on route through a pipeline into huge tanks for further processing, while a worker looks on as if it were nothing. The anchovies are numerous, small and defenseless, a metaphor for the innocent *serranos* who also have found their way to Chimbote Bay. While the birds and fish die, so do members of the indigenous population who have moved to Chimbote in order to survive. The foreign industrialists are killing all forms of life indigenous to the region while they produce fishmeal to fertilize crops and gardens, sapping the local natural resources to produce life elsewhere.

Introduced into the contemporary Chimbote setting via the diaries, the pre-Incan foxes further subvert the superficiality of materialistic and monetary gain as they recount the myth of Huatyacuri. Huatyacuri's rags serve as a disguise common in Incan mythology. In *Los zorros*, Huatyacuri's rags are intended to reveal the shallowness of the arrogant and well-dressed man whose daughter he wishes to marry. Recognition of the disguise and understanding it to be a representation of humility is paramount, a metaphor for values beyond the material and superficial. Huatyacuri's contradiction of convention in terms of his dress alerts the audience/reader to his probable prowess. The audience

understands that he will defeat the arrogant man, even before the competitions begin. His tatters are a kind of mockery of the need for ostentation and the superficial values of the potential father-in-law and supportive of pre-Incan valuation of the common man.<sup>45</sup>

Additionally, following the advice of his father, the god Pariacaca, Huatyacuri turns to natural forces for assistance. At one with all elements in nature, he calls up that force for support, and, in so doing, is victorious in all contests. Arguedas here subverts the postmodern emphasis on the “urban,” the material, and the devaluing of nature.

Perhaps the most debased of all indicators of the degeneration of respect for natural life forces is the demand by the hegemonic that the cemetery of the poor be moved. If man is an integral part of nature and on his death he returns to the earth which has fed him, desecration of that place to which he is returned is an unholy act. Furthermore, according to Catholic belief, only the souls of those who have been buried in ground consecrated by a Catholic priest can be saved. The *indios* are forced to bury their dead in land that is only cursorily consecrated by a North American priest who does not speak Spanish well, and is totally unconnected with the depth of meaning and traditions of the people whose relatives are to be interred in the new ground. The very fact that the souls are disturbed by being moved at all (the identifying crosses are moved, if not the bodies) is unsettling. Indeed, the new location represents the epitome of the destruction of nature. The move is to lower ground beyond the shanty towns near the city’s garbage dump and the asphalted road where a TV transmitter has been installed. The scene of the silent removal from the well-adorned cemetery of the hegemonic to the new location reinforces the destructive forces. The arched entrance to the cemetery and the giant

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<sup>45</sup> The Incas superimposed their value system and hierarchical system of inheritance on regional cultures that they had overpowered. Such inheritance was based on blood lineage linked to a conviction of direct descent from the Sun God to ensure their dominance.

marble cross guarding it resemble the tall ships in the foggy bay below. The white decks of the ships stand in stark contrast to the poor people dressed in black entering the cemetery to take away the crosses of their dead. Semiotically, the ejection of the Quechua *serranos* from the modern cemetery of the wealthy capitalists mirrors the total devaluation and destruction of the ancient culture and its traditions by the hegemonic. Not only is the environment destructive of the physical elements of nature, but the demands of the hegemonic who have created that unnatural setting are also destroying all that is natural to the way of life of the descendants of the original inhabitants of the region. Unnatural acts are carried out upon humanity, itself one of the fruits of nature.

Immigrant groups typically encounter a variety of barriers to miscegenation in a new society, since transculturation is a slow process that requires adjustments from all sectors. In search of work, the *serranos* show themselves to be willing to hybridize by migrating to the coast. It is a physical move to another area of their fatherland that, at the very least, requires fusing a lifestyle understood and practiced from infancy with new skills necessary for survival in what should or could be a hospitable region. They are not migrating to a foreign land, but on arrival that is what they encounter. Racism, ethnocentrism, avarice, hubris, and a complete disregard for the values of those who have arrived and are willing to work, create insurmountable obstacles to hybridization. Any attempt at positive cultural processing to assist the new workers is precluded by hegemonic economic and societal institutions while exploitation is pervasive.

The natural progression of societies in Peru during the rise of the Incan Empire, prior to the arrival of the Spanish and its superimposed culture, was a more adaptive and inclusive melding of cultural groups to form larger communities that allowed for

variation in lifestyle and customs while promoting adaptation to an expanded vision of civilization. Like the Conquest, the arrival of global industrial concerns to Chimbote provides another superimposition of hegemony on Peruvian society, again with a need for an expanded labor force. While the Spanish imposed their feudal society upon the indigenous, relegating the *indios* to a subaltern position bordering on slavery, the foreign capitalistic focus which overtakes Chimbote in the 1960s establishes its own barriers to cultural fusion. What would seem to be the natural, if slow, transculturation via hybridization of geographically-connected cultures is artificially obstructed by human prejudice, ethnocentrism, greed, deceit and arrogance. If man is created by nature to be equally a participant within the natural world, each person should have the right to live within that realm in some degree of equanimity. The fusion of cultures should allow for adjustments and accommodations that further that end. Not only did Arguedas view hybridization as the only answer to the cultural conflicts in Peru, he believed the process would produce important synergies for the nation. However, such hybridization requires mutual respect. In *Los zorros*, the condescending self-interest of foreign entrepreneurs controls all aspects of life in Chimbote according to their own self-serving terms, overriding any interest in cultural inclusion. The subaltern has no voice, victimized by the giant industrial enterprise that grinds forward in the name of progress.

## CHAPTER 10

### “LA AGONIA DE RASUÑITI”: THE SCISSORS DANCE – HYBRIDITY ENCAPSULATED, PERFORMANCE AS LANGUAGE OF RESISTANCE

Not everyone comes to “culture” or  
modernity through writing.

If performance did not transmit knowledge,  
only the literate and powerful could claim  
social memory and identity.

Taylor xvii-xviii

In 1962, Arguedas wrote the short story “La agonía de Rasu-Niti”, the fictional account of the death of a scissors dancer. Martin Lienhard suggests that Arguedas wrote the story because the dance held great fascination for him (132). However, given Arguedas’s need to reveal to the unknowledgeable the magical and wondrous cosmovision of the Peruvian indigenous of the sierra, I believe that his purpose extends beyond writing about a ceremony merely because it held meaning for him. I argue that “La agonía de Rasu-Ñiti” lays bare the inseparability of the natural and the supernatural of that population; they are one and the same. The *Danza de las Tijeras*, a contrapuntal presentation that perhaps epitomizes the performative tradition in indigenous Peru, is a dance form that combines elements of the Spanish Conquest and indigenous

mythological components of pre-Incan Andean origin. Hence, it is by definition a hybridity. The fusion extends as well to the mode of performance, since the dance contains expected traditional segments as well as spontaneous movements. In that sense, it is reflective of the oral tradition even though there are no voiced components. The “plot” may be familiar, but each time it is performed there is a distinctly different rendition based on the performers’ dialogic interaction and the responses of the audience.

Arguedas makes reference to the “*danzak’ de las tijeras*” (scissors dancer) in all of the fictional texts discussed in this work with the exception of *Agua* and *Todas las sangres*. The inclusion of the scissors dance or reference to the dancer ties the texts together and foregrounds the significance of the performance to the author. This chapter discusses that meaning and its importance, utilizing “La agonía de Rasu-Ñiti” as the basis for the examination. The dance is emblematic of the value of performance as a mechanism for the perpetuation of memory and resistance to indigenous cultural extinction. In fact, the frequency of Arguedas’s use of the scissors dance in his texts likely has contributed greatly to the recent international appeal of the dance and the resurgence of interest in Peruvian indigenous cultural praxes.<sup>46</sup>

In *The Archive and the Repertoire*, Diana Taylor identifies the body as central to the conveyance of cultural memory. She claims that “it is impossible to think about cultural memory and identity as disembodied”, and that the “mental frameworks—which include images, stories, and behaviors—constitute a specific archive and repertoire” (86). The incarnation of mnemonic systems and orderings are transmitted through their corporal

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<sup>46</sup> The Scissors Dance has been performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., as well as festivals in London, Cambridge, Hamilton, and at the Northrop Frye Theatre Toronto, Canada.

representations, bodies which have been drawn by their own individual and group identities (86). The scissors dancer is one such embodiment, and a hybrid one.

The plot of the short story, “La agonía de Rasu-Ñiti”, is simple while its cultural significance is complex. In the story, the scissors dancer awakens one morning and realizes that it is the day that he is to die and pass on his gift to the dancer who is to inherit his gift.<sup>47</sup> He then orchestrates the requisite processes to accomplish that end, each element of which is highly symbolic. Comprehension of the extent of that symbolism requires an awareness of the dance and its origins.

The costume of the *danzak*’ (scissors dancer) has ties to Spain as do the scissors, two heavy blades of iron or steel, since the Spanish introduced the smelting of those metals to Latin America. Lienhard suggests that the dress and appearance of the dancer may have served as a parody of the arrogant Spaniard.<sup>48</sup> However, the dance itself is entirely of indigenous origins and is linked to cultivating the land (131).

According to Raúl Romeros, the scissors dancer is not only a mysterious person in Arguedas’s novels, but in Andean custom and society, where the dance is particularly linked to the province of Lucanas in the region of Ayacucho (236). Lucy Núñez identifies a link between *La Danza de las Tijeras* and another ceremony, the *Takiy onqoy*. The meaning of *takiy onqoy* is “dancing sickness,” consisting of a chant and a dance that seem out of control, the dancers being possessed by *huacas* (shrines of spiritual beings, represented by natural objects or locations) or a *wamani*, a spirit of the springs, lakes, or

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<sup>47</sup> It is customary for the *danzak*’ to have a disciple from his own town whom he teaches and who will inherit the revered position. Hence, some towns are recognized as “pueblos de danzantes” (Lienhard 131).

<sup>48</sup> Comedy and particularly parody are typical of many Andean indigenous performances today, the carnivalesque being a long tradition in the region (Lienhard 126). Having seen such parodic characters perform in the Corpus Christi parade in Cuzco at the end of June, I also am able to attest to the importance and prevalence of the comedic style.

mountains. The Spanish condemned rituals related to the *huacas* or *wamanis*, considering them to be devil worship. Nonetheless, secret adoration of the indigenous spirits continued, and does to this day (Stern 51, Núñez 34). Some of the performance movements of the *takiy onqoy* reflect almost superhuman abilities related particularly to the *wamanis*, representing the flow or movements of the natural wonder that the *wamani* inspires, the *danzak'* performing such motions (Núñez 34-35).

However, the scissors dancer has come to be connected also with the Christian devil as evidenced in the following quotation taken from Arguedas's *Los ríos profundos*:

El danzak' de tijeras venía del infierno, según las beatas y los propios indios: llegaba a deslumbrarnos, con sus saltos y su disfraz lleno de espejos. Tocando sus tijeras de acero caminaba sobre una soga tendida entre la torre y los árboles de las plazas. Venía como mensajero de otro infierno, distinto de aquel que describían los Padres enardecidos y coléricos (203).

Typically the dance is performed in a plaza or under the branches of a eucalyptus tree, with two or three dancers competing in the form of a dialogue where one dancer challenges the other(s), provoking a response of a stronger or more athletic statement. The dance includes a wide range of movements that reflect virility, warrior-like qualities, the grotesque, erotic, magical, acrobatic and the graceful. The response may also portray an event, such as the lassoing of a bull, the animal being emblematic of the Spanish who introduced cattle and the bull fight into Latin America, as mentioned earlier in the chapter on *Yawar fiesta*. As the competitive level increases, one dancer may descend from the tower of a church on a rope to the plaza (Lienhard 131). The competition also includes the musicians who challenge each other to greater musical and physical feats, and the audience members who taunt and incite the participants.

Because the dance is a dialogic competition between members of different *ayllus*, according to Andean indigenous tradition, it is a ritual that has a complementary or inclusive component. However, the Christian perspective of the dance associates it with the diabolical, and views the competition as between God and the Devil. A discussion of the history assists in clarifying those differences which have become melded into the dance and accepted by both indigenous and nonindigenous persons who are familiar with the ceremonial dance. When the Spanish arrived in Peru, they became aware of the Quechua word *supay*, the meaning of which is controvertible. The Quechua word *supay* originally had a neutral meaning. As is mentioned in Chapter 7, the three Quechua worlds, the upper world (*mundo de arriba*) the world of earth (*este mundo*), and the inside world (*mundo de abajo*), are all realms where spirits exist. The guardian spirits of the inside world are *Supay* and *Sagra* (Machicado Figueroa 87). If there were a prefix of *allí* (*allísupay*) it was a good spirit; the prefix *mana allí* (*manaallísupay*) would be a bad spirit. But the Spanish attached a negative meaning to the word *supay* alone, regarding it as anything related to it or indicative of the devil of Christian comprehension (Harrison 48, Silverblatt 42). Because of that connection, the scissors dancer may not enter a church nor face a saint because he is believed to have entered into a pact with the devil in order to have the ability to dance well. However, even today the two spirits *allsuípay* and *manaallísupay* of the indigenous population are respected as guardians of their realm by the Quechua community<sup>49</sup> (Machicado Figueroa 87).

Furthermore, the *danza de las tijeras*, is suggestive of an important performance in the aforementioned myth in the Huarochirí Manuscript. Huatyacuri, (a god dressed in

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<sup>49</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 6, El Tío, the Bolivian Andes guardian of the mines, is one example. The name was changed to El Tío because the Catholic Church objected to the Quechua name. (Machicado Figueroa 87)

rags) is challenged by the son-in-law of Tamta Ñamca, who has more than 200 wives, to a dancing contest. Huatyacuri tells his father, the god Pariacaca, of the challenge, who responds that his son must overpower a fox and his wife, a skunk (both animals of the inside world or mundo de abajo). He will then be able to use their drum and win the contest. Those historical roots later combine with Spanish interpretations following the Conquest. The inside world, as mentioned earlier, is merely one of three that are equally important in the Incan/Quechua cosmovision, as contrasted with the Christian binary of good/God/Christ/resurrection and evil/Devil/damnification. Therefore, interwoven into the dance is the Christian concept of the devil and the Andean concept of the *wamani* protector as the two interact as accommodations of each other (Romero 247-249).

Further, the Western and Quechua conception of “infierno” differ. The European interpretation is associated with eternal condemnation. The Quechua “otro infierno,” however, is the world of the *wamanis*, the Andean gods of nature such as condors, springs, waterfalls, rocks and hills. These gods are visible as “huacas,” local gods, who at some historical time expressed themselves as special persons who, possessed by the gods, sang, and danced in a profound ecstasy, proposing the return to the old order and demanding that the people of the *ayllus* not mix with the Spanish. The scissors dancers (always men) have a secret understanding with the *wamanis*, and transmit the beauty of the music of the water, the blood of the hills, and the essence and force of life (Núñez 55-57). The scissors dancer serves as a mediator between the *Apu* (mountain god) and community, concentrating the power of the earth and the *wamani*. While the *zorro* moves as a messenger among the Quechua worlds, the *danzak*’ intervenes to solidify the spiritual meanings of nature’s representations.

The “danza de las tijeras” begins with the dancer and, often, the musicians (a harpist and a violinist), asking for protection from the *wamanis*. The dance most often includes another dancer or dance team in a kind of competition. While there is musical accompaniment, the rhythm of the dance is determined by the clashing of the scissors that the dancer controls as he performs. The scissors are two loose steel blades which the *danzak* connects by the handles of the scissors, his fingers making them collide. The sounds vary from a light musical rhythm, reminiscent of the light movement of water, to a very strong clashing, as of a destructive fire (“RN” 213). There is a set sequence of steps, each accompanied by a different kind of music. Lucy Núñez has recognized 18 different steps that occur in a specific order (63-77). At the end of the competition, no winner is formally identified, so each team may consider itself the winner.

The Scissors Dance has hybrid origins. The Spanish introduced the harp, violin, scissors (from forged metals such as steel), the musical style, and the manner of dress. The meaning of the ritual, however, is of Andean origin (Núñez 241). Some date the origin of the dance to the sixteenth century and its political, ideological and religious battles, while others believe that at least its roots predate the Incan Empire, but probably developed a more important role with the arrival of the Spanish Catholics, when indigenous groups worked to resist conversion. Doing so by disguising their ancient gods in Catholic dress, the symbolic significance of the clothing came to have a different meaning for the indian than for the Catholic population (Núñez 33). The name of the dancer himself is further indication of the hybridity of the ceremonial dance. “*Danzak*” is a Spanish word with a Quechua suffix, the *k* indicating the person who performs the dance. When the ideological confrontation with the Spanish turned to bloody fighting,

the Quechua population found alternative and clandestine forms of resistance. One such demonstration was a frenetic chant and dance of feverish proportions, the *taki onqoy*, which came about between 1560 and 1570 (Huamán 283). However, during the seventeenth century, many indigenous people adopted a large number of the Christian symbols, and today Andean divinity is of a decidedly different form. Certainly the *danzak'* is a hybrid in appearance and in cultural significance, as either a representation of the Christian devil, one from the interior natural world of the Quechua, or a fusion of the two.

Sara Castro-Klaren connects the *takiy onqoy* to the scissors dance in Arguedas's story of Rasu Ñiti. She indicates that in Arguedas's account of the death ritual, the *danzak'* is closely linked to the ill and frenetic dancers of the *takiy onqoy*, since the *danzak'* signifies the active presence of the *wamani* in the world, a kind of intervention or nexus between opposing political, religious, practical, and mystical forces (420). In "La agonía de Rasu-Ñiti," the powers of the *wamani* spirit pass to a successor via the *danzak'* in a total expulsion of that energy. Nature and man are one and participate in a rhythmic demonstration of that union through the rhythm of the dance (Huaman 284). Rasu-Ñiti embodies and feels the power and spirit of *wamani*, and, through the dance, that spirit is renewed and transferred to Atok's sayku. The dance movements and the scissors are controlled by the *Apu*; Rasu-Ñiti merely obeys.

The details of the setting in the account of Rasu-Niti's dance are highly symbolic in Quechua terms and yet are drawn as natural daily occurrences, a reflection of the magical/real cosmivision of the Quechua indigenous world. As the *danzak'* awakens, the *cuyes* (guinea pigs) living in the house are frightened. The birds are startled. The

*chiririnka* (blue fly), the symbol of impending death, will be coming. The *danzak*'s wife sees a *wamani*, who appears in a gray form with a white spot on its back (a condor) above the head of Rasu-Ñiti. The *danzak*' understands that the *wamani* calls him, and that he will soon bid him farewell. He tells his wife to untie bundles of corn that hang from the roof beams that will feed the *danzak*' on route to his death. While the significance is not verbalized, the woman understands the implication, and ceremoniously lowers the corn.

Two daughters arrive in the doorway. One has tripped and blood flows from a toe, presaging the arrival of *yawar mayu*, or blood river, symbolic of ritual battles. The girls cannot see the *wamani* condor above their father's head, because they do not possess the force. The *wamani* hears all sounds of the past, present, and future, including the hooves of the horses owned by the hegemonic. More importantly he hears the rising again of the Quechua god who will swallow the horses' eyes. The condor, semiotically the ancient Incan/Quechua culture, will come to dominate the Spanish invaders and their descendants, the hegemonic in Peru to this day. The harpist arrives with his steel pick (both representative of the west since the harp and steel were brought by the Spaniards). The strings are of steel wire and gut, one western, the other natural to the sierra. As the *danzak*' performs, he proclaims that the god is growing and will conquer the horse. He then falls to the floor, the final battle in progress with death in progress, and the *yawar mayu*, the blood river segment in which all Peruvian indigenous dances end, begins for the *danzak*. According to Eve-Marie Fell, the *yawar mayu*, or river of blood, is a metaphor that refers to the turbulent and muddy rivers of the rainy season. It also refers to music that is played during ritual battles. For Arguedas, it symbolizes the vigor as well as the tragedy of Andean indigenous culture (Arguedas, ZAZA 266). In the ritual battle of

Rasu-Ñiti's scissors dance, the condor will conquer the horse, at the same time that Rasu Ñiti is dying (Cusiipuma 197-208). The music then changes to indicate that the power of the *wamani* has been transferred to the new *danzak'*, Atok' sayku ("RN" 219).

Arguedas's use of the *danzak'* in his other fictional works is various but equally symbolic. In *Yawar fiesta*, the *danzak'* is a lesser character, not part of the plot line itself, but serves as a reminder of the extent of Quechua submission to the Spanish, while at the same time signifying the permanence of the culture and its resistance to obliteration. The *danzak'* performs at a distance, the sound of the scissors far off, emanating from darkness, but he is nonetheless present (*YF* 110). However, the comedic element associated with the ritual also enters in, since the local people accept the Spanish bullfighter dressed in full regalia because his attire resembles that of the *danzak'*.

In *Los ríos profundos*, the scissors dancer lives in Ernesto's memory and is strongly associated with the *zumbayllu*, not only due to similarities in the words and the fact that both are onomatopoeic (the *zumbayllu* buzzes, the *tankayllu*'s scissors clank, *yllu* is a suffix meaning producer of a certain kind of music or sound) (*LRP* 73) but, more importantly, because they both possess special powers. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the *zumbayllu* is a magical top, and its spinning movement is similar to the spinning image of the *tankayllu* possessed by the magical powers of the *wamani*. At one point in the novel, Ernesto encounters a young indigenous man in a *chicha* bar who had become a soldier. As he begins to relax with the help of the *chicha*, the soldier performs the scissors dance. Had he not become a soldier, he could have become the *danzak'* in his *ayllu*. His performance inverts the dominance of the soldiers who are there in the bar, as well as the soldiers who enter and attempt to take control of a situation in which the indigenous

people and their culture dominate. Arguedas describes the dancer and the harpist as “lanzados a lo desconocido” in the fury of the combined performance. When civil patrolmen arrive and attempt to stop the dance and arrest the dancer and the harpist, a captain in the soldier’s regiment asserts his power and sides with the soldier/dancer, supported by the *chichera* (bar maid). The inversion not only consists of an *indio* dressed as a soldier who dances the indigenous dance, but the *chichera*, a *mestiza*, who sides with the *indios*. Cultural hegemony has been inverted not only in the dance but by those who participate in and support its performance in the *chichería* in a hybridized fashion. The scissors dance, performed sans scissors, by the young *indio* while dressed as a soldier is a subversive act that inverts the power of the hegemonic soldiers, by promoting unity among the indigenous and *mestizos* present in the bar (Arguedas, *LRP*, 1958, 185-189).

The performance of *la danza de las tijeras* in *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*, has a subversive effect similar to that of Arguedas’s use of the ritual in *Los ríos profundos*, but perhaps expressed and woven into the fabric of the plot in a more sophisticated and subtle manner. In *Los zorros*, as mentioned in Chapter 8, don Diego, a fox in disguise, visits don Ángel Rincón at the fishmeal factory. While still in don Ángel’s office and prior to the inspection of the factory itself, don Diego jumps up and performs a dance similar to the Scissors Dance: “...se puso a bailar dando vueltas en el mismo sitio, como si en las manos sostuviera algo invisible que zumbara con ritmo de melancolía y acero. La sombra del visitante bailaba con más armonía que el cuerpo” (Arguedas, *ZAZA* 109). The shadow of the dancer suggests a visual image of the spirit that possesses him in order to perform the ritual. As don Diego dances, don Ángel identifies the dance as *la yunsa*, another dance from the region of the scissors dance, and

also becomes possessed by the spirit and begins to move, but his feet are pegged to the floor. As the dance proceeds, don Angel sees the clothing of don Diego change colors: his cap becomes gold, his shoes become transparent blue sandals, his frockcoat is covered with tiny mirrors in the form of a star, and his mustache turns into crystalline spines on their ends, similar to those of a tree that does not grow on the coast. The scene repeats the magic of Rasu-Ñiti when, during the dance, the spirit of the *wamani* passes from the dancer to another. Lienhard suggests that the scene is a parody of the death scene of Rasu-Ñiti, but that it is not disrespectful or atypical since serious and comic elements are often combined in Andean rituals (Lienhard 117). Huamán, however, has a larger view, commenting that the death of Rasu-Ñiti is not a grave or tragic occasion because the event is the passage to another form of life. Still, Huamán does agree that the dance scene in *Los zorros* is a symbolic death scene via the carnivalesque, when, as don Angel, the *zorro de abajo* loses his battle to become the sierran of his youth (188). The *zorro de arriba*, don Diego, wins the contest. However, both don Diego and don Angel are dressed as western businessmen, both in disguise, although don Angel does not realize that his clothing hides his real self. That self becomes apparent during the dance. Don Diego reveals his true self, and don Angel is transformed into the person of his origins, his disguise removed. Again, hybridity unveils itself here in the forms of two characters whose complexity underscores the multifaceted Peruvian culture (Huaman 188).

The *danza de las tijeras* may be interpreted in multiple ways in the context of *Los zorros*. Like the Andean *zorro*, don Angel is a complex being: he is traveler, seemingly unattached to a specific locale or cultural belief system. An illegitimate child, born in the sierra town of Cajabamba and disowned, he eventually moved to Lima. As he and don

Diego dance, he remembers the hummingbirds dancing above the corollas of the sunflowers. He recalls the dance as originating from the region of his birth, and sings its words as the two move in rhythm (ZAZA 110-112). In this dance between don Diego and don Angel there is oral dialogue as don Angel recalls his childhood. The transformation of don Angel into a scissors dancer and the *zorro de abajo* during the ritual encounter in his office subverts the view of opposition of good and evil to one of complementarity, a nexus grounded in a cultural heritage that don Angel had all but forgotten. Don Diego and don Angel find themselves, at least temporarily, on the same side (Rowe and Schelling 213).

Don Angel has given up his cultural roots by moving to Lima to work in the factory controlled by foreigners for their benefit, selling a product for international consumption at the expense of indigenous workers who are exploited to produce that product. He has acculturated, but don Diego's dance subverts that hegemony. As Don Angel moves in rhythm to his chanting, he is overpowered by his memories of his cultural origins, as is the young soldier who has joined the hegemonic military forces. Don Diego and don Angel, then, are semiotic of the *zorro de arriba* and the *zorro de abajo* and the binary tensions between the sierra and the coast, affirming Geertz's belief that the "text" of culture is "social discourse" which occurs "in multiple tongues and as much in actions as in words" (18). The importance of the scissors dance to Arguedas as evidenced in his works cannot be overstated. Prior to his death, He even requested in writing that the ritual be performed at his funeral (Huaman 286). Symbolically, Arguedas is passing on his vision for Peru to the next author who assumes that same conviction for his beloved country.

## CONCLUSION

The real world is beyond our thoughts and ideas; we see it through the net of our desires, divided into pleasure and pain, right and wrong, inner and outer. To see the universe as it is, you must step beyond the net. It is not hard to do, for the net is full of holes.

Nisargadatta

A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary....People who inhabit both realities are forced to live in the interface between the two.

Anzaldua 37

If the modernist view was man as the “centered subject” based on the nuclear family, that image is shattered in postmodernity by the portrayal of the subject as fragmented. Jameson points out that the precondition of the self-sufficient “centered self” that sets itself apart from exterior influences in a kind of bubble or armor, is itself restricting, constricting, and stagnating, effecting a kind of *anomie* (15). However, moving out of that realm causes an anxiety because the liberation from that centered self and its existence results in emotional responses that are “free-floating”, and impersonal. The theorist further argues that our lives today are dominated by the synchronic as opposed to the diachronic of modernist themes of temporality (Jameson 16). Current spaces, where memory seems to be of no consequence, take precedence over time and the

persistence of memory depicted in Salvador Dalí's famous "melting clocks" painting. Since there is no subjective "totality" due to the fracturing and fragmentation, a synchronous totality, a wholeness of being in the present cannot exist. Arguedas struggled with that fragmentation from birth due to his hybrid heritage as do millions today around the globe due to the unprecedented diasporas in the latter part of the twentieth century. While the author's writings are limited to his personal knowledge of the issues of miscegenation in Peru, his views not only pertain in the Andean region but elsewhere.

Much work has been done in the realm of cultural studies with respect to hybridity, liminality, and diaspora, overlapping terms because of their causal interplay. Hybridity typically describes the location of the person caught between two competing cultural identities because of heritage (Grossberg 91). The hybrid style that Arguedas creates in his writing reflects the Andean world as a collective of languages, histories, and traditions. Hence, Arguedas has become the signifier of that hybridity. As John Landreau notes, Arguedas, because of his hybridity and his efforts to bring liminal groups as well as the subaltern indigenous into the national political conversation, has come to embody their struggle to represent and defend themselves in a rapidly modernizing society (89).

In his discussion of the melding of the modern and the postmodern, José Joaquín Brunner comments that at the very least a center may be identified in the capitalistic world around the periphery of which marginal and dependent groups exist and with which they interact. Such interaction causes constant transformation of that cultural milieu redefining the displaced, the underserved, the fragmented, while maintaining that

hegemonic core (Brunner 52). Arguedas recognized the value of that essential and central ingredient. Indeed, his very heredity partially derived from it. However, he also understood and promulgated a new social order based on a synthesis of the inputs that over time were modified by that melding. The hegemonic center is forced to adjust as it reacts to pressures from its exterior if they are strong enough and of sufficient duration, just as the peripheral elements are transfigured as they respond to influences from that dominant location. The transformation of the central core may occur in minute alterations, and certainly may not always be to the benefit of less powerful groups, but it will occur. As new technological, artistic, economic and political structures are created, they are then appropriated in a form that is adapted to the needs, cosmivision, and customs of the unique cultures at the exterior (Brunner 52). Arguedas understood that process, but worked to ensure that the elements of the ancient Incan culture that had morphed into the Quechua indigenous lifestyle he experienced would continue to have seats at the table of change, working to participate in the formulation, as tumultuous as it may be, of a new hegemonic and heterogeneous centering.

In *Agua*, Arguedas invents a fusion of oral and written language to express as closely as he was able the dialogic reality of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Peruvian sierra, a fusion of Quechua, Spanish, and variations between the two. While he continued that blending and, in fact, worked to perfect it in both *Yawar fiesta* and *Los ríos profundos*, the author extended his semiologic demonstrations of hybridity visually, mentally, in social interaction, performance, and historical fact. Arguedas crafted novels that reveal to the Spanish reader a world with which many even in Peru may have had no experience. Life on the coastal plain was vastly different, dominated by the Spanish language, colonially-

derived feudal political policies and hierarchies. Arguedas was bent on demonstrating the hybridizations that had occurred over centuries in the sierra, a region with its own history worth preserving while meshing it with the more modern trends of the coast. His work was not an effort to recreate an Incan utopia of social reciprocity, nor was he intent on devaluing capitalism and democratic political ideals that many Peruvians espoused. He was neither a Marxist nor an Aprista. Arguedas was not a political man, but he did understand the need to reform Peruvian social and political systems to include the subaltern *indios* and those caught in the no-man's land of the *mestizo*. The author and ethnoanthropologist did not advocate *mestizismo* as the ultimate solution to the complexity of societal levels in his country. Rather, he supported a pluricultural vision that was supportive, inclusive, and respectful of all groups within Peru's borders.

In *Yawar fiesta*, Arguedas reveals the melded interplay of groups in the sierra, interactions developed over centuries of geographic proximity and economic interdependence. The sign of that fusion is the *turupukllay* and the varying perspectives of members of different social groups with respect to that traditional event. Beyond that signification, it also disables the dominant role of the political hegemony of Lima as the locals invert the social structure not only symbolically in the bull fight, but in reality with the regional power broker siding with the subaltern. Moreover, the unexpected complexity and subtleties of social interaction in the sierra town subvert its seeming simplistic, uneducated lifestyle.

Underlying all of Arguedas's messages is a profound and abiding reverence for the land in all of its natural manifestations, each of which for him was alive, as well as a deep emotional connection to the descendants of the people who originally inhabited it and

from whom he acquired that sense of awe, admiration, and veneration. Those qualities are demonstrated most lyrically in *Los ríos profundos*. Arguedas mixes visual images of imported Spanish technology dating to the Conquest indicative of the domination of nature, semiotic indicators of the violent and overarching dominance of an imported European feudalistic social and economic system, with the rugged natural beauty of the imposing mountains, and the rushing rivers that bring life to the land and its indigenous inhabitants. Imbedded in those scenes are elements representative of traditional cultural connections to nature that border on the magical. Those emotive links provide a window into the indigenous cosmovision, the lens through which that life in nature is experienced. Arguedas provides a perspective that had never been exposed to those outside the Quechua culture in writing. Meshing the Catholic Spanish influence with that indigenous experience and the problematic liminality of the *mestizo* positioning, the author exposes a much more profound vision of Peruvian society in a manner that is both brutal and tender. That combination has resulted in the general consensus of critics that *Los ríos profundos* is Arguedas's best fictional work.

Some thirty years after his imprisonment in El Sexto prison, Arguedas published *El Sexto*, his novel of that experience. Arguedas's struggle to survive and remain sane embodied in the protagonist, Gabriel, again shows the author's liminality. He is from the sierra, but he is not indigenous; is sympathetic to liberal political causes, but is neither an Aprista nor a Marxist. His is not an ideological positioning. He finds himself fitting somewhere between the two locations, recognizing the benefits and deficiencies of both. His activism is incited by a sensitivity to the individuals he encounters, rather than an overriding philosophical vision. It is perhaps that liminality that provides for the

protagonist a road away from the abject. He escapes into memories to mentally create personal distance from the horrifying inhumanity and baseness he sees in life at the prison, and in so doing, he is able to save himself. His identity is tested to the ultimate degree, but his melding of the scholarly path he had chosen, influenced by his *criollo* father, and his empathy and passion for the kindness and sincere commitment to the simple life of the Quechua, inspired by those who raised him, provide a kind of separation by which he is able to observe the prison interactions while not being subjugated by them. In this text, Arguedas reveals a new positioning, the border or liminal location that allows for the generation of new perspectives individually, but also in societal groups, a valuable site for creativity and advancement, anticipating that position later identified by Homi Bhabha.

Determined to provide a mapping of the complexity of Peruvian society in the twentieth century with the advent of international industrial interests gleaned profits at the expense of the local population, Arguedas wrote *Todas las sangres*, a novel that he believed demonstrated the many different social and political factions in play. Anthropologists were critical of the work because it was more intuitive than research based, but Arguedas defended it because it was life in the sierra as he had experienced it. While the characters are too stereotyped, in some cases seeming almost caricatures of the personality he attempts to delineate, the novel does bring to the fore the many different interests vying for power in the region. Still, Arguedas does accomplish his goal in the sense that each position demonstrates a much greater fusion of social influences and needs than the binary positioning that outsiders might expect. Again, he provides a

window into a complex and nuanced world that requires inclusion and respect for each participatory group in order to develop a social system that is just and fair to all.

While Arguedas breaks with the linear narrative style that he uses in his other texts to jump to a very postmodern meshing of genres in *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*, the sociopolitical themes he pursues do not change. Perhaps, however, because *Todas las sangres* was not well received, a sense of urgency to put before his readers factors that he recognized as destructive to Peruvian culture and society creates an energy bordering on anger, a passion that pervades the novel, which was published posthumously. It is a very personal novel in terms of the diary entries, which allow Arguedas to be a character in the novel. The metafictional approach permits Arguedas to self-consciously foreground the narrative segments of the text, calling into question the real and the fictive, a kind of magical realism technique that creates a vortex of influences that combine in ways that tend to overwhelm the reader. That is exactly Arguedas's intent. Life in Chimbote in the 1950s and 60s, the scene of the novel, was, in actuality, that kind of vortex. Not only does he describe the commercial exploitation of the anchovy market, but he draws an analogy to the process of fragmentation of traditional values resulting from greed and degenerate behaviors that are shockingly disturbing. Fortunately, Arguedas employs parody at various points to allow the reader some relief through levity that ameliorates, if only temporarily, the painful scenario. Through comedic allusions, which result in the inversion of power structures, arise from the author's utilization of the carnivalesque in combination with the intertextual inclusion of ancient pre-Incan mythology in ways that are so subtle that only those most aware of Quechua mythology, folktales, astronomical rendition, and cosmovision would detect them. The inclusion of those references suggests

that the ancient culture can and must continue to contribute its unique perspective to the unusual fusion of cultures that make up contemporary Peru. Like the ubiquitous and enduring foxes of the title, the indigenous peoples of the region persevere, defying every effort at extinction. Hence, moving forward in “a time of *bricolaje* in which diverse epochs and cultures formerly distant now are mixed” requires a profound understanding of why Latin America is “this mixture of heterogeneous memories and truncated innovations” (Canclini 345).

José María Arguedas had a tremendous following during his lifetime. As a professor, he worked to instill in his students a love for their Peruvian heritage which they embraced. While his life met an abrupt end, his influence has continually grown since the date when he shot himself in his office at the University of San Marcos in 1969. He may well be one of the most influential authors in Peru today, years after his death, due to the cultural values and awareness he generated through his writing.

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