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Universality and Utopia in 20th Century Peruvian *Indigenismo*

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature

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My dissertation explores the intersection between philosophical and literary universalism in Latin America, tracing its configuration within the 20th Century Peruvian socialist *indigenista* tradition, following from the work of José Carlos Mariátegui, and elaborated in the literary works of César Vallejo and José María Arguedas. Departing from conventional accounts that interpret *indigenismo* as part of a regionalist literature seeking to describe and vindicate the rural Indian in particular, I argue that Peruvian *indigenista* literature formed part of a historical sequence through which urban mestizo intellectuals sought to imagine a future for Peruvian society as a whole. Going beyond the destiny of acculturation imagined by liberal writers, such as Manuel Gonzales Prada, in the late 19th Century, I show how the socialist *indigenista* tradition imagined a bilateral process of appropriation and mediation between the rural indian and mestizo, integrating pre-Hispanic, as well as Western cultural and economic forms, so as to give shape to a process of alternate modernity apposite to the Andean world. In doing so, *indigenista* authors interrogated the foundations of European Marxism in light of the distinctiveness of Peruvian society and its history, expressing ever more nuanced figurations of the emancipatory process and the forms of its revolutionary agency.

Following an assessment of Mariátegui's heterodox 'Peruvian socialism' and its proposed articulation between a nascent indigenista aesthetics and an emancipatory politics informed by rural cooperativism under a process of 'creative antagonism' (Chapter I), I trace the way in which César Vallejo's 'materialist poetics' (Chapter II) and José María Arguedas' novels (Chapter III) extend the ideal of a productive mediation between the rural indian and mestizo to produce new figures of the revolutionary subject and the destiny of the socialist dream. I finally propose a general retrospective of the aims and limitations of the aspirations guiding the socialist *indigenista* tradition, considering the development of Peruvian *indigenismo* literature after Arguedas and until today (Chapter IV).

The dissertation of Daniel Sacilotto is approved.

John A. McCumber

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Vita / Biographical Sketch

My work is centered in the fields of Latin American literature, contemporary critical theory, and contemporary European and Anglo-American philosophy. I am a Research Fellow and MA from the University of California at Los Angeles. My dissertation project is titled "Universality and Utopia in 20th Century Peruvian Indigenismo". It explores the intersection between philosophical and literary universalism in Latin America, tracing its configuration within the 20th Century Peruvian socialist *indigenista* tradition following from the works of José Carlos Mariátegui, and elaborated in the literary works of César Vallejo and José María Arguedas. I am also a BA in Philosophy from Cornell University. Below is a select list of my publications:

Book Projects

- *Saving the Noumenon: An Essay on the Foundations of Ontology*

  A critical examination the rise of the so-called 'ontological turn' in 20th Century Continental philosophy, and a proposal for a new kind of rationalist epistemology and naturalist metaphysics, inspired by the work of Wilfrid Sellars, Alain Badiou, Robert Brandom, and Ray Brassier.

Articles / Book Chapters

- "A Thought Disincarnate: What Does it Mean to Think?" in *Glass Bead Journal*, *Site 1: Logic Gate, the Politics of the Artifactual M*ind. 2018.
- "Puncturing the Circle of Correlation", in *The Legacy of Kant in Sellars and Meillassoux: Analytic and Continental Kantianism*, edited by Fabio Girony, Routledge, September 2017.
- "Artificial Life and Intelligence", in F*or Machine Use Only: Contemplation on Algorithmic Epistemology*, edited by Mohamed Salemy, Published by &&& and The New Center for Research and Practice, New York, 2016.
- "Finitude", "Death", "Subjectalism", in *The Meillassoux Dictionary*, edited by Peter Gratton, and Paul J. Ennis, Edinburgh University Press, 2015.
- "Towards a Materialist Rationalism: Plato, Hegel, Badiou", in *International Journal of Badiou Studies*, second issue, November 2012.
- "Realism and Representation: On the Ontological Turn", in *Speculations*, volume IV, 2012.
- "In Defense of Unfashionable Causes: A Review of Levi Bryant's The Democracy of Objects", in *Speculations*, volume III, 2012.

- INTRODUCTION -

The Question of *Indigenismo* and the Socialist Imaginary

I – The Dream of Social Restoration

In the broadest possible sense, *indigenismo* is a literature about the rural Indian written by the urban mestizo, describing the particularities of their traditions and critically addressing the history of its subjugation since colonial times. In this broad sense, *indigenismo* is constitutively an urban production written with an urban audience in mind, shaped by and responding to the political debates that transpired among city intellectuals and activists[1]. Its origins can be dated back[2], at least, to Narciso Aréstegui's 1848 novel *El Padre Horán*, which narrates the abuses of religious and state authorities in the Peruvian republic since the mid-19th Century, tracing the origins of the social division between the rural Indian and the mestizo to the cultural clash unleashed by the colonial experience[3]. Toward the turn of the 20th Century, however, *indigenismo* is commonly dated to the publication of Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Aves sin Nido* in 1889, which although notably influenced by Aréstegui's novel, moved away from the aesthetic tenets of Ricardo Palma's literary *costumbrismo*, inspired by the liberal politics and the social realist literary ideal guiding Manuel Gonzales Prada and his so-called "Literary Circle" (*Círculo Literario*). Across this shift, *indigenismo* emerges not only as a literature that aims to describe the abuses committed against the rural Indian by the mestizo, but

[1] Efraín Kristal traces the relations between the literary and political ambiance within which *indigenismo* is configured since Aréstegui's novel, situating the movement in a wider spectrum of intellectual debates and political circumstances. See Kristal, Efraín. *The Andes Viewed from the City: Literary and Political Discourse on the Indian in Peru, 1848-1930*, P. Lang, 1987.

[2] Castro Arenas, Mario, *La novela peruana y la evolución social*, J. Godard, 1967; Tord, Luis Enrique, *El indio en los ensayistas Peruanos 1848-1948*, Editoriales Unidas, 1978.

[3] Aréstegui's in fact traces the rift between the rural Indian and the mestizo to the fateful encounter between the Inca Atahualpa and the fray Valverde in 1532.

which at heart seeks to imagine a future beyond the social division and subjugation for the Peruvian nation as a whole.

In its more narrow and technical uses, the term "*indigenismo*" forms part of different periodizations and genealogies through which critics think of the place of the rural Indian in Peruvian society under specific theoretical and political orientations. Since its definition by José Carlos Mariátegui (1928)[4], *indigenismo* has been understood in a variety of ways: as the moment when representations of the Indian anticipate a "national consciousness" based on the cooperation of intellectuals and workers against the colonial legacy of the *latifundio* and the emergent capitalist class (Mariátegui), as a process of "transculturation" mediating between Western and pre-Hispanic forms of cultural production (Angel Rama[5]), as a utopian archaism guided by a dangerous tendency to confuse fiction and reality (Vargas Llosa[6]), as a process in which irreducibly heterogeneous social, economic and cultural contexts interact (Cornejo Polar[7]), etc.[8] This divergence in meaning entails

[4] Unless noted, all references to Mariátegui (1928) are cited from: *Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality*, translated by Jorge Basadre U. of Texas Press, Austin. Copyright 1971, available in full at https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariateg/works/7-interpretive-essays.htm

[5] Rama, Ángel. *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina,* Siglo XXI, 1982.

[6] Cornejo Polar, Antonio. "El indigenismo y las literaturas heterogéneas", *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana,* Nº 7-8, Latinoamericana Editores, 1978, pp-6-21.

[7] Vargas Llosa, Mario. *La utopía arcaica,* Fondo de Lectura Económica, 1997.

[8] In his book *Los narradores andinos, herederos de Arguedas*, Nieto Degregori subsumes the history of representations of the Indian world under the term "Andean narratives" ("*narrativa andina*") rather than "*indigenismo*", in contrast to so-called 'creole' narratives whose representational matrix is centered in the urban and coastal space. In contrast, in *La narrativa indigenista*, Tomás G. Escajadillo distinguishes between two historical moments: *indigenismo* proper, which evinces a gulf between representing agent and represented Indian - dating back to the 1920s, and to the work of López Albújar - and *neo-indigenismo*, in which the indigenous world seeks to be represented from within, as in the works of Ciro Alegría and José María Arguedas). A more comprehensive assessment of these variegated conceptual frameworks would demand a separate study. See Degregori, Nieto. "Los narradores andinos herederos de Arguedas", in Arguedas y el Perú de Hoy, edited by Carmen María Pinilla, Gonzalo Portocarrero Maisch, Cecilia Rivera, Carla Sagástegui, SUR Casa de Estudios del Socialismo, 2005; Escajadillo, Tomás. *La narrativa indigenista peruana*, Amaru Editores, 1994.

that any historical or critical assessment about *indigenismo* is no less mediated by the perspectives and aims of their authors than the literary works which in each case the term classifies[9].

Despite the rich polysemy of the term "*indigenismo*", what remains invariant is the attempt to trace the social ambition of urban intellectuals to narrativize the reality of a nation born under the conditions of a historic social fissure, which separated its mestizo and indigenous populations between its urban and rural settings. Since its inception, *indigenista* literature evinces at once an ambition toward descriptive realism and utopian projection: it confronts Peruvian social reality in its present disarticulation and contradictions, but it also imagines and anticipates the conditions necessary to overcome social fragmentation and consolidate a national identity for the future. In the terms of Reinhart Koselleck (2012), we can say that *indigenista* narratives fulfill a double function: first, to construct a "space of experience" through which one interprets the past from the perspective of the present; second, to construct a "horizon of expectation" in which a different collective future is conceived[10]. Accordingly, *indigenista* narratives sought to imagine a new kind of individual and collective agency, who mediates the process of social restoration and anticipates the forecasted future, for the rural Indian in particular, but also for the nation as a whole.

The following study proposes to examine the different figurations of the revolutionary subject developed in the 20th Century Peruvian *indigenista* socialist tradition, following downstream from the work and thought of José Carlos Mariátegui in the 1920s, tracing its development in the literary and critical works of César Vallejo and José María Arguedas. As I aim to show, this tradition can be distinctively characterized as a project for an alternate modernity for Peruvian society which

[9] Marquez characterizes *indigenismo* as a movement of "ideological and aesthetic projections", encompassing not only literary or aesthetic works, but also the theoretical or philosophical accounts used to assess the place of such works, their authors and traditions. See Marquez, Ismael. "The Andean Novel", in *The Cambridge Companion to the Latin American Novel* , edited by Efraín Kristal, Cambridge University Press. 2005 pp. 143.

[10] Koselleck, Reinhart. *Futures Past - On the Semantics of Historical Time*, translated by Keith Trible. Columbia University press, 2004. pp 32.

appropriates aspects of indigenous economic modalities and cultural traditions. The ideal of social and economic integration through an appropriative mediation between the Western and indigenous traditions results in different conceptions of the kind of emancipatory agency and historical process in which such agency plays a privileged role: from the *peasant proletariat subject* imagined by Mariátegui himself, to the post-nationalist *generic human subject* indifferent to cultural and ethnic determinations which emerges in the late works of Vallejo and Arguedas, just to cite two paradigmatic examples of what is an otherwise complicated trajectory. In what follows I study this trajectory, focusing on the works of the three abovementioned authors, and examining the ways in which they aligned the socialist ideal of social revolution with a new kind of literary and philosophical practice, of which *indigenismo* was at once an extension and a prelude.

Emphasizing the ambition of the *indigenista* socialist project to think of a possible reconciliation between modernity and tradition has two principal aims. First, to engage in a more nuanced critical retrospective concerning the aspirations and theoretical foundations guiding socialist *indigenista* writers, in their attempts to coordinate the tasks of literature and politics by adapting the principles of socialist philosophy to the Peruvian context. Second, to evince how although *indigenismo* is often read as a kind of regionalist narrative or "telluric literature"[11], restricted to describing its local traditions and national problematic (often to point of fetishism)[12], its utopian ambition toward integration and its emphasis on a constructive mediation between the Western and pre-Hispanic

[11] In his recent study about the "Latin American universalist tradition", and following Rafael Gutierrez Girardot's verdict, Fernando Zalamea contrasts the universalist vector following downstream from the works of Bello, Henriquez Ureña, and Rodó, to the "Americanist", "tropicalist", and "indigenista" regionalisms of the continent. See Zalamea, Fernando. *Ariel y Arisbe: evolución y evaluación del concepto de América Latina en el siglo XX,* convenio Andrés Bello, 2000, pp. 5.

[12] Just to take three paradigmatic exemplars, in *Journeys Through the Labyrinth* Gerald Martin categorizes the *indigenista* works of Ciro Alegría and José María Arguedas under the rubric of the "social realist" narrative in Latin American literature, characterized by a "telluric" tendency, and predating the modernist experimentation of the so-called "Joycean moment" (Juan Rulfo, Miguel Ángel Asturias, Jorge Luis Borges…). In a more critical tone, Rafael Gutierrez Girardot places *indigenismo* alongside other variants of "Americanisms" and "tropicalisms", defined by fetishistic isolationism. Finally, focusing on Arguedas' works, Mario Vargas Llosa characterizes *indigenista* narrative as part of what he names "the archaic utopia" which confuses reality and fiction as it idealizes a bygone past (cf. Chapter IV).

worlds reveals an essential complementarity between the aims of regionalism and those of universalism. More precisely, I argue that, for *indigenista* writers, the representation and potentiation of rural indigenous economic and cultural traditions becomes inextricable from understanding the complex social reality which composes the Peruvian nation as a whole, as well as its global, geopolitical context[13]. By the same token, these authors understand socialism as a self-correcting enterprise which is at once theoretical and practical, descriptive and projective, and whose central concepts, methods and aspirations had to be measured against ever changing historical circumstances. The prospects for social and economic integration envisaged the integration of intellectuals and workers, ultimately leading to a new kind of collective organization capable of binding the rural and urban populations, appropriating productive modalities, ideas and practices from both indigenous pre-Hispanic traditions and Western ones. In this regard, my project proposes to place the Peruvian socialist *indigenista* tradition within the spectrum of what the Colombian philosopher Fernando Zalamea has described as the Latin American "universalist tradition", while at the same time showing how the "regionalist" aim to address the specificity of its own historical context becomes intrinsic to the integrative and so universal perspective:

> Beyond the descriptions of regional specificities and richness, folklorist elaborations and connotations, praises to the differences of its natural and human ambiances, many of the best contributions to Latin American thought throughout the 20th Century highlight the integral, relational, global, general, and utopian vector – in a word, universal – in which Latin America is placed, with its lasting cultural production[14]. (Zalamea 2001: 1)

[13] Terra Rodrigues, Cassiano, and Daniel Campos. "Originality and Resistance in Latin American Culture", in *Inter-American Journal of Philosophy*, Volume I, Issue I, 2016, pp. 61-62.

[14] "Más allá de descripciones de especificidades y riquezas regionales, de elaboraciones y connotaciones folclorísticas, de elogias a la diferencia en ámbitos naturales y humanos, muchos de los mejores aportes del pensamiento latinoamericano

It is in anticipation of a future "national literature" which coincides with the emancipatory prospects of social integration that the term "*indigenismo*" is introduced in Mariátegui's *Seven Essays*, within a three-stage historical dialectic leading from the colonial past to the socialist future[15]. In particular, Mariátegui identifies *indigenismo* as a transitory moment in Peruvian literature, characterized by an unprecedented degree of authenticity in its representation of the Andean world, partaking in an ongoing rupture with colonial aesthetic and political ideals initiated in the "cosmopolitan" period of Peruvian literary history. Forecasting its own negation, for Mariátegui, *indigenismo* was to give way to an "indigenous literature" written by the Indian themselves. In this process, the rural Indian ceases to be an *object* of representation for the urban mestizo, and would become the *subject* of its own literary expression and political destiny, spearheading a new socio-economic organization and aesthetic production in coalition with urban intellectuals and workers.

Following Alain Badiou (2009), I use the term *subject* or *subjectivation* to designate a process whereby individuals become incorporated to historical sequences of radical creation across different domains of thought: the elaboration of new scientific theories, the production of new artistic forms, the formation of new collective emancipatory political possibilities, and new existential-affective rapports[16]. In each of these cases, subjectivation appears as an exceptional occurrence to the laws and determinations which structure a given situation, implying a process that is at once negative and affirmative. And it is the same for Mariátegui, and his understanding of the role of *indigenista* narrative: its authors anticipate a process whereby the rural peasantry enters an alliance between

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a lo largo del siglo XX tienden a resaltar la vertiente integral, relacional, global, general, utópica – en una palabra, universal – en la que se sitúa el lugar de América Latina, con su más duradera producción cultural."

[15] As Efraín Kristal shows, however, the pretension to realism is by no means the prerogative of the socialist approach to *indigenismo*, but more generally characterizes the circular logic by virtue of which critics evaluate the value of literary tradition on the basis of a conception of 'authenticity' which coincides with and presupposes in advance the author's political-theoretical proclivities: Critics use the same norms to evaluate the degree to which characters and situations are realistic that writers use to create fictional characters and situations(...)Once a particular critic has chosen a writer with an "appropriate" view of the Indian to set the stage, he or she then describes who to include and exclude from a history of "imperfect" literary works which lead to the "satisfactory" indigenista novel [or narrative] (Kristal 1987: 7-8.)

[16] Badiou, Alain. *Logics of Worlds,* translated by Alberto Toscano, Continuum, 2009, Book I.

workers and intellectuals through the agency of the party and the syndical movement, constituting a new "national consciousness" which is also a new economic and society beyond the historic contradiction between the mestizo and the Indian.

And yet for Mariátegui the inherent idealization affecting the representations of mestizo writers about the rural Indian meant that the ideal of "appropriation" could only be progressively corrected in anticipation of the moment of definitive liberation. In this regard - to the extent that the commitment to realism remained possible in the face of inevitable distortion - *indigenista* writers and socialist thinkers would constantly retrospectively assess the theoretical and practical limitations of the emancipatory and integrative ideal, modifying thus the figurations of the revolutionary process, its subject and its ultimate result. In tracing this historical unfolding, I ultimately seek to place the Peruvian socialist *indigenista* search for a new figure of a political and artistic revolutionary subjectivity in the context of a wider problematic concerning the ensuing legacy of socialism in the 21st Century. This is to further develop what Bruno Bosteels (2012) names the Historical work of "genealogical counter-memory" incumbent upon any contemporary historical and literary criticism of the legacy of Marxism in Latin America: an effort to engage not only in a historiographical retrieval of exhausted political ideals, but the attempt to localize and actualize new possibilities for emancipatory thought and practice in light of and addressing itself to the contemporary world:

> [T]the point of the exercises of genealogical counter-memory that I am proposing here is not to retrieve such subjective elements by inserting them into a nostalgic re-objectification of the past, but rather to reactivate their silent and still untapped resources for the sake of a critique of the present. (Bosteels 2012: 7)

In extending this critical-retrospective task, I place the *indigenista* tradition in dialog with recent attempts by contemporary socialist philosophers to separate the subject from the priority

accorded to the moment of insurrectionary violence in the revolutionary process, emphasizing the role of creative action and affirmation across autonomous but communicating domains of human practice: scientific-philosophical theories, artistic-literary experiments, and political-social projects[17]. It is in this wider context that I propose to situate and assess the integrative ambition of *indigenista* writers, departing from a consideration of what Mariátegui names "creative antagonism", and elaborated progressively in the works of Vallejo and Arguedas.

In the next section, by way of introduction, I briefly situate the Peruvian socialist project in relation to "problem of the Indian" in its proximate historical context at the turn of the 20th Century, laying a roadmap to understand the development of *indigenismo* since and after Mariátegui which we propose to trace in the chapters that follow.

II – The Liberal Precursor to Socialist *Indigenismo* in the Late 19th Century

As Antonio Cornejo Polar remarks in his preface to Clorinda Matto de Turner's 1989 novel *Aves sin Nido*, the orientation toward a social realist perspective addressing the social fragmentation of the nation was exacerbated in the aftermath of War of the Pacific in 1979, revealing the "…fragile constitution of Peruvian society, its unqualified disintegration, and the substantial failure of the

[17] In the first part of his *Logics of Worlds*, Alain Badiou outlines his rejection to three predominant philosophical and critical approaches to the theorization of the subject, which prevent a thinking of human agency outside contemporary ideology: (1) The phenomenological conception of the subject: as the conscious pole which registers experiences through a schema of reflexivity (separating conscious from non-conscious apprehension, for instance). This conception attempts an impossible approximation towards conceptually unmediated presence; (2) the moralist conception of the subject, assigned to the 'bio-ethical' imperative of recognizing and respecting the Other as subject for life; finally flattening the subject "...onto the empirical manifestness of the living body." This conception is insensitive to the possibility of a constructive vision of the subject, since it remains a priori circumscribed to specific or empirical normative registers; (3) The Althusserian conception of the subject as an *ideological* construct: directly interpolated by statist designations; reducing the subject to being the effect of discourse and rhetoric, and leaving no room for its material being in the form of a body [Ibid]. This position eradicates the possibility of situating the subject outside the representational protocols of state legislation, thus blocking a thinking of the transformative (material) power of subjective agency. (Badiou 2009: 48)

different… national projects assumed until then by the diverse parts of the ruling class[18]" (Cornejo Polar 1994: 3, my translation) In 29th July 1888, Manuel Gonzales Prada had given his *Discurso en el Politeama,* diagnosing the fundamental reason behind the social division lingering at the heart of the Peruvian nation, accounting for its disarticulation and vulnerability: it stemmed from a generalized situation of pre-modern backwardness and ignorance, under which state institutions functioned in complicity with a barbaric semi-feudalism, derived from the colony, persisting under the hegemony of an uneducated oligarchic class in both the city and the provinces:

> Chile's brutal hand tore our flesh and battered our bones; but the true victors, the enemies' arms, were our ignorance and our spirit of servitude… If of the Indian we made a servant, what country will he defend? As the servant from the middle-ages, it will only fight to the feudal lord. (Gonzales Prada 1998, my translation)[19]

As we noted above, Matto de Turner's mature literary works were emblematic of the shift toward the social realist mode and liberal political views that characterized the literary impetus behind Manuel Gonzales Prada's *Círculo literario*. Thus, while her 1884 collection *Tradiciones Cuzqueñas* already focused on describing the rural indigenous world and its traditions, it was only under the influence of Gonzales Prada that Matto de Turner proposed a more general diagnosis of its ailments

[18] Cornejo Polar, Antonio. "Aves sin Nido como alegoría nacional", in Matto de Turner, Clorinda. *Aves Sin Nido*, Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1994.
"La derrota fue la casi inevitable culminación de un proceso de deterioro económico, social, político y ético, y mostró – más que la obvia debilidad militar- la muy endeble constitución de la sociedad peruana, su desintegración sin atenuantes y el fracaso sustancial de los distintos (pero muy parecidos) proyectos nacionales que habían sido asumidos hasta entonces por las diversas (aunque también muy parecidas) fracciones de la clase-casta dirigente."

[19] Gonzales Prada, Manuel, "Discurso en el Politeama", in *Pájinas libres*, edited by Thomas Ward, 1998, http://evergreen.loyola.edu/tward/www/gp/libros/paginas/pajinas6.html)
"La mano brutal de Chile despedazó nuestra carne i machacó nuestros huesos; pero los verdaderos vencedores, las armas del enemigo, fueron nuestra ignorancia i nuestro espíritu de servidumbre… Si del indio hicimos un siervo ¿qué patria defenderá? Como el siervo de la Edad media, sólo combatirá por el señor feudal."

and prospects, thinking of a future for the Peruvian nation as a whole[20]. As she writes in her preface to *Aves sin Nido*, her narrative assumed the historic responsibility of intellectuals to provide "…a photograph that stereotypes the vices and virtues of a people, with the corresponding moral corrective for the former and homage of admiration for the latter." (Matto de Turner 1994: 3)[21]

At once victimized and idealized, Matto de Turner's novel trilogy depicts the rural Indian as a crippled figure, illiterate and torn by the oppression of local authorities, yet in itself innocent. As Efraín Kristal argues, for Matto de Turner, "…when the unhappy Peruvian Indian does evil, it is because he is either forced by oppression, or desperate from abuse." (Kristal 1987: 131) Under the oppressing rule of the local authorities ("*notables*"), the rural Indian cannot find emancipation, let alone restore its ancestral greatness, and so must depend on the empathic guidance of the educated mestizo who facilitates their transition to the city, not without great difficulties and uncertainty. Promoting national cohesion under modernization in the urban setting, the capital becomes at once the utopian space wherein the flourishing of a kind of Peruvian enlightenment takes place, in which the rural Indian becomes subject to education and professionalization. As Matto de Turner writes, describing the inextricability of the realist and utopian impetus, "…the flexibility of the aerial Limeñan forms that carry thought to the blue of the skies has come with all the realism of the epoch in which it was conceived."(Matto de Turner 1895: 2)[22] In continuity with Gonzales Prada, this

[20] Matto de Turner situates Gonzales Prada's liberal ideas and social typology to allegorize Peruvian society in the fictional setting of the town of Killac, modeled on the southern sierra of the Cuzco region. The characterological frame which structures these texts thus closely mirror Gonzales Prada's typology of Peruvian society, in which three basic subjective positions were discerned: the joint ignorance of abusive and corrupt institutional powers, the uneducated Indian victims, and finally the educated Enlightened mestizo who realize the prospect of modernization. In *Aves sin Nido*, Matto de Turner focuses on the portrayal of the uneducated rural authorities, the notables, as they conform to what Prada called a "stupefying trinity" of domination against the rural Indian ("*la Trinidad embrutecedora del indio"*): the priests ("*curas"*), the policing governors ("*gobernadores"*), and the local 'majors' ("*caciques-alcaldes"*). The Marin couple, Lucia and Fernando in turn assumes the role of the enlightened mestizo, facilitating the emancipation of the Indian from subjugation under the rule of the notables, delivering the promise of migration and education in the city.

[21] Matto de Turner, Clorinda, *Aves sin Nido*, Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1994.

[22] Matto de Turner, Clorinda. *Herencia*, Impresa Masías- Baquijano, 1895.

emancipatory process is mediated by the emerging figure of the educated mestizo, who enables a simultaneous process of ethnic miscegenation and acculturation for the rural Indian[23].

It is precisely within the context of conceiving of an alternative solution to the Peruvian social problematic than that the liberal modernizing solution belabored by Gonzales Prada and that Mariátegui would identify the role of *indigenismo* in the *Seven Essays*. For although part of the "cosmopolitan" moment of Peruvian literary history, *indigenismo* also radicalized the ongoing break with colonial forms by redirecting the prospects of social emancipation away from capitalist modernization to conceive of a different future, unique to its history and potentials. More particularly, Mariátegui would adapt the realist and utopian ideal to the project of a "Peruvian socialism", which transformed the representation of the Indian from that of a victim, whose only destiny was to await assimilation to the urban space, the better to think of its potentiation as an emancipatory agent. Across this process, the appropriation of elements from the indigenous world becomes necessary to think of an alternate modernity and integral "national consciousness".

III – José Carlos Mariátegui's Critique of Liberalism: From Acculturation to Revolution

Facing the persistence of the semifeudal oligarchic rule of the *gamonales* under the modernizing agenda of Leguía's regime during the first decades of the 20th Century, Mariátegui's *Seven Essays* criticized Prada's liberal vision of both the rural Indian and the nation. His critique was not without ambivalence, however: Mariátegui celebrated the experimental and progressive spirit that initiated the definitive liberation from the colonial age, avowing Prada's call for the eradication

[23] Matto de Turner avows the role of immigration as potentially serving to resolve the ethnic division which underlies the social fragmentation of the nation in the country. In her 1889 essay *El Perú Ilustrado*, she claims, "We call for foreign immigration that can mend our country through the mixture of blood. In our country, the majority of the population is composed of feeble people and tubercular sufferers both physically and morally speaking." (Matto de Turner 2017: my translation) See Matto de Turner, *El Perú ilustrado: 23 de Noviembre de 1889*, Forgotten Books, 2017.

of the *latifundio*. At the same time, he sharply dissociates the aspiration toward social integration from the liberal solution of capitalist modernization and Westernizing urbanization, which would transform the acculturated Indians into small-property owners as the country transitions into an industrial economy. Subtracting the ideal of modernity from the capitalist destiny, Mariátegui tells us, socialism is in the last instance defined as "the antithesis of liberalism", at the same time as it avows its civilizational and technological advances:

> Socialist thought proclaims itself anti-liberal as a result of dialectical necessity, so that socialism appears in History as the antithesis of liberalism, concretely defined as the doctrine of capitalist society. But it does not represent the liberal patrimony, in its civilizing value, at the same time as it doesn't renounce the capitalist heritage, in what concerns its technical progress.[24] (Mariátegui 1929)

In order to realize the dream of national autonomy, Mariátegui diagnosed a deeper complicity between the colonial remnants in the landlord oligarchy, the new urban middle class, and intellectual liberal progressives, as they all ultimately fostered a humanist and legalist elitism. Its avowal of pedagogical transmission and professionalization was deemed strictly retrograde with regard to both political economic critique and activist engagement, breeding a class of "writers and lawyers" removed from the rural masses, and workers more generally:

> The liberals, the old landholding aristocracy, and the new urban middle class all studied together in the humanities. They liked to think of universities and colleges as factories producing writers and lawyers. The liberals enjoyed rhetoric as much as the conservatives. No one was interested in a practical orientation encouraging work in

[24] Mariátegui, José Carlos, "Breve Epílogo", in *Variedades*, March 13th, 1929. https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/oc/historia_de_la_crisis_mundial/paginas/breve%20epilogo.htm

commerce or industry, still less in a democratic orientation making culture accessible to all. (Mariátegui 1928)[25]

As Juan Carlos Ubilluz (2017) has argued, this ideological shift toward nationalism away from liberalism was not only rooted in the assimilation of European models inspired by the international socialist revolutions, but also responded to the local insurrections at the turn of the century: Atusparia (1885), Rumi Maqui (1915), and above all The Great Uprising of the South ("*La Gran Sublevación del Sur*) (1920-1923)[26]. This shift implied a clear change of emphasis in the conception of knowledge as a vehicle for social change: the persisting subjugation of the rural Indian and the fragmentation of the nation had to be understood first and foremost as an economic problem, and not primarily in terms of institutional representation, professionalization or cultural transmission through pedagogical means. This entailed a new relation between the indigenous communities and the mestizo, where the latter served not as the instrument of acculturation, but facilitates the integration of intellectuals and workers, on whose basis an appropriative relation to the indigenous world becomes possible. As Mariátegui argues in his *Ideological Theses*, the "education of the masses" depended thus on the consolidation of the organization of a "worker's avant-garde" by means of the syndical and political organization, rather than on the labor of academic centers oriented toward legal and professional training:

> For the progressive ideological education of the indigenous masses, the worker's avant-garde lays at its disposal those militants of the Indian race, in the mines or urban centers, particularly in the latter, coming into contact with the syndical and political movement. They assimilate principles and train themselves to play a role in the education of

[25] Mariátegui 1928. https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariateg/works/7-interpretive-essays/essay04.htm

[26] Ubilluz, Juan Carlos. *La Venganza del Indio: Ensayos de interpretación por lo real en la narrativa indigenista*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2017.

their race. It is common that workers who come from the Indian context return temporarily or definitively to it[27]. (Mariátegui 1929, my translation)

The problem of Indian illiteracy goes beyond the pedagogical sphere. It becomes increasingly evident that to teach a man to read and write is not to educate him. Primary school does not redeem the Indian morally and socially. The first real step toward his redemption must be to free him from serfdom[28]. (Mariátegui, 1971, my translation)

In the *Seven Essays,* Mariátegui defines the priority of economic emancipation in the process of liberation for the rural Indian in the form of a concrete demand: not the abstract negation of the *latifundio*, but the concrete affirmation of the Indian's right to land. Only through the recognition of the economic dimension of the problem, and the concomitant organization of workers with intellectuals, could the rural Indian awaken a sense of historical self-consciousness:

First, we protest against the instinctive attempt of the creole or mestizo to reduce it to an exclusively administrative, pedagogical, ethnic, or moral problem in order to avoid at all cost recognizing its economic aspect. Therefore, it would be absurd to accuse us of being romantic or literary. By identifying it as primarily a socio-economic problem, we are taking the least romantic and literary position possible. We are not satisfied to assert the Indian's

[27] Mariátegui, José Carlos. "El problema de las razas en la América Latina", in *Tesis Ideológicas,* 1929, https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/oc/ideologia_y_politica/paginas/tesis%20ideologicas.htm
"Para la progresiva educación ideológica de las masas indígenas, la vanguardia obrera dispone de aquellos elementos militantes de raza india que, en las minas o los centros urbanos, particularmente en los últimos, entran en con-tacto con el movimiento sindical y político. Se asimilan sus principios y se capacitan para jugar un rol en la emancipación de su raza. Es frecuen-te que obreros procedentes del medio indígena, regresen temporal o definitivamente a éste(…)

[28] Mariátegui, José Carlos, *Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality*, translated by Jorge Basadre, U. Texas Press, 1971. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariateg/works/7-interpretive-essays/essay04.htm

right to education, culture, progress, love, and heaven. We begin by categorically asserting his right to land. (Ibid)[29]

To the polite educator that facilitates the acculturation of the Indian, Mariátegui thus proposes the figure of the socialist revolutionary, aiming to integrate the efforts of intellectuals and workers, and the urban and social contexts of production. This constituted an integral philosophical practice aligning scientific, political and artistic labor to the imperative of thinking a unified nation.

Though still programmatic in scope, the early *indigenista* narratives that followed Mariátegui's ideal of social integration would progressively resist the fatal destiny reserved for the rural Indian imagined by the liberal progressives and the occidentalist model of modernization. As we shall see in what follows, the works of Vallejo and Arguedas conceive of the conditions for a new emancipatory practice beyond Mariátegui's incipient program, at once aesthetic and political, mediating the internationalist scope of the revolutionary spirit while addressing and adapting itself to the Andean world. It is this attempt to find a distinct form of the revolutionary subject based on bilateral, appropriative mediations which configures the *indigenista* socialist tradition that I propose to study below, departing from Mariátegui's own understanding of socialist philosophy in terms of the aspiration toward a "national consciousness" through the practice of an "active philosophy".

IV – A Roadmap: From Creative Antagonism to Democratic Crisis

In the first chapter, I explore the ways in which José Carlos Mariátegui's revisionary and heterodox understanding of socialism constitutes what he calls an "active philosophy" that binds revolutionary politics to the prospects of a new kind of literary and artistic practice. It is within this

[29] Ibid, https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariateg/works/7-interpretive-essays/essay03.htm

broader and integrative conception of socialist philosophical practice as a national project that the ideals of the *indigenista* movement and its place in Peruvian history become first defined and elaborated. My central wager is that Mariátegui's understanding of the tasks of a dialectical materialism does not merely provide him with a lever to interpret Peruvian reality - in its socio-economic, political and literary aspects – but attempts to think of philosophy as a an integrative practice that articulates the labor of intellectual production, avant-garde artistic creation and revolutionary political action, binding the efforts of workers and intellectuals. This process was facilitated by the organizational role of the socialist party and syndicate action, alongside the intellectual, theoretical and artistic work proposed through the publication of the periodical *Labor* and the journal *Amauta*, within which the nascent *indigenista* movement in literature was placed in a wider, historical narrative about the history and destiny of the Peruvian nation.

This "synthetic" conception implied both that philosophy had to be responsive to historical circumstances, and be itself an object of historical development in connection to its social, economic, political, and artistic-literary conditions. In the first part, I explain the way in which Mariátegui conceives of *indigenismo* within a dialectical narrative informed not only from Marxist principles, but various theoretical and practical domains outside of socialism proper, engaged in the practice of what he calls "creative antagonism" I explore in more detail different ways in which, for Mariátegui, attending to Peruvian social reality enjoins an amendment of Marxist theory and practice, drawing from various theoretical registers and discourses beyond those of orthodox Marxism. In the second part, I show how his conception of socialism anticipates the figure of a peasant proletariat Indian subject, who enters in coalition with urban workers and intellectual, so as to constitute a new social bond, involving a modification of certain fundamental tenets in Marxist theory. Drawing from insights formulated, among others, by Bruno Bosteels and Alain Badiou, I show how Mariátegui's project can be seen as largely continuous with contemporary philosophical

attempts think of a corrected materialist dialectic that emphasizes the role of affirmation-creation through integration in the process of revolutionary subjectivation, supplementing the 'negative' moment of insurrectionary violence. In the last instance, the ideal of a "Peruvian socialism" gives way to a more capacious concept of the 'working class', adapted to a socialist political organization and intellectual collective effort apposite to the Peruvian context.

In the second chapter, I explore the way in which César Vallejo's literary and theoretical works attempt at once to speak for the rural Indian sentiment, and for humanity as a whole so that, as Mariátegui put it "the poet of his race" is also "the poet of his era". I periodize the development of the link between Vallejo's local and universal address across four stages, passing from an existential to a political register.

I first examine the heretical despair and domestic nostalgia of the subject of loss, which Mariátegui recognized also as the paradigmatic exemplar of the authenticity of the nascent *indigenista* literature in its expression of the indigenous sentiment. Next I explore Vallejo's 'materialist poetics', which obeys the poetic 'duty to be free' in *Trilce* (1922), and through which he pulverizes the integrity of the self in a libidinal reduction of the human subject to its "material bases". I then trace Vallejo's critical relation to European socialist philosophy and aesthetics, following his conflicted relation with the Bolshevik revolutionary sequence. Drawing from his schematic theoretical forays into aesthetic theory in the 1930s, I argue that what Vallejo names an "aesthetics of transmutation" follows the integrative spirit that guided Mariátegui's alignment of the tasks of literary experimentalism with those of a revisionary Marxism, while at the same time distinguishing between the tasks of a revolutionary arts and politics. In the end, however, a "socialist literature" is continuous with revolutionary spirit in its pursuit of human liberty, against dogmatism and bare repetition. Giving literary expression to the Peruvian turned revolutionary, I briefly trace the critique

of capitalist imperialism within the Peruvian rural context elaborated in his 1931 novel, *El Tungsteno*. Through the transvaluation of the nostalgic sentiment of his earlier poetry and a transmutation of the lyric poetic voice, I show how Vallejo's Paris poems embrace the possibility of overcoming the individual finitude in collective existence, in his *Poemas Humanos* (1923-38). Finally, I follow the apotheosis of this collective destiny Vallejo's late poetry, looking at the internationalist universalism elaborated in *Spain, Take Away From me This Cup* (1937). Following recent work by philosophers Alain Badiou and Quentin Meillassoux on the universal scope of the egalitarian ideal, I show how Vallejo's solemn affirmation for humanity does not negate the alienation of the individual or the time of the flesh, but incorporates individuality into a generic subject, unbound from cultural, economic or indeed biological determinations, transfixed only by the desire for universality.

Short of simply tracing Vallejo's intellectual trajectory as a passage from the individual-existential-domestic to the universal-political, I seek to show how he progressively explores different dimensions of universality inherent to the human condition in its incarnate, finite experience. For Vallejo, the mortal destiny which binds all individuals onto death and loss is only traversed through construction of an impersonal, collective existence, sublimating the subject in an integrative movement beyond the limits of corporeality, finally collapsing the contingent order of differences which separate men from each other, and which block the universal demand for justice: national, cultural, and even biological determinations, all dissolve. At the same time, I show that Vallejo never relinquishes the nostalgic sentiment which grounds the poetic and human voice in his domestic setting, so that the shattered rapport to the rural setting and the curse of loss which permeates his poetic works finds a secular resolution in the sublimating splendor of a new generic humanity. From the existential, to the libidinal, to the collective, Vallejo's poetic voice traces that which at once is unique to his Peruvian, indigenous spirit, and what is but an expression of the human condition.

In the third chapter, I explore how the work of José María Arguedas extends the inextricability between regionalism and universalism, in thinking of the conditions to reconcile what he calls the "magical and rational conceptions of the world", and which divide the indigenous and Western worlds, respectively. Placing culture at the center of the integrative ambition, Arguedas reconceives the conditions for a literary approximation and appropriation of the indigenous world beyond the dialectical narrative proposed by Mariátegui, correcting rather than abjuring the spirit of a socialism adapted to Peruvian social reality. I show how Arguedas rejects the occidentalist simplification of the regional in the name of the global, and in doing so also rejects Mariátegui's economicist isolation of productive dynamics from a cultural matrix of beliefs and customs. Correcting rather than disavowing the appropriative ideal, I show how the reduction of culture to an object of sentimentalist, fetishistic contemplation or even vindication is overcome through the ideal of transculturation. As Angel Rama has insisted, Arguedas' ethnological and anthropological work must be therefore seen as inextricable from his literary vocation, since "…both dimensions unfold as parallel paths, mutually complimented and intercommunicated, born from the same creative impulse that makes itself adequate to disparate expressive forms without losing their unitary source." (Rama 1982, 276)

Dismantling the artificial disjunction between the reading of Arguedas as a thinker of 'transculturation' and the reading which interprets him as a reader of 'heterogeneity', I show how the literary arc which organizes the narratives of the 'small and large towns' aspires to what he explicitly names a 'superior universalism'. Within such a process, the formal invention of a new language which would show the mediations between Quechua and Spanish, and the figurations of a new revolutionary subject, become part of a coordinated process, so that literary transculturation becomes an enabling condition to describe the future of transculturation as an emancipatory process for Peruvian society. Through this progressive attempt, the ideal of economic appropriation woven

by Mariátegui becomes extended through the transcultural imaginary, passing through different subjective figures: the fiery Indian militant who returns from the city in his 1935 short-story *Agua*, the impersonal subject of integrated indigenous communities in his 1941 novel *Yawar Fiesta*, and finally a post-indigenous revolutionary subject that, in his 1964 novel *Todas las Sangres,* emerges as the strategic mediator between the waning landlord oligarchy, the rising capitalist urban class, and the indigenous community. In this last stage, the appropriative-economicist ideal becomes complemented through a threefold cultural appropriation: a collectivist ethics of *work-for-itself* from the rural indigenous *Ayllu*, the sacrificial logic of martyrdom from the Christian, Western tradition, and a pragmatic, secular intelligence, which adapts the rationalist kernel of capitalist modernity from the cannibalistic logic of competition and accumulation. The figure of Rendon Wilka is thus defined by its synthetic potency, tracing a diagonal across Peruvian society in endorsing at once a collectivist, sacrificial, and rationalist ethics, and traversing both ancestralist fetishism and occidentalist violence.

Nevertheless, I also argue that Arguedas' late work provides a definitive testament to the failure of this "transcultural" and appropriative revolutionary dream, witnessing the contraction of the rural economy, after the abolition of the *latifundio* through the 1968 agrarian reform. Witnessing the mass migration of the Indian into the city wherein the cultural bond becomes liquidated, Arguedas' late prose depicts a process of thwarted modernity in which the abolition of the landlord oligarchy did not give way to a new emancipatory destiny, but rather to an obscure future where individuals become subject to a new regime of exploitation under wage-labor and hedonist surrender. Arguedas' solemn revolutionary spirit unravels before an ever more uncertain future, as he timidly insinuates the possible figure of a new subject, no longer woven from cultural foundations, but rather from the inconstancy granted by the rabble of culture, approximating thus Vallejo's absolutely generic universal humanity.

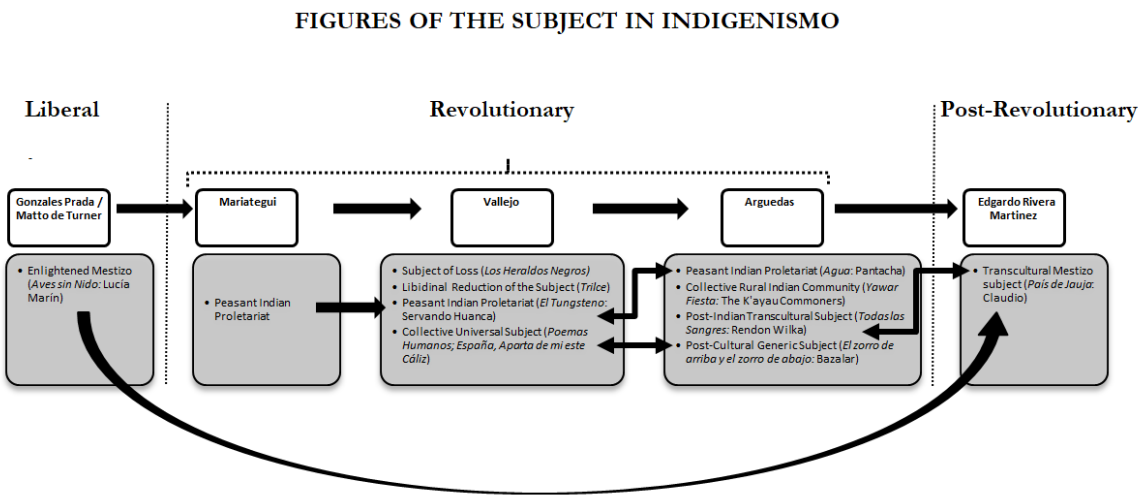
In the fourth and final chapter I propose to survey some of the major developments in *indigenista* literature in the decades after Arguedas, following the collapse of the appropriative and transcultural version of the revolutionary dream. I trace how a new sequence of 'post-revolutionary' *indigenista* literature proposes a pacifist, humanist answer to the theoretical and practical excesses of the socialist imaginary, aggravated in the aftermath of the subversive insurgency of *The Shining Path* and its brutal repression at the hands of the Fujimori regime in the early 1990s. Focusing in particular on Edgardo Rivera Martinez' 1993 novel *La danza inmóvil*, I show how *indigenista* narrative fiction pulled apart the ideal of transculturation from the revolutionary and socialist imaginary, adapting it to a new version of the 'liberal' subjective figure of the Educated mestizo which was at the center of the pre-socialist *indigenista* novel of the 19th Century. No longer endorsing a base process of acculturation for the rural Indian, the Enlightened mestizo now acts as the promise for a new hybrid subjectivity that mediates a generational cultural exchange, at once aesthetic and affective, generating the conditions for cultural transfer without the necessity of violent struggle. Extending on the proposal of Juan Carlos Ubilluz I argue that this literary moment constitutes a paradigmatic expression of an epochal and ideological shift which follows the collapse of the international revolutionary dream alongside the figure of the proletariat subject, a process which Alain Badiou, Jacques Ranciere, Slavoj Žižek among others, have titled "the ethical turn", and which at heart proposes a critique of emancipatory struggle and violence in the name of a democratic politics guided by an nonnegotiable 'respect for the Other'. I address Mario Vargas Llosa's extension of this critical line to the socialist *indigenista* tradition in his 1993 critical work *La utopia arcaica*, which diagnoses a fatal tendency to conflate the freedom of imagination in the speculative tasks of fiction with the ambition to direct Historical and social reality, ultimately idealizing a notion of collective life that elides the irreducible heterogeneity which composes social reality, and thus threatening democratic liberties and human rights. I diagnose the limits of such critical approaches, at the same

showing how the integrative vision of the *indigenista* socialist tradition can serve precisely to think of a conception of emancipatory subjectivity without relapsing into a vindication of authoritarian politics based on a fictive ideal for an 'absolute homogeneity'.

In the concluding sections, I propose to analyze the lingering limitations incumbent to the project to rekindle the ideals of a revolutionary subjectivity in the contemporary world, after the collapse of the figure of the proletarian and the failure of the productivist ambition to succeed capitalism with a superior mode of production, an ideal which animated the integrative spirit from Mariátegui to Arguedas. Having sedated the utopian and universalist aspirations from philosophy and literature, and having scaled down the ambitions of socialism from the revolutionary spirit to the conditions of democratic politics, I provide a brief assessment of the contemporary Peruvian left in its social democratic configuration, tracing its economic and political reformist agenda, as well as its relation to the problematic of rural indigenous communities, serving as a prolegomena to any future assessment concerning the contemporary relevance of *indigenismo* in the present.

The following diagram provides a schematic representation of the path to follow:

Diagram I



- CHAPTER I -

José Carlos Mariátegui: The Dialectics of Revision, Integration and Appropriation

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Introduction – *Indigenismo*, Socialism, and Philosophy

In this chapter I explore the ways in which José Carlos Mariátegui's heterodox understanding of socialist philosophy binds the ideals of revolutionary politics to a new kind of literary and artistic practice, within which *indigenismo* becomes defined and situated historically. My central wager is that socialism does not merely provide Mariátegui with a lever to interpret Peruvian reality, but becomes part of an "active philosophy" conceived not only a theoretical enterprise, but as an integrative practice which articulates the labor of intellectual production, avant-garde artistic creation and revolutionary political action.

In the first part, I explain the way in which Mariátegui conceives of *indigenismo* within a dialectical narrative informed not only by Marxist and Leninist tenets, but also by various theoretical and practical disciplines-discourses. To begin, I show how *indigenismo* emerges within a unique periodization of Peruvian history, coordinating the literary and political process from its colonial past to its socialist future. In the second section, I explain the way in which Mariátegui's "active" understanding of philosophical practice gives way to a peculiar theory of revolutionary agency that encompasses intellectuals and workers, binging scientific, political and artistic practices in a vision of a future "national consciousness" guided by the collectivist ideals of socialism.

In the second part, I explore in the different ways in which, for Mariátegui, attending to Peruvian social reality also enjoins an amendment of Marxist theory and practice. Drawing from

insights formulated, among others, by Bruno Bosteels and Alain Badiou, I show how Mariátegui produces a new figure of the proletariat subject, inspired by the voluntarist principles of European syndicalism and the perceived untapped potentials of rural Indigenous cooperativism. In particular, I focus on how Mariátegui's analysis of the tripartite structure of Peruvian economy and society is of a piece with a re-elaboration of the Marxist dynamics of class struggle conceived for revolutionary praxis, yielding a more capacious concept of the "working class". The integration brought about socialist philosophy was accommodated to the aims of a new socialist political organization and intellectual collectivity, i.e. the articulation of the socialist party and syndicate union, alongside the multidisciplinary intellectual, theoretical and artistic integration proposed through the publication of the periodical *Labor* and the journal *Amauta*. For Mariátegui, I argue, the complication of the classical conception of class struggle and the socio-economic contradiction between proletariat and bourgeoisie, incumbent upon attending to the complex Peruvian social terrain, thus conditioned the expectations for an emancipatory process which would obviate the demand for a liberal stage in Peruvian history. This revisionary and heterodox conception of the tasks of a "Peruvian socialism" reveals the ways in which its emancipatory agency and collective destiny informs the subsequent history of the socialist *indigenista* literary tradition, as we shall explore in the following chapters.

I – Between Representation and Revolution: On Creative Antagonism

(a) – *Indigenismo* as a Literary Category in Mariátegui's Dialectics

As defined in Mariátegui's *Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality*, the term "*indigenismo*" refers to a distinctive moment in the historical development of Peruvian literature. Freeing itself from the mimetic mediocrity of a literature beholden to Spanish forms, and radicalizing the experimentation with new European influences transpiring in the intellectual life of the city, *indigenismo* forms part of an ongoing process initiated by urban intellectuals in which a new "national

consciousness" emerges. In this process, writers begin to express an authentic depiction of the social reality and experience of the rural Indian in Peru, awakening an embryonic sense of the nation in its historical reality and eventual destiny[30].

More precisely, *indigenismo* is a term in a proposed three-stage periodization of the literary process across which the reality of the rural Indian becomes overtly thematized in different ways, under different influences, and with different expectations. In Mariátegui's dialectical narrative, *indigenismo* appears as the second, transitory stage, succeeding the distorting caricatures and simplifications proper to the first urban representations of the Indian derived since colonial times ("*Indianismo*"), and before an imagined, authentic self-portrayal achieved in a literature written by the Indians themselves: a so-called "Indigenous literature", and no longer "*indigenista*"[31]. These three-stages in turn correspond to a broader theoretical periodization of the development of Peruvian literature in general into three successive phases: colonial, cosmopolitan and national.

> A modern literary, not sociological, theory divides the literature of a country into three periods: colonial, cosmopolitan, and national [corresponding to the Indianista, indigenista, and Indigenous-literary phases in the Peruvian representations of the Indian]. In the first period, the country, in a literary sense, is a colony dependent on its metropolis. In the second period, it simultaneously assimilates elements of various foreign literatures. In the third period, it shapes and expresses its own personality and feelings. Although this theory of literature does not go any farther, it is broad enough for our purposes.[32]

[30] Mariátegui 1928. The periodization of indigenismo which appears in the *Seven Essays* was originally published between January and February in 1927 as a three-part piece in the newspaper *Mundial.*
https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariateg/works/7-interpretive-essays/essay07.htm

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

It is as part of this methodological typology that Mariátegui conceives of a historical dialectic culminating in an *Indigenous* literature that is also coeval with a new social bond for the Peruvian nation as a whole[33]. In this regard, complementing the political and economic independence from the Spanish colonial rule achieved by the institution of the Peruvian republic, Mariátegui's thought extends the ideal of emancipation to break with the mimetic dependency on foreign forms in aesthetic and ideological matters. Accordingly, though still beholden to an urban context of production, *indigenismo* mediates the passage from the colonial to the national phase of Peruvian literary history, still within the so-called "cosmopolitan" phase. But if *Indianista* literature remained necessarily an idealization of the Indian derived from the colonial imagery, then the prospect for an Indigenous literature to come, after *indigenismo*, expressed the ideal to overcome idealization as such. That is, it anticipates the moment where Indians become the agents for their own expression and emancipation, and are no longer a mere literary object for urban writers to represent and vindicate.

This genealogical clarification invites a certain hermeneutic caution: when using the term "*indigenismo*" to designate Mariátegui's own position or production, we are already using the term in a different sense than that intended in his writings, which coined a specific development within the cosmopolitan phase of Peruvian literary history. This disambiguation is pivotal, as it distinguishes *indigenismo* as a literary phenomenon from socialism as not only a narrowly "political" project, but an integrative practice binding emancipatory processes in science, art and politics[34]. As can be read in his fierce polemic with Luis Alberto Sanchez, in a letter dating from February 1927, Mariátegui

[33] The "national literature" to come would thrust extends the labor of independence to the aesthetic domain. As such, Mariátegui's dialectic is transfixed within the teleological impetus that, as Angel Rama argues, drives Latin American writers to free themselves from the European imaginary: that of capturing the 'spirit' of its own people by forging an authentic style and scientifically attuned representation.

[34] Rama thus situates Mariátegui in the company of other Latin American authors who, he argues, form part of a new generation of writers after 'romanticism' and who, in the wake of the social sciences (particularly, sociology, but also economic critique), and which would depict previous 'cosmopolitan' attempts at interpreting social reality as still insufficiently decanted from reliance on foreign forms.

speaks of the synergy between socialism and the nascent *indigenista* writers, but localizes his own position as an expression of socialist rather than *indigenista* thought proper:

> The *indigenismo* of the avant-garde does not seem sincere to Luis Alberto Sánchez... In Peru, the masses—the working class—are four-fifths Indian. Our socialism would not be Peruvian—nor would it be socialism—if it did not establish its solidarity principally with the Indian‘s vindications… Do not call me, Luis Alberto Sánchez, —nationalist, —*indigenista*, nor —pseudo-*indigenista*. These terms are not necessary to classify me. Call me simply, Socialist. (Mariátegui 1927)[35]

According to Mariátegui, in spite of its emancipatory force, *indigenismo* was still limited within the emancipatory horizon envisages by socialism in two ways: (1) it could not produce a faithful representation of the objectivity of the Indigenous world, and (2) it could not authentically express the subjective particularity of the Indian or of his "soul". Both of these insufficiencies stemmed from the fact that *indigenismo* was in the end still a literature written by the urban mestizo:

> [I]*ndigenista* literature cannot give us a rigorously truthful version of the Indian. It has to idealize and stylize him. Nor can it give us his own soul. It is still a literature made by mestizos. That is why it is called indigenista and not Indigenous. (Mariátegui 1928)[36]

In short, the transition from *indigenismo* to an Indigenous literature anticipated the passage not only toward a "correct" interpretation of the rural Indian, but a shift in the very ontological status of the Indian: from an idealized *object* of representation for the mestizo intellectuals of the urban space, to a historical self-conscious subject responsible for its own expression and emancipation. At the same time, short of avowing a literature decanted from all

[35] Mariátegui, José Carlos, *Correspondencia*, *1915-1930*, edited by Antonio Melis, Empresa Editora Amauta, 1984. pp. 43.

[36] Ibid.

influence from the mestizo or the Western world, definitive emancipation from the mimetic impulse entails a negotiation with the progressive tendencies transpiring among intellectuals in the city, which followed experimental artistic trends and progressive political experiences from the global "contemporary scene". Already in an article from 1924 titled *The National and the Exotic* (*Lo Nacional y lo Exótico*), Mariátegui denounces the idea that learning from the foreign is to compromise the authenticity of national expression. Such provincialist allergy to the foreign, he argues, erroneously imagines that an unmediated or pure "national expression" is possible. For Mariátegui, the dream of an uncontaminated Peruvian "essence" projected onto the rural Indian from the urban world remained was but the height of idealist sentimentalism, which at once fetishized and sentenced it. Accordingly, being peripheral but integral to Western culture, understanding the Peruvian context is also, necessarily, understanding the place of Peru in what Mariátegui calls "the reality of the world":

> Contemporary Peru moves in the orbit of Western culture. The mystified national reality is but a segment, a parcel in the vast reality of the world… We have the duty of not ignoring national reality, but we must also not ignore the reality of the world. Peru is a fragment in a world that follows a solidary trajectory. The communities with most aptitude towards progress are always those with the greatest aptitude to accept the consequences of its civilization and its epoch.[37]

This indissociable bind between the local and the global has direct implications for the tasks of literature. It is only insofar as it appropriates the aesthetic avant-garde proper to the cosmopolitan urban context for the expression of the rural Indigenous spirit that *indigenismo* emerges so as to prepare the way for an integral consciousness woven from different traditions, productive modalities and ideas, national and foreign. As Mariátegui declares, this involved a dialectical resolution of the

[37] Mariátegui, José Carlos. "Lo Nacional y lo Exótico, in *Mundial*, December 9th, 1924. https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/oc/peruanicemos_al_peru/paginas/nacional.htm

perceived opposition between regionalism and centralism, as much as the possible complementarity between Indigenous and Western expressive forms and productive modalities[38]:

> This regionalism is no mere protest against the centralist regime. It is an expression of the sierra conscience and of the Andean sentiment. The new regionalists are, above all, pro-Indian and they cannot be confused with the old-style anticentralists.[39]

In the essays comprising *The Contemporary Scene* (*La Escena Contemporánea*), written between 1923-1925, Mariátegui undertakes a critical assessment of emerging international intellectual and political currents, serving as a platform to think of the requirements for a Peruvian socialism by placing it in a geopolitical and transnational context. And in the *Seven Essays*, Mariátegui negotiates with the liberal and progressive political and artistic orientations of urban intellectuals within the cosmopolitan era, leading to *indigenismo*, as part of the transition of Peruvian society to the development of its "national" phase. He recognizes above all the progressive spirit of Manuel Gonzales Prada: at once the "least Peruvian of our writers" as also the first exemplar of a "Peruvian literature", insofar as he interrupted the "living anachronism" of the colonial spirit, igniting a process of aesthetic experimentation and social transformation. And indeed, Gonzales Prada unabashedly endorsed modernity as an ideal which ought to orient Latin American societies, destabilizing the lingering feudal heritage in Peruvian social reality as much as its exhausted literary forms. His own artistic and political work creatively draws, Mariátegui celebrates, from that "passionate and revolutionary" spirit of the 18th Century European Enlightenment philosophy, which postulated Reason as a rigorous self-correcting and collective enterprise, in contrast to the "degenerate

[38] Mariátegui's own literary, critical and philosophical production was itself always marked by an incessant curiosity and dialog with emerging global trends as much as local movements. His translations of foreign lyricists - Hugo, Goethe, Heine, among others – and own proto-modernista experiments (including his late collections Minúsculas and Exóticas, and his unpublished Orometría) constitute groundbreaking attempts in literary experimentation against the hegemony of modernismo and other traditional forms in Peruvian literature.

[39] Mariátegui 1928, https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariateg/works/7-interpretive-essays/essay07.htm

bourgeois positivism" which devolved from 19th Century Romanticism. The latter's elitist inflections and economic conservatism, Mariátegui tells us, only gave rise to a "domesticated rationalism", stagnant and reactive[40]. Moreover, Gonzales Prada's late political writings (after 1886), informed by the anarchist ideas of Proudhon and Bakunin, contained for Mariátegui a "timeless and eternal spirit", which stood against the sociological positivism of the 'futurist' generation (Riva Aguero, Prado, Garcia Calderon, Galvez…) and the '*civilistas*' which submitted to the authority of Hippolyte Taine's thought[41]. In doing so, he also castigated the perceived nostalgia of "*pasadismo*" and those of a reactionary "*perricholismo*" that avowed the colonial heritage and traditional values to justify, or at least reiterate, the present class society and economy ("They were characterized, spiritually and ideologically, by a positivist conservatism, an opportunistic traditionalism...[42]").

Above all, Gonzales Prada's rejected the mechanistic positivism of 19th Century historical materialism, which transformed socialism into a rigid determinism. Particularly, "…in his later years, he realized that idealistic and reformist politics must be solidly grounded in reality and history.[43]" This late realization formed thus a clear precedent to the project undertaken in the *Seven Essays*, which begins precisely by "taking the least romantic option possible" (Ibid). And although he did not bring the problem of the Indian into proper economic focus, Gonzales Prada's work was ultimately credited for underscoring the nefarious effects that the feudal residues of colonialism had

[40] Ibid.

[41] Hippolyte Taine's thought was also characterized in fact by an insistence in the absolute right to property, and accordingly held a reactionary attitude against revolutionary politics in general, and to the Jacobins in particular, rejecting the 1793 French Constitution. According to the sociological positivist outlook, he proposed a scientific understanding of literature as determined through three central concepts: race, milieu and moment ("*race, milieu, et moment*"). See Khan, Sholom J. *Science and Aesthetic Judgment*: *A Study in Taine's Critical Method.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1953; Katscher, Leopold. "Taine – A Literary Portrait", in *The Nineteenth Century,* Vol. XX, 1886, pp. 51–73.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

for Peruvian rural populations. The retrograde, ignorant "barbarism" of the mestizo landlord oligarchy, he observed, thwarted the inherent potentials in new generations of mestizos:

> The children of some *hacendados* travel to Europe when they are young. They become educated in France or in England and they return to Peru with all the experiences of civilized people. But as soon as they return to the haciendas, they lose the European polish and proceed with even more inhumanity and violence than their parents.[44]

The limitations that Mariátegui saw in Gonzales Prada's work were accordingly also those he saw in the liberal and anarchist imaginaries: the commitment to modernizing industrialization and urbanization were predominantly directed against the coastal export oligarchy, while his diagnosis of the rural Indian under the landlord oligarchy offered no effective solution other than their acculturation in the city, and their progressive miscegenation with mestizos. In economic and legal matters, Gonzales Prada endorsed the abolition of slavery and making of the rural Indian small-property owners of redistributed land, thereby incorporating them to the emerging capitalist economy. After the 1890s - disillusioned with the resilient divide between the rural Indian and the mestizo - Gonzales Prada could conceive of no solution other than the anarchist insurrectional imperative against the oligarchs[45]. For the socialist revolutionary, however, neither making of the rural Indian 'small property owners', educating them in the ways of the city, nor enjoining a headless confrontation could be sufficient to conceive of a future economic model for Peru in general, or a political emancipatory destiny for the rural Indian in particular.

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[44] Gonzales Prada, Manuel, "Nuestros Indios", in *Horas de lucha*, translated by Harold Eugene Davis, in "Our Indians," Latin American Social Thought, The University Press of Washington, 1961, pp. 339-340.

[45] Yet he remained firmly liberal in economic matters: however hindered by the social disjunctions affecting its population, the rejection of colonialist protectionism was to be met with a liberal opening of the Peruvian economy to the global market, a trope which would be appropriated and referenced ideologically as overtly 'Pradista' decades later in Leguía's dictatorship after 1919, to justify the submission of Peru to international capital.

Other trends in the national cosmopolitan scene introduced dissonant elements into the literary imaginary, preparing the way for *indigenismo*. The work of Valdelomar, Mariátegui writes, overtly endorsed an aesthetic avant-garde through the publication journal *Colonida* (1916), giving way to a new lyric poetry, e.g. in the work of José María Eguren. Mariátegui recognizes the influence of the work of Gabrielle D'Annunzio for the *Colonida* writers, whose literary "superomism" and realism thematized rural poverty and economic struggle with vigorous precision, diagnosing the decay of Roman art, and influenced by both French symbolism and British Aestheticism. In his 1900 novel *Il Fuoco*, and under the sway of Nietzsche's vitalism, D'Annunzio sought to represent the figure of the "overman", while his characters struggled heroically against the dominant forces of their day in the name of a creative will and subjectivity. This aspect of the *Colonida* experiment would be appropriated in Mariátegui's conception of a revolutionary subject apposite to the integrative task of the Peruvian situation, in spite of its formal classicism and political sterility[46]. The nod towards formal unruliness remained for Mariátegui *Colonida*'s lasting value, even if their ideological bent ultimately expressed a flaccid individualism, iconoclasm, corporatism and reformism in political matters. They began what many writers already referred to as "a revision of our literary values[47]", a "belligerent force" that was a necessary though insufficient condition for a new literature to emerge:

> *Colonida* was a negative, disintegrative, belligerent force, expressing the opposition of those writers who objected to the domination of national reputation by an antiquated, official, and pretentious art. (Mariátegui 1928)[48]

[46] In this regard, Valdelomar's 1916 Los hijos del sol was a paradigmatic exemplar of unctuous ancestralist nostalgia for the pre-Hispanic past.

[47] Mariátegui 1928, https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariateg/works/7-interpretive-essays/essay07.htm

[48] Ibid.

In the end, the urban capital, the "daughter of conquest", was under the cosmopolitan sway the cradle for a new mestizo intelligentsia, which however will only realize its emancipatory potentials once it took the emancipation of the rural Indian as its practical and historical foundation:

> Lima has no roots in an autochthonous past. Lima is daughter of the conquest. But from the moment that it intellectually and spiritually becomes less Spanish in order to become a little cosmopolitan, from the moment it shows concern for contemporary ideas and issues, Lima no longer appears exclusively as the home of colonialism and Hispanism. The new Peruvianness will be created, using the Indian as its historic cement. Its axis will probably rest on Andean stone rather than on the clay of the coast. But Lima, restless and reformist, wants to participate in this creative work. (Mariátegui 1928)[49]

Analogously, an "authentic literary expression" for Mariátegui was not simply an all or nothing affair, but involved the emergence of a new literary voice which, though informed by the progressive impetus of the urban space, would also be the expressive vehicle to express its own distinctive history and strife. In this regard, *indigenismo* preserves the experimental impetus of the city, while at the same time overcoming the individualistic tendencies which amputated aesthetic subversion from social ends:

> There is a symptom inherent in individualist art that indicates, better than any other, a process of dissolution: the determination with which every art and even every artistic element asserts its autonomy (Mariátegui 1928)[50]

By the same token, the idealist and individualist indulgence of urban intellectuals had to be correlated to the failure of bringing Peruvian economic reality into proper focus, thus perpetuating

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

the gulf between the urban and rural settings. In his 1927 *Message to the Worker's Congress*, Mariátegui reiterated the integrative ambition of socialism as coeval with a collective awakening of a "class consciousness" for the nation, which was as much a theoretical task (to describe the economic-social contradictions which divided the nation) and a practical one (to enable the organization of urban and rural workers, and intellectuals and activists):

> It is necessary to create a class consciousness. The organizers know well that most workers have a spirit of cooperation and mutualism. This spirit should be developed and educated until it is converted into a class spirit. The first thing that must be overcome and defeated is the anarchoid, individualistic, egoistic spirit, which besides being profoundly antisocial, does not constitute anything but the exacerbation and degeneration of the old bourgeois liberalism; the second thing that must be overcome is the spirit of corporatism, of a trade, of job category. (Mariátegui 2011)[51]

The emancipation of the Indian could thus neither amount to a restitution of a foregone "agrarian communism", nor the moralizing affirmation of the inherent worth of pre-Hispanic cultural values. As Alberto Flores Galindo argues, the ideal of socialism, for Mariátegui, rejects the hopes to prolong an agonizing Andean tradition – that of agrarian communism – but sought to traverse the contradiction between the Western mestizo and the pre-Hispanic past to reconstitute the fractured social bond of Peruvian society, beyond the fate of capitalist modernity:

> But the critique of the West will not derive in an absolute negation, just because Mariátegui distinguished western culture and capitalism. The decadence, the dusk and finality responded to an economic system and not to a culture's cultural conquests. The West did not had to

[51] Mariátegui, José Carlos. *José Carlos Mariátegui: An Anthology*, edited and translated by Harry E. Vanden and Marc Becker, NYU Press, 2011, pp. 184.

follow the paths of capitalism… The problem was to harmonize this open spirit to modern culture, with the independence and defense of national elements. (Flores Galindo 1980, 43)[52]

It is only in awakening productive mediations between the Western and pre-Hispanic worlds, Mariátegui argues, that Peru first enters what he names a "universal path":

> From abroad we simultaneously receive various international influences. Our literature has entered a period of cosmopolitanism. In Lima, this cosmopolitanism is reflected in the imitation of corrosive Western decadence and in the adoption of anarchical *fin-de-siècle* styles. But under this swirling current, a new feeling and revelation are perceived. The universal, ecumenical paths we have chosen to travel, and for which we are reproached, take us ever closer to ourselves. (Mariátegui 1928)[53]

In sight of this larger national project, the "problem of the Indian" in the *Seven Essays* becomes a unifying thread across intellectual labor in the sciences and arts, and the strategic tasks of politics. For literary invention is always mediated by political ideals and economic-social determinations, however unconsciously these may operate. Accordingly, the task of the socialist literary critic, for Mariátegui, was to integrate literature into the various domains of theory and practice composing what he names the "totality of life" of a specific historical context:

> If the Indigenous problem is part of politics, economics, and sociology, it cannot be absent from literature and art. One would be mistaken to think of it as an artificial issue simply because many of those who advance it are novices or opportunists... Mere literary erudition does not suffice for a profound interpretation of the spirit of literature. Political acumen and historical perspective are more important. The professional critic considers

[52] Ibid. pp. 232

[53] Ibid.

> literature by itself without relating it to politics, economics, the totality of life. Therefore, his investigation does not reach the essence of literary events by exploring their beginnings and subconscious (Mariátegui 1928)[54]

In the last instance, the spirit of *indigenismo* was part of a definitive historic transition, a "…a precursor of the new spirit, the new conscience.[55]" In his November 1926 article *Arte, Revolución, Decadencia* - in the third volume of *Amauta* - Mariátegui avows Vallejo's verdict in the article *Poesía Nueva* according to which modern art, both in Latin America and Europe, had often become a mere depository for technical tropes without social purpose:

> We cannot accept as new any art that merely brings us a new technique. This would mean amusing ourselves with one of the most fallacious modern illusions. No aesthetic can reduce artistic work to a question of technique. New technique should also correspond to a new spirit. If not, the only things that change are the parameters, the decorations. And an artistic revolution does not content itself with formal conquests.[56]

Insofar as *indigenismo* functions as a precursor to a "national literature", it is but an extension of the socialist movement of integration of revolutionary political organization and an aesthetic avant-garde. With this said, one might wonder: how could *indigenismo* as a literature be said to be inherently "idealizing" and at the same time a more "authentic" expression of the Indian spirit? For if the fact that it is written by mestizos and not Indians sufficed to render a literature inauthentic and idealizing, as Mariátegui says, it would follow that *indigenismo* was no better off when providing an "accurate" version of the Indian than any other colonial or cosmopolitan form.

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Mariátegui, José Carlos. "Arte, revolución y decadencia*",* in *Amauta*: Nº 3; pp. 3-4.

And yet, while Mariátegui accepts that the representations of the mestizo can never capture the reality or spirit of the Indian free from idealization, he nevertheless rejects the epistemic nihilism that claims all representation is equally idealizing or in the same footing with respect to social reality. For just like it is possible to gain proper traction on the problematic of the Indian by placing it in its proper "economic" context, so it is possible for a mestizo poet to express the grief of the rural life without relapsing into sentimentalist idealization. Assessing Vallejo's poetry, which he takes to be the paradigm of the nascent *indigenista* literature, Mariátegui avows its representation of the Indigenous spirit just insofar as it escapes the "ancestralist" nostalgias promoted by *pasadista* writers, and in so doing capturing the alienation of the Indian and strife of the rural world:

> His nostalgia, conceived in lyric purity, should not be confused with the literary nostalgia of the pasadistas. Vallejo's nostalgia is not merely retrospective. He does not yearn for the Inca empire in the way that 'pasadismo" perricholesco yearns for the viceroyalty. His nostalgia is a sentimental or a metaphysical protest; a nostalgia of exile, of absence. (Mariátegui 1928)[57]

Rather than an ideal depiction of past traditions issued from without, for Vallejo, the poetic act carried a subversive sign of "metaphysical protest" on behalf of the rural Indian and of humanity at once (cf. Chapter II). The negative disposition towards ancestralist nostalgia which affected cosmopolitan writers is but the obverse, Mariátegui tells us, of a politics of restoration: "The authentic *indigenistas* – who must not be confused with those who exploit Indigenous themes for sheer exoticism, collaborate, consciously or not, in a political and economic politics of vindication, not of restoration or resurrection."[58] At the same time, Vallejo appropriated formal subversion from foreign sources to express the strife Andean world, anticipating the political clamor for national

[57] Mariátegui 1928, https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariateg/works/7-interpretive-essays/essay07.htm

[58] Ibid.

emancipation. Mariátegui highlights above all the import of symbolism in his poetry, which was in his estimation an expressive form "…better suited than any other to interpret the Indigenous spirit", while also avowing the presence of "…elements of expressionism, Dadaism, and surrealism.[59]" These formal tools do not corrupt the expression of the indigenous identity or the concreteness of the rural ambiance, but plies the latter into a universal clamor on behalf of the whole human species. As we shall explore in the next chapter in more detail, in Vallejo's poetry, nostalgia ceases thus to be a longing for a return to an idyllic past, but instead constitutes "a nostalgia of exile, of absence", which confronts the drama of human finitude while nevertheless avoiding "Western skepticism":

> There is no relationship or affinity between him and the nihilism or intellectual skepticism of the West. The pessimism of Vallejo, like the pessimism of the Indian, is not a belief or a feeling. It is tinged with an oriental fatalism that makes it closer to the Christian and mystic pessimism of the Slavs. (Mariátegui 1928)[60]

Throughout Vallejo's *Heraldos Negros* and *Trilce*, the mourning of irreparable existential solitude and familial abandon within the Andean world thus coincides with a cosmic empathy and generic address for mankind writ large, so that the "poet of a race" becomes at once the "poet of his era":

> This pessimism is full of tenderness and compassion, because it is not engendered by egocentricity and narcissism, disenchanted and exacerbated, as is the case almost throughout the romantic school. Vallejo feels all human suffering. His grief is not personal. His soul is "sad unto death" with the sorrow of all men, and with the sorrow of God, because for the poet it is not

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

only men who are sad... Vallejo, from this point of view, belongs not only to his race but also to his century, to his era.[61]

That the "poet of a race" could emerge within the transitory, cosmopolitan context as the *indigenista* precursor to a national consciousness meant that the expression of the autochthonous had entered a process of mediation with different expressive forms while remaining mindful of its local historical context and socio-economic emancipatory tasks[62]:

> The development of the indigenista current does not threaten or paralyze other vital elements of our literature. Indigenismo does not aspire to preempt the literary scene by excluding or blocking other impulses and manifestations. It represents the trend and tone of an era because of its sympathy and close association with the spiritual orientation of new generations who, in turn, are sensitive to the imperative needs of our economic and social development.[63]

It is this integrative vision between disciplines and traditions which, for Mariátegui binds the labor of literature to that of politics and science. This integral practice is what Mariátegui conceives as an "active philosophy", of which socialism was the concrete historical expression and unified process. A Peruvian socialism, then, puts the labor of subversion and synthesis in the context of Peruvian socio-economic reality, and also in the context of its intellectual-literary trends. The following diagram can help us grasp the dialectical periodization proposed by Mariátegui:

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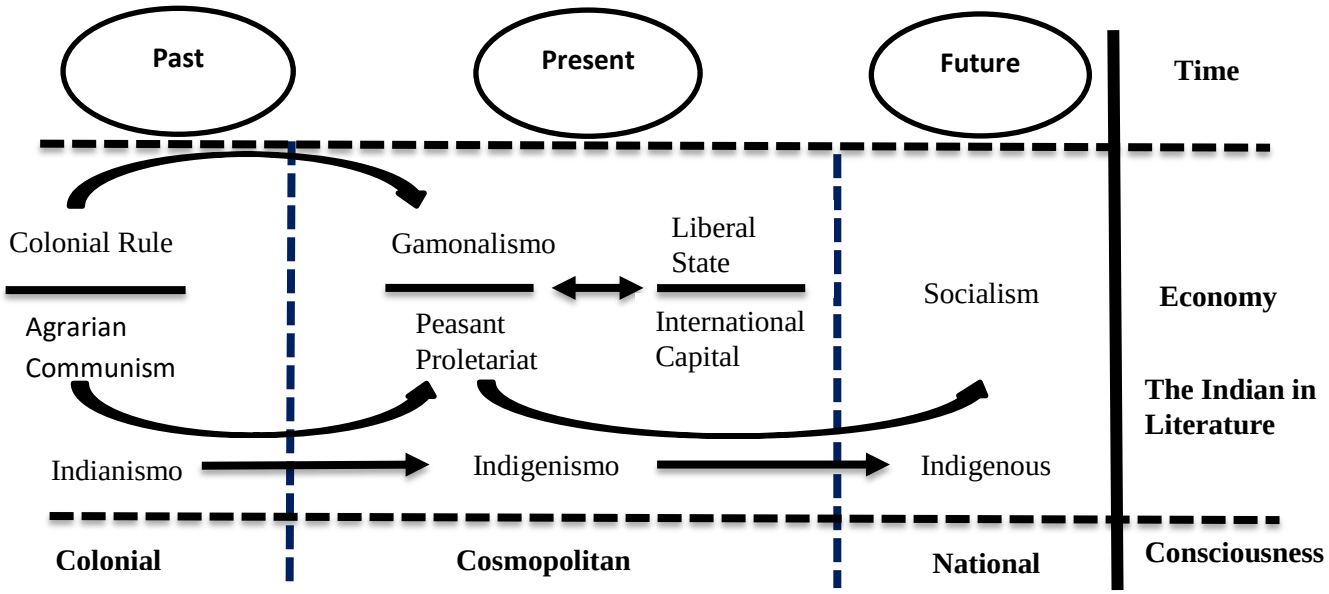
[61] Ibid.

[62] Doubtlessly, for Mariátegui, the fatalism which characterizes Vallejo's early work would also signal, however, its status as a transitory phase in the process of the Indigenous self-awakening: expressing the animus of Indigenous suffering, but falling short of expressing the possibility for any kind of emancipatory gesture or process of radical transformation. One can only surmise that, had Mariátegui been exposed to Vallejo's later work, in which cosmic melancholy gives way to a universal humanist jubilation, his avowal of the poet would have been even greater.

[63] Ibid.

Diagram 1.1



(b) – An Active Philosophy: Creative Antagonism, Myth and Faith

The nature of this "integrative task" resists intuitive comprehension, however. At the surface, it might seem as if Mariátegui endorses a kind of "economicist" historical determinism, from which he seeks to draw political and aesthetic imperatives for the Peruvian nation from the general tenets of Marxism. Indeed, he claims that the socio-economic foundation upon which any approximation to the Indigenous rural world had to be base rejected reducing the "problem of the Indian" to a cultural, moral, administrative, ecclesiastical, pedagogical, psychological, racial, or even philosophical issue. Prioritizing socio-economic *class* determination was thus the equivalent to taking "…the least romantic and literary position possible[64]" in what concerns the interpretation of Peruvian history and social reality. Accordingly, the basic project in the *Seven Essays* follows from a diagnostic of a central

[64] Ibid.

contradiction, leading to a concrete demand as part of a determinate negation of the *latifundio*: to abolish the rule of the *gamonales* in their complicity with the state one must first affirm the Indian's "right to the land". In short, the "problem of the land" provided thus the key to the problem of the Indian in its economic basis.

> As long as the vindication of the Indian is kept on a philosophical and cultural plane, it lacks a concrete historical base. To acquire such a base— that is, to acquire physical reality— it must be converted into an economic and political vindication. Socialism has taught us how to present the problem of the Indian in new terms. We have ceased to consider it abstractly as an ethnic or moral problem and we now recognize it concretely as a social, economic, and political problem. And, for the first time, we have felt it to be clearly defined… By identifying it as primarily a socio-economic problem, we are taking the least romantic and literary position possible. We are not satisfied to assert the Indian's right to education, culture, progress, love, and heaven. We begin by categorically asserting his right to land.[65]"

These lines would imply a strict incompatibility between the militant practice that Mariátegui envisages for an emancipatory political or artistic consciousness, and philosophy, understood as an "ethical" discourse only capable of devolving in "romantic and literary" idealizations. Yet the disavowal of philosophy in this regard also contrasts with Mariátegui's declaration of the systematic integrity of socialist politics and a philosophical and even religious endeavor:

[65] Ibid.

> I declare without hesitation that I bring to literary exegesis all my political passions and ideas, although in view of the way this word has been misused, I should add that my politics are philosophy and religion.[66]

I would suggest that what is at stake in this apparent contradiction is the rejection of a particular vision of philosophy, and the corresponding avowal of what Mariátegui names an "active philosophy", which binds scientific, political and artistic activity in generating new models of collective social organization and expression. Similarly, in what will become a recurrent trope throughout *indigenista* literature, in specifying the scope of "socialism" Mariátegui systematically appropriates theological and teleological vocabulary in a secularized context, so as to describe an affective and cognitive disposition enabling the emergence of a new kind of revolutionary subjectivity and practice.

In a 1930 article titled *Existe una Inquietud Propia, de Nuestra Época*?, published in the periodical *Mundial*, Mariátegui contrasts the revolutionary conviction of socialist thinkers to the reactionary spirit of that "…fictitious faith, intellectual and pragmatic, of those who find equilibrium in dogmas and in the old order…", and defends the heroism of a militant, revolutionary subject who "…dangerously struggles for the victory of a new order.[67]" The irony here is that the "authentic faith" proper to socialism is one which takes the rejection of dogmatism as its central principle. Inspired by the voluntarism of the so-called "romantic" Marxists, and in particular George Sorel's socialist retrieval of the category of myth, Mariátegui conceives of artistic and intellectual creation as part of a singular "revolutionary mission". Following David Sobrevilla (2012), we can say that myth for Mariátegui was understood broadly as part of a "construction of images" capable of guiding

[66] Ibid.

[67] Mariátegui, José Carlos. "Existe una Inquietud Propia, En Nuestra Época", in *Mundial*, March 29th 1930, available at https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/oc/el_artista_y_la_epoca/paginas/existe%20una%20inquietud%20propia.htm#1a

revolutionaries in their emancipatory tasks[68]. Particularly, in a 1925 text titled *Myth and Man*, Mariátegui establishes a correlation between the revolutionary spirit and the subjective "force of myth" (Mariátegui 2011: 387). He castigates the conservatism of the bourgeois-liberal imaginary above all for their loss of an authentic myth, well in spite of their "intellectual" and artistic experimental spirit. Accordingly, liberalism remained caught in the mimetic mode, promoting an exhausted, "fictitious faith" which could not rise to "the creative power of the proletariat":

> The bourgeoisie no longer has any myths. It has become incredulous, skeptical, nihilistic. The reborn liberal myth has aged too much. The proletariat has a myth: the social revolution. It moves toward that myth with a passionate and active faith. The bourgeoisie denies; the proletariat affirms. The bourgeois intellectuals entertain themselves with a rationalist critique of the method, theory, revolutionary technique. What a misunderstanding! The strength of revolutionaries is not in their science; it is in their faith, in their passion, in their will. It is a religious, mystical, spiritual force. It is the force of myth. (Ibid)

Drawing an implicit analogy to Marx's analysis of the Asian mode of production in *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations* (1857-58)[69], Mariátegui classifies all ancestralist views as extensions of a "fictitious bourgeois fate", producing but a sterile fetishism which brings about no genuine novelty: "What person who follows the development of modern thought with critical lucidity can fail to note that the return to spiritualist ideas, the retreat to Asian paradises, has clearly decadent causes and origins?" (Mariátegui 2011: 224). The "priests of the revolution", in turn, aspire not just to interpret the world but to change it by understanding it. In *The Science of Revolution*, titled after Max Eastman's book relating psychoanalysis and Marxist theory, Mariátegui writes:

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[68] Sobrevilla, David, "La visión del mito en José Carlos Mariátegui, Mariano Ibérico y Luis Alberto Sánchez", in *Escritos Mariáteguianos*, Universidad Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, 2012.

[69] Marx, Karl. *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, translated by Cohen, International Publishers, 1964. https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/precapitalist/index.htm

> Marx examines the material world the same way a priest examines the ideal world, with the hope of finding his own creative aspirations in it, and in the contrary case, to see how to transplant them in it. In his intellectual system, Marxism does not represent the passage of utopian socialism to scientific socialism; it does not represent the substitution of a non-practical evangelization for a better world by a practical plan, helped by a study of actual society, and indicating the means of replacing it with a better society. Marxism constitutes the passage of utopian socialism to socialist religion, a scheme destined to convince the believer that the universe itself automatically engenders a better society and that he, the believer, does not have to do anything more than follow that universe. (Mariátegui 2011: 233)

For Mariátegui a new myth could not be a purely abstract projection; the negation of the present is always also necessarily complemented with an affirmative act of invention. If revolutionary practice involves the invention of a new myth then, Mariátegui tells us, "There is nothing more sterile than trying to revive a dead myth.[70]" Just as task of vindicating the Indian is not the restoration of agrarian communism, the forging of a "living myth" which points to the future is not reducible to nostalgic melancholy or iconoclasm. He applies Sorel's secularized concept of myth to the task of literary criticism in his appraisal of Valcarcel's novel *Tempestad en los Andes*, in which "lacking doctrinary *a priorisms*" the author displays "something of a gospel, and even something of an apocalypse. It is the work of a believer[71]", announcing a new collective identity for Peru.

Yet this "gospel" was not the same as a dogmatic fidelity or fanaticism. As we indicated above, Mariátegui repeatedly insists in that "socialist philosophy" was not a fixed doctrinal core to be applied to divergent historical circumstances, but itself transformed by attending to specific

[70] Ibid.

[71] Mariátegui, José Carlos. "Prologo" in *Tempestad en Los Andes* by Luis. E Valcarcel, 1927. My translation. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/1927/oct/10.htm).

socio-economic contexts and theoretical registers. Faith to socialism becomes then, in a kind of dialectical inversion, where the only commandment becomes the call to heresy, and where the practical demands of revolution become indissociable from those of theoretical revision. The only law of the dialectic is to subvert stable laws in the tasks of revision and revolution, the power to change the structures under which individuals organize their aesthetic, economic, and political lives. In the text titled *Modern Philosophy and Marxism*, he writes:

> Marxist criticism studies capitalist society concretely. As long as capitalism has been transformed definitively, Marx's canon remains valid. Socialism or, rather, the struggle to transform the social order from capitalist to collectivist, keeps this critique alive, continues it, confirms it, corrects it. Any attempt to categorize it as a simple scientific theory is in vain since it works in history as the gospel and method of a mass movement.[72] (my translation)

The dialectical arc proposed by Mariátegui in the *Seven Essays* accordingly draws from manifold theoretical sources, elaborated upon his return to Peru from exile in 1923 until his death. Heavily influenced by the Parisian *Clarté* group (directed by Henri Barbusse) and the Italian voluntarist syndicalism (Croce, Papini, Gramsci), Mariátegui held a thorough multidisciplinary approach binding progressive tendencies in science, art and politics.[73] In *La Escena Contemporanea*, and commenting on Henri Barbusse's work, revolution was inherently linked to creation, understood as the intrication of a utopian and "active", rather than passive "Intelligence":

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[72] Mariátegui, José Carlos. "La filosofía moderna y el Marxismo", in *Defensa del Marxismo,* 1974, https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/oc/defensa_del_marxismo/paginas/iv.htm. "La crítica marxista estudia concretamente la sociedad capitalista. Mientras el capitalismo no haya trasmontado definitivamente, el canon de Marx sigue siendo válido. El socialismo, o sea la lucha por transformar el orden social de capitalista en colectivista mantiene viva esa crítica, la continúa, la confirma, la corrige. Vana es toda tentativa de catalogarla como una simple teoría científica, mientras obre en la historia como evangelio y método de un movimiento de masas."

[73] See in particular the chapter titled *La Revolución y la Inteligencia* (*The Revolution and the Intelligentsia*), from *La Escena Contemporanea*. Barbusse's influence can be seen already in Mariátegui's involvement and direction of *Claridad*, succeeding Haya de la Torre, before his definitive break with the APRA in 1928. It is also worthy of note that in 1927 Vallejo sent Mariátegui a copy of Barbusse's *Fait Divers*.

> Barbusse reminds intellectuals of the revolutionary duty of Intelligence. The function of Intelligence is creative… The innumerable army of the humble, of the poor, of the miserable, has been placed resolutely in the march towards Utopia that Intelligence, in its generous, fecund and visionary hours, has conceived.[74]

Commenting on Barbusse's "reinvention of the epic" in *Les Enchainements* in an article of the same name included in *La Escena Contemporánea*, Mariátegui notes that the work's formal ambiguity, straddling the line between poetry and the novel, at the same time awakened what he calls "the epic, larval and amorphous still, of a proletariat civilization", incarnating a collective clamor for mankind within what he characterizes as a "multitudinous sentiment"[75] (Mariátegui 1925). It is not the epic of the hero that is at stake here, but rather the unprecedented form of a new collective voice that Mariátegui calls simply "the multitude"[76].

In *Modern Philosophy and Marxism,* Mariátegui mentions several philosophical orientations which in his estimation could amplify the scope of socialism:

> Vitalism, activism, pragmatism, relativism: none of these philosophical currents, insofar as what they bring to the revolution, have remained marginal to the Marxist intellectual movement. (Mariátegui 2011: 196)

In two texts titled *El Determinismo Marxista* and *Freudismo y Marxismo* (*Freudianism and Marxism* – compiled in his *Defensa del Marxismo* - Mariátegui explicitly rejects a determinist conception of socialist philosophy by drawing not only from voluntarism, but from Freudian psychoanalysis. Drawing an analogy to the unconscious drives of the Freudian libido – in the course

[74] Mariátegui 1925, my translation.
https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/oc/la_escena_contemporanea/paginas/les%20enchainements.htm#1a

[75] Ibid.

[76] Barbusse, Henri. "El presente y el porvenir", in *Amauta*: Nº 8; pp. 9-11.

of a commentary on the work of Max Eastman – he underlines how the dialectical history of productive modalities led Marx to reject a narrow economicism also always involved an ideological critique against dogmatism and determinism. He argues that "…the dialectical principle on which all of the Marxist conception is based excludes the reduction of the historical process to a purely mechanical economics" (Mariátegui 2011: 221). Following Jacoby, he calls for a "dialectical loyalty", which emphasizes the active role of the revolutionary subject, against a "passive" historicism.

> The voluntarist character of socialist is not, in truth, less evident, although it is less understood by critics, than its determinist background[…] [E]very word, every act of Marxism harbors an accent of faith, of will, of heroic and creative conviction, whose impulse it would be absurd to search for in a mediocre and passive determinism.[77]

Mariátegui goes on to extends the analogy between psychoanalytic repression in the unconscious and the repressive, false consciousness promoted by ideological dogmatism in all its forms, including that proper to an ossified Marxism. For just as the libidinal drives become the locus for the workings of a normative order covertly given to consciousness, the concept of "ideology" represents "…the deformations of social and political thought produced by repressed motives." (Mariátegui 2011: 220) This leads Mariátegui to declare that socialism is but the generalization of psychoanalysis, so that "…the economic interpretation of history is not anything more than a generalized psychoanalysis of the social and political spirit.[78]" The psychoanalytic therapeutic procedure through which the traumatic effects of the unconscious are displaced thus mirror the revolutionary process of social emancipation process: socialism as an active philosophy emancipates the repressive mechanisms for collective consciousness, just like psychoanalysis unearths and

[77] Mariátegui, José Carlos. *Marxist determinism,* translated by Celina María Bragagnolo, 1928, https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariateg/works/1928/marxist-determinism.htm

[78] Ibid.

displaces the libidinal torsion of the individual psyche. As Alain Badiou writes in his 1975 *Theory of the Subject*, echoing the analogy proposed by Mariátegui, this amounts to identifying a common epistemological role in the categories of the hysteric and the proletariat as figurations of the subject:

> It is beyond doubt that Freud's unconscious and Marx's proletariat have the same epistemological status with regard to the break they introduce in the dominant conception of the subject[79]. (Badiou 2009: 115)

The analogy with the process leading to psychoanalytic cure is also coordinated to the voluntarist conception of liberation at the theoretical level: Mariátegui identifies the accusations against Marx's "pan-economism" as resting on a mechanistic simplification of his understanding of economy, mirroring the accusations against Freud's alleged deterministic "pan-sexualism". Such proposed subjective liberation from social and individual repression was also intrinsic to the literary creative process. In a text titled *"Freudianism" in Contemporary Literature*, Mariátegui argues that in modernist literature – citing the works of Pirandello and Proust – there is a subversive aesthetic spirit that overcomes repression in the name of freedom[80]. Once again, the process of artistic liberation comes to coincide with that of political emancipation, which makes the question of collective, "tactical" intervention the central question for the voluntarist revolutionary subjectivity. In *Marxist Determinism*, he defines this strategic side of a socialist practice as part of the task of localizing the task of theoretical revision within a historical-local context, citing Adriano Tilgher:

> Socialist tactics, to lead to success, must take into account the historical situation in which they must operate, and where this is still too immature for the installation of socialism, they must certainly take good care not to have their hand forced... Marxist tactics

[79] Badiou, Alain. *Theory of the Subject*, translated by Bruno Bosteels, Continuum, 2011.

[80] Mariátegui, José Carlos, "El "Freudismo" en la literatura contemporánea, published in *Variedades*, August 14th 1926, https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/oc/el_artista_y_la_epoca/paginas/el%20freudismo.htm

> are thus as dynamic and dialectical as Marxist theory itself. Socialists do not agitate in a vacuum, do not disregard the preexisting situation, do not delude themselves that they can change things with calls to humanity's better emotions, but adhere solidly to historical reality, without resigning themselves passively to it. (Mariátegui 2011: 209)

In sum, we can say that the revisionary, multidisciplinary and anti-dogmatic spirit was central to Mariátegui's understanding of socialism, which Flores Galindo describes in terms of "…that hope in the future which does not repose in the laws of the dialectic, not in the conditioning of the economy, but rather on collective wills" (Flores Galindo 1980: 14). The identification of philosophy with politics should therefore not indicate what was often imputed against Mariátegui: an 'intellectualist' reification of theoretical principles, which operated in comfortable distance from the Peruvian and Andean world that he claimed to speak for.[81] But neither should it be understood as an anti-intellectualist practicism which elides the valence of theoretical labor. Answering to his critics, in the editorial opening to the 17th Volume, Mariátegui reiterates that the collective labor of *Amauta* is to serve both a site for intellectual explorations but also for new social movements, once again alluding to the "multitude" as a collective subject: "*Amauta* is not a diversion nor a game between intellectuals: it professes a historical idea, it confesses and active and multitudinous faith, it obeys a contemporary social movement.[82]" (Mariátegui 1928) For the coming revolution must be, he argues,

[81] This line of criticism, one would do well to remember, was not only that proposed by political rivals or posterior critics, but often sprung from fellow sympathizers of Marxism and even from Mariátegui's own collaborators. Perhaps the clearest case is that of Martinez de la Torre, who in his correspondence with the exiled Mario Nerval, targeting Mariátegui's incipient efforts through the publication of *Amauta*, proposes a vigorous "…attack against intellectuals and petit bourgeoisie professionals who pretend to lend their "intelligence" to the movement, being their labor, within it, precisely negative. To the inert intelligence we ought to oppose the "active intelligence". See: Martínez de la Torre, Ricardo, *Apuntes para una interpretación marxista de la historia social del Perú*", Volume III, Empresa Editorial Peruana, 1947.

[82] Mariátegui, José Carlos. "Aniversario y Balance", in *Amauta,* vol. 17, 1928. https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/1928/sep/aniv.htm

a movement towards integration, resisting the fragmentation of the working class which sent European socialism into a crisis[83].

In defining this "national consciousness", Mariátegui was careful however to reject the essentialist concept of 'nation', conceived as a self-contained locus for emancipatory action. It follows that a "national identity" must be conceived as a task to be realized, rather than as an essence from which to draw an imaginary unity, and which would obviate the need for bilateral mediation. In matters of literary creation, referencing De Sanctis, he claims that "The idea of a national literature is an illusion. Its people would have to be as isolated as the Chinese are supposed to be…Greek poetry has Asiatic elements, Latin poetry has Greek, and Italian poetry has both Greek and Latin.[84]" Once one has rejected the ideal of national purity, the idea of a Peruvian socialism becomes coeval with achieving a productive mediation not only between its indigenous traditions and the Western world, but between domains of thought in what Mariátegui calls a new "Intelligence". Mariátegui's opening lines for the first volume of the journal *Amauta* in 1926 - seeking to bind the efforts of progressive Peruvian intellectuals, activists and writers into a dialog and coalition with foreign thinkers, ideological currents, and stylistic experiments:

> Beyond differences, all these spirits lay forth what binds and groups them: the will to create a new Peru within a new world. Intelligence, the coordination of the most volitional of these elements, progress gradually. The movement – intellectual and spiritual – acquires organic integrity little by little. With the apparition of *Amauta*, it enters into a definitional phase...But we always consider Peru within the panorama of the world. We shall study all the great movements of renovation: political, philosophical, artistic, literary, and scientific. All that is human is ours.

[83] Mariátegui, José Carlos, "La Crisis doctrinal del socialismo", in *La Escena Contemporánea*, 1925, my translation. https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/oc/figuras_y_aspectos_de_la_vida_iii/paginas/la%20crisis%20doctrinal.htm

[84] Ibid.

> This magazine will bind all the new men from Peru, first with other peoples of the Americas, and then with the peoples from the world as a whole[85]. (Mariátegui 1926)

Developing on this point, in a 1929 article titled *La Misión de Israel* (*The Mission of Israel*), published in *Mundial*, Mariátegui explicitly indicates that the integrative movement achieves the resolution between "internationalism" and "nationalism", amounting to a "dialectical negation" of the isolationist and essentialist conception of the latter:

> Internationalism is the same as Supranationalism. Internationalism is not, as is imagined by many obtuse leftist and rightists, the negation of nationalism, but its overcoming. It is a dialectical negation, in the sense in that it contradicts nationalism; but not in the sense that it condemns or disqualifies it as an epoch's historical necessity[86].

Such "dialectical negation" concentrates what Flores Galindo has identified as the fundamental axis around which Mariátegui's entire thinking revolves: that of the encounter between "Marxism and nation", or more perspicuously that between socialist theory and the conception of a new Peruvian national consciousness. It is within this axis that Flores Galindo finds that Mariátegui's universal dimension which binds local struggle to the global history of revolutionary thought:

> As it so happens, precisely coming from his peculiar articulation between Marxism and Nation, Mariátegui ended up elaborating a specific way – Peruvian, indoamerican, Indigenous – to think Marx and, as always, precisely by virtue of being all the more Peruvian became universal; such that he was able to propose a Marxism as different as that of

[85] Mariátegui, José Carlos. "Presentación de *Amauta*", in *Amauta,* year 1, No 1, 1926, my translation. https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/1926/sep/amauta.htm

[86] Mariátegui, José Carlos. "La Misión de Israel", in *Mundial*, May 3rd 1929, my translation. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/oc/figuras_y_aspectos_de_la_vida_iii/paginas/la%20mision.htm#*a

> Gramsci and Lukaks, and as valuable as either, thanks to which Peru began to appear in the geography of socialism. (Flores Galindo 1980: 12)[87]

In a correspondence from Vallejo to Mariátegui, dated December 10th 1926, the *indigenista* literary production, as part of the collective labor of *Amauta*, becomes accordingly identified as part of a common aspiration to "…densify more and more the healthy Peruvian inspiration of our action before the continent and the world"[88]. In the second part of this essay, I will seek to explain how this programmatic imperative for socialist philosophy leads into a revision of Marxist theory and to the emergence of new political and intellectual organizations to facilitate the integration of the working class across different regions and the different strata of Peruvian society.

II – Toward a Peruvian Socialism: The Indian Proletariat Subject and the Coming Nation

Mariátegui's own claims notwithstanding, and mindful of his failure in predicting future of Peruvian society, it seems plausible to suggest that the proposed dialectical narrative leading to a socialist, national phase was but another idealization issued from the urban setting. The socialist imaginary would have thus reiterated a structural invariance, through which urban writers idealize a foreign world by projecting their own ideals and expectations onto it. This is what we might call *the myth of authentic representation*, in which the very attempt to escape idealization as a whole in the name of a "realism" or "materialism" merely reproduces it. And if Mariátegui's dialectical narrative

[87] "Pero ocurre que, precisamente a partir de su peculiar articulación entre marxismo y nación, Mariátegui acabó elaborando una manera específica -peruana, indoamericana, andina- de pensar a Marx y, como siempre, precisamente por ser más peruano se convirtió en universal; de manera que consiguió proponer un marxismo tan diferente como el de Gramsci y el de Lukács, y tan valioso como ambos, gracias a lo cual el Perú recién comenzó a figurar en la geografía del socialismo."

[88] Vallejo, César. *Letter to José Carlos Mariátegui*, December 10th 1926, my translation. https://www.marxists.org/espanol/vallejo/cartamar.htm

remained overladen with political biases, perhaps the category of *indigenismo* should be ultimately separated from the socialist imaginary, and placed within a wider historical frame[89].

As many commentators have noted, such historical placement would have the advantage of interpreting Mariátegui's thought within a wider historical spectrum to think of socio-cultural frictions in Latin America, once two of its fundamental assumptions are interrogated: (1) that there is an essential, integral 'Indigenous reality' which only the Indians themselves can express or communicate, and (2) that the specific revolutionary fate anticipated and imagined by socialism for the Indian is but the inevitable result of them achieving a kind of 'historical self-consciousness' conforming to the tenets of the socialist imaginary. For *indigenismo* could only constitute a "more authentic" representation of the Indian in relation to those "idealized" ancestralisms it claimed to supersede insofar as the future of the rural Indian in particular and the nation in general coincided with the basic collectivist tenets of socialism, nevermind its "adaptation" to the Peruvian context.

This suggestion, however, operates under the assumption that representation comprises something of a monolithic gaze, camouflaging its own idealization as authentic representation. Nothing seems to support this thesis, however, other than the assumption that every attempt at representation results in an epistemological and pragmatic impossibility. With this in mind, we can say that although one must be wary of what Efraín Kristal (1987) names – following Bourdieu - the

[89] Departing from Mariátegui's terminological frame and dialectical methodology, Ismael Marquez for instance situates *indigenismo* within a common alternative, four-stage periodization, which aims to place it in a more ideologically neutral context of cultural production. The first category, that of *Indianismo*, corresponds to the 19th Century 'Romantic' colonial literary production about the Indian, surrendered to nostalgic representations, with no discernible political agenda oriented towards the restitution of Indigenous values and lacking any effort to confront the socio-economic hegemony of the urban elites . It is only with indigenismo that the political goal of vindicating the oppressed Indian becomes defined and an overt aim. Third in Marquez's periodization we find the 'Indigenous literature' to be written by the self-representing Indian writers to come, but which historically never arrived; indeed, this stage becomes not so much a step beyond indigenismo, as Mariátegui conceived, but an integral part of the imagination of indigenista urban writers, in the broader sense defined above. A fourth category, that of "neoindigenismo", now designates representations of the Indian produced after the 1950s, roughly after the publication of Arguedas' *The Deep Rivers* (1958). This last phase assimilates elements of magical realism and modernist literature to depict 'mythological' facets of Indigenous culture, and construe its imagined vindication with an exacerbated sense of lyricism and a disposition toward formal experimentation.

"effect of realism" that affects *indigenista* authors when construing an image of the rural Indian and its future on the basis of given biases, one must be equally wary of an "effect of anti-realism": reifying the rural Indian as an ineffable Otherness, and rendering every discourse as equally idealizing or epistemically impotent before it. Indeed, it is trivially true that in its descriptive and projective dimensions, Mariátegui's narrative follows those specific theoretical ideals which determine his understanding of national and global history. But it doesn't follow that because every idealization must be conditioned by given socio-economic conditions, political imperatives and theoretical principles, that every possible representation is equally distorting or idealizing.

Since it follows that every representation and projection will be thus conditioned by background assumptions and imperatives, at the outset of the *Seven Essays,* Mariátegui does not only accept he is guided by specific political and philosophical convictions, but affirms that the presumption of neutrality is part of that hermeneutic illusion which denies its inherent biases: "My criticism renounces any pretense of impartiality, agnosticism— if indeed any criticism can be so— which I absolutely do not believe. All criticism is informed by philosophical, political, and moral concerns." (Mariátegui 2011: 407) Above all, however, the epistemic anti-realist position not only assumes that knowledge of a different cultural-social-economic context is a misnomer, but misses how interpretation can be construed not only in representational terms – as the *correct* depiction of a particular reality – but as the constructive task to imagine and forge new possibilities for action, intellectual and political production, articulating concepts of theoretical and practical agency. Surely, to imagine a future is to project an ideal fiction about a possible world, issued from a given perspective and context. But from this point again nothing follows about the plausibility or desirability of specific visions of literary creation in its relation to political projects.

This point is of considerable importance, since Mariátegui repeatedly suggests that the transition from *indigenismo* to an Indigenous literature would not merely constitute the transition from an incorrect representation of the Indian to a more correct one, but imagines the emancipation of the Indian as premised on its independence from the representations of mestizo writers. The reduction of *indigenismo* to ideological idealization thus risks underestimating how the dialectical method, as Alain Badiou argues, emphasizes the tasks of creative *ideation* beyond mere *idealization*, such that "… a dialectical mode of thinking will be recognized by its conflict with representation.[90]" And although grounded in the methods and data of the social sciences, the anticipation of the future required also the revision of theory in sight of concrete empirical circumstances and historic contexts. As Mariátegui writes in *The Liberal Economy and the Socialist Economy*[91]:

> And it cannot be said, on the other hand, that Marxism as a *praxis* currently relies on the data and premises of Marx's economy studies, because the theses and debates of all its congresses are not anything other than a continual reintroduction of the economic and political problems, according to the new aspects of reality.[92]

Above all, Mariátegui systematically avoids the temptation of framing a general solution in appraising the tasks for a Peruvian socialism, rejecting thus the "linear conception of history that all countries must necessarily pass through the same process of political and economic development in the formation of a civil society sufficiently strong to support the apparatuses of the state". (Bosteels 2012: 7) In the Preface to *La Escena Contemporánea*, Mariátegui writes:

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[90] Badiou, Alain. *Peut-on penser la politique?*, Le Seuil, 2008, pp. 86. Translated by Bruno Bosteels (Bosteels 2012: 70)

[91] Mariátegui, José Carlos. "La economía liberal y la economía socialista", in *Defensa del Marxismo*, my translation. https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/oc/defensa_del_marxismo/paginas/ix.htm

"Y no se diga, de otro lado, que el marxismo como praxis se atiene actualmente a los datos y premisas de la economía estudiada y definida por Marx, porque las tesis y debates de todos sus congresos no son otra cosa que un continuo replanteamiento de los problemas económicos y políticos, conforme a los nuevos aspectos de la realidad."

[92] Ibid.

> I do not think it is possible to imagine the entire panorama of the contemporary world in one theory.... We have to explore it and know it, episode by episode, facet by facet. Our view and our imagination will always be delayed in respect to the entirety of the phenomenon. Therefore, the best way to explain and communicate our time is one that is perhaps a little bit journalistic and a bit cinematographic. (Mariátegui 2011: 30)

Part journalistic and part cinematographic, socialism is defined by a double task: reporting the present historical moment, but also engaged in the narrative-historic task to imagine a future out from the contradictions internal to its national and global context[93]. This means that there is no essential unity to the Indigenous populations that could be assumed in advance of the integrative enterprise, just as there was no pure "essence" to the Peruvian nation to come. For the disaggregation of Indigenous workers and intellectuals, both urban and rural, must be taken as the factual basis that explains why the Peruvian proletariat has not yet become capable of a national organization, overcoming its social contradictions:

> The Indigenous congresses, misled in recent years by bureaucratic tendencies, have not yet formed a program, but their first meetings indicated a route for Indians of different regions. The Indians lack a national organization. Their protests have always been regional. This has contributed in large part to their defeat. Four million people, conscious of their numbers, do not despair in the future. These same four million people, though they are nothing more than an inorganic mass, a dispersed crowd, are unable to decide its historical course. (Mariátegui 2011: 152)

[93]In several texts from *Mundial* and *Variedades* from the same year, Mariátegui repeatedly referenced cinematic production (particularly, the work of Chaplin) as an example of a contemporary artistic form in which national concerns could be integrated and seen within a wider international context, an example which he extends to the 'journalistic' task of activists and thinkers to interpret their local realities.

To find the means to carry forth this organizational task involves an act of "heroic creation", through which socialism becomes not merely doubled in the Andean world, but singularly adapted to it. As Mariátegui writes in the introduction to the third anniversary volume of *Amauta* in 1928:

> We don't want, certainly, that socialism will be in America, mere doubling and copying. It must be heroic creation. We must give our lives with our own reality, in our own language, the indo-American socialism. Herein lies a mission worthy of a new generation.[94]

The integration of the "inorganic mass" which composes the rural Indigenous populations involved the forging of new institutional means in which intellectuals and workers united[95]. To achieve this, the political intelligentsia of the urban centers would have to play a different pedagogical role than that imagined by liberal progressives: to facilitate the articulation of the disjointed peasantry, not only through the agency of the party, but of a new syndical organization which would awaken "class consciousness" for urban and rural workers:

> But the great masses of peasants are disorganized; they have multiple problems to resolve... In order to focus and resolve these problems, it is necessary to organize and educate the masses as to their class role, and to gather them in peasant leagues and peasant communities that lead to the creation of the *National Federation of Peasant Leagues*… the Indian will be a militant in the union movement, that is, a soldier who fights for the social liberation

[94] Mariátegui, José Carlos, "*Aniversario y Balance*", in *Amauta*, Year III, No 17, 1928, my translation. https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/1928/sep/aniv.htm
"No queremos, ciertamente, que el socialismo sea en América calco y copia. Debe ser creación heróica. Tenemos que dar vida, con nuestra propia realidad, en nuestro propio lenguaje, al socialismo indoamericano. He aquí una misión digna de una generación nueva."

[95] Bruno Bosteels (2012) has suggested that, had he been aware of the emergence of Indigenous revolts across the continent, Marx himself could have amended his colossal dismissal of Latin America, recognizing the inherent potential in pre-Hispanic communitarian forms of property and labor. After all, it was an appreciation of the emerging rural peasant uprisings in countries with such a colonial heritage that led Marx – after 1870, in his studies on Ireland, China, Russia, and others - to revise the thesis according to which the socialist revolution was first to emerge from the most industrially developed countries with a consolidated industrial proletariat class.

> of his class. The objective of communities will then be to realize the full potential of their capabilities, and to bring the federation of all the communities into a single common defense front. (Mariátegui 2011: 347-349)

Mariátegui's revision of Marxism thus begins by complicating the central categories that classical Marxism lays forth, in light of the development of the Peruvian economy and society since colonial times. In particular, he complicates the division of the social terrain in terms of a binary contradiction between an industrial proletariat-working class and the capitalist bourgeoisie. This classical conception, Mariátegui argues, betrays a fourfold socio-economic structure derived from the thwarted colonial heritage and the pre-Hispanic world: (1) a subordinate and exploited multiplicity of Indigenous communities, with their persisting cooperativist labor and collective property modalities, dating back to the "agrarian communism" of the *Ayllu*; (2) the semifeudal control of landowning *gamonales*, with their "medieval" institution of serfdom, derived from colonial consciousness; (3) the indifference and complicity of the republican state and new mestizo bourgeoisie, whose power stems from the urban centers, ultimately subordinated to the interests of the international market; (4) the urban working classes, including both the nascent industrial proletariat class and those subjugated by colonially derived forms of coastal oligarchic rule.

Attending to this fourfold internal structure complicates the Marxian picture in at least two essential ways: the persistence of a semifeudal economy implied the lingering colonial vestiges of pre-modern economic forms and values, and their hegemonic power over persisting pre-Hispanic collectivist economic and productive modalities in the rural economy. But while the former designated a pre-capitalist residue composing the coastal and rural oligarchies, for Mariátegui, the latter indicated the potentials in the Indigenous traditions to lay the foundations for a post-liberal economy, rooted in "…habits of cooperation and solidarity that are the empirical expression of a

communist spirit". Such traditions, above all, constitute for Mariátegui "a formidable productive machinery", measurably superior to the aberrant marriage of capitalism and *gamonalismo* which defined the nation (Mariátegui 2011: 98). This account marked a clear divergence with the more orthodox Marxist-Leninist line pursued by the Latin American *Komminterm*, as it not only proposed to widen the base of the organization of the party through the inclusion of other sectors of society such as the rural peasantry, but proposed a reformulation of the shape of a revolutionary politics to come. It yielded thus a more capacious and generic concept of the proletariat class and class struggle than that composed by industrial wage-laborers in an urban context. As Flores Galindo writes:

> This communal collectivism could serve as the base for the development of socialism in Peru. This was a fundamental thesis, since from it followed a very peculiar image of Peruvian society. While for the International it could be simply defined as 'semi-colonial and feudal', for the Peruvian socialists it pertained to a world in which a nascent capitalism coexisted with the feudalism inherited from the colony and the agrarian communism that gave life to the great peasant masses. The collectivist traits allowed the rural populations to listen and partake in the socialist thought; it is for this reason that the term 'proletariat' acquired a more generic meaning – as has been remarked by Robert Paris – for Peruvian socialists, including in its interior both workers as well as farmers. (Flores Galindo 1980: 31)

In its broadest implications, the revision adaptation of Marxism was but the obverse of the attentiveness of the particularity of the Peruvian context: the rural Indigenous populations are only recognizable as part of the "proletariat" class once one accommodates the theory of contradiction to account for the peculiar economic and social context in which gamonalismo and Indigenous cooperativism coexist within a "capitalist" state. By amplifying the concept of the working class and the account of contradiction within the Peruvian situation, the rural Indian passes from being the

blind spot where they even lack the status of wage-laborers, to an identifiable agency in the political process, mediated as we have seen through the organization of the party and syndicate.

The tasks for the association of workers constituted the political obverse of the multidisciplinary intellectual integration envisaged through the serial publication of *Amauta* and *Labor,* which had an important precedent: in 1918 - before his involvement with French and Italian syndicalism – Mariátegui had co-founded the partisan newspaper *La Razón*, which supported worker and student strikes. Following the May 1919 worker's strike in protest of food costs, Mariátegui led the formation of the *Peruvian Regional Labor Federation* in July 8th, in which a mass demonstration congregated in his honor[96]. The periodical was short lived, but it prefigured the way in which Mariátegui would seek to articulate the labor of intellectuals with the collectivization of rural and urban workers until his death. This project would become an overt strategic objective for the journal *Amauta*, leading to a specification of the new Indigenous peasant proletariat class. Mariátegui noted that the urban working class had already began coordination with the syndical movement, which potentiated "militant aspects" in the rural Indian peasantry:

> The working class' avant-garde makes use of those militant aspects of the Indigenous race, which in the mines or urban centers, and particularly in the latter, come into contact with the syndical and political movement. They become assimilated to its principles and are capacitated to play a role in the emancipation of races.[97]

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[96] With regard to the May 1919 general strike, Mariátegui deemed this to be a historic event "…whose experience led the proletariat to its first attempt at a national syndical organization, under the principle of class struggle."
Mariátegui, José Carlos. "Presentación to El Movimiento Obrero in 1919", published in *Amauta*, 1928.
"El proceso del "paro de las subsistencias", cu-ya experiencia condujo al proletariado a su pri-mera tentativa de organización sindical nacional, bajo el principio de la lucha de clases, está aquí explicado en sus principales factores y aspectos."

[97] Mariátegui, José Carlos. "El problema de las razas en America Latina", in *Tesis Ideológicas,* my translation.
https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/oc/ideologia_y_politica/paginas/tesis%20ideologicas.htm

In an essay titled *The Proletariat of Spirit* (*El proletariado del espiritu*), published in the 15th volume of *Amauta,* Luis Aragón argued that, beyond a coalition between intellectuals and workers, ultimately socialism enjoined their identity under the name of a "global proletariat"[98]. And although Indigenous communities were still in the course of being organized into a united front, the cooperativist productive modalities which persisted across disparate Indigenous populations under the *latifundio* could be potentiated through the labor of syndical organization[99], and the consolidation of the party. More specifically, with regard to the latter, *The Programmatic Principles of the Socialist Party* (1928) provided the outline of a "doctrinal declaration" which at once placed the problematic of the Peruvian working class into the international proletariat struggle, as it indicated the exceptional character of the Peruvian situation, reiterating the need to reconcile Indigenous cooperativism with the productive demands of modern civilization against restorative projects:

> But this, like the stimulation that freely provides for the resurgence of Indigenous peoples, the creative manifestation of its forces and native spirit, does not mean at all a romantic and anti-historical trend of reconstructing or resurrecting Inca socialism, which corresponded to historical conditions completely bypassed, and which remains only as a favorable factor in a perfectly scientific production technique, that is, the habits of

[98] Aragón, Luis. *El proletariado del espíritu*, in *Amauta*: Nº 15, 1928, pp. 3-5.

[99]Mariátegui, José Carlos*, Estatutos de la Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú*, 1929, https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/oc/ideologia_y_politica/paginas/estatutos.htm
With regard to the syndical organization of the working class, Mariátegui defended a unionist and federalist separatism in Peru. Across the periodical *Labor*, two essential articles from 1929 begin to frame the problem of a syndical coalition, in critical relation to the European experience: *Origen y desarrollo de los sindicatos de oficio*, and *Sobre los comites de fábrica y sindicatos de industria*. Placing the problematic of the coordination between industrial workers and the peasantry at its center, these provisory meditations would result in the May 17th 1929 *Estatuto and Programa de Lucha*, laying out the foundation of the *Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú* (CGTP). The syndical movement would thus complement the labor of the party, tilting the political process through legal reform, while keeping the socialist horizon in place.
In his 1929 Mariátegui writes that the creation of the CGTP concretized a long sequence in which attempts at unification for Peruvian workers finally take place, a process dating back to the 1913 *Maritime and Terrestrial Federation* in Callao, passing through the *First Workers' Congress* in Lima in 1922 and the formulation of the *Local Labor Federation* during the same year, leading to the anarcho-syndicalist inflections of the 1923 *Regional Indigenous Workers Federation* and of the 1926 *Local Labor Congress*. The CGTP's efforts were both pedagogical and tactical: collective action towards local reform was to be put to the service of the development of a general "class consciousness", through which urban and rural workers would integrate themselves also to the international proletariat revolution.

> cooperation and socialism of Indigenous peasants. Socialism presupposes the technique, the science, the capitalist stage. It cannot permit any setbacks in the realization of the achievements of modern civilization, but on the contrary it must methodically accelerate the incorporation of these achievements into national life. (Mariátegui 2011: 239)

As summarized by César Ugarte, Mariátegui would identify the following essential traits associated with the communitarian practices in rural Indigenous communities:

> Collective property of the land labored by the 'Ayllu' or group of families, though still divided in non-transferable lots; collective property of water, arable lands and forests by the tribe, that is, the federation of established *Ayllus* surrounding a single village, common cooperation in work, individual appropriation of crops and yield. (Mariátegui 1928)[100]

The organization of the *Ayllu* as a collective labor-unit would then support a different productive model than the liberal proposal to make of the rural Indian small property owners, thereby liquidating their native traditions in a process of capitalist modernization. Moreover, Mariátegui contrasts the prospective socioeconomic vindication guided by appropriative ideal of cooperativism with those "spiritualist ecstasies" which distort the problem of the Indian:

> In Peru, communal property does not represent a primitive economy that has been gradually replaced by a progressive economy founded on individual property. No, the communities have been stripped of their land for the benefit of the feudal or semifeudal large landholdings that are constitutionally incapable of technical progress… The community, however, on the one hand leads to an effective capacity for development and transformation, and on the other hand is presented as a system of production that keeps

[100] Mariátegui 1928, https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariateg/works/7-interpretive-essays/essay03.htm

alive in the Indians the moral stimuli needed for their maximum performance as workers… (Mariátegui 2011: 99)

These "practical reasons", however factually controversial in the last instance, led Mariátegui to postulate the relative advantage of the Indian's productive machinery in comparing coastal and rural agricultural yield, attending in particular to the cotton and sugar plantations in the Peruvian south. The latter's "measurable superiority" provided economic evidence, he argued, against the liberal prospects of fragmentation of the land into parcels for small property ownership:

> The sugar and cotton *latifundios* cannot be divided into parcels to make way for small properties—a liberal and capitalist solution of the agrarian problem—without negatively impacting yield and its profitable functioning based on the industrialization of agriculture. The collective state management of these enterprises is, however, perfectly possible. (Mariátegui 2011: 250)

It is in continuity with this appropriative principle and productivist appraisal that the 1928 *Program of the Socialist Party* conceived of the integration with the peasant populations, beyond the disjunction between capitalist modernity and the ancestralist restoration of "agrarian communism":

> Socialism finds the same in the subsistence of the community in the great agrarian enterprises, in the elements of a socialist solution to the agrarian question, a solution that would have tolerated in part the exploitation of the land by small peasants, there where *yanaconazgo* or small property ownership recommend discarding individual management, to the extent that a collective management is advanced, in those areas where that kind of exploitation prevails. But this, the same as the stimulation that lends itself to the free resurgence of Indigenous thought, to the creative manifestation of its forces and native spirit, does not mean at all a romantic and ahistorical tendency of construction or

> resurrection of Incan socialism, which corresponded to historical conditions that have been completely overcome, and which remains only as an appropriable factor within a perfectly scientific technics of production[101].

In the broadest sense, Mariátegui's amplified concept of the proletariat within the integrative nationalist project entailed reconceiving the category of contradiction for the Peruvian context. Following Alain Badiou (2011), let us recall that in its classical expression the Marxist concept of contradiction was given two distinct formulations within the critique of capitalist economies: (1) *the fundamental contradiction* – expressing the *structural* relation between the forces of production and the private accumulation and control over the means and ends of production; (2) *the principal contradiction* between opposing social classes, proletariat and bourgeoisie, expressing the historical and subjective dynamics of class struggle. Badiou gives the following explanation, which we cite at length:

> The specification of the fundamental contradiction gives us a definition construction in the following manner: capitalist is any social formation in which the private appropriation of the means of production tends to constitute a barrier to the necessary and growing socialization of the productive forces. Under capitalism, the competitive dispersion of property (the multiplicity of subject-profits) enters into a restrictive collision with the process of the organic concentration of the means of production. There you have, the

[101] Mariátegui, José Carlos. "Programa del Partido Socialista Peruano", in *La organización del proletariado*, Comisión Política del Comité Central del Partido Comunista Peruano, 1967, my translation.
https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariateg/1928/oct/07a.htm
"El socialismo encuentra, lo mismo en la, subsistencia de las comunidades que en las grandes empresas agrícolas, los elementos de una solución socialista de la cuestión agraria, solución que tolerará en parte la explotación de la tierra por los pequeños agricultores, ahí donde el yanaconazgo o la pequeña propiedad recomienden dejar a la gestión individual, en tanto que se avanza en la gestión colectiva de la agricultura, las zonas donde ese género de explotación prevalece. Pero esto, lo mismo que el estímulo que se presta al libre resurgimiento del pueblo indígena, a la manifestación creadora de sus fuerzas y espíritu nativo, no significa en lo absoluto una romántica y antihistórica tendencia de construcción o resurrección del socialismo incaico, que corresppndió a condiciones históricas completamente superadas y del cual sólo quedan como factor aprovechable dentro de una técnica de producción perfectamente científica, los hábitos de cooperación y socialismo de los campesinos indígenas. El socialismo presupone la técnica, la ciencia, la etapa capitalista, y no puede importar el menor retroceso en la adquisición de las conquistas de la civilización moderna, sino, por el contrario, la máxima y metódica aceleración de la incorporación de estas conquistas en la vida nacional."

classics say in one voice, what constitutes the base of the social history of humanity. All the rest is superstructure.

The specification of the principal contradiction provides us with an entirely different definition of capitalism. Capitalist is any society in which the central class conflict, the one that organizes political life, opposes the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Such is, the classics state unanimously, the motor of the social history of humanity. The rest is ideology.

Base and motor. Two contradictions, two definitions, a single object – capitalism – and a single doctrine, Marxism. (Badiou 2011: 26)

Badiou notes that the category of the "proletariat" plays a definitional role in both formulations: first as principal "objective" base of the productive force, and second as the opposing subjective polarity that engages in class-struggle against the hegemonic powers. In its structural-fundamental and historical-principal sides, the working class thus refers respectively to (1) an "arrangement of places, quantities, invariants" (base), and (2) to a militant, revolutionary agency (the "motor" of change), which introduces a "coefficient of torsion", i.e. a strong "qualitative shift" in the organization which configures the fundamental contradiction. It is by virtue of producing such a "strong difference" that the proletariat not only opposes the bourgeoisie in its structural placement, but becomes an active subjective force irreducible to the reiteration of class society: "Strong difference (the subjective project of the proletariat, that is, communism, cannot be represented by the bourgeoisie) / Class struggle, and not a simple binary distinction of the social. / Reversible asymmetry, within the problematic of the revolution.[102]" This active agency or 'motor' cannot be reduced to a sheer anarchic force that emerges *ex nihilo*, however, but is conditioned by and relative to the structural dynamics and class placement given by the fundamental contradiction. In this sense,

[102] Ibid.

the two contradictions are not intelligible apart from each other. The fundamental contradiction without the principal contradiction only describes a static objective order; the principal contradiction without the fundamental is in turn a volition stripped from all strategic and programmatic specificity, and so remains helplessly abstract. In short, taken together, "…the definition of capitalism ultimately leads to the divided definition of the working class.[103]"

Following these indications, we better understand how Mariátegui adapts the terms of both the fundamental and principal contradictions to the Peruvian context to understand its structural basis (the socio-economic analysis and grounding) and its revolutionary agency (the rural Indian proletariat). The Indigenous populations are the principal "motor" in a process of class struggle which leads to strong qualitative change in the structuration of Peruvian society, not only a negation of the existing socio-economic order, but a positive and affirmative act:

> All great human ideals have started with a denial, but they also have been an affirmation… It is with pessimistic and negative spirits of this nature that our optimism of the ideal refuses to let us be confused. Negative attitudes are absolutely sterile. Action is made of negations and affirmations. The new generation in our America and around the world is, above all, a generation that shouts its faith, sings its hope. (Mariátegui 2011: 231)

The inextricability of negation and affirmation places Mariátegui's "active philosophy" and Indian proletariat subject in the company of contemporary attempts to reconstitute a materialist dialectics that does not isolate the insurrectionary dynamics of class-struggle from the constructive labor of thought. In this regard, Alain Badiou (2007) proposes that the starting point for the dialectic must lie in understanding the peculiar role played by the subject in the political process, which is at once antagonistic and creative: that historical force on whose behalf negation includes not only the

[103] Ibid.

destruction of the old, but a movement of "subtraction" in which new structural possibilities are materialized and defined as guiding ideals for the development of revolutionary processes in politics and art (as well as science and love – the "four conditions" of philosophy). We cite at length:

> All creations, all novelties, are in some sense the affirmative part of a negation. "Negation", because if something happens as new, it cannot be reduced to the objectivity of the situation where it happens. So, it is certainly like a negative exception to the regular laws of this objectivity. But "affirmation", affirmative part of the negation, because if a creation is reducible to a negation of the common laws of objectivity, it completely depends on them concerning its identity…
>
> I name subtraction the affirmative part of negation.... Clearly, this subtraction is in the horizon of negation; but it exists apart from the purely negative part of negation. It exists apart from destruction. In any case we name subtraction this part of negation which is oriented by the possibility of something which exists absolutely apart from what exists under the laws of what negation negates.
>
> So negation is always, in its concrete action - political or artistic - suspended between destruction and subtraction. That the very essence of negation is destruction has been the fundamental idea of the last century. The fundamental idea of the beginning century must be that the very essence of negation is subtraction[104]. (Badiou 2007)

The semantic resonance is more than superficially apparent: Badiou's emphasis on "affirmation", "subjective creation", and "fidelity" to an "Idea", is continuous Mariátegui's constructive horizon for "creative antagonism", his account of revolutionary "faith" and the ideation

[104] Badiou, Alain. *Subtraction, Destruction, Negation*, presented at UCLA, 2007. Available at: http://www.lacan.com/badpas.htm

of a new "living myth". What underlies this rhetoric is the vocation to define a new revolutionary agency where theological and voluntarist vocabularies are repurposed to socialist, that is *materialist*, aims. The new figure of the subject as a creator, for Mariátegui, as for Badiou, cannot be reduced to the claim according to which revolution involves invention *sui generis*, since true novelty is also the concretizing of an antagonism against existing structures, ideological and socio-economic.

In his 1975-76 book *Theory of the Subject*, Badiou goes on to diagnose two possible and corresponding deviations for the materialist dialectic in relation to the fundamental and principal contradictions. An "active materialism", like Mariátegui's "active philosophy", cannot remain content with the reflective operation given by the metaphor of thought as a "mirror", according to which the subject merely represents the world in its structural composition. But it can neither fetishize the complimentary image of the "asymptote", as an indomable excess to all representation. Materialism, that is, can neither be strictly *structuralist-dogmatist* or purely *dynamicist-anarchist*: it must articulate the two in producing a concept of practice in which revolutionary agency is irreducible to the structural logic of places, but nevertheless remains grounded in it. This entails that although the revolutionary praxis must always recognize the "irreducible remainder" in excess of the symbolic order of "the state", this active remainder is *not* an ineffable mystery only expressed in insurrectionary action. In other words, in resisting the logic of representation, the dialectic must nevertheless retain from the representational image of the mirror the possibility of an address to the Real in its structural basis. It is always possible to positivize that which, within the hegemonic structure, appears as its remainder or excluded force, as the subject emerges as a localized agency, if only to disrupt the logic of places from wherein it emerges as an exceptional force:

> [W]hat we did not know before was determined as a remainder of what has come to be known, at the crossover between the nameless movement through which the real appears as a

problem and the retroaction, named knowledge, which provides the solution…there is no unknowable, even though all knowledge demands its position. (Badiou 2011: 201)

As Badiou elaborates, in revolutionary subjectivation thought becomes of making the un-representable point of a situation by 'supplementing' it with a new presence:

> However, the fact that man can solve a problem, inasmuch as the retroaction of the solution it turns out that this problem posed itself to him, and that he can solve it entirely, guarantees the metaphor of reflection [and the mirror]... The real of knowledge is at all times that which is impossible to know. But that is precisely what asymptotically fixates the future of the reflection. This impossible, therefore, will be known, all the while being placed in the position of possibility (of reflection) by the new supplement in its field[105].

And it is the emphasis on creative agency that likewise allows Mariátegui to reject to anarchic sublimation of subjectivity as a self-sufficient force[106]. As we saw in the first section, in Mariátegui's estimation, it is precisely the overemphasis on a purely destructive conception of revolutionary activity which limited the anarchic justifications of violence against the mestizo hegemony in the late work of Gonzales Prada. As Mariátegui writes in his 1928 essay *The Heroic and Creative Sense of Socialism* – prologue to Valcarcel's *Tempest in the Andes* - it is not towards a negative disposition that the proletariat subjectivity must orient itself, but rather to building a "superior social and economic order", composing itself from the elements of its situation through a generic "human effort":

> A new civilization cannot arise from a sad and humiliated world of miserable helots with no greater merits or faculties than their servility and misery. The proletariat only enters history

[105] Ibid.

[106] This is the deepest insight drawn from Gramsci's rejection of an economicist determinism that appealed to underlying "laws of History" – elaborated in *The Revolution against Das Kapital* - as well as from Sorel's rejection of the idea that the dialectic unfolds as an organic development analogous to the evolutionary process of natural selection.

politically, as a social class, at the moment it discovers its mission to build a superior social order with elements gathered by human effort, whether moral or amoral, just or unjust. And it has not gained this ability miraculously. It has won it by situating itself solidly on the terrain of the economy, of production.[107]

If for Mariátegui, "the bourgeoisie no longer has any myths" then this means that, as Badiou would write decades later "The bourgeoisie has no longer been a subject for quite some time." (Badiou 2011: 200) As Flores Galindo argues, in assessing the ultimate stakes of Mariátegui's project:

> Facing the necessity to summarize what's essential in Marx, [Mariátegui] did not think in any analytic category (merchandise, for instance), or discipline (historical materialism), nor even in a method (the dialectic), but strictly in that its 'exceptional merit' was to have discovered the proletariat, that is, the revolutionary subject. (Flores Galindo 1980: 54, my translation)[108]

The "peasant proletariat subject" cannot be thereby reduced to an insurrectionary force which negates the latifundio: it is its *concrete negation*, anticipating the advent of a new national, collective consciousness, beyond the existing division in Peruvian social reality. The Indigenous literary subject would accordingly not merely stand as the polar opposite of the mestizo, but signal a new collective consciousness within which the contradiction is rendered inoperative. Nevertheless, it remains true that the necessity for a revolutionary politics and art emerges from the alienation of the rural Indian, and is set against the idealizations projected onto it since colonial times.

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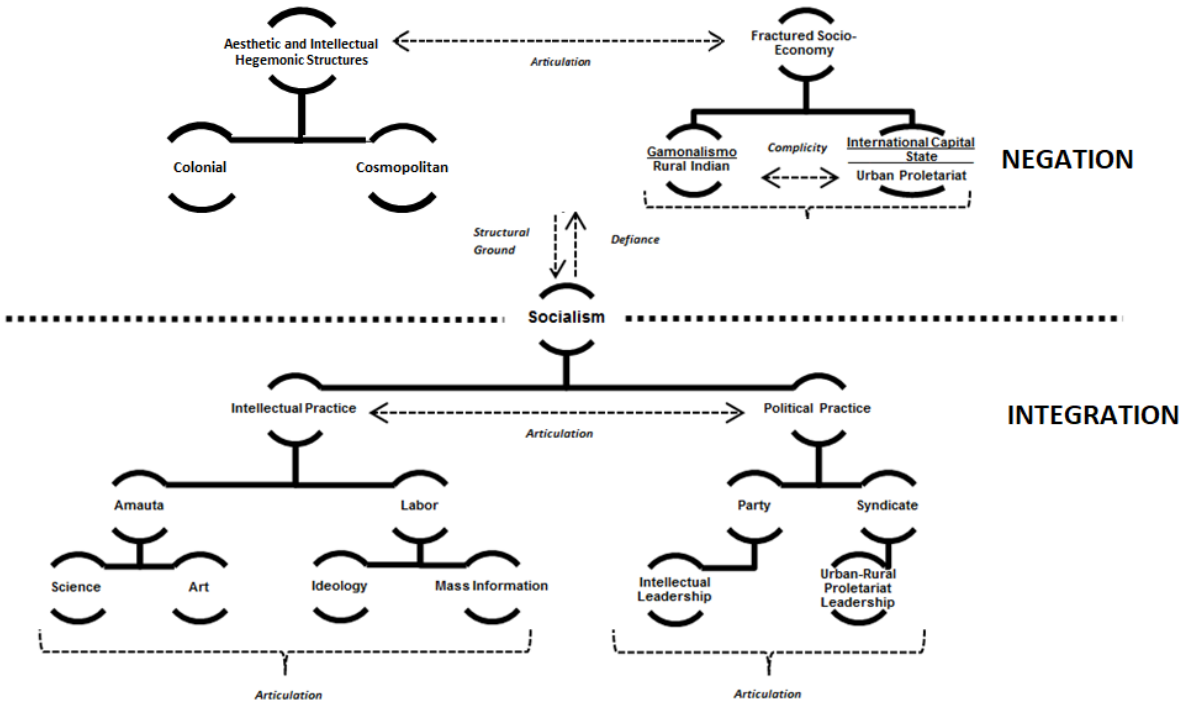
[107] Mariátegui, José Carlos, *The Heroic and Creative Sense of Socialism,* Humanity Books, 1996. http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4ad81c060100vg5e.html

[108] "En su Defensa del marxismo, puesto frente a la necesidad de resumir lo esencial del pensamiento de Marx, no pensó en ninguna categoría de análisis (mercancía por ejemplo), en ninguna disciplina (la economía política), tampoco en algún nuevo continente científico (el materialismo histórico), ni siquiera en un método (la dialéctica), pensó estrictamente en que su "mérito excepcional" consistía en haber descubierto al proletariado, es decir al sujeto de la Revolución."

To sum up, we can see how the re-elaboration of the central Marxist categories – contradiction, negation, revolution, collectivism – around a new figure of the Indian proletariat revolutionary subject gave way to a unique conception of dialectical and materialist philosophy. The following diagram illustrates how Mariátegui conceives of the relation between intellectual-artistic and political practice as part of the integrative practice of socialism *qua* active philosophy:

Diagram 1.2



The elucidation of the peculiarities of Mariátegui's heterodox socialism, and its proximity to contemporary theories of Marxism, by no means entails that his vision of revolution could be simply transposed or directly applied to understand Peruvian reality today. If anything, to subscribe to the dynamic and revisionary conception of philosophy and socialism that Mariátegui presents entails, above all, that we should treat his work in the same way he treated Marx: by amending its postulates and scope in light of changing historical circumstances, following new theoretical developments,

attending to both the peculiarities of the Peruvian context but also of the world. It goes without saying that Peruvian History from the 1930s onward did not follow on the paths that Mariátegui's dialectic anticipated. The socialist obviation of the 'liberal phase' by a socialist society, nurtured by elements of Indigenous cooperativism, could not come into fruition. And the overcoming of *indigenismo* into an 'Indigenous literature' did not take place. Socialism would become the avatar for humanitarian horror and sectarian fragmentation, rather than a horizon for National integration and an actual alternative for collective life. Attending to the divergent paths that history has taken ought to be, then, a starting point in attempting a critical approximation to his work.

- CHAPTER II -

From Existential Despair to Collective Jubilation:

César Vallejo's Materialist Poetics

Introduction – Vallejo's Universalist Poetics and the Question of *Indigenismo*

As we saw in the previous chapter, Mariátegui avows César Vallejo's first two poetic collections for having forged a new lyrical style within the emerging intellectual avant-garde, capturing with unforeseen authenticity the rural indigenous sentiment. Such was the nascent spirit of *indigenismo* within the "cosmopolitan period" of Peruvian history, itself defined by its experimental tendencies, which broke with the colonial dependency on Spanish and colonial forms. Following Antenor Orrego's verdict, Mariátegui avowed Vallejo's "poetic liberty" and "the triumph of the vernacular in writing" against the perceived ornamental excesses of colonial literature, in which the unique voice of the rural Indian was first heard. As such, his works attested to the emergence of a "genuine Americanism", beyond the representations of the rural Indian provided by the urban mestizo:

> Vallejo is a poet of race. In Vallejo, for the first time in our history, indigenous sentiment is given pristine expression… But the Indian is the fundamental, characteristic feature of his art. In Vallejo there is a genuine Americanism, not a descriptive or local Americanism. Vallejo does not exploit folklore. Quechua words and popular expressions are not artificially introduced into his language; they are spontaneous and an integral part of his writing. It might be said that Vallejo does not choose his vocabulary. He is not deliberately autochthonous. He does not delve into tradition and history in order to extract obscure emotions from its dark substratum. His poetry and language emanate from his flesh and

spirit; he embodies his message. Indigenous sentiment operates in his art perhaps without his knowledge or desire[109]. (Mariátegui 1928)

Challenging the idea that Vallejo's work is primarily defined by its ethnic, Peruvian, or Americanist character, some critics have pointed to its universal dimension, which addresses human reality writ large, and engages in a formal experimental spirit which communicated with literary and ideological experiences from around the world. Rafael Gutierrez Girardot (2003), for instance, has insisted in that Vallejo's works must be understood alongside aesthetic and intellectual currents transpiring in Western culture at the turn of the Century, bearing witness to the "destructiveness of the epoch" which afflicted the human race as a whole:

> Universality is precisely what characterizes César Vallejo's work, which is not to suppress his Peruvian, indigenous, American, Hispanic identity…the critical orthodoxy reduced Vallejo to a merely Hispanic-American or Peruvian phenomenon, depriving him thus of that universality which is not the one of a vague and general 'humanity', but the concrete one of his contemporaneity and of his participation in the perception and formulation of the destructiveness of the epoch with those few poets from other cultural traditions that suffered it. (Girardot 2003: 6, my translation)

Although these statements doubtlessly point to a crucial aspect in Vallejo's work, which identifies its universal and tragic 'existentialist' quality, it falls victim to an equally pernicious one-sidedness, in spite of its qualifications. For what Mariátegui conceives as the emergence a "genuine Americanism" in Vallejo's work and *indigenismo* more broadly was precisely the indissociable nature of its universal and its local scope, carrying the indigenous problematic beyond telluric nostalgias into a wider productive horizon. The regionalist expression of literary *indigenismo* and its universal

[109] Mariátegui 1928, https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariateg/works/7-interpretive-essays/essay07.htm

scope were not to be understood as incompatible characterizations between which one had to choose as a hermeneutic ground. They rather constituted simultaneous aspects of a singular poetic voice, fractured between a general human predicament and the contrivances of domestic experience.

Attempting to traverse the disjunction between these dimensions in Vallejo's work, recent commentary has traced deep connections between his early poetry, in which domestic themes appear more prescient, and the overt universalism of his late political poetry. However, to map the connections between the local and the universal merely diachronically, as successive phases in Vallejo's *oeuvre*, also risks obfuscating how both dimensions are inextricable, as part of a coherent, if also conflicted, development. For just as many of the "Paris poems" continue to evoke the rural indigenous sentiment and localize the poetic voice in its cultural and bodily matrix, the poems comprising *Los Heraldos Negros* and *Trilce* address themes that extend beyond such concerns to think of the human condition as a whole, also interrogating the possibility of its collective destiny. Which is to say that the preoccupation with the destiny of mankind in general is also articulated in response to the poet's local and personal experience, binding the poet to a time and place. For *indigenista* writers, the experimental artistic experiments of the urban mestizo were thus used to express the singularity of the Andean world.

Following this basic insight, in what follows I propose a more nuanced articulation between Vallejo's response to the Peruvian and rural indigenous context, his persistent existential "cry of protest" for mankind, his aesthetic literary avant-garde, and his endorsement of a collective-revolutionary destiny for global humanity. Only in seeing these dimensions as part of a coherent intellectual development one may understand the impetus behind Vallejo's contribution not only to poetry or literature, to the integration of "the problem of the Indian" to political and aesthetic questions of a more general scope, which constituted the nascent spirit of *indigenismo* as conceived by

Mariátegui. Following Linda Nochlin, Tom Gunning, and Michelle Clayton, we can say that if Vallejo defies the central tenets of the Latin American tradition as much as those of "literary modernism", it is insofar as he ultimately seeks to reconcile the two opposing dispositions of the modernist artistic project: a *nostalgia for the past* and a *passion for the future*[110]. Nostalgia and passion: the wound of loss that marks individual finitude, and the jubilation of collective being against the destructive force of time and the limits of the body. In its last expression, Vallejo's universalism is not one which merely identifies invariances across human experiences, or which bears witness to his global historical moment, as Girardot suggests. Rather, it thinks of the construction of a new lyric idiom as the aesthetic counterpart of the project to forge a new collective humanity, in Mariátegui's sense, guided by the clamor liberty and justice, beyond national or ethnic determinations. Vallejo did not awaken an "authenticity of expression" insofar as he ruminated in the idiosyncrasies of the rural setting, fetishizing its cultural environs, mourning its ancestral greatness, or vituperating against the Western hubris of the city. Rather, Mariátegui already tells us, Vallejo's lyric voice is at once an expression of the Andean world and also a statement on behalf of mankind as a whole, so that "the poet of a race" is at the same time "the poet of his era":

> This great poet, lyrical and subjective, acts as an interpreter of the universe, of mankind. There is nothing in his poetry reminiscent of the egoistic, narcissistic lament of romanticism. The romanticism of the nineteenth century was basically individualistic; the romanticism of the 1900's is, on the other hand, spontaneous and logically socialist, unanimist. Vallejo, from this point of view, belongs not only to his race but also to his century, to his era. (Mariátegui 1928)[111]

[110] Clayton, Michelle. *Poetry in Pieces: César Vallejo and Lyric Modernity*, UC Press, 2011, Chapter I.

[111] Ibid.

Although Mariátegui's premature death entailed that he could never be exposed to Vallejo's later poetry, already his early works evinced an essential step towards the overcoming of the "dead myths" of liberal writers, prefiguring that "national consciousness" in which the mimetic impetus would be finally overcome, and an original Peruvian literature would come into view.

In the first section, I clarify how Mariátegui's reading of Vallejo's early poetry can be nuanced by attending to his depiction of a poetic subject affected by alienation, and traversed by different possible relations to and kinds of nostalgia. In the second section, I show how in *Trilce* the poetic subject burdened by loss and finitude becomes the basis for a poetic language that thinks the "material bases of experience" (Clayton), where the lyric voice and subject unravels, reduced to the arrest of libidinal drives and bodily functions. Yet in doing so Vallejo also prefigures an embryonic process whereby the inconsistency of the incarnate, finite individual becomes incorporated to minoritarian struggle and collective subjectivity, subverting the time of the flesh in historic becoming. In the third section, I explore the extension of this collectivist orientation in Vallejo's schematic insights into aesthetic and political theory during his European exile, focusing on several of the essays compiled under *El Arte y la Revolución*, and in which he qualifies his appropriation of socialist philosophy toward a universalist vision against partisan dogmatisms. In the fourth and fifth sections, I respectively trace the figure of new militant Indian revolutionary subject in *El Tungsteno*, and of the global proletariat collective subject in *Poemas Humanos*, in which the nostalgic arrest is progressively supplanted by a subversive furor and affirmative jubilation. Taken together, we can see how the nostalgic address to the domestic scene and the rural Indian world which appears since his earlier poetry becomes mediated by a constructive vision of revolutionary politics, against the dogmatism of European Bolshevism. In the sixth and final section, I show how the universalist aspirations of Vallejo's "communist poetry", as Alain Badiou calls it, results in the production of a generic human subject across his final poetic collection, *Spain Take Away from Me This Cup*. At its

lyrical apex, Vallejo's poetic voice acquires a hyperbolic, even cosmic scope, celebrating the collective integrity of Man against both the lawfulness of nature and nature, traversing all strata that bind individuals and groups to contingent orders of identity, including those of race and nation.

I – Vallejo's Heretic Defiance: The Three Nostalgias and The Subject of Loss

(a) The Nostalgia of Absence

For Mariátegui, the definitive interruption of the romanticist literary approximation to the rural Indian demanded a definitive cessation of the *ancestralist nostalgia* characteristic of "*pasadista"* writers, and of the liberal victimization of the Indian which made of acculturation and miscegenation their singular destiny. The ancestralist disposition, Mariátegui tells us, merely longed for a return to an idealized past, and obviated the broken relation to this past in the present. The liberal disposition, in turn, sought to directly thematize the subjugated present of the rural Indian, but victimized it to the point of depriving it of a real future, embracing assimilation under the Westernizing process of capitalist modernization. In contrast to the idealization inherent to both liberal and ancestralist approaches, Mariátegui argues, Vallejo's poetic voice expressed a unique *nostalgia of absence,* through which alienation becomes not only a passive mourning, but an act of "metaphysical protest*"*:

> Very well, Vallejo is supremely nostalgic. He evokes the past with tenderness, but always subjectively. His nostalgia, conceived in lyric purity, should not be confused with the literary nostalgia of the *pasadistas*. Vallejo's nostalgia is not merely retrospective. He does not yearn for the Inca empire in the way that *pasadismo perricholesco* yearns for the viceroyalty. His

> nostalgia is a sentimental or a metaphysical protest; a nostalgia of exile, of absence. (Mariátegui 1928)[112]

For Mariátegui, the "experience of exile" described by Vallejo is not that of idyllic withdrawal, through which the poetic voice would remain in harmonious rapport to his rural environs. It rather incarnates a subject dislocated from the domestic space, suspended between Peru's rural and urban contexts, and between his individual destiny and that of humanity. This nostalgia of absence thus characterizes what Alain Sicard has called "a dialectics of lack" in Vallejo's early poetry, where the concept of "orphanhood" expresses not only familial mourning in relation to the departed brother or to the parental dyad, but moreover generalizes loss as defining the human condition[113]. Insofar as it remains inscribed in his familial and rural context, Vallejo's nostalgia of absence speaks of a past that is never redeemed by manufactured memory, but testifies to a broken rapport in which the subject is defined by a frustrated relationship to the Other. Accordingly, Vallejo's lyric voice is constantly affected by a frustrated relation to its world, to the broken home and his fellow man, provoking a heretical howl against the indolence, or even hatred, of God.

This form of nostalgia, rooted in the immediacy of the domestic scene yet also defining humanity as traversed by loss, is manifested throughout the poems composing *The Black Heralds* and *Trilce*. In *To my Brother Miguel*, which is addressed to the departed sibling, Vallejo not only recollects but re-enacts the past through memory, as the grief of loss becomes magnified in a temporal reversal: recalling an irresolvable childhood game of hide and seek, Vallejo folds the ubiquity of finitude and mourning back onto the intimacy of the domestic scene and the play between brothers.

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[112] Mariátegui 1928, https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariateg/works/7-interpretive-essays/essay07.htm

[113] Indeed, Sicard notes that the concept of orphanhood appears in Vallejo's poetry over a year before the death of his mother, as seen in his poem *Bajo los Álamos*, published in June 1917 in *La Industria*, Trujillo.

The poet relives the past of infancy, as the lyric voice becomes disarmed from all eloquence and is reduced to a child's whimpering tremor in the face of desertion.

> Brother, today I sit on the brick bench outside the house,
> where you make a bottomless emptiness.
> I remember we used to play at this hour of the day, and mama
> would calm us: "There now, boys..."
> Now I go hide
> as before, from all these evening
> prayers, and I hope that you will not find me.
> In the parlor, the entrance hall, the corridors.
> Later, you hide, and I do not find you.
> I remember we made each other cry,
> brother, in that game.
>
> Miguel, you hid yourself
> one night in August, nearly at daybreak,
> but instead of laughing when you hid, you were sad.
> And your other heart of those dead afternoons
> is tired of looking and not finding you. And now
> shadows fall on the soul.
>
> Listen, brother, don't be too late
> coming out. All right? Mama might worry.[114] (Vallejo 2007: 155)

The distance that thwarts Vallejo's frustrated recall within the confines of the household becomes at the same time sublimated, inscribed without measure in a "bottomless emptiness" that

[114] All quotations from Vallejo's poetry are cited from: Vallejo, César. *The Complete Poetry: A Bilingual Edition*, edited and translated by Clayton Eshleman, University of California Press, 2007.

explodes childhood fear back into the ubiquitous arrest of human finitude. As the poem closes, Vallejo's nostalgic retrogression becomes concentrated in the arrest of maternal anxiety: "Mama might worry", the poem ends. This desolate cry, however, is already and subtly an act of metaphysical defiance, enabling what time does not allow: its reversion, and thus the re-enactment of what has come to pass. Through the unraveling of childhood memory, as Sicard has shown, Vallejo's early poetry produces something akin to a "dialectics of lack", as it *"…*translates this presence of death in the very origin of life" [115] (Sicard 2006: 111, my translation).

The "wound of loss" scarring the poet, nevertheless, is but one of the many forms in which Vallejo's poetry attests to a frustrated rapport to the Other. At every scale, from the everydayness of the family bond, to the cosmic stand of Man before God, the poet occupies a dislocated position with regard to his addressee and world. This motif is particularly evident throughout *The Black Heralds*, where paternal absence becomes a surrogate for the existential crisis of mankind in the wake of "the death of God" (Girardot 2003): the figure of the dormant Father in *The Distant Footsteps* (*Los Pazos Lejanos*) reveals the solitude of the unraveling home, while in *The Black Heralds,* the poet, standing for a representative of humanity, is confronted by a scornful and indifferent God. The absence of the divine Father is thus indexed negatively in the annulment of bodily communion, as the "bread is burnt at the oven's door", while the collapse of the familial unit in *The Distant Footsteps* becomes likewise a metonymic symbol for the alienation of Man from the home: "the flight into Egypt, the styptic farewell". ("*la huida a Egipto / el restañante adios*") (Vallejo 2007: 106).

In *The Eternal Dice,* the Father's indifferent quietude becomes again negatively correlated to a placid removal from finitude: the motherless omnipotent being who (pro)creates and gives life but does not lose what it cannot have, for as increate being, outside of time, it was "always well". The

[115] Sicard, Alain. "La dialéctica de la carencia en la poesía de César Vallejo", in *Zama,* 2016, pp. 111.
"Vallejo traduce esta presencia de la muerte en el origen mismo de la vida…"

irony is that it is that the Father's infinite power and disembodied existence deprives him of the singular power of suffering, which is Man's alone. Divine plenitude becomes thus transvalued into a privation, as the negation of loss. By the same token, loss becomes transvalued from a negative power into a vital potency in the face of finitude: only Man can become severed from the Other and from a past, *because it has one*. Alienation, the scarring of time, defines the human subject in its local relation to others, but also in relation to the impossible transcendence of divine shelter. In the poem, Vallejo completes the heretical inversion, as divinity is subtracted from the indolence of the Father and becomes identified with Man's material existence instead:

> My God, had you been a man,
> today you would know how to be God;
> but you, who were always fine,
> feel nothing for your own creation.
> Indeed, man suffers you; God is he! (Vallejo 2007: 99)

As Mariátegui notes, the nostalgia of absence which describes the permanent removal of origins, acquires a more elusive and radical form in several poems throughout *Trilce*, unbinding the poetic object from any clear referent or environs, whether of natural, individual or cultural kind. In *Trilce XXXIV*, the poetic voice laments the loss of "the stranger", whose identity is never disclosed, distancing and temporalizing itself as the "ardent evening" descends into the certain night. Vallejo progressively exacerbates the movement of removal until it acquires an apocalyptic scope, undoing the teleological naivety of youth with a stern confrontation of finality that shuts the world without reason: *at the end*, delivered onto death, time annuls all teleological ends or closure. The erasure of the "diminutive" tenderness of childhood, the end of the youthful "holiday" destines the subject to a finality deprived of resolution. The loss of the world becomes thus an image of the abrupt finality of

human life, where the passing of time afflicts the poet with "unending pain", at once immeasurably intense and yet lacking all finality or purpose.

> That's it for everything at last: the holidays
> your breast-fed obedience, your way
> of asking me not to go out
> and that's it for the diminutive, for
> my coming of age in unending pain
> and our having been born thus for no reason (Vallejo 2007: 235)

Such nostalgia of absence directly afflicts Vallejo's representation of the rural setting and Indian world. In *Dead Idyll* (*Idilio Muerto*), Vallejo inscribes the experience of loss in the distance that separates the poet from the rural home. As he contemplatively addresses to the feminine figure of "his sweet Andean Rita", Vallejo evokes the allure of the "wild rushes and the wild grape" alongside the sweetness of the "sugar cane brandies of May", contrasting the oppressive urban setting which surrounds him: "suffocating Byzantium", symbol of the capital Lima, from which Vallejo writes (Vallejo 2011: 99)[116]. In *Agape,* Vallejo's exiled, orphaned voice becomes again plied onto the social scale, precisely at the interstices splitting the urban and rural worlds. The poet speaks as an alienated observer from the forgetfulness of the city populace, rendered woefully invisible and obsolete: "On this afternoon everybody, everybody passes by / without inquiring or asking me for anything" (Vallejo 2007: 103) The rural scenery reveals thus not the plenitude of cultural heritage, but only the disharmony between the subject and its world. In *Imperial Nostalgias* (*Nostalgias Imperiales*), Vallejo desecrates the memory of the pre-Hispanic past with melancholic irony, describing the degeneracy of the rural space[117]. He describes the unbecoming of the folkloric song derived from Incan culture,

[116] As some commentators have suggested, the figure of Rita may refer to Rita Ulceda, mother of the revolutionary guerrilla leader from 65, Luis de la Puente Ulceda.

[117] This poem in particular evinces the influence of Baudelaire in Vallejo's early works.

brutally describing the poverty of the rural present: those "shaggy Incan troubadours", whose existence is reported by "the poet's exhausted soul" (Vallejo 2011: 51). Yet this does not lead Vallejo to a blunt repudiation of the Western world or urban space, fleeing from the contradictions of his social environs. He presents indigenous rituals not as idyllic objects of remembrance, but as degenerated morsels of a past stripped from any positive force, amputated from their original locus of meaning, and swallowed in a frustrated modernization. Refusing the rhetorical ploy of ancestral vindication, Vallejo's gaze is always positioned as that of an outsider; neither the voice of the rural Indian, nor that of the Western mestizo. The impotence of poet's divided identity mirrors the fractured natural and cultural space that he inhabits: the defeat of indigenous imperial glory presents an irremediably torn world, which defines Peru's past and present. As Michelle Clayton (2011) argues:

> Vallejo's early writings repeatedly stage an attempted return to the lost idyll of home and Andean ritual, only to discover that the lyric subject is unrelentingly excluded from both, restricted to describing what he witnesses and his own externality to it…Indeed it is striking just how many of the poems in *Los heraldos negros* are structured around images of petrification, paralysis, or emptiness, particularly when they refer to poetic reconstructions of Andean culture; and indeed, those many poems that have been taken as celebrations of the vitality of traditional culture can more pointedly be read…as a veiled critique of that culture, of the rituals that made it as static as the urban literary bohemia that implicitly rejected it**.** (Clayton 2011: 36)

In *Babel*, Vallejo outstrips the domestic rural scenery, rendered ruthlessly "without style", referring to the disarticulated aesthetic character of its spatial contours through colloquial

descriptivism. Linguistic and spatial-architectonic lack of ornamental grandeur becomes at once the expressive vehicle and the object to which the poet relates:

> Sweet styleless home, built
> from only one blow and of only one piece
> of sunflower wax. And in this home
> she damages and arranges; sometimes says:
> "The poorhouse is nice; quite all right!"
> And other times she begins to cry! (Vallejo 2011: 51)

Vallejo unravels the figure of the Babylonian tower, Western symbol of the hubristic desire, such that the edifice of memory is delivered to the arbitrary intuition of the domestic cleaning-lady, as she dogmatically adjudicates the admissible from the inadmissible. Her spontaneous judgment oscillates between inexplicable aesthetic satisfaction and an equally elusive situational abhorrence. But the identification of the banality of domestic labor with the towering Babylonian Western monument does not revert into a glorification of the household space, any more than it provokes a provincialist avowal of aesthetic intuition over reflexive knowledge. Rather, the contrivances of sensory immediacy and the familiarity of the domestic appear every bit as inaccessible to understanding, every bit as shrouded in ineffability as absolute erudition. It is thus not only that finitude forecloses omniscience: Man cannot give cohesion to the banal materiality and everydayness of experience, even in its most mundane endowments. What proves in any case impossible is overcoming alienation by restorative act, since loss lingers from the start, and until the end.

This resistance to epistemic capture and semantic coherence warps the poetic language in its attempt to represent the world it perceives and thinks. Vallejo's voice is put continuously in a precarious position, not only in relation to its external environs, but negotiating with a material

reality resistant to narrative or discursive recovery. Anticipating what will become a prescient motif throughout *Trilce,* in *Prayer on the Road* (*Oración del Camino*), he upsets the harmonious association of poetic language with the wellspring of organic productivity, reducing the lyric form to the stench of dead matter (manure). Its aerial symbol (the "singing lark") is given over to biological decomposition, overwhelmed by the enveloping soil. Its "saintly gold" is mummified and embittered in the valley; the "marble pillars" which consecrate the past ('*consagrados marmoles*') are ruinously fragmented in shards and epidemic outbreaks ("*brotes*"). Under the effects of materiality, language, memory and even *time itself* decompose, so that cultural deterioration and organic decay subordinate the Peruvian landscape and its history. The stench of space and time, the putrefaction of matter now polluting the "light of gold", is carried through the expiring power of a "dying sun", whose cessation brings about the end of life itself (Ibid). The poet's agitated language is then no longer the carrier of lyric beauty, but communicates an irreparable anxiety before a coruscating world. In what is doubtlessly one of Vallejo's most Baudelairean moments, he writes:

> An odor of time lingers fertilized by verses,
> for the shoots of consecrated marble that would inherit
> the auriferous song
> of the lark rotting in my heart! (Vallejo 2011: 89)

As an intermediary, horizontal displacement relative to the human and the personal, in *Trilce XXVI*, the experience of absence is indexed to the rural indigenous world as a whole, where death becomes not only a cultural but aesthetic destiny: the "Cuzcos moribund" are then coeval with the "moribund alexandrias" of the unraveling of *modernista* aesthetics carried forth throughout *Trilce.* The rural scene enters the vortex of urbanization and commerce, where the "young alpacas" are morphed into livestock for cloth and coats, reducing the fetishized mystique of the natural and rural

traditional setting to the banal circuit of commodification. This transfiguration of the social setting under a thwarted modernizing process is expressed in uncanny unison to the visceral properties of the transfigured body, producing the monstrous image of the "coated man" inhabiting this conflictive social space in tension with nature with his "arms morphed into legs". Nostalgia voices not only the poetic exile from the Indian world that it problematically represents, but the very destruction of this world in the present.

> Undone knot of the sinamayera's
> lacteal gland
> good for brilliant alpacas
> for a coat of useless feather
> - arms more legs than arms! (Vallejo 2007: 217)

(b) The Nostalgia For What is to Come

In addition to the nostalgia of absence, Mariátegui finds an additional kind of nostalgia in Vallejo's poetics, which he characterizes in the *Seven Essays* as the "nostalgia for what is to come" ("*la nostalgia de lo que vendrá*")[118]. Unlike the "nostalgia of the future" which, as Alain Badiou (2014) argues, organizes the "future anterior" of revolutionary poetry, in which the moment of collective triumph is anticipated with solemn melancholy, Vallejo celebrates the relief of vital cessation, in the definitive interruption of suffering through death (Badiou 2014: 104). In *Absent*, Vallejo writes:

> Absent! The morning when, like a rueful bird,
> I go away to the shore of
> the sea of shadow and silent empire,
> the white pantheon will be your captivity. (Vallejo 2007: 43)

[118] Mariátegui 1928, https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariateg/works/7-interpretive-essays/essay07.htm

In these lines, the nostalgic sentiment is woven by way of a unique temporal inversion: the poetic voice is foreclosed from knowledge ('The Mystery', "*El Misterio*", a clear nod to Darío's *modernista* aesthetics), as time sentences the absent subject it addresses to an abstract captivity, anticipating the future moment of erasure from existence. Vallejo expresses the patheticism of a vengeful triumph in the prospect of a personal death that at once annuls the experience of loss as it destines its addressee to guilt and mourning. For in death the alienation of the subject from the Other is sublimated into a distance without measure, "more far than far" (Ibid). At the same time, the absentee, defined by her affective and absolute removal from the poetic voice, paradoxically, can only come closer to it through death, to the point of "captivity", since death is nothing other but a kind of absolute absence, the pure and empty form of loss as such. Vallejo thereby conjures the paradoxical affect whereby the poetic voice no longer speaks from a determinate place but rather retroactively from an anticipated future, expressing a rancorous jubilance in the certain future in which the distance separating the Other from the subject will be definitely erased: the Other sinks into the black nothingness of the "sea of shadows", as well as into that white nothingness, the "white pantheon" and "penitent lacerated whitenesses" that erase all asymmetry between subject and its world (Ibid). In this form of nostalgia, as existential affliction is therefore no longer specifiable in terms of individual, contingent determinations - not even those of race and place – but rather sublimates the tragedy of human finitude into the warped triumph of the abandoned. The present, punctured by the nostalgia for the future, gives the anticipatory rejoicing of the unrequited to be at once relieved on alienation in death.

We now have the template for three kinds of nostalgia, moving from the reactive ancestralist dream of restoration, to the twofold determinations of the progressive *indigenista* spirit, specifying three different possible relations between the subject, its world, and time. *Ancestralist nostalgia*, as the

idealized caricatures of the mestizo imagery remains caught in the sterile desire for the return of an ideal past or restored rapport to the Other. The *nostalgia of absence* in turn laments loss and absence *in the present*, its irremediably dislocated and forlorn condition as an emblem of protest to the world it inhabits. Finally, the *nostalgia for what is to come* condenses the affect for what *will be lost* in an annulled future, as the hallmark of finite being delivered onto death. This "anticipatory nostalgia", Mariátegui tells us, occurs precisely the point in which the local voice suddenly acquires universal scope: it concentrates the suffering of "three centuries", but also functions as a subversive call, and becomes thus an act of "metaphysical protest" on behalf of humanity.

II – A Materialist Reduction of the Subject: Hermetism, Sexuality and Temporality in *Trilce*

Beyond the two forms of nostalgia that Mariátegui identifies across *The Black Heralds* and *Trilce*, one witnesses Vallejo grappling with the possibility of a future in which collective practical engagement is conceived as a means to confront alienation altogether. This problematic, obscure relation to a real future becomes as much a question of existential coping as one about the aesthetic mission of the poetic act, and finally a political question about collective existence. If the ideal behind *Trilce* constitutes an attempt, as Vallejo tells us, to fulfill "the sacred duty, of man and artist, to be free", then this must not only be understood as a question of formal subversion, or as a declaration of the nascent spirit of a new aesthetic avant-garde[119]. Rather, it forms part of an attempt to understand how the living subject can achieve liberation in the face of finitude, facing a fractured social bond, and accepting the constraints of materiality without relapsing into patheticism. In other words, the *formal* experimental tendencies in *Trilce* are continuous with an attempt to think

[119]Vallejo, César. *Epistolario general*, Lectorum Pubns, 1982.
"…la obligación sacratísima, de hombre y de artista ¡la de ser libre"

substantively about a possible horizon for human action that is consistent and yet defiant of man's alienated condition as an individual, and as a member of particular social, ethnic or national group.

Accordingly, in what follows I propose to read *Trilce* as part of what recent commentary has denominated Vallejo's "materialist poetics", which thinks of the relation that the embodied subject holds to time and history[120]. More precisely, I argue that the articulation between Vallejo's aesthetic ambition and existential struggle leads to an interrogation concerning the pragmatic conditions for historical change, implying both the tasks of artistic invention and collective emancipation.

(a) The Material Bases of Experience

As we saw, already in *The Black Heralds*, the two forms of nostalgia expressed by Vallejo implied a tensional negotiation with the ornamental and symbolic tendencies of *modernismo*, upsetting its poetic norms in manifold ways: through the interruption of prosody, neologistic invention, the introduction of the vernacular and the archaic, etc. Radicalizing this subversive impetus, *Trilce's* experimental and hermetic language exacerbates a discordant rapport between an alienated poetic voice, on the one hand, and an inconsistent, meaningless and fragmentary referent, on the other. As Michelle Clayton emphasizes, Vallejo produces simultaneously a new view of the poetic subject and object, but also of the problematic relation woven between the two through the poetic act:

> While mutilating *modernismo* and ripping rhetoric to pieces, *Trilce* also allowed for the emergence of a disconcertingly human, poetically incorrect lyric voice that is audacious and vulnerable at the same time. This voice is no longer the centered and often celebratory of romantic poetry but instead belongs to a subject who complains, stutters, and frequently fails to keep hold of his own discourse, who makes spelling mistakes and invents words, who refuses to separate scientific and literary language, who sometimes eschews language

[120] I trace some predominant critical vectors in the contemporary literature about Vallejo and *Trilce* in Appendix I.

> altogether in favor of numbers, who reveals himself in moments of the basest physicality—yet who also, paradoxically, soars lyrically… *Trilce's* voices neither fully articulate a location nor incarnate an identity but rather propose a temporalized, partial, and contingent relationship to place and the lyric speaker's position within it (Clayton 2011: 69)

For Vallejo, it is only by upsetting the order of common-sense language and the pulchritude of the poetic idiom that this discordant rapport may be thematized, attesting to the "material bases of experience" with disarming realism (Clayton 2014: 99). Vallejo's introduction of the vernacular and archaic in *Trilce* is thereby complemented by the introduction of scientific jargon and mathematical vocabulary, carrying forth a ruthless reduction of semantic content to somatic function. Vallejo de-stabilizes the self as a coherent locus of meaning, such that the registers of affect, language and tradition become increasingly precarious. The erudition and majesty of the lyric voice is pulverized into the impotence of an infant's babbling, as eloquence collapses into cacophony. Julio Ortega describes this as the "erosion of the lyric" in *Trilce,* where *"*…the poem sets the scene of a living in babbling" ("*un vivir en balbuceo*)" (Ortega 1986: 13)[121]. Throughout these poems*,* the subject becomes liquidated in his banal incarnate nature, marked by biochemical, libidinal and formal indexes which carry no intentional, qualitative or affective specificity.

In particular, Vallejo proposes to re-inscribe the experience of alienation and the frustrated rapport to the Other by positively indexing those impersonal libidinal processes which underlie the fabric of emotion and human relations. In doing so, Vallejo does not simply "aestheticize" the material world by interjecting the literal into the literary; rather, as *Trilce IX* expresses with perhaps unmatched clarity, he disassembles the consistency of the lyrical subject and of the human voice, so

[121] Ortega, Julio. *Teoría poética de César Vallejo. Providence*, Del Sol, 1986.

that the generational and temporal drama of human existence reveals only a primal repetition: the reiterative thrust of lust, copulation and procreation, and the iterative multiplication of bodies:

I sdrive to dddeflect at a blow the blow
Her two broad leaves, her valve
opening in succulent reception"
from multiplier to multiplier
her condition for excellent pleasure
all readies truth (Vallejo 2011: 182)

Such reduction operates with grueling, visceral violence and deliberate vulgarity across *Trilce*. In *Trilce XIII*, Vallejo enacts a violent metonymic play, in which the loved Other is reduced to her bodily parts, and love is reduced to the transparency of desire. In its prosaic forthrightness, the objectification of the subject distils affect into thought, voided of any semblance of sentimental depth: the "old feeling" accordingly "degenerates", as the heart becomes "simplified" into "brains":

I think about your sex.
My heart simplified, I think about your sex,
before the ripe daughterloin of day.
I touch the bud of joy, it is in season.
And an ancient sentiment dies
degenerated into brains[122]. (Ibid: 191)

The defiance of humanist sentimentalism becomes coeval with an extension of the heretical spirit, directed against the destructive effect of time which destines finite beings. In the second stanza, the allure of the flesh, we are told, exceeds in power even death: for although "begotten by God himself", death is in the end "less harmonious and prolific" than the spatial "grooves" of Man's

[122] "Pienso en tu sexo. Simplificado el corazón, pienso en tu sexo, ante el hijar maduro del día. Palpo el botón de dicha, está en sazón. Y muere un sentimiento antiguo degenerado en seso"

fecund animal body, that "free beast" that "…enjoys where it pleases, where it can." (Ibid) Implicitly subverting Quevedo's romantic triumphalism, it is ultimately sex that is constant, not love, beyond death: the blind productivity of life in its generative prowess. The poem concludes as the voice escalates into sheer noise, the "mute thunder" of orgiastic tremor which shatters all eloquence and linguistic propriety: "Rednuhtetum!" (Ibid) The heresy against the human in the name of materiality becomes subsequently extended to the familial structure which localized domestic nostalgia in *Los Heraldos Negros*. In *Trilce V*, in particular, Vallejo overtly ordains the materialist play on the restlessness of bodies as a means to dispel the parental bond characteristic of his earlier poetry, relegating the relation between begetters and children to the blindness of the procreative impulse:

> Dicotyledons group. From it petrels
> overture, propensities for trinity,
> finales that begin, ohs of ayes
> believes to be rhinestoned with heterogeneity (Vallejo 2011: 233)

In these lines, mankind is first reduced to biological process in the sexual dyad: a group of *two* "dichotyledons", each coterminous in the other. Through a simple numerical reduction, Vallejo extirpates Man from divine transcendence: the Two of sexed humanity against the divine One; the heterogeneity of human rapport against the infinite consistency of the absent Father. The Two thus *are* "without being more" ("*sin ser más*"); they linger on "without being heard" and "without being seen". As it consummates the reproductive function, the Two evinces "propensities for trinity"; as subject to the temporal dehiscence of living bodies, human life is barrenly defined as those "endings that begin" (Ibid). Finally, the Two simultaneously is situated between the black nothingness of 0, coeval with death and absolute indifference, and the infinite resonance of the wholesome 1, symbol of absolute identity and consistency. Rather, the Two remains suspended, split by sexual difference

and alienation, as "newlyweds in eternity", situated between the nadir of Zero and the plenitude of the One, ultimately defined by its temporal becoming: the passage from inexistence to existence, which tilts existence from Zero, "…until it wakes the 1, making it stand".

But libidinal defiance also acquires a properly socio-economic dimension, in *Trilce*. Paradigmatically, in *Trilce XLVIII*, Vallejo sexualizes numerical succession, drawing an analogy between the orgiastic ascent of libido to monetary accumulation, projected into the austere coins that make up the poet's "70 Peruvian soles", entering an escalating vector as the poet grabs the "penultimate coin" which suddenly stacks up into another, and so onto infinity: "This coin, being 69, bumps into 70, then scales 71, bounces on 72", "vibrating and struggling", augmenting as it screams ("letting out yelllls"), so that the infinity unleashed in numerical succession becomes indiscernible from the totality of human life: "all numbers / the whole of life"[123]. At the same, the reductionist gesture becomes transvalued into a latent potency for a kind of subversion. No longer a mere "cry of protest", the heretical act in *Trilce* thus acquires a measure of confidence, pitting matter against the human voice, and the divine, at once. In *Trilce XXXVI,* Vallejo channels the reductionist gesture through pure mathematical operations, conterminously dividing sexed humanity, in order to finally unleash the vital productivity of the body:

> We struggle to thread ourselves through a needle's eye,
> face to face, hell-bent on winning.
> The fourth angle of the circle ammoniafies almost
> Female is continued the male, on the basis
> of probable breasts, and precisely
> on the basis of how much does not flower! (Ibid: 239)

[123] "…todos los guarismos, / la vida entera". The prominence of the use of numerical symbols in Vallejo's work has been exhaustively studied in the literature. See Coyné (1955), Meo Zilio (1960), Larrea (1963), Abril (1963), Yurkievich (1966), Ferrari (1968), Vega (1974), Salvia (1978), and Fernández (1980).

Continuity, probability, division: the poem engenders a quantificational order in which mathematical concepts register more than a purely formal symbolism, but become the medium to capture the carnal furor of desiring bodies. The mutual arrest of the sexes is thus "rooted" ("*a raiz*"), operating not over abstract quantities, but mapping their measurable contingency, assigning a probabilistic index which "holds in" an uncertain future and incarnates a "standing imperfection". At the end, poem enacts a transvaluation of orphanhood, displacing the experience of suffering from existential defeat into a latent potency: the splitting of the evenness of the Two into the oddness of the new life, whose anonymity signals the promise of the future:

> Make way for the new odd number
>
> potent with orphanhood! (Ibid)

(b) The Collective Subject to Come: Materiality, Animality, History

Attesting to a temporal prison with no escape, and tethered to the fatal dehiscence of the body, we might ask: does not the poetic freedom belabored in *Trilce* in the last instance coincide with the denial of all agency, leaving no integral subject to issue an address, nor the consistency of an object to be addressed, thus reducing the relation between the poet and world to the degeneration of temporalized matter? If so, then Vallejo's "materialist poetics" would entail a kind of anti-humanist nihilism, in which the future becomes definitively erased in the dusk of the individual.

But this would be an overly hasty interpretation, for Vallejo also ventures to conceive of a new subject that enacts a subversion of finitude, beyond the constraints of bare animality, in which the time of the individual is superseded in collective becoming. In this regard, William Rowe (2013) calls attention to *Trilce XXXVIII*, where Vallejo evokes the tension between societal complacency

and an emergent promise for historical change. The poem's central metaphor: that of the abstract "crystal", condenses a still-unrealized time, a nameless materiality which resists the voice that interdicts it as it awaits incarnation. Rowe describes it as "…the material un-named and waiting to be re-named… is not precisely undetermined, or a-historical, or simply natural. It is not some sort of pure substance as such.[124]" The crystal is first defined by its geometrical integrity and resilient stand, anticipating a process of temporalization: it does not "surrender through any of its sides" ('*no dase por ninguno de sus costados*')". It thus harbors a dormant power identified with coming-incarnation (the "bread yet to come"), as it awaits being "sipped in the rough" ("*sorbido en bruto*") by a "future mouth without teeth" ("*la boca venidera / sin dientes*."). Entering this body with its ideal integrity intact, the crystal becomes embodied form, resisting decomposition, clearly contrasting the stillborn arrival of the "burnt bread" and thwarted productivity from *The Black Heralds*. As it becomes observed and interjected, the crystal thus stoically rejects the attempt to "humanize it" back into the voice which addresses it. Lacking "animal affections" ("*cariños animales*"), colorless, the crystal "will be sent for love and for a future", as its abstract existence enters a new collective being; it grabs hold of the "sugar mold for names" ("*horna de los sustantivos*"), and while refusing "animal affections" it goes on "to form new lefts", named also the "new Less" ("*los nuevos menos*) (Vallejo 2011: 243, translation modified). The becoming incarnate of the crystal is thereby identified thus with a kind of minoritarian struggle, signaled in the numerical figure of the negative: neither the mere positivity of the 'animal order' which ordains the call of individual being, nor the crystalline zero of the abstract Idea. The "new Less" come into existence as the Idea becomes materialized, structurally becoming individualized as what Alain Badiou (2009) has recently called "the inexistent of a world". For Badiou, the inexistent signals a historical process of intensification and subjectiviation, whereby a

[124] Rowe, William, "The Political in *Trilce*", in Politics, Poetics, Affect: Re-visioning César Vallejo, edited by Stephen M. Hart, Cambridge, 2013, pp 8.

nameless multiplicity with no force suddenly appears with 'maximal intensity', becoming a "strong singularity", and so reorganizing the positive distribution of bodies and languages in a world[125]:

> Generally speaking, given a world, *we will call 'proper inexistent of an object' an element of the underlying multiple whose value of existence is minimal. Or again, an element of an apparent which, relative to the transcendental indexing of this apparent, inexists in the world*. (Badiou 2009: 322, author's italics)

The passage of Vallejo's crystalline being into the collective body of the "the new less" anticipates thus a nameless collective agent, defined by the unqualified pursuit of "love and a future", resisting the allure of "animal affections". Accordingly, Vallejo anticipates a different production than the procreative circuit of sexed bodies: his "materialist poetics" are not merely descriptive, but projective and prescriptive. For the "sacred duty to be free" enacts aesthetic subversion through a gesture of "political agitation" which, like Mariátegui, Vallejo thinks is the lasting subversive heart of the Romantic tradition. As he had already written in his 1815 thesis:

> The principles of literary freedom were, after all, genuine manifestations of the free, confused and complex social and political agitation of the epoch. And so the lemma of the disciples of forward-thinking Romantics was the renovation of style and of the metric in

[125] In negotiating the poetics of *Trilce* with a nascent concept of temporality and History, Rowe goes on to suggest three possible readings of the relation between "the Subject, politics, and number", favoring a reading he identifies with Badiou's mature theory of subjectivation and of the event, as a rupture in the temporal fabric in moments of invention:

> The third [interpretational orientation] would be to follow Badiou's later book *Being and Event*, and to hypothesize that the Subject of *Trilce* is the subject of an event, where the event is taken to be a 'creation ex nihilo, a chance to begin again from scratch, to interrupt the order of continuity and inevitability', and where 'what is encountered through an event is precisely the void of the situation, that aspect of the situation that has absolutely no interest in preserving the status quo as such… Event, in this context, should be taken in the strong sense of an epochal change which breaks with the order of the status quo, i.e. breaks the order of what can be numerated in the situation…If the event in this sense opens the possibility of a universal truth, and it's in that truth that the Subject finds its existence, then the problem with this third stance, which is the most difficult one to work out, is the question what would be the event in Trilce? In other words, one can speak of an event in the later poems, especially of course those of *España, aparta de mí esta cáliz*, but that's not the case with *Trilce*. (Hart 2013: 12)

molds of greater free spontaneity, for the purposes of enveloping in them the new practices of the century.[126]

The essential question that follows, and which takes us beyond the embryonic historical musings found fragmentarily in *Trilce* and into Vallejo's work since his exile in Europe, remains the question prefigured in *Trilce*: how to reconcile the experience of loss and deliverance onto death which destines the material basis of living bodies to the sundering of time, with a productive, *concrete* notion of historicity and subjectivity which defies mere repetition and brings about a real future?

III - The Paris Years – Vallejo's Aesthetics of Transmutation in *El Arte y la Revolución*[127]

A closer look at Vallejo's intellectual production after his exile to Europe in 1923, during the so-called 'Paris years', reveals how the experience of alienation opened to specify a collective horizon underwritten by inventive passion. The critical appropriation of Marxist-Leninist thought since 1927 allowed him thus to clarify the subject which in *Trilce* remained but a generic figure of minoritarian struggle, and the role that the poetic act plays in relation to possible emancipatory-political ends. In this regard, we must understand Vallejo's involvement with socialism as part of the attempt to interrogate the nature and possibilities for human liberty first, and only secondarily as an affinity with a particular kind of politics, tethered to a specific historical site or sequence. In a letter to Pablo Abril dated December 27, 1928, Vallejo writes of his progressive immersion in revolutionary thought, as part of a vital, personal development:

> I am beginning to develop a revolutionary feeling, through my lived experience more than through learned ideas[128] (Vallejo 1928).

[126] Cited in Clayton 2014, pp. 49.

[127] All translations from *El Arte y la Revolución* in what follows are my own. The entirety of the original text and the references are available at: https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/352721/mod_resource/content/1/Vallejo.%20El%20arte%20y%20la%20revoluci%C3%B3n.pdf

Like Mariátegui, Vallejo would progressively see socialism not as a fixed doctrinal core to be blindly emulated elsewhere, but as an evolving enterprise in its aesthetic and political expressions. But unlike Mariátegui, for Vallejo, the spirit of socialism was principally not one reducible to a nationalist program for social integration. Rather, it was conceived as a universal project for human liberation which expressed at once an aesthetic and social mission beyond national boundaries and contingent organizational-partisan affiliations. Vallejo's first paradigmatic referent for a social model was in fact not the Soviet revolution, but rather the Parisian intellectual space, which exemplified a universal dimension in "…a vital and human exploration, that is, generous and uncorrupted"[129]. In a chronicle written in November 1926 titled *The Twilight of the Eagles,* published in *Mundial*, Vallejo speaks of his "becoming-Parisian" as a process of universalization in intellectual cooperation. More than a site for multicultural encounter, Vallejo avows Paris as a "cosmic city", enabling the free-association and collaboration among members of multiple origins and identities, a social pact guided only by creative desire under "coexistence" (*'convivencia'*; more literally *living-with*). As Vallejo writes, "Paris is New York, Berlin, London, Rome, Vienna, Moscow and, also, Paris.[130]"

The avowal of the Parisian space as a model for cooperative intellectual labor would appear distinctly in the *Human Poems* (*Poemas Humanos*), where Vallejo rehearses the individual's sundering by the cyclical ubiquity of time, intercalating between French and Spanish. Yet beyond the circularity of the passing of seasons, Paris is named paradoxically the singular "kingdom of the world": "*¡c'est Paris, reine du monde!*" ("It is Paris, the kingdom of the world!"). Bringing death to death itself, the poem

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[128] Cited in Clayton 2014, pp. 144.

[129] Ibid,167. Clayton translates Vallejo's "acendrada" as "deep-rooted", which changes crucially the meaning of the sentence. For Vallejo, Paris is not a site where a deep-rooted identity becomes expressed, but rather where individuals are *uprooted* from their national determinations in sight of a new collective form of pragmatic and intellectual exchange. Vallejo's designation of "acendrada", taken to mean an 'uncorrupted' expression, conveys how corruption involves the compromising of universality in sight of individual interests.

[130] Vallejo, César. "El crepúsculo de las águilas", in *Mundial*, December 17th 1926, my translation.
"París es Nueva York, Berlín, Londres, Roma, Viena, Moscú y, además, París."

anticipates the celebratory internationalism of the *Hymn to the Voluntaries to the Republic*, where the Spanish volunteers from around the globe announce a future in which "only death will die":

> Heat, París, Autumn, so much summer
> In the midst of the heat and of the city!
> ¡*C'est la vie, mort de la Mort*!
> It's as if they had counted my steps (Vallejo 2011: 436)

The universalist ideal would guide Vallejo's articulation of the relation between art and politics toward a conflicted critical stance with regard to Soviet Marxism, informing the subsequent figurations of the revolutionary subject which appear in his literary works. As with Mariátegui's materialist appropriation of religious concepts, Vallejo secularizes theological-religious vocabulary to define the distinctiveness of the revolutionary spirit. In a piece published in *Mundial*, August 31st 1928, titled *The Communist Spirit and Fact* (*El espíritu y hecho comunista*), Vallejo highlights in the incipient promise of "…an authentic and virginal political movement that, if you want, may be assimilated into a new religious liturgy"[131]. And in his polemical text *Russia in 1931*, at the height of his "Stalinist" phase, Vallejo echoes Mariátegui in identifying socialism with the birth of a new "myth", and even a new "dogmatic": "we can neither ignore the existence in the socialist revolution of a new myth and a new dogma. But this myth and dogma are equally of materialist essence and Structure: which is to say, economic.[132]" (Vallejo 2014: 106) However, short of promoting blind attachment to doctrinal principles, the "faith" and "dogmatism" in question takes as its non-negotiable basis of revolutionary praxis the necessity of revision and experimentation.

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[131] Vallejo, César. "El espíritu y hecho comunista", in *Mundial* no. 429, August 31 1928, my translation.

[132] Vallejo, César. *Rusia en 1931*, Lingkua Digital, 2014. pp. 106. my translation.
"Tampoco hay que desconocer la existencia en la revolución socialista de una nueva mítica y esta dogmática son igualmente de esencia y estructura materialistas, es decir, económicas."

Indeed, several of the texts compiled under the title *Art and Revolution* (*El Arte y la Revolución*), written between the late 1920s and early 1930s, deal explicitly with the refusal of a fanatical dogmatism. In *The Lessons of Marxism* (*Las lecciones del Marxismo*), written January 19th 1929, Vallejo criticizes the crass projection of Marxist categories into the life of communities as the "human calumny" of "…forcing social reality to prove the principles of historical materialism, literally and faithfully…[133]" (Vallejo 1929) In his piece *The Doctors of Marxism* (*Los Doctores del Marxismo*), targeting Plejanov and Bujarin, Vallejo argues against those who have "ossified Marxism" so as to constrain socialism into an "iron shoe" (Vallejo 1973: 64)[134]. He mocks the intellectual rigidity of those "…rigorous Marxists, fanatical Marxists, grammatical Marxists, who pursue the realization of Marxism by the letter (…) even denaturalizing facts and assailing the meaning of events." (Ibid) Against the "weighty mediocrity" of "Bolshevik partisans", Vallejo repeatedly avows Marx and Lenin for their relentless critical spirit. Like Mariátegui, Vallejo sees Marxism as part of a historical mode of thinking that followed "…closely the changes in life and the transformations in reality to rectify doctrine and correct it." (Ibid: 65) For Marx, Vallejo argues, the dialectical materialist "science of history" was a self-correcting enterprise, at once "reflexive, conscious, technical". Socialism was defined thus by its "constructive faith", echoing Mariátegui's conception of "creative antagonism". As Vallejo states in *The Revolutionary Function of Thought* (*Función Revolucionaria del Pensamiento*):

> Our tactics, critical and destructive, must march united inseparably from the profession of a constructive faith, derived scientifically and objectively from history. Out struggle against the reigning order harbors, according to the materialist dialectic, a Movement, tacit

[133] Vallejo, César. "Las lecciones del Marxismo", in V*ariedades*, no.1090*,* Lima*,* January 19th 1929, my translation. "Los marxistas rigurosos, los marxistas fanáticos, los marxistas gramaticales, que persiguen la realización del marxismo al pie de la letra, obligando a la realidad social a comprobar literal y fielmente la teoría del materialismo histórico."

[134] "A fuerza de querer ver en esta doctrina la certeza por excelencia, la verdad definitiva, inapelable y sagrada, una e inmutable, la han convertido en un zapato de hierro".

and necessary, towards the substitution of that order by a new one. Revolutionarily, the concepts of destruction and construction are inseparable. (Ibid: 16)

These schematic musings on the universal and creative essence of socialism naturally inform Vallejo's understanding of the tasks of a revolutionary poetry, and art more generally. In *El Arte y la Revolución,* he schematically outlines the grounds of an aesthetic theory in which the experimental spirit of the European avant-garde complements the theoretical revision needed for social emancipation. In *What is a Revolutionary Artist?* (*¿Qué es un Artista Revolucionario?*) Vallejo provides a typology of artistic orientations, synchronically distinguishing between a *bourgeois art*, a *Bolshevik art*, and a *socialist art*. For Vallejo, if bourgeois art serves primarily an ideologically reactive function which is also essentially *repetitive*, socialist art is defined by its ruthless capacity to subvert all normative and ideological strictures in its inventive pursuit. Its primary purpose is not formal subversion, nor to prepare a "national consciousness", but to nurture a *universal consciousness* defined by the desire for unrestricted creative freedom.

Occupying thus an ambiguous, intermediary position, Bolshevik art indexes the Soviet aesthetic production after the October revolution, which as we have seen Vallejo castigates for relapsing into a monotonous propagandistic function, reifying the party and proletariat insurrection in doctrinal celebration. More specifically, Vallejo claims that "Bolshevik art" remains caught in an "aesthetics of reflection", which produces an *analytical* conception of socialist artistic practice, bound to a descriptive empiricism which betrays the transformative kernel of socialism. The function of art, for Bolshevik's was thus modeled in analogy to the representational function of scientific knowledge: art had to report on the glorious upsurge of the proletariat masses in a gesture of commemorative mimesis, avowing the party as its organizing core and leadership as its spiritual anchor. And yet only in descending from such ideological stupefaction to a "worldly plane" could

Soviet artists escape the fate of becoming defanged and the subversive function of art sedated. Rekindling the internationalist scope of the Marxist project requires thus that socialist art continue the path toward creative transformation, rather than merely singing the praises of past glories:

> Bolshevik art serves a periodic vicissitude in society. Once this transformation or Marxist "leap" has taken place, the harangues, the proclamations and admonitions lose all their aesthetic relevance and, should they continue, it would be as if in the midst of the labor of harvest or sowing, one heard hymns of war, apostrophes of struggle. (Ibid: 26)

In his short text *The Execution of Bolshevik Art* (*La Ejecución del arte Bolchevique*) and in his polemical *The Maiakovski Case* (*El Caso Maiakovski*), Vallejo critically notes that Soviet socialism threatened to reduce the literary revolutionary spirit to mere "propaganda and agitation". In Maiakovski's texts, in particular, Vallejo finds not the expression of lived struggle, but a stale reiteration of Soviet tropes, which led to an "…an art based on formulas and not in the affective and personal sincerity...", and engendered "…verses devoid of any laudable warmth and feeling, evoked by mechanical and exterior traction, by artificial heat…" (Ibid: 109) This ambiguity towards the Bolshevik experience finds unique poetic expression in *Angelic Salutation* (*Salutación Angélica*) from *Poemas Humanos*, in which Vallejo celebrates the revolutionary enthusiasm while cautiously suggesting that insurrectionary furor must be succeeded. The Bolshevik's "doctrinal warmth" threatens to be amputated from its productive counterpart, becoming thus "the vehicle of death". The "time of war", of affective upsurge and violent struggle thus anticipates the "the time of harvest", guided by collective creation and no longer destruction. A "growing pleasure" drawn from the anarchic desire for destruction corrupts it; "weed" grows in the "nouns" of its disfigured language, whose violence injures the generic being of "common man", with whom the poet identifies. The mutilated poet remains thus "silent and half one-eyed" (Vallejo 2011: 382, translation modified).

In the end, Vallejo's critique is not so much directed against the Bolshevik revolutionary sequence, but rather at the failure of rising up to the productivist dream of a communist society *after* the moment of insurrectionary violence. Once the supersession of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" relapses into mere ideological veneration, the revolutionary process is reduced to the destruction of the old world, and tips over into a repressive, brutal form of state politics. Accordingly, the distinction between Bolshevik and socialist art is also the distinction between a nationally and institutionally bound conception of revolutionary practice centered on antagonism, and its authentic universalist expression, which is generically human, oriented toward creation. For socialist art, subversion is indissociable from the positive furor of an unbound human universality, producing new aesthetic forms which do not only commemorate but transform the world and the relations between men. The erasure of authorship and of the poetic voice which was carried forth since *Trilce* becomes in this way tethered into a purely "human function":

> For the socialist poet, the poem is not, then, a spectacular trance, provoked at will and to the preconceived service of a creed or political propaganda, but it is a natural and simply human function of sensibility. (Ibid)

For Vallejo, the erasure of authorship in what concerns the poetic act mirrors thus the erasure of political idolatry that characterizes the "great leaders" of the socialist revolution, as they become emblems of the "collective will":

> Politically, the great men (Lenin, Trotsky, etc.) are not objects of individualist and deifying idolatry enjoyed by the great bourgeois rulers of capitalist countries... Stalin and Trotsky do not exist and are interesting to no one. What exists and is interesting to everyone

is the theory and practice of each in function of the revolutionary interest…Lenin is an idea, not a person. (Vallejo 2014: 82)[135]

And however controversial the attribution of such "impersonality" to Lenin, Trotsky or Stalin may be, the essential point is that socialist practice must deem its individual figures as much as its contingent manifestations across the party as provisional mediators of the universalist communist goal: which overturns the distinction between state and civil society, subtracting the forced of production from capitalist dynamics[136].

Nevertheless, we should be weary of allowing the analogy between the artistic avant-garde and revolutionary politics to blur the distinction between the two domains. For Vallejo, the asymmetry concerns the different relation that art and politics bear to the economic basis of socialist thought: while politics must remain grounded in the scientific to represent socio-economic reality (the "dogmatic" of historical materialism) so as to eventually transform it, revolutionary aesthetic is not representational or analytic in character, even if it too aims toward liberation for human expression. Accordingly, the problem with Bolshevik art was that its commitment to an "aesthetics of reflection" erroneously transposed the scientific condition of emancipatory politics into artistic practice, binding poetic liberty to the local representations of struggle and its mediating agencies. In contrast to such aesthetic vision, in *The Work of Art and the Social Medium* (*La obra de arte y el medio social*) Vallejo proposes a historical "aesthetics of transmutation" at the heart of the socialist spirit:

[135] "Políticamente, los grandes hombres (Lenin, Trotsky, etc.) no son objeto de esa idolatría individualista y endiosadora de que gozan los buenazos gobernantes burgueses de los países capitalistas... Stalin y Trotsky no existen ni interesan a nadie. Lo que existe e interesa a todos es la teoría y la acción de cada uno en función del interés revolucionario."

[136] And it is perhaps in sight of this felt divergence from the 'official' poetic norms of 'Bolshevik' art which led Vallejo to leave the Paris poems unpublished, exercising caution against potential charges of being a reactive dissident to the Soviet cause (after all, as Flores Galindo shows, dissent from the official line of *Komintern* had already caused Mariátegui no shortage of opprobrium from his fellow Latin American Soviet representatives).

> The artist absorbs and concatenates the surrounding social anxieties as well as his own individual ones, not to return them such as he absorbed them… but to transform them, within his spirit, into other essences, different in form yet identical in substance, to the primary matters thus absorbed. (Ibid: 48).

In the end, though reiterating Mariátegui's dream of an integration between intellectual and manual labor, and finally between art and politics through dialectical materialist philosophy, Vallejo contemplates the possibility that a revolutionary art might occur independently of revolutionary politics. More radically, he surmises that a revolutionary art obtains only in freeing itself from the the reflexive cognition which grounds socialist "scientific" understanding and thus which grounds political action. This is the case even if, as Vallejo argues, "the complete artist" is one who is *also* a revolutionary in political matters:

> 1. An artist may be a political revolutionary and not be it, as much as he may want to consciously and politically, in what concerns art.
>
> 2. And vice versa, an artist may be, consciously or subconsciously, revolutionary in art and not be it in politics.
>
> 3. There are cases, very exceptional, in which an artist is a revolutionary in art and politics. The case of the complete artist.
>
> 4. Political activity is always the result of a conscious will, freed and reasoned, while the work of art escapes, the more authentic and grand it is, the conscious springs, reasoned, preconceived at will. (Vallejo 1978: 34-35)

This leads Vallejo into unbinding socialist art from any particular place and time: it may emerge and has emerged in history across different contexts, often independently of specific political commitments or overt affiliations. In a sense, the historical present of revolutionary politics, for Vallejo, lagged behind its accomplishments in art, precisely because the former remained, under the

aegis of the Bolshevik sequence, overly bound to dogmatic partisanship. In *Does a Socialist Art Exist?* (*¿Existe el Arte socialista?*) he accordingly notes that while a genuine socialist community is yet to exist, exemplars of a socialist art already exist, and have existed, referring to historical figures that traversed their individual destinies to inaugurate unprecedented aesthetic forms:

> Socialist art exists. Examples: Beethoven, many Renaissance fabrics, the pyramids of Egypt, Assyrian statuary, some of Chaplin's movies, Bach himself… Why do these works correspond to the notion and content of a socialist art? Because, in our estimation, they respond to a universal concept of mass and of sentiment, thinking common interests… of every man without exception. Who constitutes every man without exception? In this denomination are included individuals whose life is characterized by the preponderance of human values over the values of the beast… When a work of art serves and cooperates towards this human unity, underlying the diversity of historical and geographical sites in which it is rehearsed and realized, it is socialist. (Ibid: 37)

In this regard, Vallejo remains strictly Marxist in his utopianism: what remains non-negotiable is the eventual dismantling of the state, without which the productivist dream to wrest labor from capitalist exploitation simply cannot obtain. The impersonality demanded for such revolutionary agency would become subsequently imaged not only in Vallejo's poetics, but also across his works in prose. In the sections that follow, I trace the figurations of the revolutionary subject in Vallejo's works across his socialist period, in his progressive attempt to give shape to the universalist ideal which orients his "aesthetics of transmutation". I first focus on his projection of the proletariat indigenous subject in his short novel, *El Tungsteno*, before assessing the manifestation of the global proletariat and revolutionary spirit in some key works comprising the 'Paris poems'.

IV - The National and the Global: El *Tungsteno*, and the Militant Indian Proletariat Subject

During his theoretical approximations toward socialism, Vallejo's depiction of the Peruvian context and the reality of the rural Indian would progressively shift away from the problematic relation separating the subject and world. In the place of nostalgia or carnal arrest, Vallejo's works during the Paris Years progressively integrates existential alienation into the context of specific geopolitical circumstances binding the destiny of Peruvian society to the world. In the early 1930s Vallejo's works in prose particularly reveal the extent to which, under the socialist imaginary, it became necessary to understand the tragic reality of the rural Indian as bound to the imperialist venture of the great economic powers into the Peruvian nation. For the intensified brutality against rural communities by the extractive industries had established a predatory relation through which the exploitation and subjugation of rural Indian labor was carried with impunity, suspending the order of law as needed in complicity with an emerging national capitalist class. Attesting to this complicity which perpetuated the instrumental reduction of the rural masses and labor in the absence of an industrial proletariat productive base, Vallejo would write years later, in 1937:

> Peru's economic life rests entirely on agriculture and mining. There are no transformational industries to speak of, and even less heavy industry. Al most all explorations are carried out by foreign firms whose only activity in the country, as a source of work and wealth, consists in the pure and simple extraction of minerals and their bulk exportation overseas[137].

[137] Cited in Clayton 2014, pp. 113-114.
"La vida económica peruana descansa enteramente en la agricultura y en la minería. No existen por decirlo así, industrias de transformación y menos aún, por supuesto, industrias pesadas. Casi todas estas explotaciones pertenecen a empresas extranjeras cuya única actividad en el país, en cuanto fuente de trabajo y de riqueza, consiste en la pura y simple extracción del mineral y en su exportación en bruto al extranjero."

Beyond this crude diagnosis, Vallejo ideas about a corrected socialism, taken beyond its Soviet or European forms, begin to take more precise shape across his literary works during this period. Without doubt, the decisive effort to think of Peru's position in the context of international capitalism remains his 1931 short novel, *El Tungsteno*, which describes the complicity between the Marino Brothers (*Marino Hermanos*) association with the North American Mining Society, as they jointly ravage the rural community of Quivilca, in the southern province of Cuzco. In the novella, indirectly pressured by the military demands of the First World War, the indigenous communities are forced into nefarious working conditions: their lands are usurped and appropriated, and the creeping degeneration of capitalist modernization corrupts the rural setting through hedonistic debauchery, rendering human bodies dispensable in the interests of private desire and greed.

At the same time, Vallejo's account of the derelict fate for the Andean world, however, also anticipates the coming subversion of the indigenous populations, given voice through the figure of the solitary blacksmith, Servando Huanca: a "pure Indian", who irrupts into the story from the protesting Indian masses, defying the authority of the town's major, Parga at a critical moment:

> A man rose from the people among the crowd and, throwing himself against the major Parga, emotionally but energetically said:
>
> The people, sir, demands that justice be made!
>
> Yes!... Yes!-... Yes!... chanted the multitude – Justice! Justice against those who have been struck! Justice against murderers!
>
> The major turned pale[138].

[138] Vallejo. César. *El Tungsteno*, Edición Cultura Universitaria, 1932. pp 91. my translation. The complete original text corresponding to this edition can be found at: https://archive.org/stream/eltungstenonovel00vall/eltungstenonovel00vall_djvu.txt

In this passage, the work of "endless metonymy" which Clayton describes as organizing Vallejo's poetic oeuvre acquires a political dimension. Huanca emerges as a singular exception from the masses, while at the same time he represents the oppressed Indian workers as a whole, shaping the "obscure and vague" indignation of the disarticulated masses in a concrete demand:

> The most abominable and scandalous abuse of authority did not arouse in the people but an obscure vague and diffuse sentimental malaise. Impunity was, in the history of administrative and communal crime, a traditional and common affair in the province. But here, now something new and unprecedented happened. The case of Yepez and Conchucos stirred violently the popular masses, and a man arising from the latter dared to raise his voice, asking for justice and defying the wrath and vengeance of the authorities. Who was, then, this man? He was Servando Huanca, the blacksmith. (Ibid)

The absence of details about Huanca's past and the absence of interpersonal relations reduce him almost to a formal presence who does not speak as an individual, but rather as a generic surrogate for the collective demand for justice, giving cohesion to the otherwise inarticulate masses. Unflinchingly, he issues a direct response to "the injustice of men", as he feels…

> …a growing pain and rage against the injustice of men. Huanca believes that in this pain and in this rage there were not but little personal interests involved…He was convinced that one ought to protest always and vigorously against injustice, no matter where it may manifest itself. Already then his spirit, re-concentrated and wounded, ruminated day and night on these ideas and will for rebellion. Did Servando Huanca already possess a class consciousness? Was he aware of it? His only combative tactics boiled down to two very simple things: the unification of those who suffer social injustice, and the practical action of the masses. (Ibid: 92-93)

Speaking on behalf of the desolate Yepez, whose silence echoes the invisibility of the common Indian worker for the rulers, Huanca protests to the local authorities with clarity: "This man is a poor, ignorant Indian. You stand before him. He is an analphabet. An unconscious man. A disgraced man. He ignores his own age. He ignores whether he is inscribed in the military service. He ignores everything, everything." (Ibid: 97) In actively dispossessing them of practical and theoretical resources, the rural Indian is not merely "misrepresented" as bereft of all social substance, but is seen as objectively alienated, kept in subjugation without a future. For the Indian's incapacity to read or speak in the language in which they are interjected *de facto* excludes them from the possibility of subversion. The cohesion required for emancipation must then come to grips with the real effects of socio-economic exploitation, and the necessity to reconstitute the social bond.

The imperatival force of mass demand in Huanca is progressively amplified in its scope, situated against not only the local authorities, but as part of the international proletariat movement. In the closing dialogs with the liberal democrat mestizo, Leonidas Benites, Huanca integrates the struggle of the rural Indian into the international horizon of revolutionary politics. As the heated dialog ensues, Huanca disavows the idea, defended by the facile pacifism of his interlocutor, that emancipation ought to "trickle down" from the educated class into the poor masses - an idea that as we saw was made popular among Peru's progressive liberals, at least since and paradigmatically in the work of Manuel Gonzales Prada (cf. Chapter I) Dispelling the idea that an educated elite naturally serves the development of the rural masses, Huanca argues with combative skepticism that the ministers, lawyers and priests are equally indifferent to the interests of the workers, but operate as the accomplices or direct perpetrators of their tragic fate.

Nevertheless, the dialog also expresses cautionary ambivalence: though moved by Huanca's uncompromising demand for justice, Benites worries that the revolutionary call for insurrectionary

violence promotes a hatred of educated mestizos, thwarting the possibility of a coalition or reconciliation. In response, Huanca does not deny in principle the ideal of cooperation, but affirms that any coalition would have to imply the immediate subordination of the intellectuals and activists to the interests of Indian workers. Only when the asymmetry between the urban mestizo and the rural Indian is taken as the non-negotiable imperative guiding the prospect of cooperation, will then a conciliatory process take place. As Huanca states in solemn anticipation, only then "…we shall work, later, together and in harmony, as true brothers… Make a choice, Mr. Benites… Make a choice." (Ibid: 127) The novel closes announcing the revolutionary upsurge to come, as *"…the wind blew outside, announcing the coming tempest."* (Ibid: 132) It is prefigured in Huanca's uncompromising call to arms, incarnating the Indian revolutionary subject whose minoritarian struggle is nevertheless an extension of the international proletariat movement. The awakening of the class-consciousness of the Indian workers becomes thus also the moment in which the Peruvian history enters the vector toward the emancipation of Man from the hegemony of capitalism. It is this integration of the Indian's local struggle into the horizon of the global emancipation of mankind as a whole which ultimately directs the revolutionary act and subject. As we shall see in the next section, this internationalist scope of the proletariat struggle is progressively developed across Vallejo's Paris Poems, leading to the formation of a "global proletariat subject".

V – The Time of Harvest: The Glorification of Labor and the Global Proletariat Subject in *Poemas Humanos*

Across several of the poems in *Poemas Humanos*, Vallejo revels in announcing the advent of the global proletariat subject, not only as the insurrectionary force of the "coming tempest" against the hegemonic powers of the time, but as the bringer of what the poet calls "the time of harvest".

After the moment of war and defiant militancy, Vallejo imagines the utopia in which the experience of alienation which split the poetic voice between the urban and rural worlds becomes tethered not onto a lost past and derelict present, but toward a radiant future woven by collective labor. The individuality of the poet and of the poetic voice is suddenly trivialized, measuring itself not against the impersonal undercurrents of matter, but against the grandeur of humanity as a whole.

Paradigmatically, in *It Was Sunday in the Bright Ears of my Donkey* (*Fue domingo en las claras orejas de mi burro*) Vallejo invokes the colloquial sadness for his "Peruvian donkey in Peru", both spatially separated and temporally disjoint from the European evening of "his personal experience" (Vallejo 2011: 386). With a taint of apologetic embarrassment, this remembrance defines the poet's identity at the core of his "microbial cycle" ("*ciclo microbiano*") and "patriotic hairstyle" ("*patriótico peinado*"). Yet the poet feels not only alienated in relation to his European ambience, but jubilant in commemorative memory: the Andean world is celebrated in its holistic articulation, from those "inorganic bodies" that compose the natural landscape to mankind's generational descent, no longer reduced to the procreative multiplication of animal bodies. The nostalgic sentiment for the lost home is then characterized with a positive, fertile productivity, situated beyond meaningless repetition, in which the memory of the past rekindles it, "painted with belief":

> So do I see the portrayed hills of my country
> rich in jackasses, sons of jackasses, parents today in sight
> that now return painted with beliefs
> the horizontal hills of my sorrows (Ibid)

The conflicted relationship towards the Andean world becomes then the lever to introduce a celebratory integration of the nation into a global destiny, in which rural indigenous cooperativism emerges as an expression of the internationalist spirit of socialism more broadly. In a kind of

exacerbated metonymic play, in *Telluric and Magnetic* (*Telurica y Magnetica*) the domestic world and the poet's relation to the past gives way to a generative rather than destructive temporality, where the particularities of the rural landscape, its mountain slopes, flora and fauna, are plied first to the national scale, and finally to the worldly "orb":

> Tearful auchenia, my own souls!
> Sierra of my Peru, Peru of the world
> and Peru at the base of the orb;
> I adhere (Vallejo 2011: 332)
> (...)
>
> Oh human fields!
> Solar and nutritious absence of the sea,
> and oceanic feeling for everything!
> Oh climates found within gold, ready!
> Oh intellectual field of cordilleras,
> with religion, with fields, with ducklings! (Ibid)

In these verses, Vallejo anthropomorphizes the natural scenery at the same time as he naturalizes the human, rendering divergent ontological strata porous and coterminous. The "human fields" of collective labor in which the social bond itself grows is situated at a safe distant from the devouring ocean, as the Andean mountains become also "intellectual fields". The cyclic temporality of the seasons become in turn continuous with and enabling of the time of labor; the soil provides both its "theoretical and practical ground", entwining cultural and natural history as an integral system. Human productivity thereby forges labor from the inexhaustible heterogeneity of the organic order and its elements, articulating "an astonishing hierarchy of tools". The absence of the Father, which concentrated the time of finitude in Vallejo's earlier heresy is immanently identified

with the Promethean prowess of collective humanity, which masters the "technics of the Heavens" ("*tecnica del cielo*"; both "sky" and "Heaven") and binds inorganic matter and organic productivity; the "abrupt" molecule in its deviant motion, the "judicial" mice in its survivalist skepticism, the "poultry-yard" of angelic roosters, and the "patriotic asses" of the poet's life:

> ¡Quarterly maize, with opposed birthdays
> I hear through my feet how they move away;
> I smell them return when the earth
> Clashes with the technics of the Heavens!
> Abruptly molecule! Terse atom!
> Oh human fields!
> Solar and nutritious absence of the sea,
> Oh climates found within gold, ready!
> Oh intellectual fields of cordilleras,
> With religion, with fields, with ducklings! (Ibid: translation modified)

The redoubling effect of light, reflecting the image of the self in the mirror's surface, is potentiated as it "climbs in" filtered through the mind, animating the barrel skeletal dust of the body, and taking it beyond the shadow of representation into movement: "Oh light hardly a mirror [away] from shadow, which is life with the period and, with the line, dust, and that is why I revere [it], climbing through the idea to my skeleton!" (Ibid) In this way, Vallejo systematically reiterates the unity of theory and practice, as the imperatival force of the idea now subjectivizes the body, animating it. The "crystalline" body which characterized *Trilce's* timid insinuation for the future as abstract idea becomes finally incarnate and set in motion, that is, *set to work*.

In *The Miners Came Out of the Mine (Los Mineros Salieron de la Mina*), Vallejo characterizes how the "bottomless depths" of human suffering are transvalued and potentiated in laborious action

rather than affect. The manual productivity of the miners' work becomes symbolic of collective prowess, to be honored as those "creators of profundity" (Ibid: 336). Similarly, in *Glebe* (*Gleba*), the worker's strife reconstitutes the fragmented body and the multiplicity of its organic functions: it gives shape to the "global effect" of a "brightening candle" that incorporates the phallic "foreskin", the worker's "beaten bodies" and their extremities into an integral, collective body of "functional laborers". Subtracted from the time of the flesh, the laborers "lack clocks"; in their immortal productivity, they "never gloat to breathe", but carry on with impersonal diligence:

> They own heads, their trunks, their extremities,
> They own their pants, their metacarpal fingers and a little staff
> To eat they dressed themselves in height
> And they wash their faces caressing them with solid doves
> Have their head, their torso, their extremities
>
> Their pants, their metacarpous fingers and a Little stick
> To eat dressed in tallness
> And wash their faces caressed with solid doves (Ibid: 390)

At the same time, the generality of the idea which guides collective becoming transcends every localized manifestation, becoming ultimately resistant of the finitude which afflicts mankind not only as individual being, but as the bearer of contingent biological and cultural determinations. In *There Exists a Mutilated* (*Existe un mutilado*) - written *apropos* the historical figure of a certain French coronel named Piccot, who was dismembered in 1914 during the war - Vallejo reiterates the preponderance of the collective, historical subject in the immeasurable integrity of the clamor for mankind over the disparate function of bodily parts, and even when its supporting organs are removed:

> There is a man mutilated not from combat but from an embrace, not from war but from peace…Face mutilated, face covered, face closed, this man, nevertheless, is whole and lacks nothing. He has no eyes and he sees and cries. He has no nose and he smells and breathes. He has no ears and he listens. No forehead and he thinks and withdraws to himself. No chin and he desires and subsists. Jesus knew the man whose mutilation left him functionless, who had eyes and could not see and had ears and could not hear. I know the man whose mutilation left him organless, who sees without eyes and hears without ears. (Vallejo 2014: 353)

The freedom aspired to by poetic language is now conceived in terms of the real possibility to erase the lyric voice from its negative, combative manifestation, and to assume what Vallejo deems a *"*universal language*"*, as he overtly claims in *The Universality of Verse For the Unity of Languages* (*Universalidad del Verso por la Unidad de las Lenguas*):

> A poem is a vital entity, far more organic than a natural organic being. An animal's limbs may be amputated and it may live on. A vegetable's branch may be cut and it lives on. But if a verse is amputated from a poem, a word, an orthographic sign, it dies. Like the poem, upon translation, it cannot preserve its absolute and living integrity, it must be read in its original language, and this, naturally, limits for now the universality of its emotion. But one must not forget that this universality will only be possible the day in which all languages are unified and melt, through socialism, in a singular socialism, in a unique universal idiom. (Vallejo 1973: 62)

In *There Is No One Left In the House* (*No hay Nadie ya en la Casa*), Vallejo transforms impotence before alienation within the domestic space and the Other into a potency for transformation, yielding thus a kind of *productive heresy* and an insinuation for a definitive transvaluation of nostalgia.

The subject remains beyond the individual, defined by its irreducible creative potency, which traverses the order of identities and the arrest of finitude: it is the "agent of the gerund", of verb turned noun, a pure agency. The circle, once the image of the ubiquity and cyclical unrest of repetition, weaves together the amputated body out of itself, constructing a functional system that remains irreducible to its mere biological parts; the heart, the lips, and feet, are all but trivial in themselves, yet part of the integral function of ceaseless creativity and labor. What persists in time, at the end and beyond the time of loss, is "the subject of the act":

> When somebody leaves, somebody remains… What continues in the house is the organ, the agent of the gerund and in circle… What continues in the house is the foot, the lips, the eyes, the heart… What continues in the house, is the subject of the act. (Ibid: 347)

This re-integrative function through labor in the end not only overcomes the bodily constraints of individual being, but the wealth of determinations which dissolve universality into the specificity of biological and cultural determinations. As Hegel would have put it, in exposing the dialectical limit of the integrative movement of Spirit, the element and whole become coterminous, so that the last instance the base and the divine coalesce under labor ("spirit is a bone"). In *I am Going to Speak of Hope* (*Voy a Hablar de la Esperanza*), Vallejo enacts an erasure of the name and individual identity, taking the form of an empty "I" defined by a "simple" suffering, unqualified further: "I do not suffer this pain as César Vallejo. I do not ache now as an artist, as a man or even as a simple living being. I do not suffer this pain as a Catholic, as a [Muslim] or as an atheist. Today I simply suffer" (Ibid: 343) The poem unravels the entire fabric of nouns and predicates which split Man from within by contingent differentiations, jeopardizing its integrity. The self-effacement of the authorial voice unveils thus a nameless, minimal subject, a dismembered, generic being, voided from all particularity, who "simply suffers" on behalf of mankind as a whole.

In the end, the subject of socialist art does not interrupt representation by interrupting the mimetic dependence on foreign forms, or bringing forth a self-portraying autochthonous subject, like Mariátegui conceived. Rather, it announces the necessity of poetry to partake in the construction of a new collective identity, purely guided by the clamor for justice for mankind as a whole, defining a generic human subject defined only by cooperative labor and inventive freedom. This *hymnal poetic*s which captures the spirit and language of a universal humanity, as we shall see, announces the agency of an de-localized subject, neither dispersed in the lived experience of the suffering body, nor reducible to the local circumstances of nation, class, race, or indeed, political determinations.

VI - Nostalgia for the Future: The World of Justice and the Generic Human Subject:

Although the universalist ideal in Vallejo's poetry is clearly discernible across his work during the Paris years, it doubtlessly finds its apotheosis in his last, 1939 poetic collection, *Spain, Take Away From Me This Cup* (*España aparta de mi este cáliz*). In these poems, a particular historical event becomes the surrogate for the universal destiny of mankind that outlives and exceeds its contextual specificity. Thus, while the Parisian "cosmic city" was the site for the free association between intellectuals, the Spanish territory, caught in the midst of civil war, becomes the site for internationalist militant resistance against social oppression. As Alain Badiou (2014) has argued, the unique internationalist quality of the Spanish Civil War resulted in an immeasurably rich sequence of artistic production, which integrated divergent and even incompatible ideological orientations:

> Let us observe that the Spanish civil war is certainly the historic event that has most intensely mobilized all the artists and intellectuals of the world. On one hand, the personal commitment of writers from all ideological tendencies on the side of the republicans, including therefore the communists, is remarkable: whether we are dealing with organized

> communists, social democrats, mere liberals, or even fervent Catholics, such as the French writer Georges Bernanos, the list is extraordinary if we gather all those who publicly spoke out, who went to Spain in the midst of the war, or even entered into combat on the side of the republican forces. On the other hand, the number of masterpieces produced on this occasion is no less astonishing. We already announced as much for poetry. But let us also think of the splendid painting by Pablo Picasso that is titled Guernica; let us think of two of the greatest novels in their genre: Man's Hope by François Malraux and For Whom the Bell Tolls by the American Ernest Hemingway. The frightening and bloody civil war in Spain has illuminated the art of the world for several years. (Badiou 2014: 96)

In the collection's opening poem, the *Hymn to the Volunteers of the Republic* (*Himno a los Voluntarios de la República*), Vallejo reiterates the fraternal celebration of labor found in *Poemas Humanos*, as he pays homage to those who congregate from all corners of the world in the name of humanity to fight in the Spanish soil. Overwhelmed as he witnesses the collective martyrdom but also jubilance of the volunteers who "march to kill" with their "world-wide-agony", the poetic voice is at first moved to the point of impotence. The death carried forth and the shattering of eloquence does no longer tremble in defeat or angst, but is underwritten by a universal passion to which the poet humbly incorporates himself, bearing his "impersonal forehead". Alienation becomes transvalued thus into the qualitative fullness of a historical, "long ecstatic movement" and "double-edged speed", that the poet is incapable of "retaining in his hands":

> for my hands won't hold your long ecstatic moment
> and I smash against your double-edged speed
> my smallness dressed up in grandeur. (Vallejo 2011: 569)

The nostalgia "for what is to come", which signaled an anticipation of a death without

redemption in *Los Heraldos Negros* now incarnates universal struggle, giving a concrete historical presence to what was but an abstract ideal in *Trilce*. The "inexistent" being of the "crystalline idea", which abstractly prefigured the minoritarian upsurge of the "new Less"' as a latent historical potency, is thereby given concrete measure and expression. The poet, witnessing the materialization of a global militant proletariat in the Spanish soil, conveys thus what Badiou elsewhere names a distinct "nostalgia for the future", whose projective "future anterior" inscribes the collective hope for the future of humanity:

> [T]he nostalgia for a grandeur and a beauty that nevertheless have not yet been created. Communism here works in the future anterior: we experience a kind of poetic regret for what we imagine the world will have been, when communism will have come. (Badiou 2014: 104)

As the poem proceeds, Vallejo goes on to ponder, in a protracted history of "Spanish affairs", the inventive prowess of the great artists across the history of Spain, from Calderon to Cervantes, from Goya to Quevedo, from Cajal to Odena... This litany which Vallejo "brings to the balance" sheet of history attests to the spirit of that socialist art which, although produced in a singular time and place, was also universal as an expression of human creative liberty. And in the same way that Paris is more than "just Paris", but the site for intellectual cooperation between thinkers from around the world, the "volunteer of Spain" is not 'Spanish' in the narrow sense, but a collective body that ignites a "captive matchstick" with "choleric gold", through which the "sorrows of common people" become the carriers of what Vallejo calls "the hopes of men" ("*Dolores de pueblos con esperanzas de hombres*") (Vallejo 2011: 569). The subject dies not in individual solitude, but rather of the universality that afflicts it: the martyr "proletariat that dies of universe" in a "methodical chaos", at once "theoretical and practical". The violent upsurge and negative movement against the present

is matched by teleological, egalitarian ambition: that "Dantesque desire" in which the "fallen farmer" is vitally enveloped in the "green foliage" of fertile lands to be sown in cooperative (Vallejo 2011: 569). The Dantean descent to "the form of the soul" tracks this expansive movement, such that the individual rises to the universal and the body becomes incorporated to the revolutionary idea "without track to his body" (Ibid). As Badiou writes: "This unknown liberty is precisely that of the reversal of misery into heroism, the reversal of a particular anxiety-ridden situation into a universal promise of emancipation" (Badiou 2014: 98).

In what are doubtlessly his most 'Whitmanian' moments, the sacrifice of the proletariat gives way to a constructive ideal binding disciplines and modalities of labor: the militiamen express themselves horizontally, as incessant "blades of grass". They are, "Builders, agricultural, civilian, and military", makers of "light" and "eternity" (Ibid). The violence that the militiaman inflicts, short of meeting its end at the borders of the flesh, opens the horizon of "the time of harvest", as the collective body of the collective subject incorporate disparate individualities ("your creature") and "rises to the weak" (Ibid). At this point, and reaching the apotheosis of the universalist clamor, Vallejo's voice becomes void of all melancholy, but becomes prophetic in sight of the future, in what is at once a hymnal celebration of the generic humanity to come:

> All men will love one another
> and will eat holding the corners of your sad handkerchiefs
> and will drink in the name
> of your ill-fated throats!
> They'll rest walking at the foot of this run
> and they'll weep thinking of your orbits, happy
> they'll be and to the sound
> of your return, atrocious, flourishing, innate,

tomorrow they'll adjust their chores, the figures they've dreamt and sung!
The same shoes will fit him who ascends
without track to his body
and him who descends to the form of his soul! (Ibid)

These lines progressively re-inscribe the Christian dialectic of death and resurrection, of individual martyrdom and heavenly redemption, in the transition from finitude and orphanhood to the brotherhood of universal Man. The revered militiaman imparts the joyous return to fraternal embrace, and the severed link to the Other which defined subjective alienation is restored in collective synergy. A world transfixed by the idea of justice is affirmed, while Vallejo's desire for uncompromising inclusiveness defies the laws of men, nature, and the divine all the same. Indeed, at its apex, the universal voice not only demands but prophesizes the imminent advent of redemption for human and the non-human, vindicating the living and the dead in an act not of metaphysical protest or heresy, but of productive transgression:

Embracing, the dumb will speak, the lame will walk!
The returning blind will see
and, quivering, the deaf will hear!
The ignorant will be wise, the wise ignorant!
Given will be the kisses you couldn't give!
Only death will die! The ant
will bring scraps of bread to the elephant fettered
to its brutal delicacy; aborted children
will be born again, perfect, spatial,
and all men will work,
all men will procreate,
all men will understand! (Ibid)

The reiterated totality of "all men", overcoming all loss and suffering, culminates in the assignation of three basic determinations which define the new collective subject: the universal community to come jointly enjoys the fruits of *labor*, of *love*, and of *understanding*, an immanent trinity of practice, feeling and thought. All living beings are to relate freely, and the departed return in a creative joy who enthusiasm knows no limits: species assist one another irrespective of size or might, procreation becomes absolutely unbound from the divisions among beings, while the unjustly damned return to celebrate with the living. If, as we saw in the *Poemas Humanos,* Man and Nature had already been identified in the dynamics of labor and productivity, here Vallejo dares to imagine a positive overcoming of the disjunction between life and death itself: as individuals cease to live as individuals they also "cease to die", and bodily erasure is vindicated retroactively from the future anterior. The aborted children which were deprived of the future return under the glare of a promise for eternity, exempt from the destructive effects of time as purely "spatial" beings.

More than any identifiable Marxist utopia, Vallejo's delirious jubilation forges a standard for justice not only situated beyond the confines of individual identities, ethnicities, nations or languages, but even beyond the order of temporal finitude as such. In its uncompromising affirmative gesture, Vallejo's address approximates if anything what the French philosopher Quentin Meillassoux names the "world of justice", which traverses all ontological strata, from the inorganic to the cultural[139]. For Meillassoux, like for Vallejo, the clamor for universality results in an "irreligious" account of resurrection, where revolutionary hope retrieves bodies subjected to an untimely death. In the course of using the untamable, absolute power of "absolute contingency" to disrupt the lawful continuities in the orders of Matter, Life, and Thought (the "three worlds" which

[139] Meillassoux, Quentin, *The Divine Inexistence,* in Graham Harman. "Quentin Meillassoux: Philosophy in the Making, Edinburgh University Press, 2011, pp. 190.

have come to pass as moments of historical, ontological rupture in history until now) Meillassoux anticipates the advent of such a world of justice as what he names a "pure object of hope" (Ibid). It transfixes the living in the present with an idea of the future in which the limitations of nature and culture are superseded and transgressed, so that "…the World of the rebirth of humans that makes universal justice possible, by erasing even the injustice of shattered lives.[140]" As an "object of hope", the world of justice is but the egalitarian future carried by what Vallejo names "the hopes of men", which oriented toward a future in which not even death can constrain the clamor for the Good:

> The more one denounces the requirement of universal justice as a pure illusion belonging to the imaginary realm of the human, the more one emphasizes that with the advent of such a chimerical requirement, becoming displays its capacity for producing something that previously did not exist at all. Namely, it is an imaginary Good, aimed at by an illusion for which only thinking beings are equipped. It is a Good at which one aims, perfectly inexistent in the world that precedes the rise of humanity. And it manifestly exceeds the capacities of matter, in whose midst it has nonetheless emerged in the form of an obstinate hope. Thus, one emphasizes all the more the capacity of time to transgress even its own laws toward the objective advent of justice... (Ibid: 205)

As the clamor for justice traverses the memory of past injustices with ruthless affirmation, the future becomes at once redemptive and inventive; Meillassoux describes thus the premonitory knowledge that elides contingent differences and actualizes the universal, as follows:

> The eternal truths to which our condition grants access are in fact indifferent to differences, to the innumerable and necessary differences between individual thinkers. The differences are necessary because humans, as simple existents, are contingent and particular

[140] Ibid, pp. 190.

> beings indefinitely differentiable from other humans ... Justice can survive only as an idea of existent and irreparable wrongs, and we owe the dead nothing less. When the requirement of justice actually transfixes us, it also summons our refusal of injustice for the dead, for recent or ancient deaths, for known and unknown deaths. For the universal is universal only when it makes no exceptions. (Ibid: 192)

In unabashedly affirming the overcoming of death in the promise of rebirth, Vallejo's late, hymnal poetry subtracts heresy away from the protest against absent deity, and directs it against the very "material bases" of experience, transforming them into contingent constraints and supports for the universal idea. This impetus finds unique distillation in the poem *Masses* (*Masa*), where the figure of the "dying militiaman", nameless, anonymous, without rank or nationality, rises at the precise moment in which all of humanity congregates as unity becomes exceptionless, that is, universal:

> Then all the inhabitants of the earth
> surrounded him; the corpse looked at them sadly, deeply moved;
> he got up slowly
> embraced the first man; started to walk… (Vallejo 2011: 611)

Across the entire collection, in fact, Vallejo indulges in unrestrained affirmation against all normative orders, while at the same time avoiding a relapse into religious or "spiritualist ecstasies". In *Battles* (*Batallas*), Vallejo avows the resilience of the militant subject, immortalized through collective struggle: those "immortal dead" which overcome finitude in plying themselves to history, and so eventually "…finished weeping, finished / hoping, finished / aching, finished living /, finally being mortals." And in the commemorative poem to the deceased militant Pedro Rojas, the individual body of the proletariat militant harbors not only the cessation of life, but overtly becomes the immortal carrier of the collective dream the within itself, after death: "His body was full of the

world" (Ibid). Finally, in the second poem to the collection, the thwarted "oven" which gave those "burnt breads" in the fractured familial space haunted by the figure of the absent Father, are now themselves lost, erasing the locality of the event of birth into a timeless horizon erupting from the region of Malaga, and encompassing the entirety of human history: "Malaga, without father or mother / no pebble, nor oven, nor white dog! Malaga defenseless, where my death was born taking steps and out of passion died my birth." (Ibid) The "flight to Egypt" no longer designates the point of alienation and the absent, transcendent Father, but sings the incorporation of the particular life into the universal history, that "innate orb" immanently expressed in the Spanish soil:

> Malaga, literal and from Malaga
> Escaping to Egypt, since you are stuck
> Widening in suffering identical to your dance
> Resolving in you the volume of the sphere (Ibid)

In the last instance, Vallejo produces a genetic subject not only unbound from ethnic or cultural determinations, but also from the economicist or culturalist ambitions of socialism to modulate its emancipatory dreams in the pursuit for an autochthonous expression, as imagined originally by Mariátegui. Its universality is unapologetically hyperbolic; its sense of justice precisely "exorbitant", as Meillassoux puts it, in abjuring any semblance of programmatic imagination, and so reducing the future into an inchoate promise for egalitarian collective, bound by creative fraternity alone.

In the next chapter, I show how the works of José María Arguedas attempt to retrieve the universalist scope of *indigenista* literature in its global ambitions without relinquishing Mariátegui's ideal of adapting socialism to the peculiarities of the Andean world and Peruvian context, within which the integrative dream woven reaches its apotheosis and terminal point. As we shall see, in the last instance, the figure of the generic subject becomes in this way reconceived in the figure of a

post-cultural subject, woven from a process of thwarted transculturation, which echoes the genericity of Vallejo's universal human subject.

- CHAPTER III -

The Light Within the World: José María Arguedas and the Limits of Transculturation

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Introduction – The Limits of the Appropriative Dream

In this chapter I propose to read José María Arguedas' literary works as the culmination of the sequence of socialist *indigenismo* following downstream from Mariátegui's integrative socialist project, which in essence attempted to conceive of constructive mediations between the urban mestizo and the rural Indian through the agency of a new revolutionary subject.

In the first section, I begin by considering the polemics between Arguedas and Julio Cortázar, in which the tension between regionalism and universalism emerges in the attempt to clarify the way in which intellectual labor relates to general social imperatives. I show that Arguedas is led to confuse universalism with a facile occidentalism just as much as a nostalgic ancestralism, instead searching for novel possibilities of mediation between Western and pre-Hispanic forms which would also, like Mariátegui, serve the purposes of imagining a new collective identity for the Peruvian nation as a whole. In the second section, I trace how Arguedas claims to correct Mariátegui's residual economicist ideal of appropriation, the better to underscore the indissociable link between subjective cultural-normative factors and objective economic-productive determinations. In the third and fourth sections, I show how the ideal of "transculturation" becomes the lever through which Arguedas begins to think of a possible reconciliation between what he calls the "magical and rational" conceptions of the world, searching for a new language as part of what he calls a "superior universalism", and "more absolute act of creation". In the fifth section, I begin to assess the way in which Arguedas progressively puts the search for a new language by thinking of

different forms of a revolutionary transcultural process and agency, starting from the *militant Indian subject* who returns from the city, as depicted in his short story *Agua*. In the sixth section, I focus on the figure of the *collective Indian subject* depicted in his first novel, *Yawar Fiesta*. In the seventh section, I assess the culmination of the transcultural search for a new integrative consciousness under the figure of the *post-indigenous transcultural subject*, as elaborated in Arguedas' 1964 novel *Todas las Sangres*. For Arguedas, beyond a reconciliation between the Indian and mestizo, this transcultural subjectivity served as a strategic mediator which integrates the collectivist values upheld by indigenous *Ayllu*, the elegiac repentance of the waning landlord oligarchy set in the path of Christian martyrdom, and the rational and pragmatic thrust of the new capitalist bourgeois class, all jointly endangered by the mantle of international capital. In the seventh final section, I show how the years leading to Arguedas' last, truncated 1972 novel, *The Fox From Up Above, The Fox From Down Below*, attests to the collapse of the transcultural subject and the appropriative dream, in the wake of changes in Peruvian society and economy after the 1968 Agrarian Reform and the abolition of the *latifundio*.

In this context, I ultimately show the collapse of the integrative socialist project in its economic and cultural ambitions, as Arguedas witnesses the effects of a thwarted modernity in the urban space, where the mass migration of disenfranchised indigenous masses into the city pulverized the collective bond and perpetrated their subjugation. Facing the deterioration of the hopes of potentiating the cooperativist *ethos* from the Indian cultural world, in *The Foxes* Arguedas' tantalizingly conceives of the figure of a generic post-cultural subject, woven from the inconsistent individualities from the degenerating the urban space. Yet this generic abstract figure also signals the crisis of the revolutionary productivist and culturalist ideal.

I - The Tasks of the Intellectual: Between Regionalism and Universalism

In his polemical 1967 letter to Roberto Fernandez Retamar – published in Nº 45 of *Casa de las Américas,* and addressing the question about "the place of the Latin American intellectual" in global culture - Julio Cortázar criticized the telluric tendencies of those Latin American writers who isolated themselves from a global horizon of literary production in the name of their native traditions. Guilty of promoting a "parochial and villagey" fetishism, and inspiring a dubious nationalist allergy to foreign cultural forms, such a "regionalist" orientation was indicted for relying on a totalizing conception of culture, positing a problematic contrariety between *country* and *world*.

> The tellurism, as one might understand for example Samuel Feijao, appears to me as profoundly alien because it is narrow, parochial and I would even say 'villagey'; I can comprehend it and admire it in those who don't reach, for different reasons, a totalizing vision of culture and history, and concentrate all of their talent in the labor 'of a zone', but I see it as a preamble to the worst advances of the negative nationalism when it becomes the creed of writers that, almost always for reasons of cultural misconceptions, obstinately exalt the values of the plot against values as a whole, the country against the world.[141] (Cortazar 1967, my translation here and below)

Defying such regionalist isolationism, what Cortázar named the "contemporary intellectual" was defined by entering an expansive horizon of intellectual production, in which all nations participate in collective production, in sight of the universal ideals of "global peace" and "social justice". So we

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[141] Cortázar, Julio. "Letter to Fernández Retamar", in *Casa de las Américas,* no. 45, 1967, my translation. http://www.mundolatino.org/cultura/juliocortázar/cortázar_3.htm
'El telurismo, como entiende entre ustedes un Samuel Feijoo, por ejemplo, me es profundamente ajeno por estrecho, parroquial y hasta diría aldeano; puedo comprenderlo y admirarlo en quienes no alcanzan, por razones múltiples, una visión totalizadora de la cultura y de la historia, y concentran todo su talento en una labor `de zona`, pero me parece un preámbulo a los peores avances del nacionalismo negativo cuando se convierte en el credo de escritores que, casi siempre por falencias culturales se obstinan en exaltar los valores del terruño contra los valores a secas, el país contra el mundo."

are told, the contemporary intellectual operates not by isolation or circumscription to the local, but by forging "conjunctions and syntheses" in what Cortázar calls a "planetary" perspective:

> The problem of the contemporary intellectual is one alone: that of a peace grounded in the social justice such that the national belonging of each individual only subdivides the issue without taking its basic character away. But it is here that the writer distanced from his country is situated by force in a different perspective: the sentiment of the human process becomes in a way more planetary, it operates by conjunctions and by syntheses, and if it loses the force concentrated in an immediate context, it achieves in turn an almost unbearable but always clarifying lucidity. (Ibid)[142]

This internationalist aspiration did not, however, entail a disavowal of native traditions: on the contrary, Cortázar argued that his own Argentinean identity had been incorporated into "an infinitely wider and richer path" following his immersion and integration with the international intellectual ambiance:

> The argentine quality of my work has gained rather than lost as a result of that spiritual osmosis in which the writer does not relinquish anything, does not betray anything, but rather situates its vision in a plane where original values become inserted into an infinitely wider and richer path…situating oneself in the more universal perspective of the old world…so as to little by little discover the true roots of Latin America. (Cortazar 1968)[143]

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[142] [E]l problema del intelectual contemporáneo es uno solo, el de la paz fundada en la justicia social que las pertenencias nacionales de cada uno sólo subdividen la cuestión sin quitarle su carácter básico. Pero es aqui en dónde el escritor alejado de su país se sitúa forzosamente en una perspectiva diferente [el] sentimiento del proceso humano se vuelve por decirlo así más planetario, opera por conjuntos y por síntesis, y si pierde la fuerza concentrada en un contexto inmediato, alcanza en cambio una lucidez a veces insoportable pero siempre esclarecedora"

[143] Cortázar, Julio. "Carta Abierta a Roberto Fernández Retamar", in *SIMO, Ana María. Cinco miradas sobre Cortázar*. Tiempo Contemporáneo, 1968, my translation.

In response to Cortázar's verdict, and initiating a fierce polemics which would extend over the course of several publications, until 1969, José María Arguedas questioned the "solemn conviction" of his contemporary that would allegedly allow Latin American writers to understand themselves only from without[144]. On the contrary, if there was a danger in the self-perceived role of Latin American writers within the horizon of international culture, he argued, it was precisely the belief that exposure to and involvement in the foreign was sufficient for an understanding of regional traditions. In short, Arguedas notes that alertness to the threat of a myopic *provincialism* which disavows involvement with the global must not make us blind to the opposite threat of an *occidentalism*, which disavows the intricacies of the local through facile talk about "integration".

According to Arguedas, Cortázar's "contemporary intellectual" promoted thus not a genuine universal perspective, but rather the occidentalist elitism of the "professional writer", who sought to "…sting with his 'genius', with his solemn convictions in that one better understands the essence of the national from the high spheres of the supranational.[145]" (Arguedas 1968) Turning the argument on its head, Arguedas attributed to Cortázar a culturalist bias which vitiates the alleged claim to a universal and integrative stance. For if it is only through integration into an international horizon that the provincial writer escapes provincialism, then for Arguedas it must be just as true that only from an intimate knowledge and appropriation of the local one may make of the universal aspiration something other than the reification of the foreign. Thus, while agreeing with Cortázar's avowal of a complementarity of the local and the global, Arguedas disputes the idea that universality can only transpire outside of a deep immersion in the regional. He argues that every writer is always, and relative to different levels of understanding, a "provincial writer" who is also, however, part of a

[144] Arguedas, José María. "Primer diario", in *Amaru*, Nº 6, April-June 1968 – (later included in his posthumous novel, *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*).

[145] "…aguijonear con su `genialidad`, con sus solemnes convicciones de que mejor se entiende la esencia de lo nacional desde las altas esferas de lo supranacional."

universal *continuum*: the normative horizon of "value-in-itself", which plies the local into the spheres of the global:

> We are not different in what I was thinking of in speaking of provincials. We are all provincial, don Julio. Provincials of nations and provincials of the supranational which is, also, a sphere, a well-closed stratum, that of 'value-in-itself', as you point out with great joy. (Arguedas 1969b)[146]

In the end, while agreeing with Arguedas' rejoinder, Cortázar insisted on the importance of distinguishing between provincialist fetishism and the trivial fact we are all determined by certain native-regional traditions. And as we have seen, the *indigenista* tradition identified by Mariátegui was precisely distinctive insofar as it aspired to a realist approximation to the reality of the Andean world, resisting its idealization. The question is then just what kind of relation can at once fulfill the aims of being maximally specific and responsible with regard to local determinations and yet preserve the universal reach emphasized by Cortázar, but also as we have seen emphasized by socialist *indigenista* writers since Mariátegui. Aiming at once to maximal analytic specificity and maximal synthetic comprehensiveness, Arguedas' works elaborate precisely the complementarity between the specificity of local tradition and the global reach of universalism, tracking not only the mediations between the urban mestizo and rural Indian, but between Western and indigenous culture more broadly. In the next section, I show how this task involved a methodological rejoinder to the perceived economicism in Mariátegui's depiction of the rural Indian ambiance, emphasizing the importance of cultural determinations in satisfying the ideal of appropriative integration.

[146] "No somos diferentes en lo que estaba pensando al hablar de provincianos. Todos somos provincianos, don Julio (Cortázar). Provincianos de las naciones y provincianos de lo supranacional que es también, una esfera, un estrato bien cerrado, el del `valor en sí`, como usted con mucha felicidad señala".

II – The Rehabilitation of Culture Against Economicism

In his 1950 essay *La Novela y el Problema de la Expresion Literaria en el Perú,* Arguedas overtly rejected the identification of his work with the label "*indigenismo*", insofar as he conceived of his own project not as addressing the reality of the rural Indian as an isolated particularity, but as part of an integral narrative binding the Andean world to a national and ultimately global context[147]. He draws a distinction between a literature that takes the rural Indian as its central subject matter, and one which aims to apprehend the complexities of the *Andean world*, in which the rural Indian is but one agent and element within a complex system of relations:

> One speaks thus of the *indigenista* novel; and it has been said that my works *Agua* and *Yawar Fiesta* are *indigenista* or Indian. And that is not true. These are novels in which the Peruvian Andes appear in all of their elements, in their disquieting and confused human reality, in which the Indian is but one among many and different characters[148]. (Arguedas 2009: 153, my translation here and below)

It follows that if *indigenista* narratives continued to miss the reality of the Andean world, it is because they continued to promote an essentialist view of the rural indian, defined in terms of inherent properties-values derived from its ancestral heritage, and a view in which the identity and placement of the rural Indian was only intelligible in its structural placement, always subject to transformation[149]. Above all, and as he would express years later in a retrospective assessment,

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147 Arguedas. José María. "La Novela y el Problema de la Expresión Literaria en el Perú", in *Qepa Wiñaq... Siempre Literatura y antropología*, edited by Dora Sales, Iberoamericana, 2009.

148 "Se habla así de novela indigenista; y se ha dicho que mis novelas Agua y Yawar fiesta que son indigenistas o indias. Y no es cierto. Se trata de 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."

149 Arguedas' entire anthropological *oeuvre*, far more voluminous than his literary work, has been recently compiled in Seven Volumes in *José María Arguedas. Obra Antropológica,* edited by Sybila Arredondo Arguedas, Horizonte, 2013. A cursory glance at the contents of this collections reveals the extent to which Arguedas' appraisal of the particularities of

Arguedas endorsed what we can name a *principle of reconciliation* between the "rational" and "magical" conceptions of the world, associated with the Western mestizo and the rural Indian, respectively. As he would state in the infamous 1964 roundtable about *Todas las Sangres*, such a principle expressed the hope to overcome the purported contradiction between modernity and tradition:

> There is no contradiction between a magical conception and a rationalist conception, but rather that each character sees the world according to their human formation…[150] (Arguedas 2000: 29, my translation here and below)

These lines reveal the essential point of contention not only between Arguedas and his own appraisal of the *indigenista* writers, but also with Mariátegui's own account of the rural Indian within the scope of a "Peruvian socialism". For the emphasis on apprehending the nature of divergent "human formations" contrasts Mariátegui's dismissal of "cultural" issues in the name of realism. For Arguedas, economic structures and relations remain inextricably bound to a whole system of cultural practices which define the cooperative *ethos* of the Indigenous subjectivity, and without which the objectivity of Andean productive modalities couldn't be understood or even less potentiated[151]. In other words, any genuine project for a "national consciousness" based appropriative mediations

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the Peruvian sierra and their relation to the coast and urban centers was coeval with a patient study of the manifold and different folkloric traditions, social formations, cultural values, and history of the regions of Perú, complicating the binary antagonism between the rural and the urban worlds.

[150] Arguedas, José María, *La Mesa Redonda sobre Todas las Sangres del 23 de junio 1965,* edited by Guillermo Rochabrún, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2000.
"No hay una contradicción entre una concepción mágica y una concepción racionalista, sino que cada personaje ve al mundo de acuerdo con su formación humana."

[151] As several commentators have noted, Arguedas' descent to indigenous culture by way of his scientific, anthropological research – for instance, as evinced his studies of the cultural preservation of the pre-colonial value-systems in the communities of the "southern sierra" of Huancayo and the Mantaro Valley directly informs the unique appraisal of the potentials of the indigenous world. For the analyses of these regions in particular. See Arguedas, José María. *Evolución de las comunidades indígenas.* Museo, 1957, pp. 78-151; *Folklore del Valle de Mantaro (provincias de Jauja y Concepción) Cuentos mágico-realistas y canciones de fiesta tradicionales*, in *Folklore Americano,* pp. 101-298. As Ángel Rama notes, these texts reveal a crucial complication of the simplification of the mentality and reality of the rural Indian in the northern and southern sierra endorsed by those who project a Manichean polarity between the rural and urban worlds, identifying this nuanced approach as setting his work apart not only from early *indigenismo* but from the novelistic work of Ciro Alegría, as well.

between the mestizo and the Indian would have to not only seek organizational integration and productive transformation, but essentially to forge a new set of collective values. The principle of reconciliation was thus not only a corrective to the extremes of occidentalism or ancestralism, but also implicitly a corrective against a lingering *economicism* in Mariátegui's dialectical narrative, which strictly disavowed the *anthropological* dimension in the constitution of the social bond:

> Mariátegui did not possess information about indigenous or Indian culture; he had not studied it, and he had no opportunity or time to do it; an account of Incan culture – about which a very voluminous bibliography exists – and the mode of being of contemporary indigenous life was and probably remains still unknown[152]. (Arguedas 1970, my translation here and below)

This insufficiency clarifies Arguedas' disavowal of *indigenista* literature, leading him as we have seen to reject the term as a suitable characterization of his own project. For although *indigenismo* formed part of a decisive advance towards an approximation to the reality of the rural Indian grounded in a social scientific outlook – prefigured, according to Arguedas in the work of the generation of 900, and particularly traced to the work of archeologist Julio C. Tello, in contradistinction to José de la Riva Aguero's and Victor A. Belaunde's *hispanismo* - it continued to miss the reality of the "living Indian ", producing a caricature of its psychology, social practices, and cultural values. As Arguedas tells us, recounting the origins of his own literary and anthropological project, and *apropos* his encounter with the narratives of Lopez Albújar and García Calderon, he…

> …felt so appalled, so estranged, so disappointed, that I considered it indispensable to make an effort to describe the indigenous man such as he was and such as I had come to know him through a very direct coexistence… The two describe the Indian as a

[152] Arguedas, José María. "Razón de ser del indigenismo en el Perú", in *Formación de una cultura nacional indoamericana*, edited by Ángel Rama, México, 1975, p.192. The essay was first published in *Visión*, Lima, 1970, pp.43-45.

being of petrous expression, mysterious, inexcusable, ferocious, lice eating[153] (Arguedas 1971: 40, my translation).

For the required rigorous approximation to the Andean world it was not sufficient to reject a deterministic conception of history and revolution, as Mariátegui had done, or to amplify the binary schema of class-contradictions to account for the reality of a peasant proletariat and the semifeudal landlord oligarchic class. The very idea of a "primary contradiction" which reduced social fragmentation to class determinations divisions already involved an oversimplification which missed the articulation of cultural and economic factors. This leads Arguedas to say that the category of contradiction is itself inadequate as a methodological lever, thereby complicating the central motor of the dialectical process endorsed by historical materialism:

> There are no contradictions, that is, contradictions are those which naturally exist between the different peoples in our country, between different ways of seeing the world. The great ambition of the book [*Todas las Sangres*] was precisely to show this multiplicity of conceptions, in accordance with the degrees of approximation to a populous world (Arguedas 2000: 30)[154]

Neither occidentalist nor ancestralist, neither economicist nor fetishistic, Arguedas' principle of reconciliation aspired to a more nuanced prospective process of integration for Peruvian society, where the ideal of economic *appropriation* of the Indian collectivist productive modalities had to be

[153] "Me sentí tan indignado, tan extrañado, tan defraudado, que consideré que era indispensable hacer un esfuerzo por describir al hombre andino tal como era y tal como yo lo había conocido a través de una convivencia directa. (…) Los dos describen al indio como un ser de expresión petrea, misteriosa, inescrutable, feroz, comedor de piojos."
Arguedas, José María, and Alejandro Romualdo. "Poesía y prosa en el Perú contemporáneo", in *Panorama actual de la literatura latinoamericana,* Fundamentos, 1971.

[154] "No hay una contradicción entre una concepción mágica y una concepción racionalista, sino que cada personaje ve al mundo de acuerdo con su formación humana… No hay contradicciones; es decir, las contradicciones son las que naturalmente existen entre las diferentes gentes que hay en nuestro r país, entre diferentes modos de ver el mundo. La gran ambición del libro fue precisamente mostrar esa multiplicidad de concepciones, según los grados de aproximación de un mundo populoso."

supplemented with a subjective cooperativist ethics and politics of *transculturation*. It is to this aspect of Arguedas' project that we now turn.

III – Transculturation and Heterogeneity, Synthesis and Difference

In his now classical study *Transculturación Narrativa en América Latina*, Angel Rama (1982) describes the process of social-subjective transformation depicted in Arguedas' literary works in terms of what Cuban anthropologist-musicologist Fernando Ortiz calls *transculturation*, and which is defined in terms what the Italian semiologist Vittorio Lanternari calls "cultural plasticity"[155]. According to Rama, the thematic of transculturation becomes characteristic of the narrative impetus behind the so-called third phase of regionalist Latin American thought, to which the work of Ciro Alegría and José María Arguedas belongs[156] (Rama 2012: 67). In Rama's appropriation of the term into literary criticism, narratives of "transculturation" describe the possibility of productive encounters between cultural traditions, involving first and essentially a bidirectional mediation and twofold process: the *acculturation* through which one culture acquires the traits and becomes part of another culture, and the *deculturation* through which a former cultural identity is left behind. Yet this simultaneous process of gain and loss also generates novel syntheses between different cultural forms and expressions, as part of a "creative movement" of *neoculturation*[157] (Ibid). The following

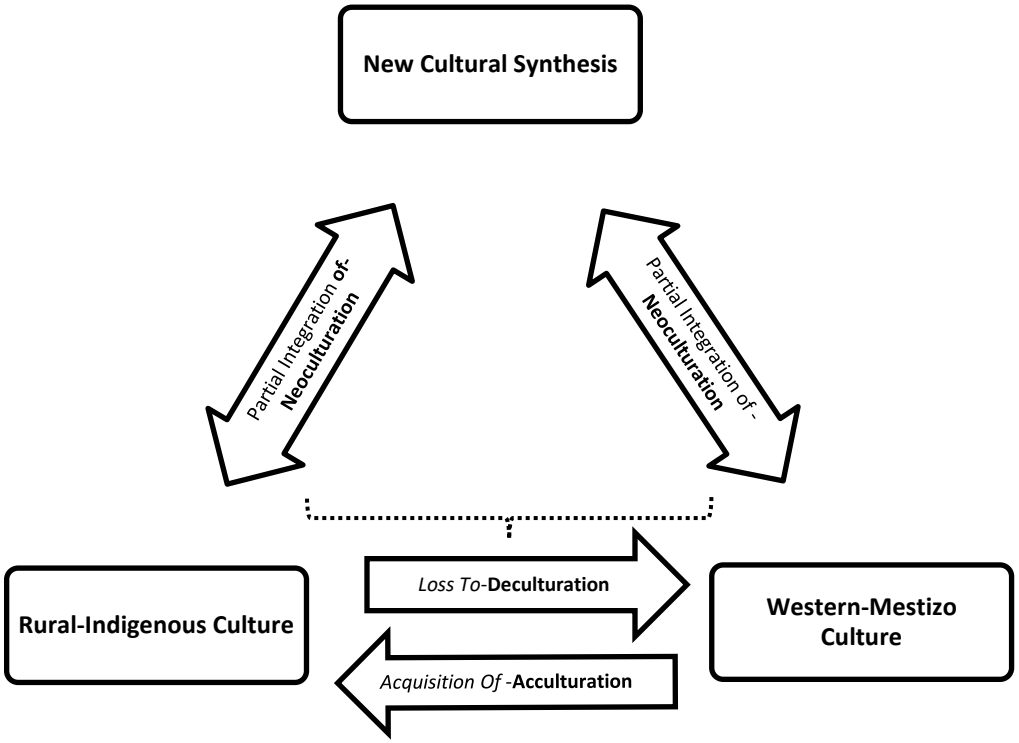
[155] Rama first uses the term in his 1971 article *Los procesos de transculturación en la narrativa latinoamericana*. In its more mature formulation, however, he extends Ortiz' hermeneutic frame in discerning four distinctive kinds of relations and corresponding literary relational forms which involved characters caught within a process of transculturation, formative of what he calls a "general reconstruction of the cultural system": losses, selections, rediscoveries, and incorporations. Across these four operations, the effects of transculturation results in what Rama calls a structural "Latin American perspectivism", in which the differences and tensional spaces of transit between cultural productive sites become thematized and explored in their relations, rejecting at once the 'regionalist' closure of a culture into itself and the process of assimilation in acculturation (Rama 1982: chapters I-II).

[156] Rama, Ángel, *Writing Across Cultures: Narrative Transculturation in Latin America,* edited and translated by David Frye, Duke University Press, 2012.

[157] As Silvia Spitta (1995) puts it, "…the transculturated subject is someone who, like Arguedas, is consciously or unconsciously situated between at least two worlds, two cultures, two languages, and two definitions of subjectivity, and who constantly mediates between them all." (Spitta 1995: 24)

diagram illustrates the transcultural process outlined by Rama as it becomes expressed by Arguedas to think of the relation between the Andean World and Western culture.

Diagram 3.1



As Rama argues, every literary expression of a process of transculturation is therefore identified as satisfying a "double proof": (1) it must produce a mapping of the elements and qualities that define the culture(s) relating with each other, (2) it must depict the creative production of novel forms and so the irreducibility of a new transcultural subject to existing normative codes, historical structures, and cultural identities.

On the one hand it notes that the current culture of the Latin American community (which itself is a product of long-term transculturation and in constant evolution) is composed of idiosyncratic values that can be identified as having been active since the

> remote past; on the other hand, it corroborates the creative energy that propels it forward, making it quite distinct from a simple aggregate of norms, behaviors, beliefs and cultural objects, for it is a force that acts with facility on situations arising from its own development as well as on contributions coming from elsewhere (Rama, 2012: 19, my translation)

Abiding to the demands of this 'double proof', Arguedas' transcultural literature, for Rama, retrieves the particularity of the Andean world in its tensional but holistic articulation with Western culture, but also anticipate a transformative process between the two in the generation of a new culture[158]. And this transformative process was also one of *universalization*, bringing unforeseen mediations between local and foreign forms[159]:

> The link [to the Andean world] could universalize itself, extend; it showed itself as a concrete, acting example. The barrier could and had to be destroyed; the flow of the two nations could and had to unite. And the road did not have to be, nor was it possible that it was the only way, that under the empire of the exploiting victors, namely: that the defeated nation surrender its soul, even if not in appearance, formally, and that it take that of the victors, that is to say, that is become acculturated. (Arguedas 1968)[160]

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158 According to Rama, if Latin American writers are to meet the pretensions to universality through literary creation, this can only be attained by recollecting and composing from the particularities of heterogeneous cultures, thus "…."recomposing from [previous cultural] material a superior discourse that could match or confront the most hierarchic products of a universal literature". Rama, Ángel. "Los Procesos de transculturación en la narrativa latinoamericana", in *Revista de Literatura Hispanoamericana*, issue 5, 1974, pp. 37, my translation

159 When, in his 1968 speech *No Soy un Aculturado*, Arguedas disavows the label of "acculturation" as an adequate description of his own relation to rural Indian reality, he overtly rejects that the sole destiny which escapes a futile resistance through nostalgic ancestralism must be the 'occidentalist' assimilation of the autochthonous in the name of international integration and modernization. A third way is posible.

160 "El vínculo podía universalizarse, extenderse; se mostraba un ejemplo concreto, actuante. El cerco podía y debía ser destruido; el caudal de las dos naciones se podía y debía unir. Y el camino no tenia por qué ser, ni era posible que fuera únicamente el que se exigía con imperio de vencedores expoliadores, o sea: que la nación vencida renuncie a su alma, aunque no sea sino en la apariencia, formalmente, y tome la de los vencedores, es decir que se aculture."
Arguedas, José María, *No soy un Aculturado*, speech given in 1968. Full text available at:
https://www.servindi.org/actualidad/3252

The affirmation of possible new mediations which bind indigenous culture in a "path to universalization" rejects the idea that only alternative to acculturation is a peaceful coexistence between already existing heterogeneous cultures or identities, and so that a literature written from a particular productive contexts ought to remain, at best, at a respectful distance from an inaccessible Other[161]. By the same token, the productive potentials inherent in transculturation, for Arguedas, do not entail that heterogeneous identities unravel in composing an "ideal culture", alike that conceived in Vasconcelos' "cosmic race". Rather, transcultural hybridity functions as an *integrative* potential, preserving difference without compromising unity, finally promoting…

> …[a] revitalized examination of local traditions, which had become sclerotic, in order to find formulations that would allow for the absorption of external influences. External influences would thus be diluted into larger artistic structures that can still translate the problematics and the peculiar flavors they had continued to preserve (Rama 1974: 37)[162].

This is as much a social as it is a literary process; indeed, to the extent that it involved the projective task of thinking new syntheses, literary transculturation functioned as a precursor to and imaginary for social integration. As Arguedas describes, the immediate task for the fictional imaginary was thus to find a new language apposite to describe the complex exchanges that exist between Quechua and Spanish, precisely to describe new possible forms of subjectivation as

[161] While Ángel Rama's concept of transculturation emphasizes the synthetic and integrative potentials which obtain from the mediations between different terms, Antonio Cornejo Polar's (1978) reading sees the irreducibility and priority of difference and multiplicity, and the autonomy of divergent 'contexts of realization-actualization-consumption'. Following Cornejo Polar, Klára Schirová (2004) for instance has argued that Arguedas in fact disavows transculturation in favor of "inculturation", in which heterogeneous cultures coexist in their differences within a new social space:

> José María Arguedas did not promote the idea of transculturation. He did not attempt to create a complimentary and ideal culture that was a combination of the best aspects of the two originary cultures. Arguedas formulated the Peru of everyone's blood, maintaining the primary cultural richness and expressing his faith in the process of 'inculturation'… Arguedas' inculturation was a harmonic encounter (not a fusion) and constructive between cultures… The purpose of the linguistic model is not, according to Cornejo Polar, integration and unification, but the justification of different cultural manifestations that live in contact with each other. (Shirova 2004: 99, my translation).

[162] Translated and cited by Moreiras, Alberto. *The Exhaustion of Difference: The Politics of Latin American Cultural Studies*, Duke University Press, 2001, pp. 185.

potentially arising. In the next section, I attend to this productive task as it unfolds since Arguedas' early works, exemplifying how literary transculturation becomes a methodological condition to express the socio-cultural, historical process of integration between Western and indigenous culture.

IV – Form and Content: Literary Transculturation and the Search for a New Language

In retrospectively clarifying the potentials of a future transculturation between Western and pre-Hispanic forms, Arguedas identifies a formal, constructive task which he would elaborate progressively across literary works: the invention of a new expressive medium apposite to describe and imagine processes of transculturation in Peruvian society. In his essay *The Novel and the Problem of Literary Expression in Perú* (*La novela y el problema de la expresión literaria en el Perú*) he describes how since his earlier works he aimed to enrich the resources of the Spanish syntax and grammar so as to evince its mediation with Quechua. For the absence of such a language had remained the central boon which destined *indigenista* narratives to an inauthentic account of the Andean world, and by extension a distorting picture of Peruvian socio-cultural reality as a whole:

> Under a false language a world appeared as invented, without marrow and bloodless; a typical "literary" world, in which the word had consumed the work. (Arguedas 1976: 401, my translation here and below)[163]

In the same essay, Arguedas makes clear that the search for a language was continuous with a structural demand, which led him to develop a characterological framework leading to the construction of two narrative arcs in his novels and short stories: the narratives of the "big towns"

[163] Arguedas, José María. "La novela y el problema de la expresión literaria en el Perú", in *Varios,* Casa de las Américas, La Habana, 1976.
"Bajo un falso lenguaje se mostraba un mundo como inventado, sin médula y sin sangre; un típico mundo «literario», en que la palabra ha consumido a la obra."

("*pueblos grandes*") which describes the major rural provinces and their capitals, from *Yawar Fiesta* (1941) to *Todas las Sangres* (1964), and the narratives of the "village" ("*aldea*"), paradigmatically exemplified in his collection and short-story, *Agua* (1933) (Ibid). But while the narrative of the villages depicted a binary opposition between the landlord oligarchic rulers and the Indian villagers, the narratives of the big towns discerned five subjective types: the *rural Indian*, the fanatical-dogmatic *traditional landlord*, the institutionally servile *new landlord*, the town's wandering *mestizo* who lacks a future, and finally the protagonical role of *the returning provincial student*, who returns to his place of origins after being educated in the city, and which will prefigure the ideal transcultural subject:

> He has two residences, Lima and 'his town', of a messianic whose soul rages between love and hate; that human element, so noble, so tenacious, so abnegated, that it becomes engulfed by the implacable forces that sustain the social order against which he lacerates and spends his breath. (Ibid)

Clearly, the role endowed to the provincial student reiterates a characteristic trope throughout the "third-wave regionalist" *indigenista* narrative since at least the 1940s; evinced for instance in Ciro Alegría's *Broad and Alien Was the World,* in the figure of Benito Castro. But it can be traced back at least to Vallejo's blacksmith, Servando Huanca, who emerged from the masses with the knowledge of revolutionary politics acquired from European socialist imaginary (cf. Chapter II), if not to Rómulo Gallegos' 1929 novel *Doña Bárbara* and the figure of Santos Luzardo, who emblemizes the eventual reconciliation of "civilization and barbarism". In any case, the provincial student is defined by his amphibian quality, selectively appropriating Western thought without relinquishing his traditional values. He is educated in the city, awakening political consciousness and appropriative knowledge of the modern world and world history as a practical lever to defy the hegemonic powers which besiege his home and culture:

> The fifth character is the provincial student that has two residencies; Lima and 'his town'; generally messianic type, whose soul blazes between love and hate; this human element, so noble, so tenacious, so abnegated, which is then swallowed by the implacable forces that sustain the social order against which he lacerated and spent his breath.[164] (Ibid)

In the last instance, the approximation to the linguistic and cultural mediations which mapped and anticipated processes of transculturation pertain to what Arguedas calls the "literary expression to the problem of universality", against the threat of a parochial "regionalism". Following Vallejo's own imagined "universal language" in which different national traditions would coalesce, tracking the "subtle displacements" between Spanish and Quechua was not only the attempt to strike a balance between form and content, but between regional fidelity and universal ambition:

> There was and there is before the solution of these very special trances of literary expression to the problem of universality, the danger of regionalism that contaminates the work and parcels it… To become realized, translated, to convert the diaphanous and legitimate torrent of the language that appears foreign; to communicate to the almost foreign tongue the matter of our spirit. That is the arduous, difficult question. The universality of this rare equilibrium of content and form, equilibrium achieved after intense nights of incredible work, is something to arrive in function of the human perfection achieved in the course of such a strange effort… Only one could be the end: Spanish as a legitimate medium of expression of the Andean Peruvian world, the noble whirlwind in which different spirits,

[164] "El quinto personaje es el estudiante provinciano que tiene dos residencias, Lima y «su pueblo»; tipo generalmente mesiánico cuya alma arde entre el amor y el odio; este elemento humano tan noble, tan tenaz, tan abnegado, que luego es engullido por las implacables fuerzas que sostienen el orden social contra el cual se laceró y gastó su aliento"

forged in different stars, struggle, attract, repel and mix, between the highest mountains, the deepest rivers, between snows and silent lakes, the freeze and fire. (Ibid: 402-403)[165]

In what resembles a dialectical resolution, Arguedas then tells us that the search for a new expressive and universal form is at the same time a question of *spirit*; that is, of cultures forming novel syntheses across history, forming what he calls thus "narrow zones of confluence":

> Was and is this a search for universality carried through the struggle for form, and only form? Form, insofar as this signifies conclusion, or equilibrium, attained by the necessary mixture of elements that try to constitute themselves in a new structure…To have sought to expression with a sense of universality through the steps that take us to the dominion of a foreign idiom, to have sought in the course of the leap; that was the reason behind the incessant struggle. The sought for universality, searched for without disfiguration, without the decline of earthly, human nature that one attempted to show; without giving in an apex to the external and apparent beauty of words…It was not a matter then of a search for form in its superficial and commonplace sense, but a problem of the spirit, of culture, in these countries in which strange currents meet and throughout centuries do not conclude in fusing their directions, but rather form narrow zones of confluence, while in the deep and broad of the main veins they flow without rest, incredibly. (Ibid)[166]

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[165] "Existía y existe frente a la solución de estos especialísimos trances de la expresión literaria, el problema de la universalidad, el peligro del regionalismo que contamina la obra y la cerca…. Realizarse, traducirse, convertir en torrente diáfano y legítimo el idioma que parece ajeno; comunicar a la lengua casi extranjera la materia de nuestro espíritu. Ésa es la dura, la difícil cuestión. La universalidad de este raro equilibrio de contenido y forma, equilibrio alcanzado tras intensas noches de increíble trabajo, es cosa que vendrá en función de la perfección humana lograda en el transcurso de tan extraño esfuerzo… Uno sólo podía ser un fin: el castellano como medio de expresión legítimo del mundo peruano de los Andes, noble torbellino en que espíritus diferentes, como forjados en estrellas diferentes, luchan, se atraen, se rechazan y se mezclan, entre las más altas montañas, los ríos más hondos, entre nieves y lagos silenciosos, la helada y el fuego."

[166] ¿Fue y es ésta una búsqueda de la universalidad a través de la lucha por la forma, sólo por la forma? Por la forma en cuanto ella significa conclusión, equilibrio alcanzado por la necesaria mezcla de elementos que tratan de constituirse en

Such a process of universalization through integration thereby attests to "…the possibility, the necessity, of more absolute act of creation[167]" (Ibid) To patiently construct a new language which makes of Man "one and unique", resisting "the dangers of regionalism" by drawing a diagonal across divergent cultural forms, becomes at last the definitive literary responsibility:

> But if language, thus charged with strange essences, allows one to see into the profound heart of humanity, if it transmits the history of its journey over the earth, universality may take perhaps long; but it shall arrive, since we know well that man owes its preeminence and reign to the fact of being one and unique. (Ibid: 33)[168]

In what follows, I briefly trace Arguedas' "narrative of the villages" by attending to the development of the militant Indian revolutionary subject in *Agua,* before attending to the figurations of the subject in the narratives of the "big towns" since *Yawar Fiesta*, and reaching its apex in *Todas las Sangres*. Across this trajectory, the construction of a new language becomes progressively realized in a process of literary transculturation at the same time as the projective ideal of a future subject that carries universality in mediating between the Western and Andean world.

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una nueva estructura…. Haber pretendido expresarse con sentido de universalidad a través de los pasos que nos conducen al dominio de un idioma distinto, haberlo pretendido en el transcurso del salto; ésa fue la razón de la incesante lucha. La universalidad pretendida y buscada sin la desfiguración, sin mengua de la naturaleza humana y terrena que se pretendía mostrar; sin ceder un ápice a la externa y aparente belleza de las palabras…No se trata, pues, de una búsqueda de la forma en su acepción superficial y corriente, sino como problema del espíritu, de la cultura, en estos países en que corrientes extrañas se encuentran y durante siglos no concluyen por fusionar sus direcciones, sino que forman estrechas zonas de confluencia, mientras en lo hondo y lo extenso las venas principales fluyen sin ceder, increíblemente"

[167] "[L]a posibilidad, la necesidad de un acto de creación más absoluta"

[168] "Pero si el lenguaje así cargado de extrañas esencias deja ver el profundo corazón humano, si nos transmite la historia de su paso sobre la tierra, la universalidad podrá tardar quizá mucho; sin embargo vendrá, pues bien sabemos que el hombre debe su preeminencia y su reinado al hecho de ser uno y único".

V - The Revolutionary Indian Subject in the Narrative of the 'Village": *Agua*

In the words of Jana Hermuthová, already in *Agua*, Arguedas produces with remarkable dexterity "…changes in the lexicon, the morphology, and overall the syntax [of Spanish][169]" (Shirova 2004: 51, my translation here and below). In particular, she draws attention to Arguedas' displacement of the priority accorded to the sentential unit, so as to capture the privileging of the verb which occurs paradigmatically at the end of the phrase in Quechua, and which semantically functions as "… the bearer of emotional nuance" (Ibid)[170]. Beyond the linguistic divide between the mestizo and the Indian, however, two asymmetrical worlds are suspended in tension, Arguedas writes, "…one which stabs, and one which bleeds" (Arguedas 1978: 402). Woven from "pure hatred", the story evinces a destructive furor which, we are told, nevertheless springs from what Arguedas calls "universal loves":

> *Agua* was written, yes, with hate, with the rapture of a pure hatred; that which springs from universal loves, there, in the regions of the world where two contradictory bands exist in confrontation with implacable cruelty, one which is harvested and the other which bleeds. (Ibid)[171]

At its most abstract level, the story develops around a central antagonism, through which the rural Indian population is positioned directly against the mestizo oligarchic rule. Beyond this central contradiction, however, the Andean world appears as an intrinsically multifaceted natural and

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[169] Jana Hermuthová, "El discurso experimental arguediano, in José María en el Corazón de Europa", in *José María Arguedas en el corazón de Europa*, edited by Klára Schirová, Universidad Carolina de Prada, 2004, pp. 51.

[170] Hermuthová also signals in this syntactical displacement between the two languages the accumulation of adjectives, and the repetition of entire phrases, both of which integrate mannerisms and modalities proper to the mediated form between Quechua and Spanish (Ibid).

[171] "Agua sí fue escrito con odio, con el arrebato de un odio puro; aquel que brota de los amores universales, allí, en las regiones del mundo donde existen dos bandos enfrentados con implacable crueldad, uno que esquilma y otro que sangra."

cultural system: in the region of San Juan, where the story transpires, the landscape and fauna are invoked as parts of a holistic network of semantic valences. Ventanilla, once a great silver mine, is now forlorn and abandoned, reduced to site for mestizo lovers to secretively meet, a shelter from the scorching sun for the cows during the day, and a site of rest for mountain hogs through the quiet night. The analogical junction of the animal and human worlds weaves a tensional but nevertheless singular ambiance, split from within by the mark of economic subjugation and abandonment by the state. Arguedas does not indulge, however, in a redemptive, homeostatic vision of this natural and cultural scenery: harboring the memory of the mine's past prosperity and the stain of its current precariousness, the narrative voice scans its "hollow, black doors", revealing a voided space deprived from its past glory and bereft of all promise for the future. In what appears but as a frustrated, inverted vitalist image, we are told that "San Juan is dying"; its infrastructure collapsing, its population withering under the criminal rule of the *gamonales* and the neglect of the state (Arguedas 1933: 1, my translation here and below)[172]. The natural and cultural domains in *Agua* become then not only multifaceted in themselves, but porous and asymmetrical, distributing a social heirarchy: Don Braulio, predatorily scavenging his surroundings "as the fox or hound" (as Ernesto describes him), usurps San Juan's water supplies not only from the Indians, but from the competing landlords.

If there is nostalgia to be seen, it is appropriative rather than commemorative. Arguedas projects the indissociable bond between traditional indigenous folklore, and the economic, productive determination of the commoners: at the outset, the senior Indian leader Vilkas reproaches his fellow commoner for playing a celebratory song in times of drought, calling for him to instead "sing for rains" (Ibid 1-3). The aging Vilkas, respectful of tradition, is however also a figure of passivity and surrender, unwilling to defy the rule of don Braulio and the principals,

[172] Arguedas, José María, *Agua,* 1933. Available at: http://home.snafu.de/angelam/rp/ES/Agua_JMA.pdf

addressing the divinities with servitude in an innocuous plea for mercy. His respectful stance reveals, in the guise of melancholic despair, the danger of reactive inertia, and of submissive patheticism.

Marking a profound skeptical distrust in the future under the rule of the landlords, but also heretical resistance against the imposition of Western culture and its religious idols, Arguedas subtly displaces the impotence of Vilka's musical prayer through the fulguration of the revolutionary presence: standing in exception to the fearful and submissive Indians of the community, the young militant "*mak'ta*" Pantacha questions the natural order depicted in the Indian song, and accurses the crimes perpetrated by don Braulio. Pantacha has returned from the coast with radical political ideas, reinforcing the idea that emancipatory consciousness originates and trickles down from the coastal city in which it is forged. His musical tune conveys the hostility and coldness of the Andean environs, destining its inhabitants to a perpetual struggle. In contrast to Vilkas' submissive plea, the "student turned revolutionary" faces the sun with a defiant song. As Pantacha tells the young Ernesto as he plays a cold "tune from the *puna*" he indicts the colonial heritage to the imposition of its religious-cultural mythos: *"*The rage of don Braulio is the cause. *Taytacha* [Jesus] does nothing.*"* (Ibid) Yet his demand extends to a protest to the sun-God (*Inti*), subverting the fate prescribed by the Andean theological mythos as much as that imposed by the mestizo rulers:

> Pantacha stood in the chant of the corridor, gazing the *Inti tayta* eye to eye; and he blew the *wanakupampas'* horn with strength… the *Inti tayta* scorched the world. The stones of the mine Ventanilla shined like little mirrors; the hills, the mountains, the ravines, sizzled in the heat. It seemed as if the sun was burning the heart of the mountains; that it was drying

the eyes of the earth forever… The *Inti tayta* wanted, surely, the death of the earth, gazed forth, with all its might. His rage set the world aflame, and made men weep (Ibid: 12)[173].

In a gesture reminiscent of Vallejo's metaphysical "cry of protest" in *Los Heraldos Negros* (cf. Chapter II), encompassing not only the Western divinities but the indigenous icons, the elegiac arrest of the Indian song is transvalued from supplication into an act of subversion. As he congregates in the midst of inner-conflict and unending exploitation, Pantacha's defiance promises to articulate the divided commoners from the different neighboring villages:

The *tinkis* gathered around don Wallpa; the *sanjuanes*, silent, without calling to each other, convened on the other side.

– There is no trust; commoners will not end well – Pantacha said, gazing toward the peoples separating in two bands[174]. (Ibid: 13)

Pantacha's pessimistic verdict in the face of internal separation carries an implicit lesson: without organized action, the competitive spirit that animates the indigenous community risks fragmentation and ultimately dissolution. As Juan Carlos Ubilluz argues, this places Pantacha within the scope of "the classical solution" to the indigenous problem overtly thematized since Mariátegui's 1929 *Ideological Theses*, in which the urban avant-garde politically awakens the Indians to guide their own revolutionary path as an integral collectivity (Ubilluz 2017: 117). The syntactical designator for the collective quantitative "many" ("*tantos*") becomes in his voice thus condensed and integrated into the singular qualitative form "much" ("*tanto*") next to which the competing landlords appear but

[173] "Pantacha se paró en el canto del corredor, mirando ojo a ojo al Inti tayta; y sopló bien fuerte la corneta de los wanakupampas…El tayta Inti quemaba al mundo. Las piedras de la mina Ventanilla brillaban como espejitos; las lomas, los falderíos, las quebradas se achicharraban con el calor. Parecía que el Sol estaba quemando el corazón de los cerros; que estaba secando para siempre los ojos de la tierra…El tayta Inti quería, seguro, la muerte de la tierra, miraba de frente, con todas sus fuerzas. Su rabia hacía arder al mundo y hacía llorar a los hombres."

[174] "Los tinkis se juntaron alrededor de don Wallpa; los sanjuanes, callados, sin llamarse, se entroparon en otro lado. −No hay confianza; comuneros no van a parar bien −dijo Pantacha, mirando a la gente separarse en dos bandos."

disarticulated, feeble multiplicity "But *comunkuna* much we are; principals, two, or three, at most there are." (Arguedas 1958: 8)[175] Ubilluz remarks:

> This is, without doubt the political solution that the indigenista narrative develops through the rural leaders like Benito Castro in *Broad and Alien is the World* (Ciro Alegría), Servando Huanca in *El Tungsteno* (Cesar Vallejo), and even Demetrio Rendon Wilka in *Todas las Sangres* (Arguedas). In all of these novels, they have educated themselves with leftist politicians in the coast, and have returned to their communities to organize them in sight of rebellious action. (Ubilluz 2017: 117-118, my translation here and below)

As the story reaches its dramatic apex, the sun's fiery natural presence ('*Inti*'), divine symbol of the arid highlands, is accursed as the ruthless figure of destruction rather than productivity: not the benevolent sun of the time of harvest, but the splintering sun of utter wastage, whose natural indolence mirrors don Braulio's indifference to the commoners. In response to this internal strife, in which nature is turned against Man just as Man turns against himself, Pantacha's voice reverberates: rather than a peaceful reconciliation, his outcry leaves neither myth nor reality intact, initiating a movement through which the collective rises against all normative orders, natural and human, mortal and divine, splitting the laws of the world in the name of justice.

V - The Collective Indigenous Subject in the Narrative of the "Big Towns": *Yawar Fiesta*

In *Yawar Fiesta*, often touted as Arguedas' most "technically" accomplished novel, the process of transcultural defiance achieves a further stage of maturity[176]. Beyond a more nuanced

[175]"Pero *comunkuna* somos tanto, tanto; principales dos, tres nomás hay."

[176] The novel is preceded and anticipated by two short stories published in 1937, in which the divergent bullfighting traditions separating the indigenous from western subjects appears as central: The first of these, titled *The Dispossession*, was published in the April 4th edition of the magazine *Palabra* (Lima) and appears in rewritten form as the second chapter of *Yawar Fiesta*. The second, which works as an embryonic 'draft' of the 1941 novel, titled simply *Yawar*, was published in the #156 edition of the magazine *Revista Americana* (Buenos Aires).

description of the mediations between the Spanish and Quechua through idiomatic displacements, the novel enacts a transvaluation of the traditional Latin American antagonism between civilization and barbarism - typical of the Latin American social realist and telluric novel, since Sarmiento's *Facundo* - within the social rift evinced in the Pucquio region of the Peruvian southern highlands. Arguedas disassociates the (occidentalist) ideological alignment of Western modernization with civilization, and of barbarism with native pre-Hispanic traditions while avoiding the temptation of facile inversion, through which modernity would be identified as the agent of barbarism in contrast to an idyllic indigenous collective, supported in communitarian integrity. Instead, barbarism appears as a structural condition binding both the mestizo and the rural Indian, in which victims are defanged into servile surrender.

The entirety of *Yawar Fiesta* revolves around a single question: who will claim conquest of the quasi-mythical, Andean mountain bull Misitu, whose resilient presence symbolically stands both for the force of nature in general, but also for the ruthless hostility of the Andean highlands? More precisely, the incorporation of the bull into competing cultural rituals becomes the tensional point in which the indigenous traditions, deemed 'barbaric' by the Westernized creoles, is threatened by the state's attempt to prohibit the *Yawar*, supplanting it with the gallant, 'civilized' Western violence of Spanish bullfighting. Under the pretext of protecting the life of the indigenous community from the brutality of their traditional rituals, deemed intolerable by the mestizo, the distant yet oppressive authority of the state claims to save the region of Pucquio from what they deem "a savagery":

> I ask that the Council sends a telegram to send a telegram to the director of Government, thanking him for this commandment that protects the life of the Indian. And that frees Pucquio from a savagery. (Arguedas 1958: 196, my translation here and below)[177]

The formality of the address is at once undermined by the implicit but obvious hypocrisy of its message: the *gamonales* do not recognize their own violence against the rural Indian as barbaric, as long as it conforms to the normative strictures of Western culture. It is thus not violence as such which is deemed barbaric, but only the violence which threatens the hegemony of one's own position to enact violence. The rhetoric of a civilizing movement against savagery becomes then but the persisting force of the colonial impulse to enforce acculturation in the name of Western values.

The novel's guiding symbol for the division between the Indian and the mestizo, the bull Misitu, ultimately represents divergent mythologies and cultural spaces standing in tension, corresponding to two contrasting worldviews and belief-systems. For the Indian commoners, the formidable bull reproduces their native myth of creation: the emergence of the God *Wirak'ocha* from lake Titicaca, life rising from the waters as they "…turned whirlwind at the center of the lake next to the large island, and from within this whirlwind thus emerged the Misitu, longing and shaking its head[178]." (Ibid: 307) In the novel, Misitu ultimately stands for the power of Nature and its indomable force facing the combative and collective prowess of Man. Yet the relation between the two is also inscribed in a cyclic temporality from which a new sequence of struggle and invention springs forth: the surviving bulls from each year return, having learned how to fight back, so that even the

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[177] Arguedas, José María. *Yawar Fiesta*, epublibre. Available at: http://files.comunicatodos.webnode.es/200011834-6ab036ba9f/Yawar%20fiesta%20-%20José%20Maria%20Arguedas%20(1).pdf
"Yo pido que el Concejo envíe un telegrama de agradecimiento al señor director de Gobierno por ese mandamiento que protege la vida del indígena. Y que libra a Puquio de un salvajismo."

[178] "…se hizo remolino en el centro del lago junto a la isla grande, y que de en medio del remolino apareció el Misitu, bramando y sacudiendo su cabeza."

appointed Spanish toreador falls into skepticism before the learned beast that now "…knows how to kill[179]" (Ibid: 377): Anticipating the futility of the Western pretension of sedating the Andean world by proscribing the *Yawar* and submitting the bull to own ritual, the Indian community leader Don Pancho rhetorically undermines not only human arrogance before nature, but the acculturation implied in the demand to supplant the *Yawar*:

> And the Government also: why will it intrude in the life of the towns? Who messes with the Government, then? (...) As fish in the broth, the Misitu shall waggle in that corral. Swiftly it shall seize the bullfighters.[180] (Ibid: 404)

The frustrated imposition of acculturation in the novel signals the triumphant permanence of indigenous culture: Don Julian fails to bring the bull by force from the mountain in risible disarticulation with his subordinates, driven only by individual plunder, while the *K'ayau* Indians succeed in their cooperative attempt to do so, allowing the *Yawar* to proceed. The commoners thus victoriously drag the broken bull, dispelled from omnipotence, as the sovereign authority of an infuriated don Julian unravels, refusing to accept that the savages succeeded where he failed:

> In a little corner, the Misitu trembled. The *k'ayaus* gazed at him, saddened. It was an animal of the highlands, nothing more. There it was! Well strapped, well temperate by the Raura against the *k'eñwal*.[181] There was no more rage; everyone stood silent… They dragged

[179] "Esos toros buscaban el cuerpo tras del poncho o de la capa, que embestían sobre seguro. Eran de experiencia, y sabían matar."

[180] "Y el Gobierno también, ¿para qué se meterá en la vida de los pueblos? ¿Quién friega de aquí al Gobierno? ... Como pescado en sopera, el Misitu coleteará en ese corral. Rápido agarrará a los capeadores."

[181] A species of tree from the Andean regions.

him through the middle. In vain he resisted, in vain he sought to pull or turn. They pointed to the grassland with their helmets, dragging him on. (Ibid: 434)[182]

Rather than the triumph of the "barbaric" rite, Arguedas takes the reaffirmation of the Indian collective as a symbolic act of subversion against centuries of oppression. Dragged down from the mountains by the commoners, Misitu is brought to die under the rule of the Indian and the celebration of the *Yawar*, usurping the martyrdom of the Christian procession into a vindication of the *Ayllu*. The victory over Misitu speaks thus to the capacity of collective resistance to stand against what Arguedas calls "mythic terror", through which institutional powers exert their hegemony by constructing mythological narratives designed to disarm the possibility of insurgency:

> They precipitate the Indian toward darkness, toward fear, toward that which we call in the university "mythic terror"… And the landlords, the very priests, all the people that exploit us, that makes money at the expense of their ignorance, aim to confirm that this fear in the Indian toward the great forces of the earth is good and sacred. But if we were Government, brother! What would happen? We would shatter the cases that have made primitivism and servitude survive for so many centuries. (Ibid: 472)[183]

The revolutionary Indian subject in *Yawar Fiesta* is not, however, concentrated in a singular individual who rises from the otherwise helpless masses to assume a heroic role, or who returns from the city as the privileged agent for emancipation, as is the case with *Agua's* Pantacha. There are no clear protagonists in the novel; indeed, if there is a protagonist to be discerned it is the

[182] "En un rinconcito, el Misitu temblaba. Los *k'ayaus* lo miraban, tristes. Era un animal de puna no más. ¡Ahí estaba! Bien amarrado, bien templado por el *Raura*, contra el *k'eñwal*. Ya no había rabia; estaban todos en silencio…En medio lo arrastraban. En vano se encabritaba, en vano quería jalar o voltearse. Señalaban el pajonal con sus cascos, arrastrándolo".

[183] "Ellos precipitan al indio hacia lo oscuro, al temor, a eso que en la universidad llamamos «el temor mítico»" –…Y los terratenientes, los mismos curas, toda la gente que los explota, que hace dinero a costa de su ignorancia, procuran confirmar que este miedo del indio por las grandes fuerzas de la tierra es bueno y es sagrado. ¡Pero si nosotros fuéramos Gobierno, hermanos! ¿Qué pasaría? Romperíamos las causas que han hecho sobrevivir por tantos siglos el primitivismo y la servidumbre."

indigenous communities, spearheaded by the *Varayoks* or local leaders from the four towns in Pucquio. The Indian commoners function as a collective subject, which slowly composes itself from the neighboring villages: they are mostly nameless, but always in a dialogic context, designated by their functional role within their communities as they are forced to suspend the productive spirit of competition between themselves in a common struggle before the authorities:

> There are almost no Indian names in *Yawar Fiesta*. It narrates the feats of the four towns in Pucquio; it tries to exhibit the soul of the community, what is lucid and dark in its being, the form in which the tide of its actual destiny disconcerts them[184] incessantly; how such tide, beneath an apparent definition of limits, beneath the scab, obliges them to a constant effort of accommodation, of re-adjustment, to permanent drama. Until when shall the tragic duality of the Indian and the Western in these countries descendant from the Tahuantinsuyo and Spain last? What profundity does the tide that separate them have in the present? (Arguedas 2009: 154)[185]

The integration of the disparate communities which would potentiate the indigenous cooperativist and collectivist spirit in a subversive act - which Mariátegui already identified as the defining trait of indigenous culture to be appropriated for a future social structure - acquires peculiar significance in the chapter titled *Los Serranos*, where the ethereal, soaring echo of the mountains and the Indian voice is carried beyond the highlands onto the coast by the products of communal labor. The *K'ayaus* take upon themselves to open the road to Nazca, building the bridge to the cities in a

[184] In the novel, "the community" is disconcerted *in the plural* ("disconcerts them" / "*los desconcierta*"). This is another subtle indication of how Arguedas always thinks unity in multiplicity, and the generic identity of the collective to be woven from difference.

[185] "Casi no hay nombres de indios en Yawar fiesta. Se relata la historia de varias hazañas de los cuatro barrios de Puquio; se intenta exhibir el alma de la comunidad, lo lúcido y lo oscuro de su ser; la forma cómo la marea de su actual destino los desconcierta incesantemente; cómo tal marea, bajo una aparente definición de límites, bajo la costra, los obliga a un constante esfuerzo de acomodación, de reajuste, a permanente drama. ¿Hasta cuándo durará la dualidad trágica de lo indio y lo occidental en estos países descendientes del Tahuantinsuyo y de España? ¿Qué profundidad tiene ahora la corriente que los separa?"

seemingly impossible endeavor, as all individuals become defined in terms of specific functional roles, integrated in labor towards a singular purpose:

> The ten thousand commoners extended the entire road to Nazca. The vicar made the stroke of the road, calculating the ravines, surrounding the gorges of stone that crossed the bridle path. The *varayok's* straightened the stroke, according to their own judgment, what that of the priest was no good; they gathered, and consulting with each other, improved the way. (Arguedas 1958: 262)[186]

The local victory over Misitu, and the subsequent organization of the communities in the building of the road, initiate then a projected, wider-scale process of collective subjectivation, whereby the rural indigenous communities not only defy the corrupt local authorities, but build the emancipatory path toward a new cooperativist future. The novel closes anticipating the moment revolutionary upsurge against the city state powers, and not only against the landlord oligarchy:

> Do you know, brothers, what it means that the *k'ayaus* dared to enter Negromayo? That they submitted the Misitu and dragged him across the entire *puna* all the way to the Pichk'achuri plaza? They have done it for pride, so that the entire world sees the strength that they have, the force of the *Ayllu*, when it wants. Thus they opened the road to Nazca; because of that, 150 kilometers in 28 days! As in the times of the Empire…
>
> By popular initiative, without support from Government. And so ever since, every town began. In the north, in the center, in the south, all the way to the jungle, they gathered

[186] "Los diez mil comuneros se extendieron en todo el camino a Nazca. El vicario hizo el trazo de la carretera, calculando las quebradas, rodeando los barrancos de piedra que cruzaban el camino de herradura. Los varayok's enderezaban el trazo, según su parecer, cuando el del cura no era bueno; se juntaban, y consultándose, mejoraban la ruta…"

in the town plazas, in large congregations; they sent telegrams to the Government, and began the work by themselves. (Ibid: 277)[187]

At the end, Arguedas exemplifies the vital complementarity between cultural and economic factors by highlighting the way in which the indigenous spirit of competition operates outside of the individualistic logic of wage-labor or feudal subjugation. As we shall see, abjuring the implicit teleology in the sacrificial conception of labor under capitalist production, the indigenous communities was underwritten thus in a shared avowal of *work for itself*[188]. Anticipating the possible extension of cooperativism, in the novel the communities converge in a unified meta-collectivity and a processional migratory movement is anticipated, opening the paths into the coastal cities. And yet, at this stage in the narrative of the big towns, the consummating moment of revolutionary upsurge remains obscure in its direct implications, as does the relation between the mestizo and the Indian collective across the entire process. The image of the future society to come after the expansive movement into the city is left utterly indeterminate in the novel, relapsing to the familiar restorative dream (castigated by Mariátegui) of a collective effort which would match the indigenous ancestral glory; "as in the times of the Empire." One notices then that the threat of an ancestralism becomes rekindled once the idealized indigenous collective becomes the agent of a pure expansive movement,

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[187] "¿Saben, hermanos, lo que significa que los *k'ayaus* se hayan atrevido a entrar a Negromayo? ¿Que hayan laceado al Misitu y que lo arrastren por toda la puna hasta la plaza de *Pichk'achuri*? Ellos lo han hecho por orgullo, para que todo el mundo vea la fuerza que tienen, la fuerza del ayllu, cuando quiere. Así abrieron la carretera a Nazca; por eso, ¡150 kilómetros en 28 días! Como en tiempos del Imperio. (…) Por iniciativa popular, sin apoyo del Gobierno. Y desde entonces empezaron todos los pueblos. En el norte, en el centro, en el sur, hasta en la selva se reunían en las plazas de los pueblos, en cabildo grande; pasaban telegramas al Gobierno, y comenzaban el trabajo por su cuenta…"

[188] Arguedas, José María. "Razón de ser del Indigenismo en el Perú", in *Formación de una cultura nacional indoamericana*, Siglo XXI, 1975, pp. 193. Arguedas traces the historical roots of this conception to the Incan social organization of labor:

> [The Incas]…organized a society of a high level in what concerns technics, which rendered possible the abundance of goods, and a federal system with regard to religious beliefs, the arts, and modes of recreation; all of this systematic conjunction within a strict political order of such efficiency that the ancient Peruvian man worked without considered labor as a chore, much more that in any time, and as much as the most in the world. In this way it dominated an aggressive nature, threatening, apparently invincible, majestic, and tender. It converted abysses into gardens… irrigated desserts and constructed thousands of kilometers of excellent roads. (Arguedas 1975: 193, my translation)

modeling the revolutionary process as the overtaking of the mestizo by the Indian rather than through the achievement of an unprecedented, productive mediation between the two.

Perhaps for this reason, Arguedas' subsequent elaboration of the narratives of "the big towns" would give a different image of revolutionary agency, thinking of a transcultural subject who would be situated beyond both the fiery defiance of the Indian turned revolutionary, as well as beyond the collective migratory expansion of the integrated Indian community. Accordingly, in *Todas las Sangres,* Arguedas not only anticipates the *emancipation* of the rural Indian from the mestizo through their integration, but imagines the production of a *post-Indian subject*, situated beyond the disjunction between the Western and indigenous worlds, weaving itself from both traditions' cultures and beliefs. In thinking of this new subjective figure and process, Arguedas also thinks of a more complex social typology for the Peruvian Andes, and a different path toward reconciliation.

VII – The Post-Indian Transcultural Subject *Todas Las Sangres*

In her article *Todas las Sangres: La utopía Peruana*, Klára Shirová characterizes Arguedas' novel as an unprecedented attempt to "…blur the line between literature and dialectics, creating ideological-poetic reflections which crucially depict the social background of the epoch.[189]" (Shirova 2004: 97, my translation, here and below) Implicitly disputing Mariátegui's belief that only the Indians can represent or emancipate themselves, she argues, Arguedas does not draw an incommensurable division between the rural Indian and the mestizo, but attests to the possibility for their integration in the antagonism against "a common enemy":

> Arguedas ascribes to the Indians the conduct of revolution, but never excluded the possibility that other races would sustain their struggle. On the contrary, José María

[189] Shirová, Klára. *Todas las Sangres – La utopía Peruana*, in "José María Arguedas in el corazón de Europa", 2004, pp. 97.

> Arguedas believed that a common enemy would destroy the barriers of cultural differences and establish the bonds of the community.[190] (Ibid: 133)

This "common enemy" appears in the novel as the looming threat of imperial, international capital, in relation to which the interests of both landlords and the state become subordinated[191]. The consolidation of a united front binding all social and ethnic groups would not only oppose the usurpation of national sovereignty, but would consolidate a new collective bond for Peruvian society writ large, reiterating Mariátegui's hope that liberal market capitalism did not need to be a transitionary period before the socialist future for Peruvian society.[192]

In the novel, the opposition between the mestizo and the Indian becomes then integrated into a more complex social typological framework. At heart, the story narrates the strife of the Aragón de Peralta family, which exerts hegemonic control over the lands of San Pedro, in the region of Lahuaymarca. The pathetic agony of the patriarch Andrés at the outset of the novel, as he drunkenly ascends to the Church's bellower to address the town's Indians, opens the narrative with an elegiac gesture: the death of the old mestizo oligarchy and the waning Christian hegemony which follows from the colonial past. Drunken and falling to senile delirium, don Andrés accurses his fate as he addresses the congregated Indians in the town plaza, while a "castle of fires" blazes during the hour of Ascension; the church bells covered in the blood of the patriarch, standing against the resilient

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[190] "Arguedas atribuye a los indios la conducta de la revolución, pero nunca excluyó la posibilidad de que otras razas sostuvieran su lucha. Al contrario, José María Arguedas creyó que un enemigo común destruiría las barreras de las diferencias culturales y entablaría los lazos de la comunidad."

[191] Following Antonio Cornejo Polar, Irina Feldman argues that *Todas las Sangres* constitutes above all the attempt to think the foundations for a collective, national liberation from and struggle against the international capital: "Arguedas creates a common front against imperialism and overrides the internal contradictions between bosses and workers, Indian s and the lords… the narrative underlines similarities between the formations of the hacienda and ayllu and explores them as theoretical ground on which the projection of the sovereignty of the Peruvian state can be built" (Feldman 2014: 30-32)

[192] Commenting on this aspect of Arguedas' novel, Irina Feldman cites Tracy Strong's verdict, according to which "…the liberal tradition no longer offers the intellectual resources to meet the challenges…of the modern world". Cited in Feldman 2014: 2.

sublimity of the town's protector, the mountain-deity Pukasira (Arguedas: 2001:7). Unmovable symbol of the *Ayllu*, the mountain looms behind the Church tower in the dusking hour of red, its plains covered in beds of *k'antu* ("*Cantuta"*), divine flowers of the Incas, recalling the terminal History of colonial bloodshed, and insinuating historic retribution.[193]

The death of the patriarch signals not only the agonic closure of the landlord oligarchy, and of the rural economy under the *latifundio*, but a fissure in the family unit. On the one hand, as the figure of the "new landlord", Don Bruno aspires to hegemonic control over *La Providencia*, imparting direct brutality against the Indian commoners, but eventually sinking into repentance before his indigenous subordinates. Bruno's authoritative compulsion and dogmatic verbosity becomes hyperbolized as he becomes ever more fanatically Christian, revealing the degeneration of a Western spiritualism, contrasting the persisting communitarian values of the subjugated commoners. Appalled by the secular threat rising from the nascent capitalist class emblemized by his brother Don Fermín, Bruno's atonement not only fulfills penitential absolution, but unleashes a quixotic martyrdom, prophesizing the fatal cessation of the *latifundio* by the end of the novel.

At the opposite end of the family feud, Don Fermín incarnates the instrumentalist heart of an emerging capitalist class, with close ties to the state. The lives of the exploited Indians become under his rule reduced to a dehumanized labor force, slavishly provided by Bruno for work in the mine *Apar'cora*. But Fermín also is an advocate of the "liberal solution", promoting the proletarization of Indian workers so as to secure a exploitable labor force after the certain end of the *latifundio*, coinciding with the industrialization of the nation in a process which would "…transform barbarism into civilization" (Ibid: 306). Fermín's secular rationality provides thus the secular obverse of Bruno's religious patheticism: anticipating the assimilation of the rural economy into urban industrial

[193] The *Cantuta* is a bush which predominates in the Andes. The peculiarity *k'antu* bush was precisely that it engenders only "flowers of the same name", a clear symbol for the presumed communitarian disposition of the rural Indian.

capitalism, naturalizing inequality and socio-economic privilege as the only path to civilization. The liberal dream of urbanization and "professionalization" becomes revealed in its true motivation:

> We have to make of them lucid factory workers, and very regularly, open a tailor made door so that they ascend to technicians. The future world is not and will not be one of love, of 'fraternity', but of the power of a few, most serene and free from passions, over inferior ones that must work. "Fraternity" is the path of regression to barbarism. God made man unequal in his faculties… The fraternity of the miserable is the worst enemy of human greatness, its deceitful negation. (Ibid: 306) [194]

The contrast between the brothers is clear: Bruno's waning authority and moralistic indignation before modernization recalls the time where "every landlord was a Spanish king" (Ibid: 40)[195], while Fermín's capitalist thirst emblemizes the secular power and ideology of a growing capitalist national class. Each of the two indicts the other as the source of corruption and degradation of family's hegemonic power. For the repentant Bruno, it is Fermín´s secularism that corrupts the oligarchic legacy away from the moral tenets of Christian faith, delivering it to individualist abandon: "You drove us all to evil. Me! Me too!" (Ibid: 22)[196] In turn, Fermín chastises the hypocrisy behind Bruno's pathetic, moralizing stance, which is sustained in the reactionary dogma that *"*God and civilization are irreconcilable*"* (Ibid: 67). Recalling his brother's brutal sexual abuses against the Indians, Fermín exposes Bruno's sophistic beatitude and his hypocritical deferral

[194] "Hay que hacer de ellos lúcidos obreros de las fábricas y, muy regularmente, abrir una puerta medida para que asciendan a técnicos. El mundo futuro no es ni será del amor, de la "fraternidad", sino del poder de unos, de los más serenos y limpios de pasiones, sobre los inferiores que deben trabajar. La "fraternidad" es el camino de retroceso a la barbarie…la fraternidad de los miserables es el peor enemigo de la grandeza humana, su negación mentirosa".

[195] "Desde la República, cada hacendado era un rey español."

[196] "Tú empujaste a todos al mal! ¡A mí! ¡A mí también!"

of responsibility: "Which beast, what pig raped that miserable creature that my mother protected? Who was found with the beasts, and poor creatures without the age for judgment?" (Ibid: 22)[197]

Beyond the ideological divergence between the brothers, however, the novel evinces a deeper complicity at work between the competing modern and feudal worldviews, operating in sinuous synergy for ruthless exploitative control over the Indians. Thus, while Bruno keeps the commoners in poverty and ignorance so as to avoid their uprising against the feudal rule, Fermín draws on them as a labor force the mine *Apar'cora*, manipulating his brother's anachronistic zeal, and forging a temporary truce to gain advantage over competing city capitalists[198].

This structural bind under which capitalists and landlords subordinate the Indian becomes definitively threatened by the looming intrusion of international capitalist interests into the nation, incarnated in the ominous presence of the mining consortium Wisther and Bozart. The latter becomes a symbol for the danger of global capital to trump not only the interests of the emerging national capitalist class, but moreover all forms of community and local sovereignty. In the novel, the young Aquiles extends this fatal diagnosis to its nihilist conclusion, identifying capitalist intrusion not as an imperial venture driven by a foreign "nation-state", but rather as a soulless geopolitical tropism eroding the integrity of all cultural-national fidelities: "…[t]he consortiums have no fatherland; they have overcome such a concept.[199]" (Ibid: 265) Next to the global reach of the private consortium, the national capitalist class remains impotently bound to the domestic sphere:

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[197] Here "poor creature" translates the colloquial Spanish expression "pobre criatura", which used to refer to helpless youths or children. The indictment of barbarism is thus doubled, as Bruno's systematic violence treats the victimized, cognitively undeveloped indigenous children like animals to be used and abused.

[198] As Irina Feldman (2014) notes - following Benjamin, Milstein and Agamben - the distinctive placement of Fermín and Bruno coins two modes of sovereign violence: the 'divine', dogmatic or 'kingly' violence exerted by Bruno over *La Providencia* (literally, The Providence), eventually surrendered in messianic repentance, contrasting the objective violence of the proletarization of the Indian under to the structural logic of competition and the telos of capitalist production.

[199] "Los consorcios no tienen patria; han superado ese concepto."

> Aragón is limited by the "nation", which it seeks to exploit and develop to his own benefit. The consortium guarantees the calculated misery of all the men of the world to rule; however, the growth of this empire needs also to a certain extent, development. (Ibid: 380)[200]

In the last instance, the novel depicts the capitalist class not as merely a "unified" group, in contradiction only to the workforce it exploits. Driven by the logic of competition, it rather sacrifices loyalty in the pursuit of profit, always prepared to turn against "one's own" in the name of growth, so that loyalty is always only a provisory, strategic compromise. Having "overcome the concept of nation", international capital appears then as a global hegemonic power unbound from the interests of any palpable human ends, individual or collective. Whatever development comes under it remains instrumental and provisory; social utility serves it, not the other way around.

In sight of the impending collapse of the bind between Bruno's archaic violence, Don Fermín's capitalist venture, and the exploited indigenous community, Arguedas presents a new kind of transcultural subjectivity which weaves itself from all positions, through the anomalous figure of the "indian mestizo", Rendon Wilka. Like Benito Castro in Ciro Algería's *Broad and Alien was the World*, and *Agua's* Pantacha, Wilka represents the prodigal son, returning to his home town as an educated man from the city, potentiating the indigenous labor force outsourced to Fermín's mines, as well as earning Bruno's trust to eventually become his successor as the leader of *La Providencia*. Recalling young Wilka's departure to the city, Arguedas narrates how the townswomen intoned a fateful *harawi* – a traditional Andean folk song, addressing the daily difficulties of rural life –which also prophesized the homecoming which would bring back to the community the necessary knowledge for emancipation. The definitive moment of consummation is given through the book's

[200] "Aragón tiene la "limitación" de la patria, a la que desea explotar y hacer desarrollarse en su beneficio. El consorcio procura la miseria calculada de todos los hombres del mundo para imperar; sin embargo, el crecimiento de ese imperio necesita también en cierto modo el desarrollo."

primary symbol: the search for *the blood of the Other*, the retrieval of which enables a return to and for one's own blood, achieving the desired synthesis between the Western and Andean worlds:

> You shall not forget, my son
> Never shall you forget
> You go in search of the blood
> You shall return for the blood
> Fortified
> Like the hawk that observes it all
> And whose flight nobody reaches (Ibid: 78)[201]

Wilka clearly conforms to the "revolutionary student" which Arguedas describes as acquiring a protagonical role in the narratives of the big towns: appropriating knowledge of a new culture to unleash its emancipatory potentials and leading to the organized political resistance of the Indian community. But unlike Pantacha's overt, vocal antagonism against the local authorities, or the anonymous collectivity of *Yawar Fiesta's* unified indigenous community, Wilka's conduct unfolds as that of a diligent strategist, selectively appropriating elements from Indian collectivism, the rural landlord oligarchy, and the secular capitalist class, becoming thus a point of convergence for the commoners, Bruno and Fermín. Accordingly, he identifies with the cooperativist ethics of the Indian commoners, but also with Bruno's fervent sacrificial passion, as well as with Fermín's individualist rational pragmatism. His singularity lies in his methodic capacity to negotiate with all positions across the socio-cultural spectrum, forging a calculating and organizational acumen above blunt insurrectionary passion. If the tragic end common to Pantacha and Wilka is nonetheless the same, as figures of martyrdom, what they leave behind and make possible differs both in scope and

[201] "Vas en busca de la sangre / has de volver para la sangre, / fortalezido; / como el gavilán que todo lo / mira / y cuyo vuelo nadie alcanza."

consequence. As Arguedas himself states, Wilka is therefore not a figure of the rural Indian, but rather of a different, post-indigenous subjectivity, diagonally integrating different identities: at once a mestizo and an Indian, a free thinking secular rationalist and also a spirited communitarian:

> Rendon Wilka is not an Indian … [he] does not believe in the mountain-Gods; he makes use of that belief to achieve a political end. He is totally rational or rationalist; …He is an atheist! He does not believe in the catholic God nor in the local Gods; and he considers that the machine, that technical, is indispensable for the development of the country" [I]n Rendon Wilka there is an…an… an integration[…] of this world rationally comprehended , and that of which is still capable of having, in itself, this indigenous conception of the world. (Arguedas 2000: 47)

This projected integration concentrated in Wilka is not an idyllic fusion between tradition and modernity, however. For just as he rejects the individualistic spirit of capitalist competition and the reactionary theism of Christian teleology, he likewise rejects the vitalist cosmological theism of the *Ayllu*. He grounds the desirability of a secular teleology which renders compatible rational calculation, sacrificial fervor and a cooperativist ethics. Answering to the charges of provincialism raised by the historian Henri Favre in the roundtable about *Todas las Sangres*, Arguedas insists that the novel does not favor indigenous spirituality over modernization. Rather, it aims to think of alternate modernity which subtracts rationalism from capitalist individualism, and cooperativism from mythological-religious archaism:

> The ancient community may serve as the base for a… for a modern community(…) Peruvian society must be transformed, but in the sense of converting it into a society in

which fraternity and human solidarity become the element that drives the march of Man, and not competition[202]. (Ibid)

This subtle mediation becomes however inscribed across all levels of determination, from the syntactic to the ontological and political. Confronting the sarcastic praise of the treacherous engineer Cabrejos - who rhetorically asks about his correct pronunciation of the word "*cabildo*": "You don't say *'cahuildo'* any more*?*[203]" - Wilka retorts with ironic, passive aggression, accepting that he indeed has learned from the city, while in the same stroke rejecting its unqualified embrace. He answers in a grammatically deviant, yet precise and laconic subjunctive, proper to the Indian Spanish, in almost prophetic tenor: "In Lima, Indian learns" (Arguedas 2001: 202)[204]. Wilka's subtle syntactic blunder thus signals also a semantic displacement, in which impropriety with regard to the norms of Spanish becomes transvalued into an act of resistance. In other words, Wilka's defiant "error" undermines Cabrejos' false compliment, subverting the implied prescription of acculturation in the rhetoric of education as a civilizing process, through which the Indian's speech would adhere to the norms of Western culture[205]. The "learning' invoked by Wilka is then not the "civilizational" process of capitalist assimilation imagined by Fermín and Cabrejos, nor a facile assimilation of Western Christology into the Andean vitalist cosmology.

Accordingly, at the same time as he rejects the imposition of acculturation and occidentalism, Wilka characterizes "tradition" as a double-edged sword, which risks a kind of cultural protectionism: he states that "tradition is a double edged sword: it illuminates, but contains."

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[202] "La comunidad antigua puede servir de base para una, una comunidad moderna… Rendón Wilka ha tomado estos elementos de la ciudad... la sociedad peruana debe ser transformada, pero en este sentido de convertirla en una sociedad en que lo fraternal y la solidaridad humana sea el elemento que impulse la marcha del hombre, y no la competencia."

[203] "(Ya no dices 'cahuildo'?)"

[204] "En Lima, indio aprende…"

[205] In this regard, Fredric Jameson has described such a process as the dual condition for all discursive acts proper to a revolutionary practice: to resist at once "the transparency of common sense and everyday speech." (Feldman 2014: 18)

(Ibid: 102) Responding to Anto's fatalism about the fate of the community in sight of don Fermín's mining venture, seeking divine solace in the fate of certain tragedy, Wilka speaks with disarming realism, yet also with laconic tenderness: the Indians will meet a certain end, he claims, in a return to the Earth ("*pachamama*"), while the latter is reduced to its banal materiality in the diminutive form ("*tierrita nomas*"): "To the Earth only, brother Anto – little dirt only." (Ibid)[206] Implicitly disavowing both indigenous vitalism and Christian theism, Wilka identifies with the secular pragmatism of the capitalist class but from the collectivist perspective of the *Ayllu*: "Don Fermín is like me, but from the other side" (Ibid: 38)[207]. For expropriation of spiritual values to the service of capital rule only perpetrates oppression in "…another suffering then; ugly, Godless." (Ibid: 36)[208]

By the same token, for Wilka, Bruno's fanatical spirituality amounts to nothing but expiring messianic grandiloquence. He coldly denounces the falsity of the "God he carries within", who does not "lend him an eye", indirectly damning the landlord's spiritual invocations and rhetorical pomp (Ibid)[209]. The redemptive mediation signaled in Bruno's late martyrdom before the competing *gamonales* remains in the sovereign individualized power of oligarchic authority, even as it becomes directed against itself. As Fermín and Matilde themselves judge with dispassionate cynicism, Bruno's penitential martyrdom toward the Indians is depicted not so much a productive novelty, but compounds the excesses of religion and authoritarianism, in a "…feudal barbarism dangerously contaminated by the Indian one." (Ibid: 346)[210]

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[206] "La tradición es un arma de dos filos: ilumina, pero pero, pero contiene."

[207] "Don Fermín, como yo es, aunque del otro lado."

[208] "otro sufrimiento pues; feo, sin Dios."

[209] "el Dios que tiene en su adentro no la da ojo"

[210] "Un barbarismo feudal, peligrosamente contaminado por el del indio."

Yet at the same time it is Bruno who prophetically captures the revolutionary potential in Wilka's speech, noting the advent of a new language: a Spanish that is "barbaric' and yet permeated by a "rational clarity". A "divine language":

> *La Providencia* and its people depend of your intelligence, of your cleverness for the good. Come into my library. Read at night, calmly. Your Spanish is like that of… no, not like that of the *cholos*; it is of another class; you speak as if our infant God rejoiced through your mouth. Barbaric Spanish, but clear. Demetrio. (Ibid: 398)[211]

This divine language is the voice of that universal transcultural mediation between the Quechua and Spanish which Arguedas pursued since *Agua* and *Yawar Fiesta*, through which the magical and rational conceptions of the world cohere. Neither the created Earth of religious myth nor the Godless earth of capitalist instrumentalism, it becomes the instrument through which indigenous cooperativism with the secular, materialist bases of the Western materialist dialectic converge. Accordingly, Don Bruno's handing over of *La Providencia* constitutes then the self-effacement of the legacy of the *latifundio* and the emergence of a new peace pact between the mestizo and the Indian. Giving over the departing soul of his deceased mother to the verdict of the Indian mayor Maywa, she ventures barefoot to the *K'oropuna*, not to rest but to joyously work with the departed commoners, as their equal: "We shall take you where our dead go to work." (Ibid: 280)[212] In the end, the avowal of labor in-itself redeems the colonial past of the family lineage as Bruno also delivers not only his mother to the Indians, but his son to Wilka's care. Irrupting into the dialog between Maywa and Bruno, Wilka accepts gains control over *La Providencia*, not as the successor landlord, but the definitive interruption of such succession, so that figure of the *gamonal*

[211] "La providencia y sus colonos dependen de tu inteligencia, de tu astucia para el bien. Entra a mi biblioteca. Lee de noche, tranquilo. Tu castellano es como de…: no, no es de cholo; es de otra clase; hablas como que nuestro Niño Dios se regocijara por tu boca. Castellano bárbaro, pero claro. Demetrio…"

[212] "Te llevaremos adonde nuestros muertos trabajan."

disappears in the advent of a new subject and collective destiny[213]. As Bruno's mother is embarked onto *K'oropuna*, that sacred fortress which "is never finished", he accepts to protect his legacy*:*

> Will you defend my son if I die?
>
> - With my arms, my thought, with the Lahuaymarcas. (Ibid: 296)[214]

Having accepted Bruno's mother and son as one of the community's own, Wilka becomes the recipient for a future beyond the rift between the mestizo and the Indian, in which what is *productive* in both cultural heritages survives in the form of a modern cooperativism. The conciliatory process, in the end, is achieved by tying the cooperativist ethos of collective labor as an end in itself to the rational and secular desire for modernization.

The mythic anticipation of labor in the mountains becomes not only a mythic symbol, but crucially a site of struggle in the present: the mine *Apar'cora* is the site prefigures the emergence of a new social bond, in which workers from different provenances and ideologies meet and work. Developing a theme emphasized since *El Sexto*, Arguedas declares partisan attachments as much as ethnic or social polarizations as obstacles to effective collectivization, recognizing all identities being equally subject to the threat of the consortium. Meditating over K'oyowasi's prayer, Wilka avows man's creative powers with lyric heroism: the search in the mines promises to unearth not gold, but the radiance of light itself, coming into being by and as the essence of Man's labor:

> The light within the world can be done! We shall make it! Great is man! (Ibid: 137)[215]

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[213] I therefore disagree with Irina Feldman's identification of Bruno as a 'revolutionary' figure, recognizing that "…the time of the haciendas is over" (Feldman 2014: pp. 33). As Feldman correctly shows, however Bruno's penitence is of a piece with the dissolution of the quasi-divine authority of the landlord, unraveling the "kingly sovereignty" of the colonial past.

[214] "Vas a defender a mi hijo, si yo me muero? / - Con mis brazos, con mi pensamiento, con los lahuaymarcas."

[215] "La luz dentro del mundo puede hacerse! La haremos. El hombre es grande."

Describing the resounding echo of the *pututus* before the productive glory of the collective "*faena*", which makes of ordinary work "a collective project", Fermín stands in awe, reckoning the pragmatic and organizational power of the Indian commoners:

> …the Indians do not take this task in the mine as ordinary work, but as a communal project (*faena*). That is, they work in competition. To see who yields more! … They are called pututus. They are played when work is to be done in a competitive, sporty way, and in sight of common benefit. (Ibid: 132)[216]

Complementing this statement, and foreseeing the appropriation of such ethos, the engineer Palacios imagines that socio-cultural reconciliation must be supported in overcoming the alienation of man from labor, where the latter is not seen as the instrument (of wealth-property) but as an end, subverting the subordination to both the landlords and capitalists:

> Understand, my fellow. If we could all work like this…Work would not be a curse. Understand that one day we shall be like them, when we no longer work to strengthen those who exploit us… For nothing! Understand that! Only for work itself, for competing in work itself, when it is for themselves. (Ibid: 135)[217]

As the narrator of the "Second Diary" (*Segundo Diario*) declares, Wilka's ultimate act of martyrdom announces the victory of the Andean *yawar mayu*: the restless river of blood of the traditional indigenous song, through which the community thinks and celebrates the possibility of

[216] "Que los indios no toman esta tarea de la mina como trabajo ordinario, sino como una faena comunal. Es decir, que trabajarán, en competencia. ¡A ver quién rinde más!...Se llaman pututos. Los tocan cuando el trabajo ha de hacerse a manera de competencia deportiva y en beneficio común."

[217] "¡Entiende, compañero! Si pudiéramos trabajar así todos… El trabajo no sería una maldición. ¡Entiende que algún día seremos como ellos, cuando no trabajemos para fortalecer a los que nos exploran."

"fertility, initiation, renovation"[218] of the community, and the renovation of its cultural rites. Yet at the same time, the traditional rite becomes apposite to a transcultural shift within the prospect of a revolutionary upsurge. In the words of William Rowe, the *Yawar Mayu* thus emerges as "a tidal wave of passion that breaks all boundaries" (Rowe 1996: 78), in which the limits which separate bodies and collectives become destroyed in a "raging torrent".[219]

> A river of blood in [his] eyes; the *yawar mayu* of which the Indians spoke. The river was about to break its banks over him with more power than any sudden upsurge of the raging torrent that ran through a gorge, five hundred meters beyond his own hacienda's canefields (Ibid: 437).

This torrential movement is not purely destructive, but one which reconstitutes itself from whatever is contained within the limits it shatters. And yet the prospective of such conciliatory transformation, for Arguedas, would soon unravel in the face of changing social and economic circumstances, making the prospects of transculturation ever less plausible. During the years between *Todas las sangres* and the publication of his last novel *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (henceforth *The Foxes*), Arguedas faced the eventual frustration of the transcultural dream to reconcile "the magical and rational" conceptions of the world. In the last and final section, I follow how the figure of the transcultural subject becomes unraveled, giving way to the obscure figuration of a *post-cultural* revolutionary subject in the "narrative of the emerging cities".

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[218] Poole, Deborah. *Rituals of Movement, Rites of Transformation: Pilgrimage and Dance in the Highlands of Cusco, Perú,* 1983, pp. 23-24.

[219] Rowe, William, *Ensayos Arguedianos*, Casa de estudios SUR, 1996.

VIII - The Limits of Transculturation and the Post-Cultural Subject: *The Foxes*

During the infamous 1965 roundtable about *Todas las sangres*, Sebastian Salazar Bondy and Henri Favre, among others, indicted Arguedas' novel for allegedly reiterating a Manichean polarity between a maligned mestizo and a fetishized rural Indian.[220] As Guillermo Rochabrún (2000) recounts in his assessment of the discussion in the roundtable, these criticisms ultimately concerned factual questions about the novel's depiction of the rural south, castigating its evident ideological inflections: the portrayal of a system of castes ("*castas*") that was no longer operative being among the most pressing. Perhaps more fundamentally, the novel, it was argued, presented two incompatible accounts of change, where the prospects for social transformation and the preservation of an idealized indigenous culture were artificially superposed. According to Rochabrun, however, these criticisms stemmed from a sociological bias, according to which Westernizing modernization was to be taken as a definitive destiny, reducing the prospects for transcultural appropriation to a reactive ancestralism[221]:

> In the social sciences of the time, "modernization" provided the most widely accepted answer [to questions about social change]: according to it, a society such as Peru's was in a process of modernization, that is, in transit from a traditional to a modern society (...) in a movement whose direction cannot go but in the direction of the modern which though they

[220] The title assigned by the publication of the roundtable in 1983, *Have I lived in Vain?* ("*He vivido en vano?*") indexes Arguedas profound deliberation that, as his critics argued, he might have indeed failed to produce an account of the rural Indian which would be conducive to the emancipatory process of the rural Indian and the constitution of a future societal frame for the Peruvian nation.

[221] Rochabrun correctly notes that the novel in fact depicts a more complicated terrain of social positions and subjectivities than the bipolar interpretation of its sociological and literary critics suggested. Which is to say that, as we have seen in the last section, the structural complexity in which the characters in *Todas las Sangres* are situated so as to resist such a simplistic, Manichean placement. For Arguedas anticipates a prospective space for mediations proper to a schema of 'intermediary' subjectivities in transition, whose fate opens a different future other than the '*cholification*' of the Indian into the urban space, through acculturating modernization (Quijano).

wouldn't wish was that of capitalist modernity, could nevertheless only be defined as that of a productivist occidental rationalism[222]. (Rochabrún 2000: 94-97, my translation)

Now, Rochabrún is certainly right in that the criticisms against Arguedas seemed to miss how the transcultural prospects resisted the singular destiny of modernization as an extension of occidentalist acculturation or assimilation to Western culture. It is misleading, however, to suggest that Arguedas' primary task was to think of an alternative *to* modernization. It would be more correct to say that Arguedas imagined an alternate modernity, in accordance with the ideal of a socialism adapted to the Peruvian context which begins with Mariátegui, in which aspects of non-Western cultural traditions become activated potentials for a new social bond.

With this in mind, it is difficult to underestimate the effects that the persisting polemics and the charges of having unwittingly relapsed to a fetishistic idealization of the Indian had on Arguedas after *Todas las Sangres*. Reduced to "an impotent and passive spectator of the formidable struggle that Humanity is carrying on in Peru and everywhere"[223], the forecasted collectivization would not arrive, and the hegemony of international capital instead exacerbated atomization through industrial expansion and urbanization. Already in his 1952 the essay *El complejo cultural en el Perú*, Arguedas observed the tectonic shift implied in the migratory process from the highlands into the coastal cities. By the middle of the 1960s, the system of "roads and airplanes" which had taken the place of the feudal communication system appeared in inevitable tension with the preservation of cultural

[222] Rochabrún, Guillermo. "Las trampas del pensamiento: Una lectura de la mesa redonda sobre *Todas las sangres*", in *La Mesa Redonda sobre Todas las Sangres del 23 de Junio de 1965*, ed. Guillermo Rochabrún, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2000.
"En las ciencias sociales de la época la "modernización" proporcionaba la más difundida respuesta a tales interrogantes: según ella una sociedad como la peruana estaba en proceso de modernización, es decir, en tránsito de una sociedad tradicional a una sociedad moderna (…) un movimiento cuya dirección no puede ir sino hacia el polo de lo moderno, el cual si bien ellos no desearían que fuese la modernidad capitalista, no alcanzan a definirlo sino como un racionalismo occidental productivista."

[223] "Como estoy seguro que mis facultades y armas de creador, profesor, estudioso e imitador, se han debilitado hasta quedar casi nulas y sólo me quedan las que me relegarían a la condición de espectador pasivo e impotente de la formidable lucha que la humanidad está librando en el Perú y en todas partes, no me sería posible tolerar ese destino."

tradition. Moreover, Velasco's 1968 agrarian reform did not bring about the desired retribution of the Indian, facilitating a new societal bond beyond oligarchic rule, but only exacerbated precarity, leading to a contraction of the rural economy and mass migratory escape. In the wake of such shifting historical circumstances, Arguedas could no longer afford dream of an integral nation, host of an alternate modernity in which "the magic" remains. Accordingly, his last literary works express a fundamental helplessness, and the solemn utopian fervor fades away.

This diagnosis becomes particularly acute in his last, truncated novel *El zorro de arriba, zorro de abajo* (henceforth *The Foxes*). In this work, Arguedas inscribes the indigenous cosmological separation between *Hanan* and *Hurin,* the "land from up above and from down below"[224] to trace the cultural disintegration which follows from the thwarted descent of the Indian into the urban space. The novel narrates the migratory arrival of the indigenous communities to the coastal city of Chimbote, where they will suffer irreversible spiritual and bodily corruption. As Angel Rama (1984) argues, the novel attests to the triumph of individualistic "bourgeois culture", pitting technological and urban growth against the cultural foundations of collective life, ultimately bringing about…

> …material improvements with abysmal disequilibriums, but above all the loss of roots, the destruction of a cultural equilibrium that is not replaced by an equivalent one, the desecration of a communitarian worldview replaced by the "skeptical individualism" of contemporary bourgeois culture. (Rama 1984: 193, my translation)

[224] Already in his poem *Ode to the Jet* Arguedas assaults the warped and oppressive utopianism of the occidentalist view, ironically addressing 'the [earthly] world from above', projected through the aerial, panoptical gaze of a modern subject whose omniscience and omnipotence trumps the wonders of the Earth. He semantically transforms the verticality of the traditional Indian cosmology, to designate the patronizing utopianism of occidentalism: the 'world from above' (*Hanan*) no longer designates the regional divide between the *Chinchansuyo* (comprising the northern and central coasts of Peru) and the *Antisuyo* (the south and central Andes), but is amplified as a topological model which identifies the all-encompassing, quasi-divine gaze of the modern subject, whose secularizing impetus extends even to its own religious emblems in a kind of anthropocentric frenzy. By the same token, the 'earthly world' (*Hurin*) no longer merely comprises the *Collasuyu* and *Cuntisuyo*, but concentrates the entirety of the urban and rural landscape, as well as the totality of natural and cultural beings comprising the material world. In this way, we obtain a delirious modern gaze which disenchants the world at the same time as it elevates itself to the rank of divinity, as the inversion of 'Man turned God', coupled to a forlorn and trivialized 'Earth' whose richness and multiplicity appears relatively flattened, trivialized and ordinary.

A vertical logic organizes the novel, tracking not only the movement of migratory descent, but the erosion of the cultural bond which ties individual bodies into a collective history and destiny. At heart, one finds a structural complicity between the objective appropriation of labor proper to industrial capitalist modernity, and the appropriation of subjective libido which transpires in the city. The ideal of integrative mediation thus dissolves in an inconsistent multiplicity of nameless, aberrant individualities populate the city space. The British philosopher Nick Land has described the general logic of this process with precision: as societies enter the vortex of urban capitalist life, alienation becomes exacerbated, spewing wandering bodies extirpated not only from their present, but from their own history and past, so that all forms of individual and collective determination collapse:

> Once the commodity system is established there is no longer a need for an autonomous cultural impetus into the order of the abstract object. Capital attains its own 'angular momentum', perpetuating a run-away whirlwind of dissolution, whose hub is the virtual-zero of impersonal metropolitan accumulation. At the peak of the productive prowess the human animal is hurled into a new nakedness, as everything stable is progressively liquidated in the storm[225]. (Land 1992: 80)

The novel is unambiguous about this degenerative process: from the outset, Arguedas annuls the choral and dialogic narrative which organized *Todas las sangres,* drenching the voice from all eloquence under the circuit of wage-labor and the corruption of city life. As Alberto Moreiras writes, the novel ultimately speaks of a failed teleology, a "narrative of the end of narratives", in the overwhelming task to rethink utopia from '*the rabble of culture*':

> "El *zorro* is a narrative of the end of narrative, it would be reductive to call that writing of writing's collapse an "appropriation and defiance" of modernity. What else can it

[225] Land, Nick. *The Thirst for Annihilation: Georges Bataille and Virulent Nihilism*, Routledge 1992.

then be? (...) For Arguedas, at this point, a drastically urgent if perhaps already desperate task lay at hand: to re-appropriate, to re-symbolize, life in Chimbote into a possible utopia, the only hope for the future. The magical-real machine was then emblematically in place—or apparently so. But in that limit-situation transculturation could only happen as a failure of transculturation—through the failure itself. (Moreiras 2001: 197)[226]

Throughout the novel, references to Indian cultural world no longer carry the brilliance of cooperativist promise, but instead express disarming tragedy before the present. As William Rowe (2011) notes, the novel dismantles thus the triumphant insurrectionary passion of the *Yawar Mayu*, whose obliteration of all boundaries prevailed at the end of *Todas las sangres* as a restorative force, giving way instead to the image of the flood ("*huayco*"): a coruscating temporality of alluvial derail, debasement and wastage. The Indian creative mythos becomes thus perverted by the corrupting intrusion of Western modernity: the disciplined pilgrimage of the deity Tutaykire – literally, the "Warrior from the above", avatar for the difficult road for the wandering Indian[227]- is separated at once from the mountain *qua* site of labor by a throat (symbol of drunkenness and debauchery), and from the fertile sea by a gaping abyss (symbol of carnal surrender). Derailed from his journey, and sentenced to fall asleep apart from the road, the God's stoic resilience is "dispersed" by the seductress "fox" ("*zorra*"; also derogatory slang in Peruvian Spanish for prostitute). He becomes seized by her panoptical gaze, "…trapped by a "sweet and contrarian fox", among the *yungas*. From the *El Dorado* mountain she sees from up above and down below.[228]" (Arguedas 2013: 45) The image of collective *mobility*, the forging of the roads to the coast, and which since *Agua* and *Yawar Fiesta* served to celebrate indigenous productive prowess - now lead only to perdition.

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[226] Moreiras, Alberto. *The Exhaustion of Difference: The Politics of Latin American Cultural Studies*, Durham & London, 2001.

[227] This mythological figure first appears in Arguedas' work in his 1968 translation of "the Huarochiri transcript", titled *Dioses y hombres de Huarochiri.*

[228] "…quedo atrapado por una 'zorra' dulce y contraria, entre los yungas. Desde el cerro el Dorado ve arriba y abajo."

In the novel, the "fox" is etched within the city space across a series of figures signaling libidinal arrest and degeneracy. The quasi-divine sovereign authority of oligarchic rule which claimed rights over the body becomes disseminated into the social body writ large, reproducing the verticality of the master-slave logic across all human relations. The sexual violence imparted by Bruno on the Indian commoners at the outset of *Todas las Sangres* becomes thus the basis of a ubiquitous social economy in *The Foxes* through the commodification of the flesh: the wretched figure of the prostitute Fidelia, serving as a presage of the commodification of the body through which individual desire enters into the intensifying circuit of market-exchange, binding buyers and consumers, the torn voice of the homosexual and incestuous Chueca (literally, *deviant* or *bent*) bastard son of prostitution; the identification of the "the Argentinean" prostitute with a "vizcacha" (a rodent); Tinoco's procuring of both his sister Felicia and his wife Gerania; the abandoned Orfa, whose child is orphan to a nameless father; the "Double Jawed' Aymara Apasa, who procures three women and as he purchases lands in the Santa Valley, etc.

Accordingly, the colonial legacy can no longer afford the preservation of its sacrificial ethos, and the Western religious spirituality becomes inane: Don Diego, the "*inca hippi*" works as a petty subordinate for the major patron, don Braschi (Ibid: 147)[229]. The mythical subversion of Wilka's "divine language" becomes disfigured and unrecognizable in the ramblings of "crazy Moncada", whose errant sermons oscillate between patent lunacy and messianism, woven from morsels from Indian and Christian religiosity, while at the same time anticipating an obscure subversive agency beyond transculturation. He thereby vulgarly accurses the "drunken-stars" of foreign-imperial intrusion, as they "amass the incandescence of the sun, the fortune power" (Ibid: 174).

[229] "¡Extraño pendejo éste que me han mandado de Lima; extraño hippi "incaico"! ¡Y gracioso, carajo, y simpático, carajo! Muy extraño. Este Braschi se consigue auxiliares de toda laya", pensaba don Ángel."

> There are drunkards that screw it over, drunkard stars, luminaries, foreigners that imbibe liqueur from their town-nation and screw over the people-nation in which the incandescence of the sun is amassed, the fortune power that I may volatize or spite, aromatize with my voice which the constellations hear (Ibid: 174)[230].

In the novel's dramatic apex, the citizens of Chimbote relocate the crosses of the dead into a new and deserted burial site, while leaving the corpses in their place. The names and spirits of the dead are then brutally amputated from the bodies that correspond to them, just as the migrating bodies of the citizens compose the "living dead", all dislocated from their individual and collective identities:

> With the crosses over their shoulders, everyone approached the wooden row that carried the legends of their names until the arc, raising them by the head, placing them over their other shoulder. And all of the indebted marched, dune below, with crosses over both shoulders. They formed thus a very large collective that descended rising dust, a mass of people moved forward without speaking. (Ibid: 96)[231]

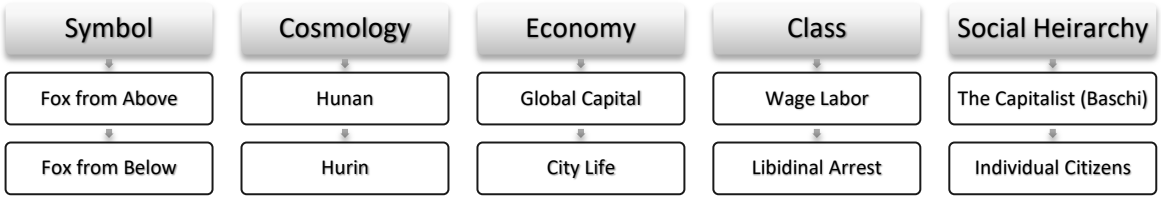
The town of Chimbote becomes the punctual emblem for the capitalist city, where the affordances of cultural belonging no longer function. Under exploitative wage-labor in the factory, and the equally imprisoning hedonistic vortex of city life, labor in *The Foxes* is reduced to a reiterative cycle of outsourced energy. Braschi's triumph in the anchovy fishing market against his competitors maps the sanguine logic of capital accumulation with the libidinal force of a misogynous virility, endowing him the title of '*culemacho'*, contrasting the impotence of *'cochos*' (literally, aging men

[230] "Hay borrachos pa'que se zurren en él, hay borrachos estrellas, astros, extranjeros que toman licor de su pueblo-nación y se zurran en el pueblo-nación donde amasan la incandescencia del sol, la fortuna poder que yo puedo volatilizar, vitriolizar, aromatizar con mi voz que oyen las constelaciones."

[231] "Con las cruces al hombro se acercaron todos a la fila de maderos que tenían las leyendas de sus nombres hacia el arco, las alzaron por la cabeza y se las pusieron al otro hombro. Y cada deudo desfilaba, medano abajo, con cruces sobre los dos hombros. Formaban asi una comitiva muy grande que bajaba levantando polvo, una masa de gente avanzaba sin hablar."

lacking virility) (Ibid: 42). The quasi-divine control over the coastal natural and socio-economic environs makes him declare: "I make the sea give birth", outperforming competing capitalists in "making the small anchovies give birth to bills.[232]" (Ibid: 45) This sinuous agency, however, is not the abstract, faceless figure of international capitalism which was represented by the mining consortium Wisther and Bozart in *Todas las Sangres*. For in his direct physical presence and limitless capacity for individualized violence, in a kind of warped transcultural offspring, he reiterates of the "divine sovereignty" of the feudal rule within the secular urban space.

Diagram 3.2



Nevertheless, the disfiguration of identity among the wretched in Chimbote emblemized by Moncada, Arguedas timidly suggests, also signals embryonic potentials for a new *post-cultural subject*, woven from the inconsistent multiplicity of bodies which populate the urban space. In this regard, William Rowe (2011) notes how the novel suggests the promise for unprecedented admixture of discursive modes and subjective types: no longer the idyllic mediation between Quechua and Spanish which informed the transcultural dream from *Agua* to *Todas las sangres*, but anomalous forms woven from different sociolects and idiolects composing what we have called the rabble of culture:

> The rupture of isolating walls encourages the intermingling of sociolects and idiolects, producing 'alluvial discourses'. The extraordinary mutual enrichment between discourses tends

[232] "Estos amos de fábrica hacen parir billetes a cada anchovetita…Yo hago parir a la mar..."

to relate with sexuality ('the Stutterer') or with death and birth (Moncada and Esteban de la Cruz). At the grammatical level we find parataxis, not only as the result of Quechua influence but also as the aesthetic product of the new ferment between social forces… The rupture of barriers, now grammatical, produces new multivalent discourses.[233] (Rowe 2011: 298)

This process is no longer the integrative mediation between previously existing social positions and cultural traditions. Rather, pulverized identities come to reconstitute the social bond in unprecedented ways. As Horacio Legrás (2008) argues, assessing the bigamous figure of Bazalar, who assumes a leading role in the procession of the crosses toward the abrupt closure of the novel, Chimbote's displaced subjectivities attest to a radical 'anti-foundationalism', which removes cultural foundations from the subjective process. In his radical hybridity and anomalous quality, if anything, the figures of post-cultural subjectivity approximate Vallejo's late generic human subject, who lies beyond any circumscription to nation, ethnicity and culture. But while the purity of Vallejo's universal "militiaman" produced an abstract clamor for justice, Arguedas' hijacks the individualist logic of capitalism from within, as the new subject composes itself from divergent particularities and impure subjectivities, drawing a diagonal across all orders of representation. The possibility of finding universality within the ruins of a failed modernization is actualized figures trafficking at the interface between reality and delirium. The unintelligibility of his language and the indiscernibility of its place of enunciation becomes thus suggests a future in which the corruption of forms and the exponential fragmentation of identities may give way still to a new collective hope.

In the Last Diary, Arguedas directly attests to this change of emphasis in his thought, overtly avowing Vallejo as the returning precursor of this new image of the future:

[233] Rowe, William. "Reading Arguedas' Foxes", in *The Fox From Up Above, The Fox From Down Below*, translated by Frances Horning Barraclough, Pittsburgh University Press, 2011, pp. 298.

> Perhaps with me one historical cycle draws to a close and another begins in Peru, with all that this represents. It means the closing of the cycle of the consoling calender lark, of the whip, of being driven like beasts of burden, of impotent hatred, of mournful funeral 'uprisings', of the fear of God and the predominance of that God and his protégées, his fabricators. It signifies the opening of a cycle of light and of the indomitable, liberating strength of the Vietnamese man, of the fiery calender lark, of the Liberator God. That God who is coming back into action. Vallejo was the beginning and the end. (Ibid: 292)[234]

The Foxes in the end provides no definitive resolution, as those carriers of Mariátegui's revolutionary dream congregate in somber defeat at the priest's office in *La Esperanza* (literally, 'The Hope') imagining the uncertain path toward emancipation. The group discuss the future for revolutionaries in the brink of defeat, divined under the watching gaze of *Ché Guevara* and the Christ. As the American priest Cardozo reiterates the possibility for a secular spirituality, he identifies the prophetic return of the messiah and the anticipation for the heroic leftist spirit of revolution, symbolizing the inextricability of individual sacrifice and collective struggle.

> The revolution will not be deeds but instead will be the work of these two examples, one divine and the other human, who was born of that divine one: Jesus and Ché. (Ibid: 281)[235]

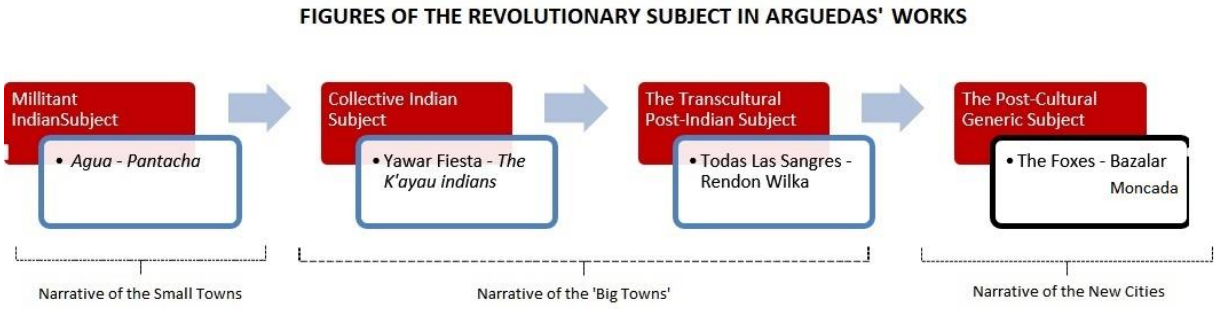
Herein lies perhaps Arguedas' final offering to the revolutionary clamor: the tender reduction of the solemn transcultural dream into the affirmation of the priority of collective interest against a savage individualism. The verdict is clear. The figure of the 'rural proletarian', even in its post-

[234] "Quizá conmigo empieza a cerrarse un ciclo y a abrirse otro en el Perú y lo que él representa: se cierra el de la calandria consoladora, del azote, del arrieraje, del odio impotente, de los fúnebres "alzamientos", del temor a Dios y del predominio de ese Dios y sus protegidos, sus fabricantes; se abre el de la luz y de la fuerza liberadora invencible del hombre de Vietnam, el de la calandria de fuego, el del dios liberador. Aquel que se reintegra. Vallejo era el principio y el fin."

[235] "—La revolución —se oyó la voz irme de Cardozo— no será obra sino de estos dos ejemplos, uno divino, el otro humano, que nació de ese divino: Jesús y el "Che"."

indigenous, transcultural form, can no longer play the role of the privileged agent of emancipation. The following diagram summarizes the different figurations of the revolutionary subject in Arguedas' works that we examined above:

Diagram 3.3



The fragmentary effects witnessed in *The Foxes* would only intensify in the decades following Arguedas' late work, making a revolutionary process organized under the persistence of indigenous cooperativist values implausible, however repurposed or reconciled with the Western 'rational worldview'. And yet, in the midst of ruin, an elegiac heroism before absolute despair seems to linger, refusing to surrender once and for all the possibility to wrest hope back from the rabble of culture. Even at the threshold, engulfed by wallowing despair, Arguedas never lets go of the heroism of agonic struggle - as Flores Galindo writes to characterize the spirit of Mariátegui - which sustains the clamor for collective justice. In the next chapter, we shall assess the consequences that this ongoing historical process enjoins for *indigenista* narrative and socialist thought in the contemporary context.

- CHAPTER IV -

The Contemporary Scene:

The Future of *Indigenismo* and the Collapse of the Integrative Dream After Arguedas

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Introduction - A Brief Retrospective: *Indigenismo* After Arguedas

In the last instance, Arguedas' work implied a decisive extension of the project of appropriation which grounds the socialist *indigenista* spirit, overcoming what he perceived as a lingering economicism in Mariátegui's view of Peruvian society. In understanding the Peruvian nation as a complicated nexus organizing not only relations of class, legal status and ethnicity, but profoundly divergent cultural traditions, he correlates the collectivist indigenous mode of production to a worldview grounded fundamentally in an avowal of work-for-itself. But although Arguedas aimed to think of culture apart from the fetishistic ancestralism derided by Mariátegui, his articulation of the "magical and rational conceptions of the world" reproduced a Manichean contradiction between Western and indigenous culture, ultimately conceiving of an idealized process of transculturation that would render modernity and tradition compatible. That is, an alternative destiny to the savagery of modern capitalism, to be seized after the collapse of the *latifundio*.

The agrarian reform initiated in 1968 by Velasco's military rule proved ultimately unsuccessful in effectively succeeding the rent-based labor economy imposed historically by the landlord oligarchy, instead exacerbating the disenfranchisement of the rural indian by the state. Mass migration into the city implied a definitive tectonic transformation of Peruvian society and economy, through which indigenous populations became subject to new forms of alienation and exploitation. As it turned out, governmental institutions would prove just as inefficient and corruptible when

protecting the Indian workers in the cities from the new capitalist oligarchies as they had been with regard to the waning rural landlord oligarchy.

In response to this new sequence, we saw how Arguedas' late work delivers an obscure forecast, in which the promise of a transcultural collective life unravels before an ever more obscure and uncertain future. Accordingly, the image of the "post-indigenous subject" that mediates strategically between the "rational and magical" conceptions of the world could not become a generic avatar for the Peruvian revolutionary process of integration. The martyrdom of the hero who achieves collective emancipation through transcultural production, expressed in the figure of Rendon Wilka, ceased to be a plausible model for emancipatory action. In *The Foxes* the rural Indian becomes subject to the libidinal capture of urban decadence and subversion under wage-labor, ran by a corrupt capitalist class taking the place of the old landlord oligarchy, perpetrating the historic complicity of the mestizo with state institutions. In this process, it is not only the kernel of agency which becomes reduced to its "material bases", as in Vallejo's *Trilce,* but the indigenous cultural heritage which becomes liquidated into inconsistent identities.

In the end, Arguedas' truncated narrative describes the horrors of an ever more fractured society as the colonial shackles of semifeudal rule is supplanted by the coruscating degeneration of life and work in the industrially developing city. That the promise collectivism becomes shattered in the face of individualist impotence and hedonistic surrender. Whatever productive potentials may have once existed in the indigenous modes of production and belief-systems, these become dissolved as the city devours individuals and communities alike. If already since its liberal expression, *indigenismo* was but the promise to restore the social fracture which afflicted the Peruvian nation, then Arguedas' fatal prognosis is that capitalist modernization, short of bringing about a felicitous process of integration for Peruvian society, results in an ever more pronounced process of individual

and collective disarticulation. More than the acculturation imagined by the liberal modernizers since the 19th Century under the dream of pedagogical transmission and professionalization, what took place was rather a process in which individuals were amputated at once from their native traditions and experience a corrosive social alienation in the city space under the exploitation of wage-labor.

What are we to say, then, of the development and process of *indigenista* literature in the decades following Arguedas' death and in light of his somber verdict, once the economic and cultural foundations of the appropriative ideal appear equally implausible *qua* mediating vehicles toward collective emancipation? In the following, concluding chapter, I attend to some of the major tendencies and problems which emerge in *indigenista* literature after Arguedas, facing the progressive collapse of the revolutionary socialist ideal which begins with Mariátegui. A new sequence of *indigenista* narratives appear in this context which move away from the revolutionary destiny, and which attempt to think of a post-revolutionary subjectivity that resists violence and re-imagines the mediation between the mestizo and the Indian. In the first section, by way of illustration, I focus on Edgardo Rivera Martinez' seminal 1993 novel, *País de Jauja*, which aligns the ideal of transculturation to a new version of the "educated mestizo", which is also a pacifist and self-admittedly apolitical response to the traumatic experience of subversive violence and its repression that resulted from the insurgency *The Shining Path* until the early 1990s. Through this narrative shift, *indigenismo* departs from its utopian configuration, and instead becomes the expression of an ideal projection unbound from any prescriptive content. Accordingly, the post-revolutionary subject is no longer a figure of collective or political mobilization, but the modest promise that future generations may awaken a multicultural consciousness. In the second section, I situate Rivera Martinez' attempt to separate the tasks of literature and politics within the spectrum of the democratic and humanitarian critique of the so-called "ethical turn" against the utopian aspirations of the 20th Century revolutionary projects, of which socialist experiences were a paradigm. This allows us to place the Peruvian *indigenista*

socialist tradition in a wider retrospective assessment of the revolutionary ideal, its past and its prospects. In particular, I focus on the critique of the concept of violence and the utopian aspirations of the socialist project, and consider the way in which the *indigenista* tradition sought, however provisionally, a predominantly constructive vision of revolutionary practice.

In light of these criticisms and historical limitations, in the third section, I address the contemporary crisis of the productivist ideal which grounded the image of the post-capitalist future for socialist narratives. This crisis, I argue, is not only a problem for socialist political practice, but an essential problem when attempting to move beyond both economicist and culturalist paradigms imagined for socialism by *indigenista* works. The collapse of productivism within the revolutionary imaginary after the collapse of the *latifundio* was thus not only correlated to the failures of the concrete socialist political experiences in the 20th Century, but to the collapse of the figure of the collective proletariat subject as the motor of historical change. The search for a new productivism is indissociable from the search for a new kind of revolutionary subjectivity and a new vision of the future, beyond the hegemonic mantle of global capital.

To complete our assessment, in the fifth section, I provide a brief recount of the development of the post-revolutionary, reformist turn of the Peruvian left after the 1960s, attending to the proposals advanced by the 'new' social democratic left concerning the future for the Peruvian economy and society in general, and the rural Indian in particular. Such approximation culminates what is but a promissory note, which aims to clarify under what conditions the integrative ideal which guides *indigenista* thinking, by tracking the present reality of Peruvian society and the place of the rural Indian within.

I – The Collapse of the Revolutionary Ideal in Literary *Indigenismo* after Arguedas

As Ismael Marquez has argued, the *indigenista* literary production since the 1940s – particularly, after the publication of Ciro Alegría's *Broad and Alien is the World* and José María Arguedas' *Yawar fiesta* in 1941 - responds to progressive changes in the Peruvian social and economic landscape, describing the "urban milieu as a pervasive, negative influence" and the fulguration of a new cultural hero: "…the individual with Andean roots who, transformed by his experience in the city, returns to his place of origin as an agent of an alternative modernity[236]" (Marquez 2006: 146). And although in many cases such a transcultural subject continues to express an optimistic vision of the future, well into the 1960s – the *neo-indigenista* novel since the 1950s also begins to confront the uncertain fate of Peruvian society, where a rekindling of the communitarian aspects of the rural world become threatened by a ruthless process of capitalist modernization. In the decades following Arguedas' diagnosis of the failures of transculturation in the urban space, *indigenista* authors seek to delineate the contours of new forms of subjugation, as well as indicate a possible emancipatory figure beyond that imaged in the socialist revolutionary subject.

At the same time, the consistency of *indigenismo* as a genre in which literature assumes the task of thinking of national integration becomes, if not impossible, exceedingly obscure. From the 1960s onwards, following Arguedas' fatal diagnosis in *The Foxes*, many writers show a growing skepticism with respect to the idea that modernization could in the end offer a solution to Peru's social fragmentation: Julio Ramón Ribeyro's *Los geniecillos domincales* (1965) and Oswaldo Reynoso's *En Octubre no hay milagros* (1965), being two paradigmatic exemplars of this movement[237]. These

[236] Marquez, Ismael. "The Andean novel", in The Cambridge Companion to the Latin American Novel, editedby Efraín Kristal, Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 146.

[237] The ensuing decades after general Velasco's 1968 agrarian reform would not shatter, but ratify the disintegration of both the indigenous community and of the urban efforts to integrate the Indian's struggle to an integral political and literary vision of Peruvian society. In 1978, Francisco Morales Bermudez called for the creation of the Constitutional

works not only recoil from the socialist revolutionary imaginary and its political aspirations, but express a frustration before a thwarted modernization which perpetrated existing social inequalities, or else imposed new ones[238]. In fact, these works attempt an explicit or implicit attempt to retroactively assess the limitations of the utopian visions that animated socialist *indigenista* writers. For example, as Manuel Scorza declares *apropos* his last novel *La danza inmóvil*, published in 1983, with regard to the failures of the armed insurrection of indigenous groups in the rural south:

> I know that many will find my novel irritable, since I pose themes such as my disenchantment after experiencing great defeats. The Peruvian guerrilla was exterminated because of an erroneous conception of reality; the guerrillas did not know their country well, their ideological instruments did not coincide with the mentality of the farmers[239]. (Scorza 1991: 141, my translation)

The critical distance from the revolutionary imagery opened the way, however, for new figures for emancipation to succeed those imagined by socialist writers, since Mariátegui. Like Arguedas' post-cultural subject, and echoing Vallejo's solemn imperatival gesture for a generic

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Assembly, and in 1979 an electoral process, ceding power to Fernando Belaunde Terry's presidency and signaling the interruption of military dictatorship. In the decades following the 1970s, the progressive consolidation of a liberal market economy and the continued disenfranchisement of the Indian would devolve in an unprecedented fragmentation and diversification of leftists groups. Among these, we saw the consolidation of new radical factions inspired by Maoist ideals (the party *Bandera Roja*) derived from the PCP, which would eventually devolve in violent, subversive struggle throughout the 1980s, under the idea that armed confrontation and civil war provided the only solution for the Indian – particularly under Abimael Guzmán's group *Sendero Luminoso* (*The Shining Path*), concentrated in Ayacucho - culminating in the genocidal and brutal counter-insurgency campaign waged largely in rural Peru in the early 1990s, under the Fujimori regime.

[238] Indeed, in the decades that follow some authors go as far as diagnosing the potential danger in a process of thwarted modernization, leading to the radicalization of indigenous rebellious groups, for instance culminating in the violent measures of *The Shining Path* as seen in Vargas Llosa's *Lituma en los Andes*. Ismael Marquez (2006) recapitulates some of these developments.

[239] Scorza, Manuel. *La danza inmóvil*, Siglo XXI, 1991.

"Yo sé que a muchos mi novela les va a irritar porque planteo temas como el del desencanto que tengo después de haber asistido a grandes derrotas. La guerrilla peruana fue exterminada por una concepción errónea de la realidad, los querrilleros no conocían bien su país, sus instrumentos ideológicos no coincidían con la mentalidad de los campesinos."

human fraternity, Scorza anticipates a yet unborn emancipatory agent who, though no longer defined by cultural belonging or local mediations, becomes the abstract avatar which binds "all the dreams of History" to a future beyond past tragedies:

> All of the dreams in History! The New Man shall understand that love and happiness are the truly subversive facts. But this man is as of yet unborn. We live not in the present but in the past. And between past and future there is a pit. Perhaps this pit may only be filed with our corpses. It is necessary that it be so, because it is necessary that above our own corpses Humanity comes to pass.[240] (Scorza 1991: 181, my translation)

For Scorza, this oblique insinuation of a future universalism demands an implicit critical retrospective, enjoining a corrective to the socialist *indigenista* representational matrix: a recognition of the lingering distance that separated the socialist utopian aspirations from the empirical reality of the rural indian in spite of its own pretenses, and the necessity to escape the fate of violence into which the revolutionary dream degenerated. This dual demand would intensify after the tragic aftermath of the armed insurgency since the 1980s, leading to a progressive disenchantment with the revolutionary ideal, and even to its utter disavowal. For, as Carlos Vilas and Richard Stroller argue, the war against *The Shining Path* unleashed brutal carnage, revealing the terminal degeneration of both the revolutionary ideal and hegemonic state rule:

> The war between *Sendero Luminoso* and the Peruvian State throughout the 1980s can be seen as a struggle between two poles of power for political-military control of disputed territory, with both sides' strategies based upon unusual levels of violence. Insurgency and

[240] "¡Todos los sueños de la Historia! El Hombre Nuevo comprenderá que el amor y la felicidad son los hechos realmente subversivos. Pero ese hombre no ha nacido. No vivimos en el presente sino en el pasado. Y entre el pasado y el futuro hay una fosa. Quizás esa fosa sólo podrá llenarse con nuestros cadáveres. Es necésario que así sea, porque es necésario que por encima de nuestros cadáveres pase la Humanidad."

counter-insurgency alike destroyed communities and forced inhabitants to take part in atrocities or to keep silent. (Vilas and Stroller 2008: 103-108)

In any case, already since the abolition of the agrarian reform, one finds *indigenista* writers adapting the transcultural ideal to a pacifist alternative. As they explore the unbecoming of the rural indian in the city, their narratives bear witness to the return of the figure of the "Enlightened mestizo" that we saw characterized the "cosmopolitan" progressive liberal relation at the turn of the 20th Century, and which Mariátegui took as the direct precursor of socialist *indigenismo*.

Two brief examples should suffice for our purposes here: in Alfredo Bryce Echenique's 1970 post-Boom autobiographical novel *A World for Julius* (*Un mundo para Julius*) the *Bildungsroman* form is adapted to tell the life of young Julius, an aristocrat mestizo living in Lima during the years before the Velasco's 1968 Agrarian Reform. In the novel, Julius becomes increasingly sensitive to the poor Indian servants and workers that work for his family, leading to an empathic realization about their helpless subjugation. The nursing housemaid Vilma – whose eventual fate is to become a prostitute – functions simultaneously as a symbol for his embryonic libidinal drives, but also for his ethical awakening to a social reality within which he is himself without clear place. The fractured family unit remains woven by the ominous, absent figure of the stepfather, Juan Lucas, representative of the new bourgeois aristocracy, contrasting but also perpetuating the ruthlessness of the old oligarchic ascendancy of Julius' family. The ethereal rapport between Julius and Vilma, contemplative and fetishistic, describes the fragmentary shards of a twofold corruption, where the alienated mestizo child who remains dislocated within his own family identifies thus in its solitude with the strife of the subjugated Indian worker. No redemptive destiny is prefigured at the end of this process, however, as the novel's conclusion signals impotence in the face of inequality, commensurate with the derelictions following the triumph of urban modernity.

In a similar way, Edgardo Rivera Martinez' 1993 novel *País de jauja* deploys the *Bildungsroman* form to a coming of age narrative featuring a nascent mestizo subject, a child whose shattered innocence follows not only a developmental process of sexual and psychological maturation, but a new emancipatory social and class consciousness beyond the division between the mestizo and rural indian. The ideal of transculturation is thus subtracted from the revolutionary imaginary, delivered onto the conciliatory figure of a new mestizo generation that identifies itself at once with both the Western and Indian worlds. In the novel, the young protagonist Claudio accordingly incarnates the purified, infantile gaze of the still-maturing enlightened mestizo, whose sensitivity to cultural production, the music and the arts, gives way to the slow assimilation of indian folkloric forms alongside the Western ones, e.g. he transcribes Quechua Andean music to the piano, at the same time as he transforms the lyrical content of the song onto a voiceless expression, in what is ultimately a peaceful correspondence.

Set in the idyllic region of Jauja at the end of the 1940s, the novel avows cultural enrichment so that the scission of the mestizo from his oppressive legacy initiates a redemptive process in which the pre-Hispanic past is apprehended in its universal dimension, alongside Western forms, just as the latter are understood as native expressions from the European soul. Conversing with his friend Georgiou Radulesco at the Jauja hospital toward the end of the novel, Claudio draws a parallel to the European appropriation of its folkloric traditions: he finds an unlikely resonance between the Indian *huayno* and the academic music of the Hungarian Bartók, who enhanced the Western musical idiom by appropriating its native song. The parallel occurs not only in seeing invariances between the West and indigenous culture, but also as a process through which Western forms become enriched through appropriation of its local traditions:

> And what do you think of Andean music? – At first I did not like it, but then I started growing fond of it, and even more so when I discovered that it resembled somewhat the works of Béla Bartók… A Hungarian composer that has been inspired much by the popular music of his country, and who has recreated songs and danceable music of more or less pentatonic form, somewhat similar thus to the indian *huaynos*[241] (Rivera Martinez 1993: 353, my translation here and below)

No longer appointed as the facilitator of the rural Indian's acculturation, the post-revolutionary mestizo adapts the liberal-humanist ideal of emancipation through pedagogical transmission to a modified transculturation, enacted through a disciplined dialogic immersion in the arts and humanistic knowledge. This multicultural consciousness becomes adequate thus to a "reformed modernity", which simultaneously overcomes liberal occidentalism and separates the ethics of cultural mediation from the revolutionary imperative. Its creative projection becomes oriented toward the fostering of what Rivera Martinez calls a "universal culture":

> Our contribution to universal culture may only be valuable to the extent that it is original and positive, and among us it is only our pre-Hispanic past that is original, although this legacy has been enriched, developed, or re-elaborated, later through miscegenation, and through an increasing assimilation of the conquests of Western culture[242]. (Rivera Martinez 1999: 28, my translation)

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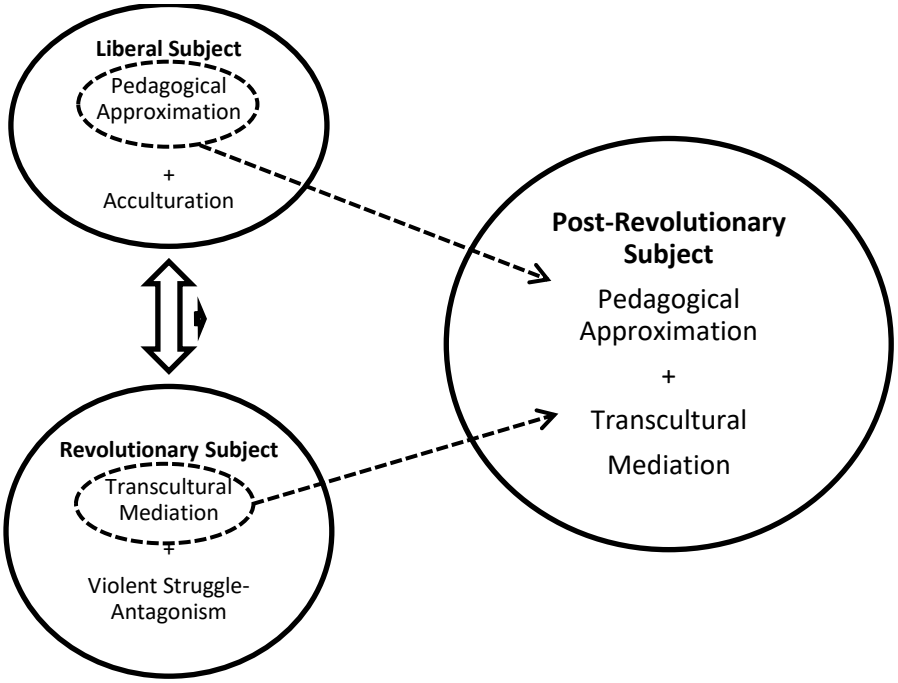
[241] Rivera Martínez, Edgardo. *País de jauja*. La Voz, 1993.
"Y qué piensa usted de la música andina?" "Al comienzo no me agradaba, pero luego fui tomándole un cierto gusto, y aún más cuando descubrí que se asemeja en algo a la de Béla Bartók." "¿Bartók?" Un compositor húngaro que se ha inspirado mucho en la música popular de su patria, y que ha recreado canciones y música de baile de estructura más o menos pentatónica, un tanto parecida por eso a la de los huaynos serranos" (Ibid: 353)

[242] Ferreira César, and Ismael P. Márquez. *De lo andino a lo universal: la obra de Edgardo Rivera Martínez*, Fondo Editorial PUCP, 1999.
"Pues nuestro aporte a la cultura universal sólo puede ser valioso en la medida en que es original y positivo, y, entre nosotros sólo es original – por lo menos hasta hoy – lo que proviene de nuestro pasado pre-hispánico, aunque ese

The unbinding of modernity from the ideological excesses of occidentalist liberalism and socialism is achieved then by non-conflictive communication. The young Claudio incarnates this spirit, in his wondrous openness to Western and indigenous traditions, and emerges not as a figure of political upheaval or collective struggle, but of affective and cognitive reconciliation. He thus fulfills the promise of a synthesis between the urban and indigenous world without the necessity of insurrectionary violence or utopian proclamations:

Diagram 4.1



This overt anti-utopianism evinces more than a disappointment with the revolutionary project, but proscribes the latter as complicit with an intolerable violence. Recalling his reaction to the tragic outcome of the Tarata explosion – Rivera Martinez (2003) himself describes the impetus behind his writing as afflicted by a kind of pragmatic impotence, in which the task of writing became that of "dreaming of a different world":

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legado haya sido enriquecido desarrollado o reelaborado por el mestizaje, y por una creciente asimilación de las conquistas de la cultura universal."

> What could I, a writer, do in this terrain of confrontation with subversion? Not much, I believe, right? Merely to dream with a different world, as the one proposed in my novel.[243] (Rivera Martinez 2003: 41, my translation)

Its modesty notwithstanding, circumscribing itself to imagining an ideal future without falling into prescriptive-utopian caprice, the process envisaged in Jauja appears as a dream, and not a political program. As a pure object of literary hope, unbound from the demands of political agitation, Rivera Martinez' fiction is self-admittedly not a manual for general conduct or, even less, a prediction for how emancipation will ultimately be attained. It remains content to "dream" within the bounds of local possibility, where emancipation succeeds, however slowly across generational transmission, without grand utopian pretenses or prescriptions. As Mirko Lauer summarizes:

> (1) Harmony, not conflict, lies at the center of the Andean narrative, although this does not cease to be problematic for the author. (2)An Andean social group emerges exerting its limitless capacities, in this case the powers of the cultural fantasy of the enlightened middle classes. (3) The Western is presented as a complement of Quechua – again, the theme of non-conflict – in this case, Ancient Greek above all, but also the cosmopolitanism that filters to Jauja through the sanatorium and socialist ideas. (4) There is a direct confession of the provincial that runs the risk… of seeking to seduce a reader construed as a kind of "national stranger." (Lauer 1998: 171, my translation[244])

Claims for political neutrality and oneiric purity, however, cannot conceal an idealized process of cultural exchange taking place in the novel. For its reformed modernity is also a reformed representative realism, through which the fate of the rural Indian is merely instrumental in the

[243] Rivera Martínez, Edgardo. "Jauja: Ciudad de Fuego. Conversación con Edgardo Rivera Martínez", in Lienzo no. 24, 2003. Full interview available at: https://revistas.ulima.edu.pe/index.php/lienzo/article/viewFile/1135/1088
[244] Lauer, Mirko. "Rivera Martínez, Edgardo. *País de Jauja*", in *Inti: Revista de literatura hispánica,* No. 48*,* Peisa, 1998, pp 169-172.

upbringing of a new multicultural consciousness. Rivera Martinez' "universal culture" operates through humanistic and humanist integrative ambition, yet also expresses a circumscribed localism at the level of practice, describing transculturation as a strictly apolitical process. In the last instance, Rivera Martinez' mestizo and alternate modernity imagines an angelic subject, freed from the vengeful desire of revolt against institutional and economic hegemonic powers. Its idyllic transmission disavows the foundational gesture which motivated the *indigenista* narrative demand for social realism: to face the fragmentation of the nation by confronting the subjugation of indigenous populations and workers, by organized intellectual and political action.

II – The Ethical Turn and Democratic Materialism

The deflation of integrative universality to the recognition of invariances across aesthetic-cognitive forms, and the abjuring of collectivist global political horizon in favor of a localized ethics of peaceful exchange, are evidently not only significant reactions to the limitations and failures of the Peruvian socialist experience. More generally, they are symptomatic exemplars of a general historic disposition that emerges in response to the carnage unleashed by the revolutionary experiences of the 20th Century across the globe. Abjuring subversive violence and castigating the authoritarian excess of socialist regimes and insurgencies, post-revolutionary consciousness ordains in place an unconditional respect for the life of the Other, in what amounts to a defense of human rights and a vindication of democratic politics. In this process, Bruno Bosteels argues, one notes not only the proscription of all violence, but also a disavowal of "political subjectivation as such", so that "…the irrefutable radicalism of one's openness to the Other" is carried precisely "…in order preemptively to strike at the dogmatic nature of all processes of political subjectivation." (Bosteels 2012: 305). Along the same lines, Juan Carlos Ubilluz has recently argued that the movement away from

emancipatory politics in Peruvian political history coincides with an epochal transition that he names - following Jacques Ranciere, Slavoj Žižek, and Alain Badiou – "the ethical turn", and which he defines as "…an ideological posture which consecrates the "democratic" humanitarian ethic to the point of inhibiting the politics of emancipation" (Ubilluz 2017: 232). Providing a brief historic contextualization which binds the Peruvian situation to the global context, he claims:

> This position exists in parallel to the revolutionary sequence, but situates itself in the world from the failure of the Soviet experiment. From then on the cultural horizon follows the certainty that all revolutions would end in a totalitarian State and in the concentration camp. In fact, in Peru the ethical turn becomes entrenched with even greater strength given the apparition of The Shining Path, with its terrorist attempts, its "retreats" to the mountains and its genocidal incursions against the indigenous communities[245]. (Ubilluz 2017: 232 my translation here and below)

This general disposition involves also a definitive cessation of the philosophical dream of universality as an integrative "meta-discursive" lever to think of the composition between autonomous processes in the arts, sciences, and politics. At the outset of *Logics of Worlds,* Alain Badiou names "democratic materialism" the contemporary ideological *zeitgeist* proper to the ethical turn, which binds the ideals of practical and cognitive prudence against the temptations of both utopian politics and philosophical universalism. In its ontological basis, democratic materialism upholds the idea that there are only a multiplicity of 'bodies and languages', but no universal truths, i.e. there is nothing beyond individual and cultural-linguistic differences to fix the horizon of thought and action. The abjuring of universalism and utopianism by proponents of the ethical turn

[245] "Esta postura existe paralelamente a la secuencia revolucionaria, pero se afianza en el mundo a partir del fracaso del experimento soviético. Desde entonces se instala en el horizonte cultural la certea de que todas las revoluciones terminan en el Estado totalitario y el campo de concentración. De hecho, en el Perú el giro ético se afianza con aun mayor fuerza debido a la aparición de Sendero Luminoso, con sus atentados terroristas, sus "retiradas" al monte y sus incursiones genocidas a las comunidades indígenas."

is premised on the protection of the singularity of bodies and languages as part of what Badiou rightly calls "the rights of the living":

> [T]he contemporary consensus, in recognizing the plurality of languages, presupposes their juridical equality. Hence, the assimilation of humanity to animality culminates in the identification of the human animal with the diversity of its sub-species and the democratic rights that inhere in this diversity… democratic materialism does stipulate a global halting point for its multiform tolerance. A language that does not recognize the universal juridical and normative equality of languages does not deserve to benefit from this equality. A language that aims to regulate all other languages and to govern all bodies will be called dictatorial and totalitarian.[246] (Badiou 2008: 2)

This position is leveraged to propose a critique of socialist *indigenista* narratives, among others, by Mario Vargas Llosa, who in *La utopia arcaica* argues that the collectivist ideal which guides all revolutionary utopias remain grounded in a nefarious desire for "forced collectivization" and "absolute homogeneity", against individual freedoms and heterogeneity[247]. With this said, one might wonder: why would a democratic politics oriented toward humanitarian protection necessarily entail the inhibition of emancipatory politics? Put differently: why is the egalitarian collective demand deemed incompatible with democracy and the protection of human rights?

One possible answer is that there is an organic link between the protective pursuits of democracy and the hegemony of state sovereignty, while the goal of an emancipatory politics is to finally oppose such hegemony by collapsing the division between the state and civil society. If so, then the circumscription of politics to a respect for human *rights* within an institutional frame is a

[246] Badiou, Alain. *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II,* translated by Alberto Toscano, Continuum, 2008. pp. 2.

[247] See Appendix II.

reformist agenda, anathema to the revolutionary spirit. The very essence of the 'generic communism' imagined by Marx in the 1844 philosophical manuscripts and the anti-statist modality of Leninist politics, Badiou argues, already establish both links:

> [Marx]… insists that democracy should in truth always be understood as a form of State. 'Form' means a particular configuration of the separate character of the State and of the formal exercise of sovereignty. In declaring democracy to be a form of State, Lenin enters into the filiation of classical political thought, including that of Greek philosophy, which declares that 'democracy' must ultimately be thought as a figure of sovereignty or power: the power of the demos or the people; the capacity of the demos to exert coercion for itself(…)
>
> If democracy is a form of State, what strictly philosophical use is this category destined to have? For Lenin, the aim or idea of politics is the withering away of the State, the classless society, and therefore the disappearance of every form of State, including, quite obviously, the democratic form. This is what one might call generic communism, whose principle is provided by Marx in the 1844 Manuscripts[248]. (Badiou 2005: 79)

If the institutional frame of democratic politics remains inextricably bound to state power, however, it is still not clear why the revolutionary alternative is destined to betray its overt aims, perpetuating brutally authoritarian forms of governance. The implicit premise is that any attempt to pursue the derogation of institutional power can only do so by unwittingly reiterating what it seeks to overthrow. The very justification of violence within emancipatory politics reveals its conceptual inconsistency as it always degenerates thus into state oppression. It is no different for *indigenista* socialists: the imagined "national consciousness" woven from "everyone's blood" is used to justify

[248] Badiou, Alain. *Metapolitics*, translated by Jason Barker, Verso, 2005.

forced collectivization and insurgency, imposing a standard of "absolute homogeneity" against the irreducible heterogeneity of the real social order. Vargas Llosa argues that such utopianism evinces the idealist truth of the "materialist" rhetoric about integration *qua* collectivization: for it is impossible to form a cohesive set from the differences that divide individuals and groups, even less form a criterion from which common destinies could be anticipated or prescribed:

> Other than in an administrative and symbolic sense – that is to say, the most precarious there is – "The Peruvian" does not exist. There are only Peruvians, panoply of races, cultures, languages, degrees of life, uses and customs, more different than similar to the other, whose common denominator reduces, in most cases, to living in the same territory, submitted to the same authority.[249] (Vargas Llosa 1993: 210-211, my translation here and below)

In the last instance, having reduced the fictional integrity of the coming Nation to its varied dimensions of difference, the *telos* of socialism is diagnosed as inherently pathological. The impetus against representation and mimicry is realized not in the fantasy of an authentically self-representing and self-emancipating subject, but rather in relinquishing the very desire for authentic representation and the ideal of a collective destiny under a cohesive "National consciousness". For the socialist dialectic, in spite of its realist or materialist aspirations, would remain every bit as idealized as any other utopian fiction that takes as a historical necessity what is in truth an ideologically mediated fiction, a narrative prop. The injunction seems clear enough: respect for the heterogeneity which separates the urban mestizo from the indigenous Other obtains once the compulsion to idealize the past and prophesize the "integrative" future of Peruvian society is relinquished.

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[249] "Salvo en un sentido administrativo y simbólico —es decir, el más precario que cabe—, "lo peruano" no existe. Sólo existen los peruanos, abanico de razas, culturas, lenguas, niveles de vida, usos y costumbres, más distintos que parecidos entre sí, cuyo denominador común se reduce, en la mayoría de los casos, a vivir en un mismo territorio y sometidos a una misma autoridad."

In a way then, Rivera Martinez' post-revolutionary *indigenista* narrative becomes the positive expression of this trajectory, which begins by correcting the utopian idealism of the socialist imaginary through ethical and humanistic attunement: a new subject, embryonic but pure, situated beyond the hostilities of racism and classism, capable of bridging comprehension between different cultures, and traversing social fragmentation by transcultural exchange. Read under this light, *País de jauja* realizes the prose of what, according to Vargas Llosa, would be an ideologically corrected Arguedas: a return to the oneiric tenderness, ethical innocence and sentimental poignancy from *Los ríos profundos*, decanted from all subversive furor against the author's more politically contaminated works. The tender and unwritten innocence of Ernesto's empathic gaze becomes then re-inscribed in Claudio's under the patient labor of human exchange. Rivera Martinez' narrative is therefore to be celebrated for not being utopian but prescriptively neutral, which is to say, thoroughly *inoffensive*: a self-declared gesture of imaginary escape, not a purported program or demand. It promotes the literary ideal of an *indigenismo* under a reformed critical realism, which represents the oppression of the Indian without confusing itself for a model for future society.

III – Beyond the Ethical Turn: The Critique of Violence and the Politics of Creation

The choice between the authoritarian tendencies of utopian idealism and critical realism, however, not only separates literary invention from political action, but aims to render all forms of collectivist-emancipatory politics inherently pathological, given its inherent authoritarian disposition. At the same time, to claim that a project for social integration or new forms of collective production necessarily leads to the justified revolutionary violence and the reification of totalitarian power is already to transgress empirical moderation. For it is just not clear why universality and utopia are necessarily incompatible with the protection of human rights, or why the integrative ideal of socio-

economic equality is deemed inherently incompatible with the preservation of heterogeneity. Such a conclusion only follows if one conflates the general idea of collective organization with the desire for "forced collectivization", where the pursuit of equality or integration is equivalent to a desire to abolish diversity. But to proscribe egalitarian demand in light of social, economic, or legal inequalities is not so much to castigate utopian excess as much as the very ideal of emancipatory struggle and collective organization[250].

This rejoinder immediately suggests the pertinent question: if the ideal of collective emancipation can be successfully dissociated from a violent utopianism of the sort denounced by proponents of the ethical turn, then what form does it take? Not without modesty, Juan Carlos Ubilluz (2017) proposes that the ensuing legacy of the socialist *indigenista* tradition goes beyond a reactive-critical gesture against hegemonic powers, but also carries the promise to follow the emerging social movements of its time, as it "…enables the thought of a literature that not only denounces the crimes of the state or of the progressive party (as that of armed conflict) but follow closely current processes.[251]" (Ubilluz 2017: 245)

At the same time, as Bosteels insists, the rejection of the possibilities of a future politics also implies that a critical task is in order, without falling into facile moralism or blind exculpation. This problematic takes right back the question of the subject, the nature revolutionary act, and finally the question of the future. To accomplish this retrospective, critical task, Alain Badiou (1975) formulates a general imperative, to avoid at all costs the reduction of political issues to the terms of what he

[250] It is not sufficient to claim that the revolutionary imaginary projects 'ideal fictions' which it confuses for social reality; for one of Marx's essential points is that capitalism itself functions as a system woven from "real abstractions", historically realized in its specific social and economic productive modes of organization, e.g. the concepts of value, commodity, labor, etc. See Brassier, Ray. "Concrete-in-Thought, Concrete-in-Act: Marx, Materialism and the Exchange of Abstraction", in *Crisis and Critique,* Volume 5, issue 1, 2018, 111-119.

[251] "A su vez, el estudio de la narrativa indigenista ayuda pensar la posibilidad de una literatura que no solo denuncie los crímenes de Estado o del partido vanguardista (como la del conflicto armado) sino que siga de cerca procesos políticos actuales."

names "post-political discourse", extremism, fanaticism, totalitarianism, etc. Short of allowing clarity into the political dimension of the problem, the moralist abhorrence and legalist-humanitarian circumscription which guides the rhetoric of democratic materialism merely seeks to provoke a sedating complacency before the present. At heart, for Badiou, the real starting point must be an interrogation of the role of revolutionary violence in its purported subversive function and role within the envisaged process of emancipatory political action and within the materialist dialectic. Already in his 1975 book *Theory of the Subject*, Badiou had denounced the moralist castigation of "totalitarian terror" in its political impotence, arguing that "…the denunciation of the repressive and bloody character of a mode of politics does not amount to the real criticism of this politics, nor does it ever enable one to be done with it." (Badiou 2009: 294) To initiate the necessary historical critique, Badiou traces the issue back to Hegel's account of the "Reign of Terror" in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, which appears as a necessary moment in the constitution of the universal where "absolute freedom" and "sacrificial death" are dialectically identified in a purely negative movement:

> Universal freedom, therefore, can produce neither a positive work nor a deed; there is left only *negative* action; it is merely the fury of *destruction*… The sole work and deed of universal freedom is therefore death, a death too which has no inner significance or filling, for what is negated is the empty point of the absolutely free will. It is thus the coldest and meanest of all deaths, with no more significance than cutting off a head of cabbage or swallowing a mouthful of water.[252] (Hegel 2018: 235-6)

Badiou does not shy from accepting the idea that such a destructive moment is essential to the process of subjectivation, but follows Marx in localizing revolutionary agency in a process that does not identify with but separates itself from state-power. For revolutionary terror is not, as Hegel

[252] Hegel. G. W.F. *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by Michael Inwood, Oxford University Press, 2018.

conceived, a despotic violence that functions as "the mechanical result of the modern State", or as the "faction of the victorious" taking the place of power. Rather, it concentrates collective action so as to become subtracted from state power, by dismantling the machinery of capitalist production. In the classical Marxist narrative, as is well known, this occurs through the projected escalation of class-struggle, which finally unravels the class-system which supports the proletariat's identity as a wage-labor as it destroys the machinery of capitalist appropriation.

But for Badiou, as for Marx, the revolutionary subjective process, however, cannot be reduced to a *destruction* of Law or proletariat insurgency, since doing so the revolutionary act relapses into a purely negative gesture, driven by a nihilistic anxiety where "the real kills the symbolical, rather than splitting it… [and whereby] subjectivation blocks the rule without annulling its space." (Badiou 2009: 291) In other words, Badiou argues, the revolutionary act is not only a "blocking" of the existing law or its destruction, but its "splitting", a "blurring of the places" under which the collective is structurally positioned in a local situation (Ibid). In short, the critical assessment of revolutionary violence, Badiou argues, begins not by analyzing the *objective* effects of the acts themselves on the basis of an antecedently agreed legal-moral register. Rather, it begins by recognizing the one-sidedness of a subjective disposition whose antagonistic furor becomes voided of positive content to the point of impotence, thus revealing "anxiety's incapacity to effectuate the division" (Ibid: 293). As Bruno Bosteels emphasizes, the revolutionary subject to come must thus effectuate the "internalization of the past" in which "shame, anxiety, and uncertainty" prevents a relapse into the temptation of power. This is the imperative for an emancipatory political act whose subversive potential may be achieved without taking the place of state power:

> [I]f authoritarianism always lies in wait as a sinister constitutive outside of all democracy precisely due to the totalitarian desire to incarnate it, then the new radical politics

to come will consist in keeping firm in the shame, the anxiety, and in the uncertainty, without giving in to the impudence of wanting to fill the empty place of power – that is, without giving in to the metaphysical temptation to give body to the ghost of effective justice. (Bosteels 2012: 187)

The message is therefore clear: for both Badiou and Bosteels, the revolutionary process is irreducible to destruction or antagonism, but involves the constructive vision of what Vallejo named in *Salutación Angélica* "the time of harvest", after the time of war and beyond insurrectionary furor (cf. Chapter II). Such reconstitution cannot be idealized as an unperturbed process *after* the revolutionary process, however, but must be seen as immanent to it, as part of the construction of a new mode of organization and production for society writ large, beyond the state power and class difference. In a more recent formulation, as we briefly surmised in the first chapter, Badiou goes on explains this positive function inherent to the revolutionary act as a process of *subtraction* from rather than mere *destruction* of the Law, through which the bodies and languages which democratic materialism deems irreducible become incorporated into a new collective process. Accordingly, Badiou identifies two deviations in the revolutionary process: a toothless reformism that seeks to obviate entirely the role of destruction ("subtraction without destruction"), and the nihilistic reduction to violent sublimation, underwritten by anxiety ("destruction without subtraction"):

[I]f destruction is separated from subtraction, we have as result the impossibility of politics, because young people are absorbed in a sort of nihilistic collective suicide, which is without thinking and destination...

We can now conclude: the political problems of the contemporary world cannot be solved, neither in the weak context of democratic opposition, which in fact abandons millions of people to a nihilistic destiny, nor in the mystical context of destructive negation,

> which is another form of power, the power of death. Neither subtraction without destruction, nor destruction without subtraction. It is in fact the problem of violence today. Violence is not, as has been said during the last century the creative and revolutionary part of negation. The way of freedom is a subtractive one; but to protect the subtraction itself, to defend the new kingdom of emancipatory politics, we cannot radically exclude all forms of violence... We have to learn something of nihilistic subjectivity[253]. (Badiou 2007)

Badiou's argumentation entails the reformation of the revolutionary subject in its bases, so as to move toward a schema that thinks of the indissociable link between antagonistic and creative action as part of the singular process of "subtraction". In the same direction, as we have seen, Mariátegui's voluntarist emphasis on affirmation was premised precisely on overcoming both the nihilistic sublimation of a pure anarchic confrontation with the mestizo (as in the late work of Gonzales Prada) as much as the distorting idealizations of the indian which obfuscate its structural subjugation under the *latifundio* in an idealized vision (*pasadismo*, ancestralism). The concrete negation of the *latifundio* could only be accomplished by satisfying the *demand* of the Indian's right to land, not in the legalist sense of assimilating it into the small-property ownership of a new capitalist class, but rather by constructing an integral social collective binding workers and intellectuals, as well as indigenous and Western forms of production. In Badiou's terms, we can thus say that creative antagonism, at heart, aimed "subtracts" the rural Indian from its structural subordination to the mestizo rule, by conceiving of an alternative at once the *latifundio* and liberal, capitalist modernity. And radicalizing this basic impetus, Arguedas then established the indissociable bind between a new subjective disposition toward labor and a new productive model for society, as he indicted Mariátegui for his disavowal of the particularity of indigenous culture in conceiving of the potentials

[253] Badiou, Alain. "Destruction, Negation, Subtraction", presented in *Art Center College of Design* in Pasadena - February 6 2007. Full text available at: http://www.lacan.com/badpas.htm,

for integration. For without the latter, he argued one simply could not understand the subjective disposition which organized the cooperativist economy of the *Ayllu*. Short of assaulting heterogeneity in the name of collectivization, Arguedas' revolutionary agency gave way to integrative figures of a post-indigenous and even post-cultural subject which, like Vallejo's generic human subject, was built from the inexhaustible differences and identities which composed Peruvian society, however fractured in their individuality and torn from their place of origins.

In the last instance, the project for a Peruvian socialism imagined by *indigenista* writers was also one that thus evinced a unique reformation of the universalist and utopian aspirations of revolutionary politics, precisely when attending to the priority of integrative production as primary, in relation to the uniqueness of Peruvian social reality. If in the last instance a universalism can never be an idealism that distorts and elides the intricacies of the particular, then a fetishistic 'telluric' localism can neither be an authentic regionalism, insofar as one severs the particular from the larger contextual-historical placement. As Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams (2016) put it – following Ernesto Laclau's logic of "populist reason" - universality cannot be thus conceived abstractly, amputated from its structural placement; for the universal is always a particular that concentrates a site of collective "hegemonic struggle", woven from and productive of differences:

> Universals emerge when a particular comes to occupy this position through hegemonic struggle…The universal, then, is an empty placeholder that hegemonic particulars (specific demands, ideals and collectives) come to occupy. It can operate as a subversive and emancipatory vector of change with respect to established universalisms, and

it is heterogeneous and includes differences, rather than eliminating them. (Srnicek and Williams 2015: 77-78)[254]

This impetus toward the necessity of new constructive mediations is, more than any antiquated ancestralism, the promise and aspiration which guided the revolutionary sequence of *indigenista* thinking, and the perceived role that intellectuals, philosophy and literature should play in relation to the emancipatory ends. And it is this part of Mariátegui's conception of socialist philosophy, as a productive practice, that must be salvaged from the critical retrospective task, which includes the assessment of the violent legacy of Peruvian socialism, beyond the indictments from a facile moralism. For Mariátegui recognized as the essence of the *indigenista* moment and promise, above all, the disciplined experimental labor which allowed a critical approximation to social reality through new theoretical principles, aesthetic paradigms, and political ideals.

IV – The Collapse of Socialist Productivism and The Proletariat Subject

At the same time, as we saw, Arguedas attested to the failure of the attempt to align the revolutionary politics to a figure of the transcultural subject, through which indigenous culture would not only survive but actively participate in the constitution of a new collective subject. Facing the dissolution of cultural identity through urbanization depicted in *The Foxes*, Arguedas timidly sought to find the conditions for a new subject in such a latent inconsistency, to no avail. With no concrete expression in the syndicate, party or the cultural bond of the community, it existed only as a wandering abstraction within the urban capitalist space, not as a figure of proletariat collective insurgency, but an indiscernible voice emerging from a growing surplus-population. In Arguedas' waning, uncertain hope, this nameless universality becomes thus but an abstract insinuation of a

[254] Srnicek, Nick, and Alex Williams. *Inventing the Future*: *Postcapitalism and a World Without Work*, Verso, 2015.

different future, a faint murmur of Vallejo's radiant universality, woven from we called "the rabble of culture", that is, from the aberrant subjectivities borne from a thwarted modernity.

More broadly, the crisis of the Peruvian socialist dream becomes thus symptomatic of and continuous with the problematic search for a new image of the political subjective process and its ultimate result, beyond the critique of violence and the avowal of creation. For once the productivist ambition to supersede capitalism as a mode of production is shorn from programmatic specificity, revolutionary action becomes only measurable against the exorbitant capacity of global capitalism to assimilate crises, and suppress every form of collective struggle[255]. Put differently, without the economicist hope to "free the forces of production from capitalist relations of production", the revolutionary dream becomes soon incapable of producing a concrete vision of the future, and the celebration of construction and invention rings hollow.

Explaining the global failures of the classical Marxist dialectic when anticipating capitalist runaway and the ultimate advent of a post-capitalist society, Nick Land diagnoses two principal failures: (1) its *theoretical* incapacity to anticipate how the prospects for an escalating contradiction between capital and labor would be modulated by ever more prescient bureaucratic-political intervention into the dynamics of market, thereby restricting the nihilist tendencies of competition; (2) the *practical* failure of socialist regimes and experiments to realize the promise of a superior mode of production to capitalism in practice, i.e. the failure of the productivist dream (Land 1993: 38).

In spite of its manifold adaptations and the overt resistance to economicist dogmatism, these general problems clearly become revealed in the Peruvian historical process, eroding the socialist dream of economic and cultural appropriation. For the failure of potentiating the productive prowess of rural peasant communities toward the constitution of a "global proletariat" not only

[255] See Appendix III.

faced an insurmountable problem facing their inarticulacy, but moreover underestimated the assimilation of rural labor by capital in the cities after collapse of the *latifundio*, which exacerbated rather than countered social and economic atomization. It is hardly surprising then that Arguedas' late work becomes depleted of the strategic, positive clarity proper to the transcultural hero and national dream in *Todas las Sangres*, returning instead to the amorphousness of Vallejo's stateless subject. As the attempt to amend Marxian economicism relinquishes the aspirations for an alternative mode of production, the revolutionary subject and the future of collectivism can only appear on condition of its utter unrecognizability, which is to say, its programmatic vacuity.

Perhaps because of the conceptual and practical difficulty of matching the productivity of capital by defining a productivist alternative, obscurity paradoxically becomes transvalued into the only gesture of uncompromising resistance. For instance, Slavoj Žižek defines the revolutionary subjective spirit as carrying simultaneously an absolute *resignation* in the face of an impossible future, and the universal *enthusiasm* of traversing this impossibility: "Enthusiasm and resignation, then, are not two opposite moments: it is the 'resignation' itself, that is to say, the experience of a certain impossibility, that incites enthusiasm.[256]" (Žižek 1990: 259) Finding solace in defeat, this gesture transforms impotence into the promise of victory, and revolutionary action can only proceed from the absolute refusal of projective specificity[257]. Only an amputated reactive subjectivity remains, no longer underwritten by the anxiety of terror, but only by the lull of resignation. Shorn from all positive content, such a vision only camouflages a general impotence in response to the voracious

[256] Žižek, Slavoj. "Beyond Discourse-Analysis", in *Reflections of our time*, by Ernesto Laclau, Verso, 1990. 249-60.

[257] It is instructive to understand the essential underestimation of capitalism which inheres in traditional Marxist historicism, which remains centered in the thought of a process of a central escalating contradiction (labor and capital) which ultimately sublimates the difference between the terms. This is the generative dynamic leading to the conditions for revolutionary moment, by virtue of which urbanization disintegrate the autonomy of rural economies through the expropriation of land, and the absorption of workers into industrial wage-labor, i.e. the process by which the European peasantry underwent a process of capitalist 'enclosure' at the end of the 15th and beginning of the 16th Century, reiterated in the Peruvian situation under the migratory economic transformation coeval with the liquidation of the latifundio after the agrarian reform.

tendency of capitalism to reintegrate all qualitative forms into its ruthless expansion and self-transformation. As collective resignation and enthusiasm become pragmatically indiscernible, in the end, it becomes evident that collective productivity and the dynamics of market-competition cannot be pulled so easily apart. Unable to match the protean capacity of capitalist production, it diagnoses the positive project to think of a different future as inherently pathological[258]. Nick Land names this position "transcendental miserabilism", and uses it to designate the pessimism of the predominant "Frankfurtian spirit" which overtakes the socialist imaginary once productivist ambitions collapse:

> The Frankfurtian spirit now rules: Admit that capitalism will outperform its competitors under almost any imaginable circumstances, while turning that very admission into a new kind of curse(…) [N]o substantial residue of Marxian historicism remains in the "communist" version of this posture. In fact, with economics and history comprehensively abandoned, all that survives of Marx is a psychological bundle of resentments and disgruntlements, reducible to the word 'capitalism' in its vague and negative employment: as the name for everything that hurts, taunts and disappoints (….)[259]

> The Marxist dream of dynamism without competition was merely a dream, an old monotheistic dream re-stated, the wolf lying down with the lamb. If such a dream counts as 'imagination', then imagination is no more than a defect of the species: the packaging of tawdry contradictions as utopian fantasies, to be turned against reality in the service of sterile

[258] See Critchley, Simon. "Declaration on the Notion of the Future"*,* at *The International Necronautical Society* December 2010, http://www.believermag.com/issues/201011/?read=article_necronautical

[259] Land, Nick. *Fanged Noumena: Collected Writings 1987-2007*, edited by Robin McKay and Ray Brassier, Urbanomic, 2012.

negativity. 'Post-capitalism' has no real meaning except an end to the engine of change.[260] (Land 2012: 623-626)

The obscure image of the future given in Arguedas' last novel emerges then as the natural result of the ongoing unraveling of the revolutionary prospect as creation becomes assimilated into the vortex of capitalist modernization. After all, Mariátegui's hope for productive appropriation of the collectivist labor of the *Ayllu,* and Arguedas' derailed transcultural dream to reconcile the "rational and magical conceptions of the world" in a post-capitalist world was still guided by the prospect of a possible peace between the pursuit of productive success and a collective loyalty to social ends. A peace, that is, capable of avoiding the atomization brought about under capitalist modernization, industrial wage-labor, and the cannibalistic tendencies of market-competition.

V – The Crisis of Democracy and the Peruvian Situation Today

Given the obscurity which shrouds the idea of a "post-capitalist future" and the nefarious legacy of past insurgencies, it comes as no surprise that the predominant political orientation of socialist thinkers has been to progressively move away from the utopian aspirations of revolutionary politics. Post-revolutionary socialists and anti-utopian humanitarian democrats agree thing: beyond implausible collectivist utopias, a powerful and efficient state is ultimately necessary for social emancipation to obtain. A far-cry from the internationalist and post-state politics, nationalism and state expansion often are thus considered necessary instruments to guarantee social justice. Under the juridical protection of a democratic politics grounded in a respect for human rights, one hopes, the expansion of state power may be leveraged efficiently within a market-economy to emancipatory ends. Only then can the egalitarian ideal may attain a tolerable degree of traction on social reality. As

[260] Ibid.

far as radical emancipatory projects go, they persist in the absence of productivist post-capitalist and post-statist ambition, and within the scope of horizontal and local struggle. As Ray Brassier argues, this moderation emerges as perhaps the most salient feature of the collapse of the communist project, and its association with totalitarian rule:

> This scaling down of political ambition by those who espouse the ideals of justice and emancipation is perhaps the most notable consequence of the collapse of communism as a Promethean project. The best we can hope for, apparently, is to create local enclaves of equality and justice. But the idea of remaking the world according to the ideals of equality and justice is routinely denounced as a dangerous totalitarian fantasy[261]. (Brassier 2014: 469)

The question dividing the political spectrum will be then that of specifying the admissible balance between the private and public powers, and the reach of the state to intervene into the dynamics of market in the interest of social utility. Where the extension of the state does not relapse into the temptation of authoritarian repression, the socialist embrace of institutional governance within a democratic political frame also fulfils the public demand for historic repentance: it disavows the tragedies of the insurgent past, without thereby betraying the pursuit for equality. The Marxian, utopian aspirations for a "post-capitalist" and "post-state" society are in this way scaled down: the collective organization of civil society is expressed and delimited to participation in local-horizontal struggle, while electoral representation through the party and syndicate concentrates and redirects social demand to the state machinery, as well as to the private sector.

The consolidation of new democratic socialist groups within the last decades in Peruvian political history illustrates this process with clarity: following the radical subversive uprising of *The Shining Path* and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), the country saw the growth

[261] Brassier, Ray, "Prometheanism and its Critics", in *#Accelerate: The Accelerationist Reader*, Urbanomic, 2014.

but also atomization of new-leftist fronts, aiming at electoral representation. These would remain in close connection not only to various labor union groups, but to emerging institutions addressing issues of cultural, ethnic, and gender rights. The new democratic left thus extended the integrative ideal to different forms of minoritarian struggle and public discontent, extending of course to the representing of indigenous communities in the provinces. The task for collective political organization was extended beyond the party and syndicate, making the prospects of a general consensus toward a singular "leftist front" quite problematic.

A brief retrospective is in order. In 1978, the *Revolutionary Vanguard* (*Vanguardia Revolucionaria*; VR) convened with fourteen other syndical groups in the formation of the *Popular Democratic Unity* (*Unidad Democratica y Popular* (UDP), participating in that year's election of the Constitutional Assembly. In September 11th 1980, the UDP, alongside several other leftist parties and groups, became part of the new coalition-party, the *United Left* (*Izquierda Unida*"), achieving considerable electoral support in the 1980 and 1983 municipal elections[262]. In 1984, a group led by José Diez Canseco founded the *Mariáteguist Union* (*Unidad Mariáteguista*), leading to the formation of the *Unified Mariáteguist Party* (*Partido Unificado Mariáteguista*) (PUM), attaining second place in the 1984 presidential elections in coalition with the United Left, only to disintegrate by 1990. The PUM explicitly identified itself with a rekindling of Mariátegui's ideal to adapt socialism to Peruvian reality through syndical-party organization of rural and urban workers, this time under the institutional mantle of participative democracy, the demand for the nationalization of natural resources and rights for the indigenous communities, and a stimulation of internal market toward economic decentralization. The PUM expanded its representative bases organizing worker groups to emerging

[262] These comprised the following associations, comprising a wide range of leftist ideological orientations: *Partido Comunista Peruano* (PCP), *Partido Comunista Revolucionario* (PSR), *Partido Comunista Revolucionario* (PCR), *Frente Obrero Estudiantil y Popular* (FOCEP), *Unión de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (UNIR), *Unidad Democrática Popular (*UDP*), Partido Comunista de Perú – Patria Roja.*

organizations concerned with issues of ethnicity, gender, ecology, and cultural rights, i.e. under the frame of so-called "identity politics". It reconvened its bases and under the name *Peruvian Socilaist Party* (*Partido Socialista del Perú*) in 2006. It would later unite with varied other groups in 2012 – predominantly, through the leadership and electoral inscription of Marco Arana's ecologist group *Tierra y Libertad* – in the formation of another leftist coalition: *The Broad Front* (*El Frente Amplio*), which quickly gained significant momentum[263].

Through the candidacy of Veronika Mendoza, the 2016 electoral contest saw *El Frente Amplio* reintroduce the principles outlined by the PUM to the national agenda, which adapted Mariátegui's ideals to a reformist-institutional strategy[264]. The historic "problem of the land" which determined the fate of the rural indian was then aligned to a prospective shift in the nation's industrial priorities toward a stimulation of internal markets, a progressive movement toward the formalization of labor, and the legal reinforcement of ecological and property rights in indigenous communities. With regard to the latter, the choice between a collective or small-property model for indigenous communities which divided socialists and liberals persisted at the core of the political debate, however stripped from any larger project of appropriation or integration. In particular, the economic program proposed by *El Frente Amplio* – elaborated, among others, by the economists Pedro Francke and Oscar Dancourt – moved away from the predominant "trickle-down" economics ("*chorreo*") of the "extractivist" primary export model of the last decades[265], driven by the

[263] These comprised the following: *Ciudadanos por el Cambio, Movimiento de Afirmación Social* (MAS), *Tierra y Libertad*, *Fuerza Social, Patria Roja, Partido Socialista del Perú.*

[264] The complete governmental plan of *El Frente Amplio* can be found in full at: http://aplicaciones013.jne.gob.pe/pecaoe/sipe/PlanGobiernoPDF.aspx?koznY8YcptP43Ose4J6sXEp7zp8dpHvRUaHy9cZM4BU

[265] It was argued that mining could not continue to be the primary motor of economic and social growth in the decades to come, for economic, ecological, and social reasons: the international fall in the prices of minerals (particularly, for Peruvian production, those of copper and gold) in relation to the 2002-2014 period , as the de-accelerating growth of the Chinese economy lowered the demand and prices considerably; the persistent environmental contamination and

revenue accrued from the mining industrial sector. In turn, the new left proposed a diversification of economic productivity, oriented toward the growth of internal markets; emphasizing, for example, agriculture and tourism through the extension of credit for small entrepreneurs and farmers.

In the political domain, the left opposed social conflict generated above all in the state violence against indigenous communities protesting the incursion of mining companies into their territories. This was considered as much a matter of historic retribution as much as economic reform. This involves both a regulation of the private sector, and a protection of the collective-property rights of the indigenous communities against the atomizing tendencies of capitalism. As Zulema Burneo de la Rocha writes with regard to the effects of the growth of the mining enterprise since the 1990s for rural communities:

> The community's collective property is affected, since mining ventures are generally 'open pit'. The community cannot oppose itself legally to the giving of a mining concession; at most, it may demand a payment for the lands in which he won't be able to work during the mining operations, and an additional indemnity in case a building belonging to the community is damaged...

The protection of the integrity of the rural collectivist practices was thus conceived in a protectionist form as the obverse of state regulation of private companies, rather than as part of a larger social project of potentiation. It finds its proximate origins in the so-called *New Land Law* ("*Nueva ley de tierras"*) passed during the Fujimori regime in 1995, which promoted the integration of the rural economy into the market by allowing the transfer of land by individual families, seeking to

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ecologically unsustainable extractive practices produced by the mining enterprise against the will of the communities, and in violation of their property and human rights.

create thus a small-property class of landowners within the communities[266]. As Jorge Luis Gonzales Angulo argues, this led to the fragmentation of land ownership, unravelling the legal basis for the collective-property model to survive:

> To give the community the faculties to decide [for a privatization of the land] and take from it the legal protection that it enjoyed in the 1979 Constitution signifies, in general terms, to leave aside that form of communal organization, to extract it from the system and abort it as an institution.[267] (Gonzales Angulo 2004: 99)

To address the internal fissure within the communities that resulted from the privatization of the land, *El Frente Amplio* proposed a fortification of the collective property rights schema for indigenous communities, implying the derogation of the New Law, and even a return to the legislation of the 1979 Constitution, which proscribed individual-familial transfer of communal land. This alternative, however, conflicted with the sentiment of those who saw the "liberalization of the land" as a means to escape the protectionist authority of community leaders.

> Individual ownership would liberate them from the social control that the community still exerts over productive decisions, and they would be able to ask for credit to financial entities and banks. This does not imply, however, that commoners desire the dissolution of the community (…) What is true is that the community leaders and guild representatives at the regional and national levels have a strong position against individual ownership of the lands. They demand even a return to the protectionism of communal

[266] See Eleodoro Romero Romaña's *Derechos Reales*, Volume II, Second edition 1993.

[267] González Angulo, Jorge Luis, "La nueva ley de tierras y el derecho de propiedad de las comunidades campesinas", in *Themis*, 2004, pp 95-100. Available at: http://revistas.pucp.edu.pe/index.php/themis/article/download/11484/12004 "Sin embargo, otorgar a la Comunidad la facultad de adoptar tal decisión y restarle la protección legal de que gozaba con la derogada Constitución de 1979, significa, en términos latos, dejar de lado esta forma de organización comunal, extraerla del sistema y abortarla como instituto."

property [guaranteed by the 1979 Constitution], which the community would not have freedom to dispose of their lands.[268] (Burneo de la Rocha 2016)

This internal rift affecting the communities indicates that the contradiction between the collectivist principles of the community and the individual private thrust of the cities has become internalized and redoubled within the communities themselves, facing the historic stagnation of the rural economy, as well as the pressures and incentives of integration into the market economy.

Reinforcing the regulation of private companies, and in response to the prescient divide between the state and rural indian communities, *El Frente Amplio* encouraged promoted enhanced mechanisms of approximation to and incorporation of the rural communities into the political decision-making process an debate through the practice of "prior consultation" ("*consulta previa*"), guaranteeing the sovereignty of the communities over their territories[269]. If a productive dynamism without market remains unthinkable, it was hoped, at least state may tame the market toward social ends. And if the idea of a new revolutionary subject remains proscribed, at least the organization of dissent in mass protests into the reformist demands may function as the democratic watchdog for the state, protecting the human integrity and cultural autonomy of rural populations.

There are several problems with these programmatic prospects, but they are fundamentally related to the prescient historic rift between civil society and its representative powers, given the

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[268] Burneo de la Rocha, Zulema, "La propiedad colectiva y las comunidades campesinas del Perú", CEPES. Text available at: http://www.cepes.org.pe/pdf/observatorio_tierras/propiedad_colectiva_tierra.pdf
"Al decir de algunos comuneros, el título individual los liberaría del control social que aún ejerce la comunidad sobre las decisiones productivas, les permitiría solicitar créditos a entidades financieras y bancos. Todo lo anterior, no implica, sin embargo, que los comuneros deseen la disolución de la comunidad (…) Lo cierto es que líderes comunales y representantes gremiales a niveles regionales y nacionales tienen una fuerte postura contraria a la titulación individual de las tierras. Ellos reclaman incluso la vuelta al proteccionismo de la propiedad comunal, con lo cual la comunidad campesina no tendría libre disponibilidad de sus tierras."

[269] Cynthia A. Sanborn, Verónica Hurtado, Tania Ramírez, "La consulta previa en el Perú: avances y retos", in *Diario Uno*, August 10th 2016. Available at http://diariouno.pe/2016/08/10/fa-presenta-proyecto-de-ley-para-mejorar-consulta-previa/

state's institutional precariousness, and its concomitant incapacity to ensure representation and suppress corruption through democratic-legal means. As it turns out, the political class consolidated through electoral representation in the decades after the Fujimori dictatorship revealed itself to be no less prone to degeneracy or corruption, and neglect of the rural indigenous communities remained a constant[270]. Facing the greatest scandal of corruption since at least the Fujimori regime in the face of the scandal with the Brazilian construction companies ("*Lava Jato*") and a growing cannibalistic relation between the major political powers, public distrust extended across all of the state institutions and against the entirety of the political class[271]. The temporary illusion of prosperity generated by the mining-export model between the years 2002-2014, and the victorious sentiment of democratic recovery after the Fujimori dictatorship, comes to an end as productivity declines, economic growth decelerates, and democratic institutions lose the population's trust. Short of a sanguine liberalism beholden to capitalist competition in a free-market, the relation between public and private institutions, it was shown, operated with impunity in a mercantilist economy, in which competition was thwarted by endemic corruption. At a loss for any great national collective projects, civil mobilization remained delimited to acts of protest and manifestations of public dissatisfaction, rather than programmatic consensus centered on proposals. The recent December 2017 national civilian march calling for a complete overhaul of the political class ("*Que se Vayan Todos*") was perhaps the paradigmatic gesture of this generalized frustration, in which a desperate demand for purification in the absence of constructive ideals was directed against the entire political class,

[270] Indeed, the major electoral presidential candidacies and groups that reached or approached power in the last decades has been unduly financed by the corrupt enterprise of the Brazilian companies: see https://elcomercio.pe/politica/contribuciones-intermediarios-jorge-barata-noticia-501801

[271] As a point of reference, *Ipsos* reported the following poll-figures, dating from December 2017: https://elcomercio.pe/politica/ipsos-57-favor-ppk-deje-cargo-presidente-noticia-482244

pointing to an institutional crisis[272]. Left at the hands of precarious institutions, mass action devolves into castigation of the memory of dictatorship and outrage against the ubiquity of corruption, expressing the frustration of a population betrayed by its political class, yet unable to consolidate a plausible counter-hegemony. This sequence implied the return to the destructive one-sidedness of collective anxiety, no longer nested in the carnage of revolutionary subversion, but rather in the lull of historical disappointment.

This is the end of the democratic utopia that emerged in the dusk of the Fujimori dictatorship, and the concomitant derail of the revolutionary socialist left. The destiny of *indigenismo* as not only a literary style but as part of a social integrative project becomes equally obscure, as the future becomes unthinkable outside the scope of capitalist modernization, and as the Andean cultural world becomes slowly assimilated in this process; if it cannot follow or imagine processes of emancipation and radical invention for the contemporary world, beyond the historic prescience of fragmentation and alienation, then it is destined to obsolescence. For only in retrieving the a productivist alternative may the prospects of collective action be situated beyond blunt vituperation, and only then may a relation to the Andean world be conceived beyond the protection of cultural rights, that is, without merely resisting dissolution in the circuit of capitalist production. Such a future, however, would be unprecedented, and so cannot merely reiterate the figure of the proletariat revolutionary, or indeed even the post-indian subjectivity envisaged by Arguedas in a process of revolutionary transculturation, but would need to find new means of emancipation and collective struggle. Which is not to say, of course, that these multiple figurations for a "Peruvian socialism" remain simply obsolete in the wake of shifting historical circumstances.

[272] Secada, Pablo. "Que se vayan todos los corruptos", in *La República,* December 20th 2017, available at: http://larepublica.pe/politica/1160278-marcha-que-se-vayan-todos-los-corruptos-colectivos-salen-a-las-calles-este-miercoles-en-vivo

From Mariátegui's dream for a "National consciousness", we underscore the practice of an "active philosophy" oriented by the dream of a "national consciousness", integrating aesthetic production and philosophical-literary ideals to political experiments, in a process where theory becomes a matter of appropriative construction in relation to one's historical context. From Vallejo's generic human subject and his aesthetics of transmutation, we underscore the boundless scope of the universalist spirit to traverse national or formal boundaries, forging an uncompromising concept of justice beyond contingent orders of difference, and so which firmly place thought beyond the horizon of identity politics under 'democratic materialism' and the subjective disposition of the "ethical turn". Finally, from Arguedas' post-indigenous subject and generic post-cultural subject, we underscore the inextricability between productivist ambition and cultural-normative determination, in which productive mediations and novel constructions weave themselves from various orders of difference, beyond Manichean contradictions.

Taken together, we can say that the ideal of an "alternative modernity" cannot obtain without a new conception of the emancipatory process, which entails both a new figure of collective subjectivation and a new image of the future. These faint indications - given over to us by the memory not only of failure, but that of a persisting labor and hope for social justice - cannot by themselves support the dream of creative integration or be themselves sufficient to produce a new figure of the subject. Nor do they prophesize its inevitable emergence, in what would amount to less than a relapse to historicist delirium. Yet the only possible destiny for the labor of synthesis, to the extent that such a destiny remains possible, is to find the means to subtract the process of collective emancipation, rekindling the productivist dream beyond the economicist and transcultural configurations offered by the 20th Century *indigenista* socialist tradition. Rather, it points toward that which remains invariant in the revolutionary spirit which informed the socialist *indigenista* tradition:

to transform the present in sight of a future, however uncertain, by imagining new forms of collective existence, beyond fragmentation and oppression.

- APPENDIX I -

On Different Critical Approaches to Vallejo's Poetics

One cannot but feel that it has become a simplifying *cliché* to point towards *Trilce's* avant-garde poetics as a transitory period between Vallejo's early work (still in the process of breaking free from the conventions of *modernismo*) and the Historical bent of his political poetry from 1923 onwards. Such an approach departs by recognizing that *Trilce's* relentless "impenetrability" not only prompts questions about what the texts themselves could mean, but methodological issues concerning the nature interpretation of poetic texts, given Vallejo's subversion of syntactic form and semantic content. In this regard, endorsing a so-called "paradigmatic approach", some commentators proceed by drawing from biographical considerations about Vallejo's life, as extra-textual factors that provide necessary information to decode the obscure play that traverses the texts, allowing us to draw from them an intelligible, if still oblique, sense[273]. Short of expressing a well-defined political or aesthetic program, *Trilce* would retain such a locus of sense in the personal and individual aspects recoverable from biographical, and historical knowledge.

Resisting this so-called 'paradigmatic' approach, which wrests and weaves meaning from meaninglessness, it might seem tempting to say that the very hermeneutic compulsion to resist Vallejo's hermetic language, aiming to understand and find meaning in the text whether by extra-textual biographical factors or otherwise, is precisely what he seeks to subvert, by producing a text resisting all interpretative strategy. Accordingly, the poetics of *Trilce* would represent the ideal of an

[273] For example, André Coyné (1957), interprets *Trilce I* as an oblique reference to Vallejo's experience during imprisonment, and specifically to the oppressive celerity that the guards demanded when defecating. In Escobar, Martos and Villanueva we see the primary exemplars of reading *Trilce* as 'production of meaning'. See Coyné, André . *César Vallejo y su obra poética*, Letras Peruanas, 1957, p. 43; Escobar, Alberto, *Cómo leer a Vallejo*, P.L. Villanueva, 1973; Martos, Marco and Elsa Villanueva, *Las palabras de Trilce*, Universidad de San Marcos, 1989.

aesthetics of *semantic nihilism,* extending his earlier existential nihilism, refusing every positive characterization or interpretative recovery, trivializing even the personal, biographical strategy of the paradigmatic approach.

However, this approach not only conflates the variegated themes and ideas explored in *Trilce* to the point of vacuity, but more fundamentally reduces Vallejo's 'avant-garde' to a facile avowal of ineffability and arbitrariness, obscuring rather than clarifying the relation between its formal experimentation and its thematic content. As Dominic Moran (2013) critically notes, those who celebrate the text for its resistance to "paradigmatic" semantic approximations ironically become as "…paradigmatic about indecipherability as his critics are about meaning"[274] (Moran 2013: 87). And indeed, these critics cannot but produce a kind of self-immunized meta-hermeneutic frame, whose affirmations should be every bit as methodologically contentious and in demand of justification as those advanced by advocates or variants of the so-called "paradigmatic" approach.

In attempting to overcome both the *paradigmatic* and *semantic nihilist* approaches, yet another group of thinkers has sought to find a middle way, understanding *Trilce's* aesthetic experiments as continuous with a nascent account of subjective and even political resistance, prefacing Vallejo's socialist experience in Europe. In a doubtlessly tendentious reading, William Rowe, for instance, has argued that in *Trilce* hermetism fulfills the positive function to resist the production of meaning which would subordinate Vallejo's poetry to the 'society of the spectacle' which allows the hegemonic powers to assimilate thought to commodified form (Rowe 2013: 3)[275]. In continuity with this line of reading, following Julio Ortega (1993) Michelle Clayton (2014) has argued that *Trilce*

[274] Moran, Dominic. "The Author's Favorite, But is it Any Good? Some Thoughts on El Palco Estrecho", in *Politics, Poetics, Affects: Re-visioning Cesar Vallejo*, edited by Stephen Hart, Cambridge, 2013, pp. 67-87.

[275] Rowe, William. "The Political in *Trilce*", in *Politics, Poetics, Affects: Re-visioning Cesar Vallejo*, edited by Stephen Hart, Cambridge, 2013, pp 3-19,

presents a "poetics of erasure"[276] and an 'ethics of the fragment', depicting a subject dislocated from a reality that is progressively conveyed as being as incoherent as the subject that relates to it, morphing the semantic nihilism into a positive *ontological* claim about the material basis of experience[277]. Vallejo's poetic act would thus express not only the affective alienation and frustrated rapport of the subject to the world, but enjoins an ontology of reality as itself lacking cohesion, enforcing a logic of 'non-representation' or 'unsaying'. As part of and in tense relation to this fragmentary reality, the poetic subject can never quite achieve harmony with the world it inhabits and addresses.[278] As Michelle Clayton notes, this visceral quality of Vallejo's 'materialist poetics' involve what she names a "metonymics of contiguity", undermining the intentional, communicational and affective order of meaning as much as the mannerisms and conventions of poetic language, enacting thus an operation "…in which the figurative is frequently displaced by the literal, metaphors are brought back to their material bases, and elements rub up against one another, exchanging some of their properties in the process." (Clayton 2011: 18) Adam Sherman (2013), exploring the function of the 'fragment' in Vallejo, has accordingly and persuasively argued that this play of 'endless metonymy' extends beyond the disturbance of formal, syntactic and grammatical structure; it also perturbs the relation of poetic language to its semantic content, rendering problematic the very phenomenon of "referentiality"[279]. Put differently, Vallejo does not only change linguistic forms *qua* vehicles to express a pre-determined meaning or object of reference, but more crucially thinks of a reality that is itself not liable to referential or representational capture. Hermetic

[276] Ortega, Julio. "Prologue", in *Trilce*, Cátedra, 1993.

[277] Clayton, Michelle, Poetry in Pieces: Cesar Vallejo and Lyric Modernity, University of California Press, 2011.

[278] According to Clayton, Vallejo accomplishes the twofold ethical and aesthetic task in question, Clayton argues, through the systematic use of 'unlimited metonymy', conveying a kind of 'semantic indeterminacy' in which parts or fragments are discernible and intelligible in themselves, but do not reconstitute into stable wholes (Clayton 2011: 24)

[279] Sherman, Adam. "Vallejo Fragments", in *Politics, Poetics, Affects: Re-visioning Cesar Vallejo*, edited by Stephen Hart, Cambridge, 2013, pp. 89-100.

obscurity does not only bear negative, *epistemological* consequences – 'the poetic subject cannot represent objective reality' – but constitutes the basis of a positive ontological claim: 'the poetic subject and its object is in-themselves inconsistent realities':

> [W]hat the poet tries to copy, imitate, capture or simulate is not only the world out there, a more or less fragmented reality outside and beyond language, but a certain way of speaking or writing about the world... Within the limits established by the fact that all language consists of fragments, it is syntax as much as obscure lexical items that produces the upheaval in referentiality. (Ibid: 98)

This ontological inconsistency in the constitution of the subject is of a piece with Vallejo's so-called attempt to forge a 'materialist poetics'. Following Rowe, in undermining the unity of meaning or identity, we can understand *Trilce* as promoting an aesthetics of the 'robustly material' and 'sensorial' bases of experience, in which the ideals of lyric embellishment are given over to think of a reality that is inconsistent, temporally restless, and hosting as it must the drama of human finitude. But because poetry can in this way no longer aspire to represent a world inherently invested with significance or objective unity, the poetic act no longer aspires to retrieve meaning from the reality it addresses, but must rather aim, as Ortega puts it, to orient itself towards the *unsaid*, that is, to say things *for the first time* (Heidegger). The poetic act is not the *reproduction* of existing forms; not an instance of *repetition* or *representation* of what there already is, but essentially an inventive act, which fulfils the duty of 'freedom' that liberates thought from the shackles of meaning and unity.

Taking this 'materialist' line of reading as anticipating Vallejo's adherence to Marxism, Stephen Hart argues that the obsession with language misses how Vallejo's return to the sensorial bases of experience expresses not only the idea of a disenchanted reality, but sets the bases for *a materialist reading of History*. In continuity with Clayton, Rowe (2013) claims that Vallejo's act of

'unrepresentation' does not only conceive of an ontologically unstable object, but a reality that is temporal and historical in nature[280]. In misunderstanding the function of the neologisms and archaisms that abound in *Trilce* as mere attempts to produce new names for a 'singular', already-determined reality, he argues, "…we find the traces of a linguistic idealism, which gets in the way of thinking materiality historically." (Rowe 2013: 8) Put differently, *Trilce* disrupts the 'logic of naming' through "…an aesthetic and political practice", which he characterizes takes as the basis of Vallejo's materialist poetics (Ibid). This new, historical conception of becomes indexed through the names Hegel and Marx: "Vallejo replaces Aristotle with Hegel and Marx: it follows that the horizon of possibility is not given by language but the opposite. Ortega's utopian nominalism falls short" (Ibid).

At the same time, the disjunction invoked by Hart between so-called nominalist and materialist readings is inadequate to understand the articulation between *Trilce*'s formal and substantive aspects. For Vallejo does not only wager to think about ontological, historical or political questions *beyond* linguistic-formal considerations, but also forces a meditation about the relation between the temporal experience within which man devolves and the function of language within which the poetic word as a medium to think of such a temporal reality is inscribed. Articulating the materialist emphasis on the sensorial, subpersonal, bodily, and fragmentary dimensions underscored by Clayton and Ortega, with the embryonic dialectical and historical understanding of materiality underscored by Rowe, I seek to explore how, among its central themes, *Trilce* posits a new articulation between the subject and temporal experience, which opens the path for a meditation on History in which the hope to traverse the opprobrium of nostalgia as a symptom of finitude is forged in sight of collective creation.

[280] Hart argues that the linguistic bias delivers Ortega's account to such an account, which he associates with 'the poetics of Octavio Paz'. Although I agree with Hart in we shouldn't be insensitive to the dimensions in Vallejo's work he points to, I do not think Ortega undermines the historical and roughly 'ontological' aspects to be found in *Trilce*.

- APPENDIX II -

Mario Vargas Llosa's Critique of the "Archaic Utopia"

In the Preface to his 1996 book *The Archaic Utopia* (*La utopía arcaica*), Vargas Llosa uncompromisingly derides the adherence to the socialist utopia as what "immolated" Arguedas from achieving literary greatness, not without lamenting in passing the return of '*indigenismo*' in the rise of new socialist political experiments in South America (here referring implicitly to the rising Venezuelan and Bolivian socialist movements):

> He was a good man and a good writer, but he could have been much more if, due to his extreme sensitivity, generosity, ingenuity and ideological confusion, he had not given in to the political pressures of the intellectual and academic medium in which he dwelled so that, giving up his natural vocation toward dream, private memory, and lyricism, would make social literature, indigenista, revolutionary(…)
>
> [It] places through the sieves of critique, the racist fantasies, reactionary and 'pasadistas[281]', of indigenismo, that was thought to be almost extinguished but has been reborn in South America, more bellicose still, in the last years.[282] (Vargas Llosa 2008: 12)

[281] A narrative defined as based in a nostalgic for the past.

[282] Vargas Llosa, Mario. *La utopía arcaica: José María Arguedas y las ficciones del indigenismo*, Alfaguara, 2008.
"Fue un hombre bueno y un buen escritor, pero hubiera podido serlo mucho más si, por su sensibilidad extrema, su generosidad, su ingenuidad y su confusión ideológica, no hubiera cedido a la presión política del medio académico e intelectual en el que se movía para que, renunciando a su vocación natural hacia la ensoñación, la memoria privada y el lirismo, hiciera literatura social, indigenista y revolucionaria... Y, asimismo, pasa por el cedazo de la crítica, las fantasías racistas, reaccionarias y pasadistas del indigenismo, que se creía ya casi extinguido y ha vuelto a renacer en América del Sur más belicoso todavía, en los últimos años."

In its specific iteration within *indigenista* narrative, this deleterious tendency toward utopianism is realized in two successive and coordinated steps: first, promoting an idealized vision of pre-Hispanic indigenous communitarianism, showing its ultimate compatibility with the tenets of modern socialism, however 'adapted'. Second, projecting the ideal communitarian vision of the pre-Hispanic Indian culture onto the Indian 20th Century, attesting to its continuing relevance and vital intensity. Its origins date to Mariátegui's productivist dream of appropriating an 'immeasurable superior productivity' of indigenous collective labor and property rights. An idealized archaic pre-Hispanic 'agrarian communism' distorts the reality of the rural indian to fit the aspirations of the revolutionary: Mariátegui's dream that the Nation which would pass from a lingering semifeudal heart to a society built on cooperativist labor and collective property, without the necessary passage through a developed capitalist liberal phase. According to Vargas Llosa, the aspirations to realism relapse into idealism precisely at the point in which Mariátegui it models the 'National consciousness' to come on the adaptation of an idealized indigenous culture to the socialist revolutionary ideal. Under this light, both the 'indigenous spirit' and the forecasted 'national consciousness' appear as fables supporting the ideal community to come. The *indigenista* tradition, paradoxically, under the socialist ideal of economic collectivism, would have reiterated a gesture derived since the Colonial representation: the essentialist belief in an organic integrity proper to 'the indigenous' which reduces its manifold manifestations across the Andes to the purposes of intensifying the evangelical labor of socialist converts.

These two features of what Vargas calls the 'archaic utopia' would thus ironically reveal the ideal of 'transculturation', another iteration of idealizing projection and even a covert form of *acculturation*, bolstered by the socialist imaginary which repeats the gesture of confusing as a historical truth what is a mere fiction (Ibid). The imagined reconciliation between 'the magical and rational' conceptions of the world' perpetuated the myth of an integrated indigenous collectivism and of a

universal subjectivity mediating beyond the tensions created by concrete difference, indulging in anachronism, simplification, and beatification. It is perhaps then because of the lingering desire for a collective destiny and identity in the guise of transculturation that literary critics have tried to redeem Arguedas as a thinker for whom the preservation and irreducibility of heterogeneity is primary (Cornejo Polar), in contrast to the exegetical tradition following downstream from Angel Rama's line of reading. Under this light, the singular virtue of Arguedas' diagnosis would be to evince the incoherent totality which composes the Peruvian nation, and the colossal violence that results from crossing the boundaries that separate us from the Other.

Looking to frame the problematic of collectivist politics within a more general critique of the utopian ambition which affected *indigenista* writers, in a recent interview, Mario Vargas Llosa proposes the following reflection: is it not precisely the attempt to force abstract principles or literary fictions into reality which confuses the limitless frenzy of imagination with the necessary prudence required for social peace and non-despotic institutional rule? For turning literary or philosophical ideals into socio-political imperatives, we are told, quickly degenerates into the authoritarian disposition to justify violence against whatever does not conform to such ideals. Utopianism imagines a standard of collective justice or common life, in whose name the interests of individuals and specific groups becomes dispensable. It thereby promotes a standard of "absolute homogeneity" which takes as necessary destiny what is the imposition of an ideal fiction, and under which whatever does not conform, whatever *differs*, is targeted as expendable obstacles:

> I believe that human beings need to get out of themselves and imagine better worlds than those they live in, to imagine different worlds… we must not give up that capacity, since it is a source of progress, but the ideal is that such a capacity be guided toward

activities in which it is fertile, helpful for humanity. For example, literature, the arts, are a marvelous expression of dream, of fantasy, of the utopia that inhabits human beings."

To think and construct utopias is not but the dictatorial temptation in the concrete world of social life. There it is more important to have one's 'feet well put', grounded on the earth, than to have them above the clouds. Because every time that utopia has been attempted to become materialized, the result has been catastrophic, it has been the disappearance of freedom, the establishment of atrocious systems… In this domain is better what we call "democracy", that mediocre thing that the great utopians find repugnant, but which is the system that creates those consensus by which we can live in the diversity that we are… There is no way to establish an absolute homogeneity without establishing a brutal violence… That absolute homogeneity does not exist… Democracy is the system that conjoins best that diversity.[283] (Vargas Llosa 2009: my translation here and below)

As long as politics remains under the safe cohort of democratic peace, guaranteeing the protection of human life as its guarding imperative, nations may remain free from the oracular delirium of utopian violence. In its 'collectivist' form, in which every communism participates, utopia is the ideal of a universal community, in which the diversity of human life becomes sacrificed in a movement of great 'collectivization'. It is the sacrificial disposition of the desire for universality

[283] Vargas Llosa, Mario, interview with RNW, November 12 2009, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3G34Ea5c-c
"Yo creo que el ser humano necesita salir de sí mismo e imaginar mundos mejores en el que vive, imaginar mundos distintos… no hay que renunciar a esta capacidad, ya que es una fuente de progreso, pero lo ideal es que esa capacidad se oriente hacia actividades donde es fértil, positiva, provechosa para la humanidad. Por ejemplo, la literatura, las artes, es una expresión maravillosa del sueño, de la fantasía, de la utopía que nos habita a los seres humanos… Pensar y construir utopías no es sino la tentación dictatorial en el mundo concreto de la vida social. Allí es mucho más importante tener los pies bien puestos, asentados sobre la tierra que tenerlos sobre las nubes. Porque cada ves que la utopía se ha intentado materializar el resultado ha sido catastrófico, ha sido la desaparición de la libertad, el establecimiento de sistemas atroces… En ese campo es mejor eso que llamamos la democracia, esa cosa mediocre que a los grandes utopistas les repugna pero que es el sistema que crea esos consensos donde podemos vivir en la diversidad que somos… no hay manera de establecer una homogeneidad absoluta sin establecer una violencia brutal. Esa homogeneidad absoluta no existe… la democracia es el sistema que conjuga mejor esa gran diversidad."

which sends the Other into slaughter. In the end, only authoritarian suppression remains, while the imagined utopia never arrives. In this sense, utopianism is no innocent idealism, but a historical impediment to civilization:

> Development and civilization are incompatible with certain social phenomena and their main one is collectivism. No collectivist society, no society impregnated with that culture, is a society that develops, modernizes, and reaches civilization[284]

The verdict is clear: universality ought to remain but in the space of ideas, of literary fiction, since only thinking can sustain such exorbitance. And yet the justification of utopian violence in the name of collectivization remains the invariant error which plagues the wealth of socialist *indigenista* works, from Mariátegui to Arguedas, and beyond. And since the aspiration for any such collective destiny involves by definition a *suppression* or *overcoming* of differences, it quickly becomes a vehicle for violence to exert itself against the precious variety which actually composes Peruvian society.

But of course to delegate the thought of utopia to the ambit of fictional imagination is not, for Vargas Llosa, the same as saying that literature can have no social function. After all, he tells us, if anything binds a society at a given historical moment, it is the *submission to the same structures of authority*, irrespective of individual and collective differences. However barred from making grand political prescriptions or predictions, he tells us, literary imagination ought to retain the critical realist task of diagnosing the forms and uses of authority by the hegemonic powers in relation to their respective societal groups and identities in a local context. If Vargas Llosa's literary oeuvre is also protagonical in the sequence that Gerald Martin names the narrative of "great dictators" -

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[284] Vargas Llosa, Mario, Interview in *El Mundo*, April 2nd 2003, available at: http://www.salman-psl.com/peruanos-en-madrid/n_11.html
"El desarrollo y la civilización son incompatibles con ciertos fenómenos sociales y el principal de ellos es el colectivismo. Ninguna sociedad colectivista o impregnada con esa cultura es una sociedad que desarrolla, moderniza y alcanza la civilización".

succeeding the synergetic emancipatory fervor of the "Boom" of the 1960s - it is because it preserves the critical function of social realist narratives within the scope of democratic demand, diagnosing the collective carnage of corrupt authoritarian states, self-serving individual agents, and bloodthirsty militant revolutionaries alike.

In the last instance, the practical excesses of utopianism are but the obverse of the theoretical hubris of universalism, producing grand historical and philosophical narratives that aim to dictate the course of social-historical change. Is the dialectical 'system' not the paradigm of 'utopian fiction' then, insofar as it not only projects an archetypical roster of 'universal' subjectivities and collective forms, mistaking them as necessary products of history? To avoid the utopian excess one must therefore also sedate the universalist clamor, so that political moderation should advance hand in hand with epistemic prudence, abjuring sweeping generalizations and speculative predictions of complex social realities. The division of labor between the literary and political arrives thus with a warning against the attempts to draw facile overarching imperatives from armchair, philosophical speculation. A more nuanced, specialized appreciation of the complexities incumbent on the Peruvian social space is the theoretical obverse of the local scope through which democratic, consensual practices mobilize political and economic progress without violent excitations.

In this regard, Martin Tanaka, in his retrospective assessment of Julio Cotler's *Estado, Nación y Raza* – argues that the Marxist (and Weberian) 'theory of dependency', used by socialist thinkers to problematizes the subservient integration of Latin American nations to the hegemonic international economic powers and to their geopolitical context, has become displaced but also, and more fundamentally, the Marxist focus on class struggle as expressions of social contradictions has become complicated as societies have come to be understood as composed of individuals grouped across different determinations, in terms of historically changing 'identities and interests':

> Not only has dependency ceased to be a central paradigm for analysis, also the Marxist focus in classes as 'incarnations of analytic categories and social contradictions; now, societies are thought of as resulting from the interaction between changing groups in a permanent redefinition of their identities and interests. [Such Marxist approaches] presuppose a model according to which classes 'ought' to act in a certain way[285]. (Tanaka 2005: 2, my translation)

It goes without saying that these manifold 'identities and interests' encompass the entire range of differences that Vargas Llosa claims democratic societies ought to protect: individual, cultural, social, economic, biological, ethical, political, national, ethnic, religious, sexual, linguistic… all of the names and predicates that discern individuals and their organization across orders of heterogeneity, refusing a the ideal of a homogeneous collective; identities and relations are understood instead contingent configurations of 'bodies and languages', individuals and groups, relative to a given time and place. And if sites of struggle are indeed always relative to given contingent identities rather than necessary destinies, then the technical-scientific horizon of theoretical reflection about social reality demands expert, specialized knowledge, rather than 'dialectical synthesis' or 'integration'. The relativistic rejection of universalist or utopian philosophical aspirations thus coincides with an avowed specialization of labor across positive scientific disciplines and orders of difference, making of overarching meta-narratives, if nothing else, a woefully procrustean enterprise. The division of labor between literature and politics emphasized by Vargas Llosa is thus of a piece with Tanaka's separation of philosophical dialectics from scientific

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[285] Tanaka, Martín, *Reflexiones a propósito de la nueva edición de Clases, Estado y nación en el Perú, de Julio Cotler,* Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2005. Available at: https://www.scribd.com/doc/9295942/Reflexiones-a-proposito-de-la-nueva-edicion-de-Clases-Estado-y-nacion-en-el-Peru-de-Julio-Cotler
"No sólo la dependencia ha dejado de ser un paradigma central de análisis, también el enfoque marxista de las clases como "encarnaciones" de categorías analíticas y de contradicciones sociales; ahora se piensa la sociedad como resultante de la interacción de cambiantes grupos en permanente redefinición de sus identidades e intereses. Se maneja implícitamente un modelo según el cual las clases "deberían" actuar de un modo determinado…"

pretension: philosophy's utopian and universal ambitions would be at once excessive in matters of practice, and deficient in matters of theory.

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