Tricontinental Modernities: Vargas Llosa's Late Turn against Imperialism in *El sueño del celta*

NICHOLAS BIRNS
EUGENE LANG COLLEGE, THE NEW SCHOOL

1. Revising the Celtic

In its mixture of the personal and the political, its concentration on an individual making difficult moral choices, and its wide historical lens, Mario Vargas Llosa's *El sueño del celta* (2010), published only weeks after he garnered that year's Nobel Prize for Literature, is reminiscent of many of his earlier novels. I wish to contend that, even more, it is an effective sequel to his 1981 novel *La guerra del fin del mundo*, not only treating many of the same themes but also providing a contrast between Vargas Llosa in the wake of his disillusionment with left-wing radicalism and the Peruvian writer after more or less thirty years being on the center-right. Whereas the Brazil-set novel seemed aimed at the errors of leftist utopianism, the more recent work indicts imperialism in Africa, Latin America, and Europe. This essay will show how this "tricontinental" agenda is complemented by a "modernity" that, for Vargas Llosa, is both ideological and stylistic.

The Celt of *El sueño del celta* is Roger Casement, the British government official, imperial muckraker, and, ultimately, committed Irish nationalist revolutionary. But Casement is not the first Celt (a category that includes, among others, both the Scots and the Irish) in Vargas Llosa's oeuvre. Galileo Gall, the chronologically inclined anarchist in *La guerra del fin del mundo* was a Scotsman as well. Furthermore, Gall was originally intended to be, like Casement, an Irishman, only, as Efraín Kristal points out, becoming a Scotsman in the "final version" (125). Clearly, Vargas Llosa meant to point to the Celtic aspects of the character and to link his political reformism with some inherent qualities of Gall as Celt. He does the same with Casement. Gall was mocked as just the sort of superficial enthusiast attracted by revolutionary unrest. Casement, though hardly unequivocally lauded, is seen as a complex individual worthy of thought and serious consideration. This, in itself, measures the distance between the Vargas Llosa of 1981 and of 2010.[1]

One assumes that Vargas Llosa images the Celt principally through the prism of the thought of Matthew Arnold. The name of Vargas Llosa's biweekly column, *Piedra de toque*, is a direct translation of the "touchstones" that were Arnold's favored approach in appreciating great literary texts, and Vargas Llosa's explicit agenda—to preserve the best of Western culture in a time of tumultuous change and reassessment—is indeed very Arnoldian. Arnold was very aware of the fact that, though the English were the numerically and culturally dominant race in the kingdom of Great Britain, the Celtic-speaking peoples were an important and under-addressed part of the cultural mix. Arnold's vision of the Celtic was that of the sensitive soul, the gifted and inspired poet. Speaking of the early medieval Welsh bard Taliesin, Arnold says, "the Welshman shows much more fire and imagination than the Anglo-Saxon" (53). We are not talking here about individual cases—where an individual Welshman may, in a given situation, show more imaginative fire than an individual Anglo-Saxon; in another situation involving two different individuals, the result would be obverse.

Arnold was saying the Welshman as a category has more imaginative fire. In our terms, he was being racially essentialist. But he was being so in order to give measured praise to the Celt, to say that at least a bit of Celtic irrationalism and frenzy could elevate the plodding Anglo-Saxon out of his practical mire.

Arnold's position was not that far from that of the Uruguayan intellectual José Enrique Rodó, who, in *Ariel* (1900), contrasted the soaring, spiritual Ariels of Latin America with the coarse, commercial Calibans of North America. The values Rodó ascribed to Latinity were not far from those that Arnold ascribed to Celticity, but there were differences. Rodó was himself a Spanish American. Arnold was a sturdy Saxon, in British ethnic terms the total opposite of an introverted Celt. Rodó was a thoroughgoing anti-commercialist and aestheticist, while Arnold only wanted just enough anti-commercialism and aestheticism to turn the English ruling class in a more disciplined and culturally attuned direction. But Arnold's paradigm, like Rodó's, does explain the positive qualities Vargas Llosa might find in Casement: not only his sense of justice and curiosity about others, but also the quasi-religious, subtly mystical substrate behind his political motivation. In *La guerra*, this mystical substrate is lampooned in the person of Galileo Gall. In *El sueño,* it is given measured, if hardly unadulterated, respect. I will contend that this is symptomatic not just of an enlarged attitude towards the Celtic, but also of a fundamental consideration of some of the axiomatic postulates of the second half of Vargas Llosa's career—that in which he has been largely associated with free-market economic positions and a critique of leftist authoritarianism.

2. Vargas Llosa, Anti-Imperialist?

Even as his Nobel Prize win was generally well received in the worldwide center-right media, given the perception of him as an anti-collectivist neoliberal, his newest work, *El sueño del celta*, was taking some positions not immediately associated with the center-right. Vargas Llosa condemns British imperialism in Ireland and European (most immediately Belgian) imperialism in Africa through the career of Roger Casement. In addition, his depiction of the rubber industry in the Amazon is excoriating. There is no lionization of the entrepreneur here. In his portrait of the Peruvian rubber tycoon Julio César Arana, Vargas Llosa moves beyond the comparative reticence about businessmen in his fiction noted by Jean O'Bryan Knight to a portrait no less demonological than that found in many naturalist novels on the early twentieth century; indeed, those novelists' Darwinian respect for the energy of the capitalist grandee is absent from Vargas Llosa's calm, matter-of-fact, yet acridly negative indictment. If Vargas Llosa were reflexively friendly to the entrepreneur above all else, he might well have found grounds to paint a positive or at least mitigating portrait of Arana: as a self-made man, and as an advocate of Peruvian nationalism with respect to the Amazon basin and of Peru's borders with Brazil and Colombia. Vargas Llosa, though, sees Arana, in consonance with the traditional portrayal, as the brutal oppressor: there is no post-progressive revisionism nor attempt to upend the consensus. The same deeds and assumptions that scandalized the world press in 1910 continue to scandalize Vargas Llosa a century later:

> Era evidente que Zumaeta jamás diría la verdad, negaría todo, repetiría los argumentos con que la Compañía de Arana había respondido de Londres a la críticas de los periódicos. Había, tal vez, ocasionales excesos cometidos por individuos intemperantes, pero no era política de la Peruvian Amazon Company torturar, esclavizar ni menos matar a los indígenas. (74)

It is just that tone of plausible deniability on the part of Arana and his company that Vargas Llosa here satirizes merely through saying it. Equally, the authorial perspective will enunciate, seemingly with the same descriptiveness, events or attitudes seen from Roger's viewpoint and they will be ambivalent. Not only is this what one would not expect from a narrowly ideological construction of the latter half of Vargas Llosa's career, but it would have been unremarkable, if necessarily normatively accomplished, from any other hand. What is notable about this critique is not its striking originality with respect to Arana, but that Vargas Llosa is throwing his weight behind it.

The Amazon section is the point of transition between the two halves of Casement's public career, the one as as responsible, if liberal, civil servant warning his British superiors about the irregularities in the Congo, the other as antinomian Irish rebel. Whereas in *La guerra* Vargas Llosa had examined the dusty northeast of Brazil, here he looks at the Amazon—a geographical and psychological territory that he had explored in such books as the early *La casa verde,* sustained in the 1970s with the (given its relatively minor heft) surprisingly pivotal *Pantaleón y las visitadoras*, and continued in the 1980s with *El hablador*. Vargas Llosa has frequently been critical of the automatic equation of the interior, and its indigenous associations, with Peruvian identity. Yet he has always kept, as it were, an open line of communication with such ideas, extending to his citation, in his Nobel Prize speech, of Peru's greatest indigenist writer, José Maria Arguedas, and his styling Peru the country of "todas las sangres." Though this promotes an idea of *mestizaje*, and a shying-away from the idea that only indigenous Peruvians are authentic or genuine, it still does acknowledge indigenous descent and culture as a principal component of Peruvian identity. In the Amazon section of *El sueño del celta,* Vargas Llosa reminds us that being a democrat does not preclude him from staking his own claim to the imperative of the Peruvian author to advocate the equitable treatment of the resources, human and natural, of the Amazon basin. Indeed, Vargas Llosa would state that it would be counterintuitive to believe only those more in sympathy with authoritarian or at least collectivist or conformist movements would be able to feel this solidarity. Whereas in other books Vargas Llosa can manipulate ideas of indigenous identity in order to point out gas and hypocrisies in leftwing rhetoric (as Ignacio López-Calvo has pointed out), here he is, in his posture and his moral priorities, being as straightforward as he can possibly be. Casement's testimony with respect to Arana's abuses, and his exposure of the injustice of Belgian rule in the Congo, underscores a common thread. There are parts of a generalized anti-colonialism prevalent in the book, a disgust at, and aversion towards, those who would seek to dominate and expropriate other peoples.

It might be argued that, in the twenty-first century, taking these positions is like being against forest fires (especially given how paradigmatic the Belgian Congo episode became in the English-speaking world after Adam Hochschild's book on the subject, which, in the 1990s, crucially raised Anglophone awareness of the Congo atrocities of a century earlier), and that all Vargas Llosa is doing is endorsing a blandly centrist consensus. As Eloy Urroz points out, Casement's critique of Arana is conducted in tones reminiscent of Karl Popper's advocacy of an open society, and thus quite close to Vargas Llosa's own biographical self. Vargas Llosa simply may be setting up straw men for attack here. Yet American conservatives have attacked President Obama for inheriting the "anti-colonialist" mentality of his Kenyan forebears; the 1980s saw a wave of 'Raj nostalgia' for British rule in India, whereas the 1990s and early 2000s saw a whole host of journalistic attempts to claim, for example, that Africa was better off under European rule. Such commentators as Niall

Ferguson and Michael Gove (see Penny) sought to vindicate the British Empire as a crucial tutorial precedent for post-September 11 America in a way that commanded a sizable consensus from roughly 2001 to 2005. The US conservative figure Newt Gingrich, in his doctoral dissertation, condemned Belgian colonization of the Congo in Casement's time, but wondered if the later, less arbitrary period of Belgian rule played a "painful but positive function in disrupting traditional society" (see Keating n.p.). Even American writers ostensibly on the left spoke of how, in the early 2000s, "Sierra Leone longed to be recolonized" (Bergner 22). The Congo, whose suffering is plumbed by Casement, could hardly long to be re-colonized. Nor is the exposure of the trauma of the Congo simply a plea—as some have read Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as being—for a more benign British colonialism elsewhere. Vargas Llosa clearly criticizes all colonialism, formal and otherwise, as inhumane and unenlightened. In seeing anti-colonialism as a baseline for modern individuality and civil society, Vargas Llosa is notably differentiating himself from much of the international Right, which was unwilling to renounce empire or to see it as automatically evil. Vargas Llosa is not nostalgic for the mantle of political legitimacy given to Western civilization's global dominance by ideas of Empire.

This dynamic was seen in the review of the English translation, *The Dream of the Celt*, by Liesl Schillinger in *The New York Times* on June 24, 2012. Historically, *The New York Times* had played a major and positive role in Vargas Llosa's reception in North America. William Kennedy's review of *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter* in 1982 gave Vargas Llosa a brand name among US general readers distinguished from that of García Márquez; Robert Stone's 1984 review of *The War of the End of the World* introduced this public to Vargas Llosa's break from the left. Vargas Llosa's subsequent books tended not only to be well reviewed in the *Times*, but also, as an especial signal of regard, to be reviewed by prominent writers who were frequent contributors to the newspaper. Individual books had received tepid notices, but novels clearly in Vargas Llosa's main sequence such as *The Feast of the Goat* continued to be received appreciatively. That Schillinger was lukewarm about the Casement book was notable. Schillinger describes Casement's Irish nationalist end as "ignominious and indicated that it has made him 'all but forgotten'" (BR6). David Landes perspicuously addressed this rather bald statement in the letters column of the July 8, 2012 issue, stating that W. G. Sebald had included a significant discussion of Casement in *The Rings of Saturn*. It is fascinating that Vargas Llosa's right to address this material was seemingly somehow questioned by the review, as well as a subsequent review by Colm Toibín in *The London Review of Books*. The interest, broadly speaking, in Northern European history parallels than of Jorge Volpi, Roberto Bolaño, Andrés Neuman, and peninsular writers such as Javier Marís or Julián Ríos, and is a clear statement against the provincialization of Spanish-language writing to areas literally Spanish or Latin American, an assertion of its right to assume a world agenda just as Anglophone literature so often has. But Schillinger's resistance shows that Vargas Llosa has a subaltern or at least a distinctly anti-imperialist aspect. In a way going to this material (again analogous to Bolaño) operates to pierce the provincialism of only writing about Latin America, in another sense (redoubled by the Amazonia section of the Vargas Llosa novel).

Vargas Llosa is viewing world history in the twentieth century from a Latin American perspective, ventilating the cosmopolitan, world-girdling perspective urged by such critics as Oscar Guardiola Rivera. And, even more basically, he is half-sympathetic to Casement out of his aversion to imperialism; that Casement did stray in a misguided direction after that might parallel cases of leftist intellectuals of Vargas Llosa's own generation whose protests against dictatorships and corruption went astray when it turned into a championship of

Communism or other illiberal ideologies. Schillinger failed to ask: why is this Nobel Prize winner and champion of democracy interested in Casement? A writer of the stature of Vargas Llosa surely deserves the benefit of the doubt, asks to be ascribed his own highly conscious reasons for doing something seemingly out of synch with what the reviewer or reading public expects of him. What the critic also perhaps missed is Vargas Llosa's masterful ability to be at once objective and empathetic about a character without endorsing that character's ideology at all. Roberto Bolaño expresses this winningly when he speaks of "the kindness and compassion—one might almost say empathy—that Vargas Llosa shows his own characters" (324). What Bolaño perceives here is that Vargas Llosa's insight into his characters does not mean an endorsement of their agendas. His supreme skill as a novelist is that he lets us see, from inside, the characters of people very different from him in every way. It is interesting here that the name Casement, as Vargas Llosa surely knew, is an archaic word for window in English. Vargas Llosa lets us see Casement as if through a window, which again may signifies understanding but not endorsement.

Casement, though, is not someone wholly other, but someone with whom Vargas Llosa can go part of the way; and the pathos of the novel partially stems from the branching-off of this putative convergence. Here, Vargas Llosa is underscoring something that has been true in his work at least since the problematic was first raised in *La guerra del fin del mundo*. Vargas Llosa's critique of the Conselheiro's insurgency was partially because of its revolutionary nature, partially because of its nostalgia—its yearning for the overthrow of modernity and its general recoil against modernity. Vargas Llosa is fundamentally in favor of modernity; indeed he has seen his liberalism as the most contemporary and bracing form of modernity, and totalitarian ideologies as atavistic lures back into the compliance, the renunciation of autonomy, latent into what Immanuel Kant termed the "self-incurred tutelage" of the pre-modern past. Vargas Llosa necessarily thinks certain wrong turns, such as Nazism and Communism, dominated the twentieth century. Yet he does not see modernity itself as a wrong turn. And, from the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and the acknowledgment by the very idea of League of Nations' mandates of eventual independence for European colonies, to the very anti-colonial example set by the United States and by Latin American republics themselves, anti-colonialism has been a part of modernity. It has occasionally been exploited by totalitarian ideologies, such as when Germany and later the Soviet Union sought to gain advantage for themselves in British and French colonies, but as a concept it has been in the mainstream of democratic modernity. Vargas Llosa is a Peruvian who, whatever his residential location, cares deeply about the condition and future of his country. Necessarily, this means that he accepts the republican and anti-colonial, albeit not anti-Eurocentric, past of Peru. In *El hablador*, he even endorses the authenticity of indigenous people, even though he does this as much to pierce trendy-left illusions about them as to be strongly polemical on their behalf. Vargas Llosa is above all a man of the Americas who accepts the hemisphere's avowed—if, again, not always fulfilled—ideals of democracy and of cultural mixture.

Nonetheless, going into this novel, one might not necessarily expect Vargas Llosa to feature as hero Roger Casement, an Irish homosexual who was distinguished principally for his protests against colonialism in Africa, against the exploitation of indigenous peasants in the Americas, and for his Irish nationalism. This last is perhaps the most surprising for the following reasons. Firstly, Vargas Llosa is known to be an Anglophile who has spent much of his life in London and has been embraced by the British intellectual establishment and by thinkers of the Conservative party, including Margaret Thatcher. The expectation that Vargas Llosa would be reflexively Anglophile was behind Schillinger's surprise at Vargas

Llosa's relatively positive treatment of Casement, and is so striking as to merit examination. Secondly, Vargas Llosa, as he has opposed Basque and Catalan nationalism in his adopted Spain, would be assumed not to be enthusiastic about nationalism of the Celtic fringe within the British Isles, and, though the circumstances were very different, he might see the Irish nationalism of a hundred years ago as an ancestor of the contemporary Scottish and Welsh nationalism he would perhaps see as an analogue to Catalan and Basque nationalism in Spain. (Arnold would have been surprised, and no doubt appalled, to see his insistence on Celtic cultural difference in the nineteenth century mutate into an explicitly independence-minded nationalism in the twenty-first). Vargas Llosa, in general, has not been an enthusiast of countries breaking up or of regions pursuing a liberationist agenda. One is not surprised, in a September 7, 2008 *Piedra de toque* column, to find him condemning as a ruse the Russian insistence that the aspirations for autonomy of South Ossetia and Abkhazia justified the Russian invasion of Georgia. On the other hand, Vargas Llosa was far less enthusiastic than most of his general political disposition for the liberation of Kosovo from Serbia begun by NATO's intervention in the late 1990s, which in his Georgia article he himself posits as the obvious analogue. Whereas, following the breakup of the Soviet Union, many intellectuals advocated break-ups of any country with regional or ethnic fissures, Vargas Llosa tended to believe that, when possible, nations already constituted should try to stay together. Ireland in the 1900s was a different case from all of these, perhaps only Kosovo being a justifiable analogy. But *El sueño del celta* reveals what must be assessed at the very least to be Vargas Llosa's non-judgmental attitude about Irish independence. Thirdly, Vargas Llosa is not often associated with endorsements of the dreamer and the utopian. Moreover, he reiterates, throughout *El sueño*, his sense that the revolutionary zeal of Irish nationalism has not only a manifestly Catholic tinge, but also an affectively mystical component.

Another exception to the "normal" ideological allegiances of contemporary conservatism is Vargas Llosa's overt skepticism towards organized religion, especially Catholicism. He has presented himself as above all a rationalist. Yet, while he certainly wants the reader to know the religious sources and mystical animation of Casement and his comrades, Vargas Llosa seems to see it as inherently neither an asset nor liability. It is simply a descriptive aspect of that which makes them who they are.

3. Author and Characters

Indeed, as so often happens in his fiction, Vargas Llosa's mastery of narrative technique, his excellence as a pure storyteller, often shrouds the ideological valence of his fiction. We are so engrossed in the tale we forget about the motives of the teller. For Vargas Llosa, the question of the author's editorial role in fiction has been one of persistent interest. His two major books of literary criticism on writers outside the Spanish language (these exemplars presumably providing a more disinterested relationships than other subjects of his criticism such as Juan Carlos Onetti, José María Arguedas, and Gabriel García Márquez), those on Victor Hugo and Gustave Flaubert, present very different models. Hugo represents the opinionated, optimistic social reformer with no compunction about letting the reader know what his opinion was and what he thought would happen in society. As Vargas Llosa puts it of Flaubert in *The Temptation of the Impossible*, "He knows everything and has a compulsive need to tell it all" (12). Flaubert epitomizes the taut, disciplined aesthete, determined to present at most an inferential sneer about the shortcomings of his characters, presented as objectively as possible in sculpted, harnessed prose. Vargas Llosa has made clear that he himself, as a novelist, is divided between these two viewpoints, and this division

can be seen in the formal structuring of *El sueño del celta*. The odd-numbered chapters are told in real time and lead up to the immediate movement of Casement's execution. The even-numbered chapters are told retrospectively and tell Casement's life story, his sojourns in Africa and Amazonia, his growing participation in the Irish revolutionary movement. This structure, of two temporal layers interacting in coordinated double spirals throughout the book, is familiar to readers of Vargas Llosa (e.g. *La tía Julia* and, most successfully, in *La fiesta del chivo*). But in *El sueño del celta*, the alternating narrative strands overtly take on dimensions of the Flaubert-Hugo split, the execution narrative being Flaubertian, the life story being Hugoesque.

Both Flaubert and Hugo are writers fundamentally important to Vargas Llosa. His devoting one lengthy critical book to each of them is not just an act of homage to masters the Peruvian writer enjoys and whose delectation he wishes to share with the reader, but a tacit excavation of the sources of certain of his literary texts and attitudes. That Hugo and Flaubert are so far apart—one a garrulous, melodramatic social activist, the other a sardonic, refined cultivator of form and style—suggests that Vargas Llosa's juxtaposition of them is a symptom of his vast ambitions in two very different modes: the inclusive and the selective. One can, indeed, explicate the idea of "tricontinental modernity" in *El sueño del celta* by stating that the tricontinental aspects are Hugoesque, and(?) the modernity is Flaubertian. This illustrates that modernity for Vargas Llosa is not just ideological, but also stylistic. As he says of Flaubert in *Perpetual Orgy,* "in fiction . . . everything depends essentially on form, the deciding factor in determining whether a subject is beautiful or ugly, true or false, and proclaim that the novelist must be above all an artist, a tireless and incorruptible aspects of style" (218). Style for Flaubert is above all *style indirect libre*, the narration of what goes on in a character's mind, a narration that is limited, not omniscient, but is related in the third person, not the first, providing both specificity and objectivity, partiality and a honed, focused lens. Vargas Llosa describes Flaubert's *style indirect libre* as "the key to the suppleness of his style, the harmonious conjunction of different perspectives that enable him to structure the fictitious reality oven several planes at once" (*Perpetual Orgy* 224).

Vargas Llosa, as a writer, is very deft in *using* the Hugo-Flaubert difference to his advantage. Once the reader knows the writer *can* editorialize or has an editorial viewpoint, the disciple holding-back of the objective technique itself is a weapon and speaks volumes. Vargas Llosa tends to hold back when he wishes to conceal any ideological viewpoint and present the topic or scene as a phenomenon in itself, leaving the reader to guess what attitudes are there, for, since we have seen his interventive side, we know there are attitudes. This ostensible tactical neutrality often can serve to direct the reader's admiration to characters whom at first we might see as satiric targets. This largely occurs in *El paraíso en la otra esquina* where, by the book's end, it is less the heedlessness of Flora Tristán that we respond to, and more the confidence and vigor of her beliefs, seen as analogous to the indisputably great art of her grandson Gauguin. Moreover, Vargas Llosa, in his fiction, may simply be different than in his discursive essays, so much so that a reader of his fiction alone would not necessarily know his positions on current economics or politics. It might be that Vargas Llosa's ability to refrain from editorializing, or not to let his socio-economic interests compromise his pure storytelling skills is crucial to the formal autonomy of fiction. But it also gives readers substantial independence in making their own assessment. This has occurred in the cases where *La guerra del fin del mundo* is read as an affirmative portrait of how inspirational Latin American peasant revolutionaries—for instance by no less than Slavoj Žižek, who calls the Conselheiro's redoubt of Canudos "a utopian space without money,

property, taxes, and marriage" (82). This is a reading as far from the author's evident intention as was Romantic Satanism with respect to *Paradise Lost*. It is a reading, though, that the textual autonomy of Vargas Llosa's novel makes possible, if not advisable.

The fact that this can be done suggests that Vargas Llosa deliberately stays away from absolutes in his fiction, that his idea of the "total novel," in ways similar to the thought of Mikhail Bakhtin, precludes the hegemony of any ideological viewpoint, even that viewpoint which we "know" the author has, even that viewpoint which the author may wish to establish. The reader might note, for instance, that Vargas Llosa's two great novels against dictators were both against dictators of the right, Manuel Odría and Rafael Trujillo. And here he is at the very least not contemptuous of the anti-colonialist Casement. Hugo's inclusiveness, the way he embodies the "innate capacity of the novel to grow, to proliferate, and to endure" (*Temptation of the Impossible* 12) permits Vargas Llosa to stretch his sympathies to characters with whom he does wholly agree. But this is complemented by the Flaubertian way in which the author restrains his omniscience to let us see events as far as possible through the prism of Roger's point of-view. This not only gives his character its own psychological integrity; it also fosters a principle of selectivity, of design, that does not let experience simply spill out on the reader, but presents us with a calculated, highly deliberate and self-conscious structure. Vargas Llosa's simultaneous grasp of content and form enables him to write novels of ideas and politics that are nonetheless not prescriptive.

4. Tricontinentalism

Post-colonial theorists such as Robert Young have spoken of the 'tricontinental' sources of post-colonial thought, the sense, reflected for instance in the left-consensus politics of the Cold War-era Nonaligned Movement, that Asia, Africa, and Latin America had a common anti-colonial grievance. Ironically, given Vargas Llosa's fierce and valorous denunciation of the Castro regime, the term "tricontinentalism" is adapted by Young from the Tricontinental Conference held in Havana.[2]

Yet, all ideological differences aside, Vargas Llosa's vision of the insurgent colonial world is not that far from those of 1960s "nonaligned" radicals. Vargas Llosa, in *El sueño del celta*, replaces Asia with the "internal colonialism" of the Celtic fringe. But the idea of three continents remains. There is Africa in its exploitation by the Europeans—particularly as Casement mirrors the steps of Joseph Conrad's Marlow in the Belgian Congo, and Conrad indeed is depicted in the book as a friend and colleague of Casement. There is South America and the capitalist expropriation of the Amazon rubber barons in Putumayo, as epitomized by Arana. And there is Europe, which Vargas Llosa recognizes at the very least as a continent whose borders and political forms are not conclusively settled. Here, Casement already does the work for his historiographic reanimator, writing an article called "El Putumayo irlandés" about "la pobreza y primitivismo de los pescadores de Connemara" (385). Both Casement's original title and Vargas Llosa's reiteration of it are meant to be provocative, to remind the reader that Europe can also be disenfranchised; that though Europe in this time possesses overwhelming privilege with respect to the rest of the world, this privilege is hardly equally distributed among its peoples. Conrad, too, wrote about Europe, South America (in *Nostromo*), and certainly Africa and Asia.

The difference between the two writers, indeed, principally lies in the fact that Vargas Llosa has not written much about Asia. There is Fushía in *La casa verde*, and most notoriously the character of Fukuda in *Travesuras de la niña mala*. But Asia is conspicuously absent not only from Vargas Llosa's revised tricontinentalism in *El sueño*, but also from the

global canvas of his work in general. Why is this? Vargas Llosa certainly lacked the ties, both generated partially in official diplomatic roles, that Pablo Neruda or Octavio Paz had with Asia. More generally—and despite the rather extensive Chinese and Japanese migration to Peru, and notwithstanding Peru's status as a Pacific nation—Vargas Llosa, in his Nobel Prize speech, credits Africa as being a contributor to Peruvian cultural identity "con su reciedumbre, su música y su efervescente imaginación (n.p.)." He makes no such mention of Asia, mentioning only the "sátrapas uniformados" of Myanmar, leading, however justifiable in his denunciation of the unjust Burmese regime, to visions of Oriental despotism in the Euro-Marxist sense as a synecdoche for all that is Asia. Nor does he credit the Islamic world, even though he says that Peru gets its access to Africa not through slavery and the Middle Passage, those malign trade winds whose proliferation touched even the Pacific that was not their primary arena, but—through Spain! Whereas most, including Vargas Llosa's great contemporary Juan Goytisolo, would mention Islam and the Arab world, not sub-Saharan Africa as a key influence on Spanish culture, Vargas Llosa not only stresses Africa but acts as if not just some but all African influences on the Latin American continent had been routed through Spain.

Why this foregrounding of Africa, over and above the neglect of Asia and Islam? The most obvious answer is that Vargas Llosa had just completed a novel in which Africa played a key role and in which the political interrelationship between Europe and Africa, and the resemblances of structure between these struggle for human dignity in Latin America and that in Africa, were prominent. The tricontinental relationship adumbrated in the Nobel Prize speech is similar to that in *El sueño*. It may seem a supernumerary question to ask why Asia seems excluded from this vision, just as it would be supernumerary to ask why Asia was included in Conrad's vision or of that of Vargas Llosa's fellow twenty-first century Western Hemisphere laureate, V. S. Naipaul. On the other hand, the presence of Africa in Vargas Llosa's revised tricontinentalism is striking enough to make these questions at least more peripherally plausible.

When one speaks of the post-colonial world, it is Asia that has been paradigmatic. This is true not only in the narrow world of North American academia where the canonicity of the post-colonial was propagated by South Asian academics largely writing on the nature and aftermath of the British colonization of India. It is also true in how the post-1945 independence of Asian nations was what made Latin America part of "the Third World," and provided a set of countries whose political circumstances were comparable to those of Latin America, provided a relationship of similarity which went beyond the facile comparison to the far stronger United States as sister inter-American republics. Moreover, like Latin America, Asian countries had a distinguished pre-European cultural past which, in forms ranging from the healthy to the less healthy, cross-fertilized with European governmental models. It was this resemblance that Octavio Paz solicited during his Indian years. Moreover, much of Latin American radicalism in Vargas Llosa's early decades defined itself against United States intervention in Asia, in Korea or, more visibly, in Vietnam. There was also, as Vargas Llosa states in his the Nobel speech, the misplaced enthusiasm of some of the Latin American left for the "aquelarre sanguinario de la revolución cultural china" (n.p.). Asia was thus a very visible issue in world politics during the novelist's formative years.

On the other hand, the cultural and economic resources that would make fruitful active cultural exchange seemed thinner on the ground in Africa than in Asia. This gap was certainly not the result of the presence or absence of immediate linguistic connections. Whereas Portuguese-speaking intellectuals had connections with Africa and, to a lesser

extent, Asia, given Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Goa, Timor-Leste, and Macao, for Spanish-speakers given the loss of the Philippines in 1898 to another colonial overlord, the late and thin nature of Spanish colonization in the Rio de Oro (later the Spanish Sahara) and Equatorial Guinea, connections to these continents would come far more from perceived political and developmental affinities.

Whereas Vargas Llosa, at least at the height of the euphoria of global neoliberalism in the late 1990s and early 2000s, lauded the free-market orientation of Asian "tigers" such as Singapore, free-market utopias in Africa, though occasionally sighted as in Côte d'Ivoire in the early 1980s, were to remain rather phantasmal during Vargas Llosa's later years. The givens of the Casement story, and of the tricontinental resemblance between Congo/Amazonia/Ireland it presented, is the baseline for explaining the absence of Asia. The admission of Africa in Peruvian national discourse has a long heritage, going back to the tagline associated with the great Ricardo Palma, "el que no tiene de inga tiene de mandinga." Africa is seen by Vargas Llosa as contributing to the cultural brew fostered by *mestizaje*, while Asia is still othered, seen as epigenous, inessential. In turn, the absence of Asia may have to do simply with Vargas Llosa's abhorrence of his rival in the 1990 elections, the Japanese-Peruvian Alberto Fujimori, and the writer's awareness that Fujimori's daughter Keiko loomed as a potential presidential candidate in Peru even as he spoke.

There may also be factors specific to Peru and to Vargas Llosa's generational identity. On the Islamic side, there simply has not been the migration from the Arab world to Peru that has occurred in Argentina, Brazil, and even parts of Central America, and what has occurred is more Christian (e.g. Lebanese) than Muslim, as Leyla Bartet and Farid Kahhat assert.[3] The same is not the case of Chinese and Japanese migration—not only the Fujimori family but influential figures such as the novelists Siu Kam Wen and Carlos Yushimito, the poet José Watanabe and, Vargas Llosa's strong supporter, the short-story writer Fernando Iwasaki, the expatriate academic Eugenio Chang Rodríguez, the political commentator Martín Tanaka, and the literary journalist and editor Julio Villanueva Chang, are figures of global renown who testify to this. But, as Jeffrey Middents puts it, "the small but significant presence of Africa- and Asian-Peruvians is generally elided in the *criollo*/campesino dichotomy" (320). Even though Vargas Llosa, unlike the indigenist writers of the early twentieth century, does not sentimentalize this dichotomy, his sense of Peru remains still largely within it. Necessarily, African Peruvians arrived to Peru much earlier, before independence, and, as the scholarship of Tanya Maria Golash-Boza and the poetry and music of Nicomedes Santa Cruz has demonstrated, became an integral part of the national imaginary from the beginning. Asian Peruvians, whose advent only occurred in the late nineteenth century, were necessarily additions to the national ethnic compact. Does an original multiracialism, acknowledged as such (unlike the officially promulgated whites-only identities of comparable settler colonies such as the US and Australia) exclude certain identities? Certainly, articulation of United States and Australian identities could hardly exclude migrants whose ancestors came between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries as essential parts of national identities. Vargas Llosa's successor as leading Peruvian novelist in the next generation, Alonso Cueto, indeed did just this in a lecture given in London in June 2012 where he noted the many "Europeans, Africans, and Asians" who have in the past arrived on Peru's shores. When an Asian Peruvian institution such as the journal *Revista Oriental* has existed for nearly eighty years, one would assume that people of this background cannot be seen as recent add-ons to a national identity. The tendency to exclude them may be there vestigially, but such exclusion is mocked by today's demographic

realities. Vargas Llosa's omission of Asia as a source is thus not automatic; it is worthy of comment, even if not necessarily meant to be excluding or invidious.

But his inclusion of Africa in both the Nobel speech and the Casement novel is nonetheless notable, and makes his vision of the world not just an enhanced Eurocentrism but also a genuine, if revised, tricontinentalism. He is demurring from the hard-Eurocentrist position of neocolonial revivalists, the position taken by writers such as Ferguson that only Europe has provided the ideas and models required to assure a viable civilization. Nor, though, is he urging what Young styles a "Marxist tricontinentalism" that stresses a "politics of the subaltern, that is all constituencies of the oppressed, disadvantaged, and exploited of the earth" (15). This would basically be a simple Third Worldism that rejects Europe, that does not understand how European culture animates even a critique of Europe, and, furthermore, as Casement's career shows, that Europe is not a monolith, it is divided by nationalist and religious difference, and is in itself a cauldron of identities and not simply a grid that can be projected over the identities of other continents. Vargas Llosa has argued that it is foolish for Latin Americans to think their cultural pedigree is other than primarily Western. On the other hand, he has never concealed the repressions and savageries operating within, as well as outside, Western civilization. The Irish struggle for liberation, though mutilated by the violence and insensate hostility Vargas Llosa elsewhere decries in Western Hemisphere revolutionary movements, also stems from the sort of dispossession and oppression that, whether in Europe or the Americas, Vargas Llosa does not countenance. Indeed, Edward W. Said explicitly invoked the Irish model as part of his anti-colonial paradigm, and scholars such as Joseph Lennon have carved out a field of Irish postcolonialism that is explicitly anti-Eurocentric. Although one could construct alternate scenarios—for instance, concluding that Vargas Llosa was friendly towards Ireland because of the seeming early 2000s free-market success of the "Celtic Tiger"--Vargas Llosa's revised tricontinentalism is not just a third position that splits the difference between Eurocentrism and anti-colonialism. It is a notable hybrid that, however closely yoked to the writer's own imaginings, provides a way out of the polemical cul-de-sac surrounding discourses of Europe and the colonial. Revised tricontinentalism stands between Europe and anti-Europe; carving out an idiosyncratic posture that however historically anchored is very much the writers own, and a symptom of his containing and adamant independence of mind.

5. Vargas Llosa, Republican

Vargas Llosa's oeuvre, collectively taken, chronicles the incredible change that has occurred in Latin America over the past century, change that the Congo section of this novel reminds us has occurred in Africa as well, even if the continuities of human suffering are all too evident. What is less frequently realized is how much Europe has changed over the past centuries, culturally and even cartographically. Looking back to the beginning of the twentieth century, we see that not only were many of today's central and eastern European countries not independent or just emerging, but that two well-known nations of western Europe, Ireland and Norway, were still attached to the crown of another land. Furthermore, as A. J. P. Taylor put it, "before the war, there has been only one republic in Europe, France or, counting Switzerland and Portugal after 1908 (sic), three" (284). Another way of putting it is the following: in 1910, most of the formal republics in the entire world were in Latin America, while most European countries were still ruled—some merely formally but many actually— by kings or emperors. In this not-yet-modern Europe dominated by monarchies occupying lands of subordinated places and peoples, in which Ireland is not atypical,

although its case is unusually clear in exposing the hypocrisy of would-be democratic Britain.

A reader not knowing anything of Vargas Llosa could read this book and place it in a Saidian continuum of William Butler Yeats, Frantz Fanon, Antonio Gramsci, and say Amílcar Cabral and have this reading not be impossible. Implausible, yes; but not impossible. Vargas Llosa takes a general position in favor of knowledge and liberty, and against authoritarianism and abuse—and sees that, in the early twentieth century, all three continents he deals with in this novel were, in different respects, in need of just this sort of championship. That Casement's anticolonialism is humanitarian and not Marxist or racialist also makes him a more eligible figure for Vargas Llosa's pantheon—someone whose revolutionary ardor still has the afterglow of melioristic Victorian optimism. One could also compare Vargas Llosa's anti-imperialism with the position of US writers such as Mark Twain in the wake of the Philippine conquest and consequent insurrection—against imperial expansion, but not as part of the Marxist avowal of the redistribution of global wealth.

El sueño del celta is not simply a paean to Roger Casement. It does not endorse his spying for Germany, nor does it excuse the violent appurtenances of the Irish independence struggle, even as it understands their sources. As to Casement's homosexuality, the book is more open, certainly not pathologizing Casement's homosexuality.[4] Most of the emphasis is on the double life Casement has to lead, hiding in a "manera impecable" (321) the true nature of his affections. This double life contributes a sense of tension and drama woven when the narrative is at its most reportorial and fact-strewn, as if to emphasize even more, by contrast, the secret transcripts of Casement's Black Book, the covert ledger of his homosexual deeds that is used against him when tried for espionage. As with Casement's Irish nationalism, Vargas Llosa does not see his homosexuality as inherently wrong, but traces what goes wrong in Casement's life to society's repression of his instincts and affiliation.[5] Vargas Llosa suggests that it is only in the twenty-first century that Casement's homosexuality does not impede his reputation: "una aureola sombría de homosexualismo *y* pedofilia acompañó su imagen a lo largo de todo el siglo XX" (448). In a more open, liberal society—a society of the sort Vargas Llosa has stood up for in his own time—Casement's life might, the novel suggests, have developed more normally.

The novel avoids a thumbs-up, thumbs-down diagnosis of Casement, presenting the character in all his amplitude, surrounded by a dossier of diligently researched facts, so that the reader can judge. Since Vargas Llosa won the Nobel Prize, one sees a new level of generality in the *Piedra de toque* columns, not so much a lessening of polemical energy but a broadening of the canvas to see the longer perspective. In writing of the European Union, for instance, Vargas Llosa, as we might expect, criticizes its bureaucracy and centralization, but praises it as a noble dream, however flawed.

However much Vargas Llosa may ask that we see the novelist and editorialist in him as part of one integrated soul, he gives himself latitude—or perhaps the genre gives him latitude—in his fiction he does not have in his journalistic commentary. As strange as it may seem to see Victor Hugo, the champion other downtrodden and mistreated, as representing, in Vargas Llosa's work, the temptation to write polemical novels of anti-leftism, one has to say it is the Flaubertian and not the Hugoesque pole of Vargas Llosa's craftsmanship that inoculates him of any danger of succumbing to the identity of reverse propagandists. It is Flaubert's insistence on impartiality and objectivity we see in Vargas Llosa's treatment of Casement. Here we might differ from Eloy Urroz, who sees Casement as a surrogate for Vargas Llosa himself, and turn more in the direction of David Gallagher when he likens Casement to Don Quixote: someone whose (anti-British, Irish nationalist, violent dreams may be foolish, but whose humanitarian, freedom-minded) goals are laudable. Even more

than Don Quixote, it is Casement's world, not himself, that is at fault for what has gone wrong in his life. Unlike Don Quixote, Casement does not need a world where his delusions would be correspondent to reality, but a realm in which the suppression of his constitutive drives would not lead to violence.

If anything, Vargas Llosa is perhaps too generous to Imperial Germany. When Casement points out that "La guerra mundial se había extendido al medio Oriente. Alemania y Turquía peleaban para echar a los británicos de su colonia egipcia" (424), the irony that both Germany and the Ottoman Empire were colonizers at least as inveterate as the British, is lost on no one except Casement and his band. The willingness of Irish nationalism to countenance negotiations with Germany in pursuit of its anti-colonialist agenda with respect to Britain is paradigmatic of the misapplication of the principle of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." As Schillinger's *Times* review notes, it becomes the tragic flaw of Vargas Llosa's protagonist. Even as Vargas Llosa shows Casement linking his specifically Irish anti-colonialist grievances to a sense of European exploitation of the world in Africa and Latin America, in Casement's spying for Germany Vargas Llosa shows his protagonist slipping from principle into expediency.

As an observer of Soviet-Cuban expansionism in the late 1970s in the wake of his disillusion with the Castro regimes human rights policies, Vargas Llosa would be well aware of the resemblances between the foreign policy of Imperial Germany and that of the Brezhnev-era Soviet Union. But he does not foreground or melodramatize this. Vargas Llosa is not writing a right-wing novel; he is not writing a novel that simply insults the left. He has never done this—*El hablador* and *Mayta* might come the closest—but he has particularly not done this for the past two decades. Persistently, he has been both sympathetic and impartial; determined to tell the story, but also to hold back, to be Flaubertian just when the reader expects him to be Hugoesque. Indeed, Eloy Urroz has accused the third part of the novel of hiding behind the narrated facts, although this is contingent on what is perhaps an overly mobilized reading of the Congo and Putumayo sections as being written to authorize Western humanitarian interventions of the 1990s and 2000s.

Moreover, *El sueño* takes a fundamentally liberal and even radical position on the issue of polity. In the 1980s, two United States political scientists observed that "on the basis of its socioeconomic pattern alone, the natural political system for Latin America" (Middlebrook and Rico 65) was absolute monarchy. As Ferguson points out, the Monroe Doctrine, for all of its visibility in United States rhetoric, was a "heroic negative" (42) that belied the reality of "multiple interventions" by European powers, often with the declared or tacit intent of reestablishing monarchical regimes. Whether this is because such formal republicanism risks the United States's claims to be a uniquely innovative democracy, or whether it robs Latin America of the mystique of the monarchy-embedded "political theology"--to use Carl Schmitt's phrase—for which so many ostensibly democratic North Americans have covertly yearned is anyone's guess, but a Latin America ruled by monarchs would have generated far less opprobrium and neglect in some circles. (Indeed, some even on the left, with their embrace of a "neo-Baroque" identity for Latin America, also seem uncomfortable with the region's formal modernity and republicanism). Indeed, Brazil's special status in US policymaking stems not just from its size and its language, but also from its having been a monarchy for nearly three generations, in an era where the vast majority of nations with whom the United states had diplomatic relations were in fact monarchies. Vargas Llosa himself, in *La guerra,* tackles this question interestingly. The Conselheiro and his followers resent the loss of the monarchy, but do not want to restore it in anything like the conventional form; their proposed solution is millenarian not restorationist, even to the

extent that twentieth-century fascist movements were at least crypto-restorationist. The republicanism of Latin America may have been, as Gabriel Entin argues, a historical accident, caused by Ferdinand VII's abdication, in turn forced by Napoleon. In the case of the Spanish colonies, the monarchy abandoned Latin America, as, contrastingly, the Brazilian monarchy sought to preserve itself by Pedro I's self-indigenization and open acceptance of Enlightenment ideals. But the genie had been let out of the bottle. Latin America was irretrievably republican. Though the authoritarian *caudillo* would plague Latin America, the explicit idea of kingship was in all but a few fits and spurts, gone forever. Vargas Llosa fortifies this in the novel by making clear the problem in the Congo was not so much Belgian colonization as such, but that the colony was under the personal rule of Leopold II. And Urroz, in a critical article on the novel, styles Arana "el rey del caucho" as if his tycoon's hegemony is the capitalist world's version of the entrenched hierarchies by which Leopold II sought to operate as an unaccountable African magnate. In *El sueño*, Vargas Llosa depicts a world restless for liberation from the very idea of kings. This is a very different perspective than that held by the Conselheiro and his followers in *La guerra*, and one may infer that Vargas Llosa is far more of an advocate of the implied position of his later novel.

6. Vargas Llosa: Liberal Against Authority

But, of course, in *La guerra* the utopian *sertanejos* did not look to Europe, and a return to European, legitimist, hierarchical forms as salvific. Their vision was very different from the mixture of New World opportunity and Old World hierarchy to be found in Mexico's two phases of Habsburg monarchy, the one chronicled by Carlos Fuentes in *Terra nostra* and the much later one examined by Fernando del Paso in *Noticias del imperio*. Nor is there, in Vargas Llosa's work, the fascination with monarchy, even if an ambivalent fascination, seen in Javier Moro's recent, prize-winning novel *El imperio eres tú* about Pedro I, the first Emperor of Brazil, and in the recent scholarship of the UK-born Latin Americanist academic Jonathan Pitcher. All these books see Europe as a reserve of traditionalism. But for Vargas Llosa, Europe is less a seat of traditional authority than it is the land of liberty, reason, and enlightenment. Indeed, one might say that Europe is less a reserve of traditional authority for Vargas Llosa than it is for Bolaño and Volpi, for both of whom Nazi Germany looms as such a menacing factor. Furthermore, for Vargas Llosa the European civilization he is concerned to defend is above all an urban and intellectual one, and, as Marisa Muñoz and Patrice Vermenen put it, the republican tradition has long been associated in Latin America with cities, as seen in a different and more embattled perspective in Angel Rama's *La ciudad letrada*. Vargas Llosa, who has long objected to the automatic equation of Latin American identity with the interior, would be more inclined to associate himself with an urban, democratic vision of Europe and not the rural traditionalism that underlay most monarchist ideas.

Of course, it could be said that there *was* a monarchist tradition in Latin America that intellectuals looked back to for authority and validation; but it was not a European one. [6] The reverence showed to figures like Atahualpa and Cuauhtémoc, the monumentalism about the Aztec and Inca pasts shown even by such a transcultural and fundamentally liberal thinker as Octavio Paz, provides the basis for a intra-American legitimist tradition, whose ritualistic authoritarianism has—as Alberto Flores Galindo demonstrated in *Buscando un inca*—been a valence of otherwise democratic and populist advocacies of indigenous rights. This would run highly counter to Vargas Llosa's championship of transparency, consent, and civil society. All this is in the background of Vargas Llosa's depiction of Casement's

struggles—differently regarded by the text—against the Belgian and the British crowns.

Vargas Llosa would no doubt say that it is this latent authoritarianism in Latin American indigenism, not any recognition of the human rights of indigenous people as such, that he finds less than appealing in indigenist rhetoric. The same indeed can be said of the novelist's attitude towards socialism. Some who are opposed to socialism are opposed because it would mean the loss of hierarchy, class privilege, and degree. Vargas Llosa opposes socialism more because of its potential ideological authoritarianism, its fostering of both unanimity and irrationalism. An antisocialist of the first strand would not mind anti-modern implications of a restored monarchy, would even potentially prefer them as they provide a clear sense of legitimacy and institutional pedigree; an anti-socialist of the second strand, like Vargas Llosa, would see anti-modernity as antithetical to the democratic, rational conversation he wishes to promote. Vargas Llosa retains a residual populism in his viewpoint, not a sense that the people are always right but that the will of an educated and morally aware majority is the ideal spur of governance in modern society. This overall posture is what Casement's Irish republicanism exemplifies. This novelist's seeming sympathy with Casement's general character and goals, if not his specific actions, is not atypical or anomalous.

Casement exemplifies one half of what Vargas Llosa, in his Nobel lecture, talks about when he refers to the "hechicería" of literature, one of "inconformidad y rebeldía" although the Irishman hardly represents what Vargas Llosa sees as the end-result of this noncomformity and rebellion, "disminuir la violencia." Vargas Llosa makes clear that nonconformity and rebellion, when combined with rational inquiry, is a far more promising road to take than adhesion to precedent. Despite Casement's failure, he is less a pathological system than an incomplete portent. Casement can even be said to exemplify a good charisma. As much as Vargas Llosa fears charisma, he perceives that an authoritarian non-charisma, a bureaucratic brutality, is possible. This is seen in *La fiesta del chivo* where Joaquín Balaguer, is as dangerous as the overly charismatic Rafael Trujillo who preceded him. In his integrity and responsibility, Casement is like nearsighted journalist of *La guerra*, the da Cunha stand-in observer. Yet he is not simply an insidious, bureaucratic operator like Balaguer. Casement has the aura of lyric and imagination Arnold prized in the Celt, but he also possesses the ability to, at least in theory, constructively engage with modern society, in a way that makes Arnold's opposition into a more syncretic force, even if the tragic fate of Ireland did not immediately exemplify that combination.

In contrast to the two right-wing rulers in Vargas Llosa's previous major novel, the dream of the Celt is as noble, if as unfulfilled, an intention as was the way to Paradise. Vargas Llosa writes Casement's story as a tragedy, in which the hero makes fatal mistakes, but does those out of the inevitability of the situation. But that Vargas Llosa can have even a modified sympathy with such a hero is striking. This is all the more so in light of recent political moves by Vargas Llosa, for instance his kind words about Barack Obama in 2008, which, whatever their expediency, did indicate a genuine commendation of the *mestizaje* Obama represented, and most notably Vargas Llosa's surprise, if not ringingly enthusiastic, endorsement of Ollanta Humala Tasso for the Peruvian presidency. It is well known that Vargas Llosa has been a persistent critic of the "Pink Tide" of recent American populism, at least in its more radical Chavista avatar, and on ideological terms one would expect him to have endorsed the center-right, pro-free-market candidate in the 2011 election. Yet in his June 19, 2011 *Piedra de Toque* column, Vargas Llosa spoke of Fujimorism as tantamount to Fascism, using Fascism in the rather loose way one might have expected of a 1970s campus radical intent on associating anyone not professedly of the Left with the ideas of Mussolini.

Vargas Llosa is an intelligent and politically savvy man if there ever was one, and he knew he was running the risk of sounding, in this particular instance, like the parlor radicals who have so often been the object of his polemical scorn over the last few decades.

Subtly, intermittently, Vargas Llosa has swung back from a declared position on the economic and sometimes the cultural right to a more centrist stance. Humala indeed so far has sought to govern as a pragmatic centrist quite unlike what Vargas Llosa might have feared. It may be said that Vargas Llosa in a sense conceived a vision of what Humala could be as president which has at least a possibility of being in some way actualized (with all the necessary caveats about political prognostication applying here). If Vargas Llosa was defeated in the 1990 election in which he actually ran, the 2011 Peruvian election may have been Vargas Llosa's ultimate victory—where his complicated mix of ideals, allegiances, and motives led him to make a courageous choice, one which itself shaped not only the tally but the tenor of the results. Vargas Llosa made clear that he is not a right-wing polemicists or someone whose opposition to leftist totalitarianism has soured him on the entire project of modernity, inherently bound up with republicanism and anti-colonialism. *El sueño del celta* is an interesting portent, not the least in its adamant denunciation of the injustices of imperialism as in its affirmation that, if we are not all anti-colonial now, we most certainly should be.

Notes

[1] Given that the aboriginal, pre-Roman inhabitants of the center of the Iberian Peninsula are often called "Celtiberians" and give the clear indications of later Celtic presence there—such as Galicia being named after the Gauls, the Celtic tribes who inhabited what is now France—perhaps Vargas Llosa himself, through his partially Spanish ancestry, might have some Celtic heritage.

[2] One would assume that Vargas Llosa holds this conference in even less esteem than the other famous conference held in 1966 at Johns Hopkins in that year, the "Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man," which introduced deconstruction to the US academic scene.

[3] Kahhat, though, also points out the enormous influence of Arabic on the Spanish language, something that Vargas Llosa, in his Nobel Prize speech, elides in favor of emphasizing how Spain made Africa—presumably, sub-Saharan Africa—available to Peru.

[4] As in *Mayta*, the homosexuality of the chief character is an aspect that distances him from Vargas Llosa. Otherwise, these characters could be seen as an authorial surrogate.

[5] Indeed, Vargas Llosa has been far more overtly supportive of gay rights than of Celtic nationalisms, whereas many conservatives found the latter more palatable.

[6] He is not inherently antimonarchy—indeed being quite positive about the existing Spanish and British monarchies—but it is not formal monarchy that is the issue here, but the acceptance of a democratic, post-colonial polity as a corollary of modernity.

Works Cited

Arnold, Matthew. *On the Study of Celtic Literature*. London: Smith, Elder, 1867.

Bartet, Leyla, Farid Kahhat, and Daniel Abugattás, ed.. *La huella árabe en el Perú*. Lima: Congreso de la República, 2010.

Bergner, Daniel, *In the Land of Magic Soldiers: A Story of White and Black in West Africa*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2004.

Bolaño, Roberto. *Between Parentheses*. Trans. Natasha Wimmer. New York: New Directions, 2011.

Cueto, Alonso. "Evil as Redemption in The Blue Hour." Lecture delviered Monday 11 June 2012, 6.30 pm. Gustave Tuck Lecture Theatre University College London.

De Castro, Juan E. *Mario Vargas Llosa: Public Intellectual in the Neoliberal Era*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2011.

De Castro, Juan E., and Nicholas Birns, ed. *Vargas Llosa and Latin American Politics*. New York: Palgrave, 2010.

Del Paso, Fernando. *News from the Empire*. Trans. Alfonso González and Stella T. Clark. Urbana: Dalkey Archive, 2009.

Entin, Gabriel. "De la república desincorporada a la república representada. El lenguaje republicno durnate la revolución del Río de la Plata." *Repensando el siglo XIX desde América Latina y Francia: homenaje al filósofo Arturo A. Roig*. Ed. Marisa Muñoz and Patrice Vermeren. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Colihue SRL, 2009. 265-76.

Ferguson, Niall. *Colossus: The Fall and Rise of America's Empire*. New York: Penguin, 2004.

Flores Galindo, Alberto. *Buscando un Inca: Identidad y utopía en los Andes*. Havana: Casa de las Américas, 1986.

Fuentes, Carlos, *Terra Nostra*. Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive, 2003.

Gallagher, David. "El misterioso irlandés." *Estudios Publicos* 122 (Autumn 2011): 512-34.

Guardiola Rivera, Oscar. *What If Latin America Ruled the World? How the South Will Take the North into the 22nd Century*. London; Bloomsbury, 2011.

Golash-Boza, Tanya Maria. *Yo Soy Negro: Blackness in Peru*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011.

Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost. A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

Keating, Joshua. "Newt In The Congo." 22 Nov. 2011. Web. 4 Dec. 2011. <http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/11/22/newt_in_the_congo>.

Kristal, Efraín, "De al utopia y la reconciliación en las últimas novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa." *Estudios Públicos* 122 (Autumn 2011): 535-52.

---. *Temptation of the Word: The Novels of Mario Vargas Llosa*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 1998.

Landes, David. "Remembering Casement." *The New York Times Book Review* 24 (June 2012): 6.

Lennon. Joseph. *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2004.

López-Calvo, Ignacio. "Going Native: Indigenism as Ideological Fiction in Vargas Llosa's *The Storyteller* and *Death in the Andes*." *Vargas Llosa and Latin American Politics*.

Ed. Juan de Castro and Nicholas Birns. NY: Palgrave, 2010. 103-24.
Middents R., Jeffrey. "Another *Limeño* Fantasy: Peruvian National Cinema and the Critical Reception of the Films of Francisco Lombardi and Federico García." *Representing the Rural: Space, Place and Identity in Films About the Land*. Ed. Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield. Detroit: Wayne State U P, 2006. 307-22.
Middlebrook, Kevin J, and Carlos Rico. *The United States and Latin America in the 1980s: Contending Perspectives*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1986.
Millington, Thomas. *Colombia's Military and Brazil's Monarchy: Undermining the Foundations of South American Independence*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998.
Moro, Javier. *El imperio eres tú*. Barcelona: Planeta, 2011.
Murray, Albert. *The Omni-Americans*. New York: Outerbridge and Diestfrey, 1970.
Penny, Laurie. "Michael Gove and the Imperialists." 1 June 2010. Web 3 December 2011 <http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/the-staggers/2010/06/history-british-ferguson> .
Pitcher, Jonathan, *Excess Baggage: A Modern Theory and the Conscious Amnesia of Latin Americanist Thought*. New York: Peter Lang, 2009.
Rodó, José Enriqu. *Ariel,* Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden, Austin: U of Texas P, 1988.
Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon, 1978.
Santa Cruz, Nicomedes. *Canto Negro*. Buenos Aires: LibrosEnRed, 2004.
Schillinger, Liesl. "Traitor, Martyr, Liberator." *The New York Times*. Sunday Book Review. 22 June 2012. Web. 22 June 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/24/books/review/the-dream-of-the-celt-by-mario-vargas-llosa.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0>
Schmitt, Carl. *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Trans. George Schwab. Cambridge: MIT P, 2004.
Taylor, A. J. P. *The First World War: An Illustrated History*. London: Perigee, 1972.
Thompson, Guy, ed. *The European Revolutions of 1848 and the Americas*. Nineteenth-Century Latin America, no. 7. London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 2002.
Urroz, Eloy. "El sueño del celta o el arte de la denuncia." *Estudios públicos* 122 (Autumn 2011): 490-512.
Vargas Llosa, Mario "La derrota de fascismo." 19 June 2011. Web. 29 November 2011.<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/opinion/derrota/fascismo/elpepiopi/20110619elp_epiopi_11/Tes>
Vargas Llosa, Mario, "Reflexiones sobre una moribunda." 11 Sept. 2011. Web. 29 Nov. 2011 <http://www.larepublica.pe/11-09-2011/Piedra-de-toque- reflexiones-sobre-una-moribunda-por-mario-vargas-llosa>
Vargas Llosa, Mario. *El sueño del celta*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2010.
---. *The Perpetual Orgy*. Trans. Helen Lane. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1986.
---. *The Temptation of the Impossible. Victor Hugo and Les Miserables*. Trans John King. Princeton: Princeton U P, 2007.
Young, Robert. *Postcolonialism: A Historical Introduction*. Malden: Blackwell, 2001.
Žižek, Slavoj. *Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle*. London: Verso, 2004.