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Review Of "The Fox From Up Above And The Fox From Down Below" By J. M. Arguedas And Edited By F. H. Barraclough

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gossip, "Vudú Gegé" justifies its title when a curse befalls a married man known for his Priapic appetite and serves to underscore the moral lesson in favor of monogamy upon his death. Then again, from another adulterous situation Anderson constructs, in "El intruso," a different set of circumstances wherein an amnesiac newcomer to a fishing village arouses the mistrust of the villagers because of their own feelings of guilt triggered by an adulterous incident that brought disgrace to the village. In turn, the story "Vi que me viste" explores the episodic feelings of emptiness that grip a newspaperman coping with depression and how his state of mind affects his wife.

Anderson Imbert is at his most impishly genial in "La cara." Here, under the guise of a student's academic researching into a writer's penchant for endowing his feminine characters with the same facial features, Anderson lampoons himself by inserting into the story no less than nine instances taken from his previous fiction (1975-1999) that, without a doubt, prove his slavish regard for this singularly haunting visage:

Más bien la cabeza, por sí sola, era la que a fuerza de soñar estaba subiendo hacia las estrellas. Frente lunar, ojos claros, nariz graciosamente respingona, sonrisa en alas... ("Mi prima May," *La botella de Klein*, 1975).

La nariz, graciosamente corta, graciosamente respingada; las cejas, en arco; la frente, abombada; el pelo, ondulante. ¡Y los ojos! Ah, los ojos. Sus iris, dos globitos verdosos, ascendían en las grandes y profundas cuencas como si se fueran soñando ("Entre el espejo y el retrato," *¡Y pensar que hace diez años!*, 1994).

However, at the end, the explanation Anderson resorts to for this literary fixation remains open to interpretation.

The collection ends with six mini-stories gathered under the title of "Casos." Anderson's enviable talent is appropriately served here, at times, by his unflinching imagination, as in the episode from "Por los clavos de Cristo," forged in wrenching pathos.

On balance, *Concenso de dos* illustrates once again an unflagging literary vitality and remarkable originality as Anderson Imbert marshals his erudition, and considerable ingenuity, by offering astounding endings and, to boot, an aesthetically wrought prose.

Nélida Norris, University of Miami

Arguedas, José María. *The Fox from Up Above and the Fox from Down Below*. Trans. Frances Horning Barraclough. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2000. 325 pp. ISBN: 0-8229-4117-1

In José María Arguedas's fiction the theme of Perú, the future of its indigenous population, the threat of urbanization and industrialization and the need to preserve cultural values and identity all reverberate with an ever increasing sense of urgency that appears to coincide with a series of psychological crises suffered by the author, culminating in his suicide in November of 1969. This posthumous novel, now finally available to an English speaking audience in a superbly prepared critical edition, is no exception to the literary demons prevalent in his earlier writing. But unlike his previous texts, this novel also reflects in a very direct way the writer's inability to adapt to his environment and the frustration he experiences as he tries to put into words the political, geographic and economic complexity of his country.

Arguedas lived between two cultures. His mother died in 1914 when he was only three years old. His father, a lawyer, remarried some three years later and his stepmother relegated him to the status of one of the household's Indian servants. Indian culture, therefore, became his refuge from the cruelty and loneliness of his family life and it is among the Indians that he will find his psychological as well as physical home. As a novelist, sociologist, anthropologist, and poet, the highlands of his country will always be the source of his inspiration while the lowlands or the coast will always represent a realm in which he feels much like a stranger in a foreign land. The catalyst of all of his creative activity and research will revolve around the need to confront a nation that displays an undisguised disdain for its indigenous population, believing that its future depends to a great degree on the destruction and disappearance of the Indian's culture and identity.

The Fox from Up Above and the Fox from Down Below presents a serious challenge to even the most sophisticated reader. In it we confront a truncated narrative and a multiplicity of narrators circumscribed by a narrative world in which the line between the fictional and the autobiographical is blurry at best. In addition the reader must face an onslaught of competing discourses, all of which reflect the complex nature of Peruvian reality as seen by one of its most insightful commentators. Organized into two principal parts, the first of which includes three 'diaries' and four chapters, and a second that contains a fifth chapter and a final diary followed by an Epilogue, the nature of the novel's structure has created a good deal of controversy among critics over the years. The majority has assumed that the inserted diaries belong to the realm of the 'autobiographical' and should be read as the author's personal accounts and views on writing, literature, and Peru and therefore are to be distinguished from the fictional content of the book. Others, particularly in recent years, insist that the diaries are an integral part of the text's fictional makeup. Critics, nonetheless, can agree on the following: the inconclusive nature of the novel, its openness, and the unfinished character of its pages which have led some to identify it not without reason, as a major avant-guard text of Latin America's literary 'boom.' Given the vast number of voices and characters who can be classified according to their geographic origin, the novel also presents a special linguistic challenge to the translator who seeks to capture as faithfully as possible the richness and variety of Arguedas' narrative discourse. In this respect Frances Horning Barraclough, who previously translated *Los ríos profundos* [Deep Rivers] and *Yawar Fiesta*, is to be congratulated for an admirable translation of this very complex, polyphonic text.

While there were areas of Perú that Arguedas admits to have known much more directly than the city of Chimbote, it should not surprise us that he would be intrigued by what was taking place in this port city and would use it as the principal setting for his novel. In 1940 little more than 4,000 people lived in this sleepy fishing town. By the mid fifties the fish meal and fish oil industries had taken hold and attracted a large immigration of indigenous people from the highlands in search of work. By the beginning of the seventies their numbers rose to more than 200,000, and the face of Chimbote was altered forever. What was once a picturesque town with pristine bay and beaches soon became the largest fishing port in the world growing at a rate that was more than ten times the national average. And what initially began as a research project for Arguedas the anthropologist on the topic of internal migration and the impact of modernization, eventually took form as a novel, which over the coming years he would struggle to complete.

It is impossible to separate the novel about Chimbote from the novel about the author's struggle to write it, for *The Fox from Up Above and the Fox from Down Below* is as much about the creative process, the insecurities of the writer, and the difficult pursuit of the ever elusive word as it is about the negative aspects of an unbridled industrialization and modernization. Three of

the 'diaries' and the 'epilogue' were written in Santiago at the same time that Arguedas was being treated by the Chilean psychoanalyst, Lola Hoffman. From a reading of the diaries one begins to see a rich relationship between the ability of the author to write and his success in overcoming his psychological crisis. Arguedas suffered his first crisis at the age of thirty-three, which left him unable to write for a period of more than five years. His second occurred in 1966 when he attempted suicide. In 1968, as we read in the diaries, he found himself once again on the verge of taking his life and part of his therapy was to write the novel we now have in our hands. In a sense, then, there is a unique relationship here between the act of writing and personal survival: The external text of life continually infringes upon the internal text of fiction just as the content of the text's diaries continually imposes its existence on the designated chapters of the novel.

The foxes of the novel do not refer to real animals but to mythical characters taken from a collection of indigenous legends compiled in Quechua around the end of the sixteenth century in the Andean province of Huarochiri by the priest Francisco de Avila. Arguedas translated and published this manuscript in Spanish in 1966 under the title *Dioses y hombres de Huarochiri*. According to the legend these foxes lived in the area inhabited by Lantauzaco, next to the sleeping Huatyacuri, the son of the god Periacaca. The world at the time was divided into two distinct regions, embodied by each of the foxes. One, the land above, was the warm, hot land of the littoral, where rainfall was an infrequent occurrence; the other, the land below, included the mountains with their cool air and endless chasms. In short, two regions best described within the context of Peru as the coastal and highland areas. Arguedas uses these two animal figures as the perfect commentators on the principal spaces in which his past and present had evolved. Through his knowledge of the De Silva manuscript he sought to convene a new meeting of the foxes at a time when Peru's economy was being overrun by fish meal fever and Chimbote presented to him a powerful symbol of the social, political, economic, and ecological ills besetting the country.

In the novel Chimbote takes on the image of a violated daughter. Its sea and bay, once pristine, are turned into bodies totally contaminated by the fish meal industry. As the great machinery of the plants devours millions and millions of the sea's wildlife, Arguedas underscores the imbalance that has been created in Chimbote's natural world. The birds of the port can no longer find their traditional sustenance in Chimbote's waters and are left with the prospect of their own extinction. But the sea and its animals are not the only victims of this industrial frenzy. Men working in the plants are left to breathe the poisonous vapors emanating from the slaughtered fish carcasses. Over Chimbote hangs a fetid cloud of death and destruction. What was once an idyllic natural setting becomes, in Arguedas' portrayal, an inferno, where man, with few exceptions, appears out of control in a world of unfettered exploitation. What remains of beauty is found principally in the narrator's nostalgia for Chimbote's past.

In spite of what some critics have considered the novel's defects, particularly with regard to its incompleteness, it is, nonetheless, one of Arguedas' most powerful statements about the harm wrought by twentieth century notions of progress and development. For Arguedas the integration of the Indian into the Western world must never depend upon his westernization, which for the author is the equivalent of his 'deindianization.' Such integration for Arguedas must include a process that makes possible the preservation of the major features of the indigenous past and present: the collective notion of work, the respect extended to nature and the environment, the language, customs and traditions of the Indian. However, as Julio Ortega points out in his insightful introductory essay to this edition, Arguedas does not propose a return to a mythical, magical past (what Mario Vargas Llosa calls the 'archaic utopia'). Arguedas' portrayal of Chim-

bote offers to his fellow countrymen an important opening to a national dialogue on what it means to be Peruvian in the face of a dehumanizing modernization that must never become the future of their land. In this sense, like all great writers, Arguedas has succeeded in creating a narrative world that gnaws at the reader long after he has closed the book.

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Arriaga, Guillermo. *Un dulce olor a muerte*. México, D.F.: Editorial Norma, 2000. 197 pp. ISBN: 970-090-285-4.

El mexicano Guillermo Arriaga (Cd. de México, 1958), novelista, guionista, dramaturgo y profesor universitario inició su carrera literaria con *Esplendores y miserias del Escuadrón Guillotina y de cómo participó en la leyenda de Francisco Villa* (1991). *Un dulce olor a muerte*, la segunda novela de Arriaga, es una obra policiaca que está ambientada en un medio rural, el pueblo imaginario de Loma Grande, en vez del típico escenario urbano. La novela, con guión de Arriaga, fue llevada al cine por el director Gabriel Retes.

El descubrimiento del cuerpo desnudo de una joven y bella mujer asesinada a puñaladas un domingo, muy por la mañana, provoca una serie de preguntas y acciones. 'Quién era' 'Quién la mató' 'Por qué' Justino Téllez, delegado ejidal, investiga el asunto. Poco a poco, siguiendo las pistas y hablando con los demás pueblerinos, tanto Téllez como el lector descubren varias cosas que permiten eliminar a varios sospechosos. Sin embargo, el lector nunca se entera de todo. De todas maneras, a través de la novela el lector encuentra la información necesaria sobre los personajes por medio de una serie de retrospectivas que revelan los hechos que precedieron al crimen, y que, junto a las investigaciones de Téllez, limita a los posibles culpables a dos personajes.

Debido a que el asesino se esconde, y ya los muertos no pueden defenderse, los lomagrandeses pueden mentir libremente y crear realidades que nunca existieron. A Adela, la mujer asesinada, se le inventa un amor con Ramón, un muchacho que apenas la conoce. Además, se le inventa un asesino, El Gitano, quien tampoco la conoce, y que debido a su encuentro amoroso con Gabriela Bautista a la misma hora, se le provee una coartada. Por fin, se le inventa una venganza. Ramón, el supuesto novio, no tenía ningún contacto con la muerta salvo unas cuantas visitas breves a su tienda donde había ido a hacer compras. Nunca fueron amigos ni mucho menos novios. Ramón, de hecho, no sabía ni el apellido de Adela ni dónde vivía. Sin embargo, por los persistentes rumores de que eran novios, Ramón se siente obligado a vengar su muerte. El lector ve la edificación del destino de asesino del joven e ingenuo Ramón de 16 años que, como una marioneta, es manipulado por los mayores de vengar la muerte de Adela. Para probar que es macho, Ramón acepta el desafío y su responsabilidad y anuncia, '...lo voy a matar en cuanto lo vea' (74). Luego, anda probando varias armas y elige, por fin, un picahielo. El matancero de reses del local, Jacinto Cruz, le provee a Ramón instrucción sobre como partirle el corazón a El Gitano con una sola puñalada usando un toro recién muerto para que Ramón pueda perfeccionar su destreza. La novela termina con el asesinato, por parte de Ramón, del inocente José Echeverri-Berriozabol (El Gitano). De esta manera venga la muerte de una muchacha que él no conocía más que de vista. La venganza es irónica por dos razones: Adela no conoce a Ramón y las investigaciones de Téllez revela que la joven, a pesar de sus 15 años, mantenía una tórrida y elícita relación secreta con un hombre casado.