



TRANSCULTURATION AND CULTURAL TRANSLATION: the tensions and anguish of the mestizo¹

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Abstract: The works of the Peruvian José María Arguedas (1911-1969) are some of the most thought-provoking ones in Latin America to think about the limits and implications of transculturation and its relationship with translation. The interest in this unique body of work is explained, to a large extent, by the fact that it was constructed in a permanent tension between the Quechua and Spanish culture-languages. This process led Arguedas, in his first book, *Agua* (1935), to opt for a writing style that “strains the Spanish,” creating a kind of “broken syntax.” This process takes on other forms in his mature works, such as in *Los ríos profundos* (1958) and in his posthumous work *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (1971). In addition, Arguedas made a series of translations, including *Canto kechwa* (1939), *Tupac Amaru Kamaq Taytanchisman* (1962), *Dioses y hombres de Huarochirí* (1966) and the posthumous *Katatay / Temblar* (1972), as well as wrote essays in which he discusses his conception of language and translation, such as in “Entre el kechwa y el castellano. La angustia del mestizo” (1939). This paper aims to show, even if concisely, how these processes of narrative creation, critical reflection and translation illustrate the tensions and strategies of the mestizo writer in the face of the linguistic reality of colonization.

Keywords: José María Arguedas, Transculturation, cultural translation, miscegenation

Resumo: Uma das obras latino-americanas mais instigantes para se pensar os limites e as implicações da transculturação e sua relação com a tradução é a obra do peruano José María Arguedas (1911-1969). O interesse por essa obra original se explica, em grande medida, pelo fato de ser construída numa permanente tensão entre as línguas-cultura quechua e espanhola. Esse processo o leva, já em seu livro de estreia, *Agua* (1935), a optar por uma escrita que “força o castelhano”, produzindo uma espécie de “sintaxe destrocada”. Esse processo ganha outros contornos em suas obras de maturidade, como em *Rios profundos* (1958) e sua obra póstuma *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (1971). Complementarmente, Arguedas produz uma série de traduções, dentre as quais se destacam *Canto kechwa* (1939), *Tupac Amaru Kamaq Taytanchisman* (1962), *Dioses y hombres de Huarochirí* (1966) e o póstumo *Katatay / Temblar* (1972), assim como ensaios em que discute sua concepção de língua e tradução, como “Entre el kechwa y el castellano. La angustia del mestizo” (1939). Nosso intuito é mostrar, ainda que brevemente, como esses processos, de criação narrativa, reflexão crítica e tradução, ilustram as tensões e estratégias do escritor mestiço ante a realidade linguística da colonização.

Palavras-chave: José María Arguedas, Transculturação, tradução cultural, mestiçagem

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As several critics have already pointed out, one of José María Arguedas most striking characteristics is that he has always defined himself as a bilingual subject. The son of Spanish-speaking parents who lost his mother very early and was practically abandoned by his father, he was raised by indigenous people, a fact that made Quechua his best-loved language, the one he considered his mother tongue. The circumstances of his upbringing are probably one of the reasons why Arguedas became, in addition to a writer, an anthropologist and translator. In the following sections, I present some brief notes on how this issue permeates his fictions, translations, and essays to, in conclusion, relate my previous discussion to reflections on miscegenation.

Cultural translation and narrative dynamics

In writing his stories, Arguedas thinks as a bilingual subject who, in a double movement, employs two communicational codes. Furthermore, Arguedas is a cultural translator, not only because of his training as an anthropologist, but also because of the worldview he brings with him, which made him act as a mediator between cultures, both from Quechua to Spanish and from Spanish to Quechua. As Ligia Karina Martins de Andrade observes, referring to his first book, *Agua* (1935), “this fight with words is not restricted to the interlinguistic and intercultural plane, but also reaches an intersystemic plane [...] the ‘Arguedian literary language’ is characterized by the copresence of

Quechua and Spanish, which forms the basis for the interactions of both languages in narrative discourse” (ANDRADE, 2011: 126-127). Arguedas himself, in his revealing essay from 1939, “Entre el kechwa y el castellano. La angustia del mestizo,” problematizes the situation in which he found himself in the following way:

Within ourselves, the people of the Andes, a few years ago the language conflict began, as a reality and expressed in our literature; from Vallejo to the last poet of the Andes. The same conflict that Huamán Poma de Ayala felt, although in a harsher way. If we speak in pure Spanish, we do not speak either of the land nor of our inner world; because the mestizo has not yet been able to master Spanish as his language and Quechua is still his legitimate mode of expression. But if we write in Quechua, we write narrow literature condemned to oblivion.

Allow me here to refer to my own problem, which certainly is typical. When I began to write, telling the life of my people, I felt a form of anguish that Spanish would not serve me well. It would not serve me either to talk about the sky and the rain of my land, nor much less to talk about the tenderness we felt for the water of our irrigation ditches, for the trees of our gorges, nor even less to speak with all the urgency of the soul our hatreds and our loves as humans. Because having produced within myself the victory of that which is Indian, as a race and as a country, my thirst and my happiness I would speak loud and deeply in Quechua. And hence that style of “Agua,” of which a chronicler said in a low voice and with a certain contempt that it was neither Quechua nor Spanish, but a mixture.

(ARGUEDAS, 1989: 25-26)²

² “En nosotros, la gente del Ande, hace pocos años ha empezado el conflicto del idioma, como real y expreso en nuestra literatura; desde Vallejo hasta el último poeta del Ande. El mismo conflicto que sintiera, aunque en forma más ruda, Huamán Poma de Ayala. Si hablamos en castellano puro, no decimos ni del paisaje ni de nuestro mundo interior; porque el mestizo no ha logrado todavía dominar el castellano como su idioma y el kechwa es aún su medio legítimo de expresión. Pero si escribimos en kechwa hacemos literatura estrecha y condenada al olvido.

Y permítanme aquí que me refiera a mi propio problema que es, seguramente, un ejemplo tipo. Cuando empecé a escribir, relatando la vida de mi pueblo, sentí en forma angustiante que el castellano no me servía bien. No me servía bien ni para hablar del cielo y de la lluvia de mi tierra, ni mucho menos para hablar de la ternura que sentíamos por el agua de nuestras acequias, por los árboles de nuestras quebradas, ni menos aun para decir con toda la exigencia del alma nuestros odios y nuestros amores de hombre. Porque habiéndose producido en mi interior la victoria de lo indio, como raza y como paisaje,



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Two of the central issues we find in Argueda's work are raised here: in what language should the Indian be made to speak? How to translate the Indian's worldview?

At the end of the 1930s and throughout the 1940s, in addition to his fictional work, which responds to the above questions with the invention of a different syntax — and which led his work to be identified with transculturation (RAMA, 2004) — another reply to these questions emerges. Arguedas published three important anthologies that are considered the first three works in the immense list of his anthropological writings. In 1938, the bilingual collection *Canto kechwa* is released, accompanied by an essay on the artistic creative capacity of indigenous and *mestizo* peoples. In 1947, *Mitos, leyendas y cuentos peruanos* is published, a book in which Arguedas compiled, together with Francisco Izquierdo Ríos, a collection of tales and legends written by *mestizo* students in schools on the Peruvian coast. In 1949, he publishes the last of the three, *Canciones y cuentos del pueblo quechua*, a collection of narratives that, according to Mario Vargas-Llosa, are translations only in appearance, being in fact creations of his own using the raw material obtained from others (*apud* CUNHA, 2012: 142).

We are faced here with three strategies of cultural translation, in which the *personae* of the anthropologist and the writer become more intertwined. If in his first book of song-poems we are faced with a bilingual work (more on this later), the other two, as is customary in the publication of narrative texts, are written exclusively in Spanish. Of particular interest here is the last one, in which the degree of authorial interference appears to be considerable. In a way, Argue-

das employs a strategy similar to that of school students in telling his version, as in fact is usual in oral cultures. What we see here is a way of approaching the “object of study” in which the indigenous worldview is present. There is a body, a subjectivity that interacts and tells in its own way the narrative that was transmitted to it, a narrative that is then kept in circulation thanks to this body and its subjectivity.

As Dora Sales Salvador (2002) points out, in 1950, Arguedas continued his reflection on the ways of giving voice to indigenous people. This is the year he published an important article, “La novela y el problema de la expresión literaria en el Perú” (ARGUEDAS, 2009). In it, Arguedas, in addition to reflecting on his project of cultural translation adopted in the writing of his first two narratives (*Agua*, from 1939, and *Yawar fiesta*, from 1941), explains the displacement he produces in his best-known novel, *Los ríos profundos*, published in 1958; this leads him to compare it with his previous attempts in the following terms:

Now, after eighteen years of efforts, I am attempting a Spanish translation of the Indians' dialogues. The first solution was to create a language built on the Spanish words incorporated into Quechua and the rudimentary Spanish that some Indians achieve in “their own villages.” [...]

I believe that in the novel *Los ríos profundos* this process has concluded. There is only one possible end: Spanish as a legitimate mode of expression of the Peruvian world of the Andes; noble whirlwind in which different spirits, as if forged in antipodal stars, fight, attract, reject, and mix with each other, among the highest mountains, the deepest rivers, between snows and silent lakes, frost and fire.

(ARGUEDAS, 2009: 159-160)³

mi sed y mi dicha lo decía fuerte y hondo en kechwa. Y de ahí ese estilo de “Agua”, del que un cronista decía en voz baja y con cierto menosprecio, que no era ni kechwa ni castellano, sino una mistura.”

³ “Yo, ahora, tras dieciocho años de esfuerzos, estoy intentando una traducción castellana de los diálogos de los indios. La primera solución fue la de crearles un lenguaje sobre el fundamento de las palabras castellanas incorporadas al quechua y el elemental castellano que alcanzan a saber algunos indios en “sus propias aldeas. (...)

Creo que en la novela *Los ríos profundos* este proceso ha concluido. Uno solo podía ser un fin: el castellano como medio de



Salvador observes that the cultural translation strategies employed in this work are manifold (SALVADOR, 2002: 146). For example, the chapter “Zumbayllu,” which figures prominently both formally and thematically in the novel, begins with an explanation regarding the meaning of its title: “The Quechua ending *yllu* is onomatopoeic. *Yllu*, in one form, means the music of tiny wings in flight, music created by the movement of light objects. This term is similar to another broader one *-illa*” (ARGUEDAS, 1998: 235).⁴ Spanish thus retains its standard form, no longer crossed by the mixed syntax of *Agua* and *Yawar fiesta*. At the same time, the Quechua language-culture is explicitly addressed, brought out in its etymological strength and world-creating power. The solution to the problem of how to speak of nature from an indigenous point of view, therefore, involves making the translation act explicit, leaving the original word intact. Thus, paradoxically, even when revealed, the word retains its opacity because it remains full of meanings only accessible to those who share the indigenous worldview implied by it.

This process of creating tension between worlds becomes more radical over time. As Natali points out, in Arguedas’ works composed after *Los ríos profundos*, a crisis even more profound arises, which will lead him “to get closer to non-European discursive practices and to write more in Quechua, with his growing dissatisfaction with the solutions of cultural hybridism leading to his questioning of the norms of literary discourse.” (NATALI, 2005: 120).

In effect, *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*, published posthumously in 1971, “with the col-

lection in the same volume of a speech, excerpts from an autobiographical diary, dialogues between mythological beings, and fictional accounts, makes its readers unable to separate what the book insists on uniting in a tense and uncertain way” (NATALI, 2015: 55). Natali argues that this narrative dynamic calls into question the very conception of literature. For the critic, in *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*, the fragmentary structure and the plurality of genres and linguistic modes causes the very concept of representation to be “affected, inserted in another paradigm,” as the process of producing this posthumous work have transformed it “into a ceremony similar to the ritual dance described in the story ‘*La agonía de Rasu-Ñiti*’ and in several of Arguedas’ ethnographic texts” (NATALI, 2005: 121). In this narrative dynamic, once again, translation comes into play. According to Natali :

the central issue of the book, including in formal terms, is precisely the possibility of resistance to translation and to the creation of a mode of writing that would already be a sign of the failure of any translation endeavor. How to translate a text that exists simultaneously in more than one language? How can we prevent the clashing linguistic layers from being assimilated by a third element, in a synthesis above the particular languages?

(NATALI, 2015: 65)

The “impossibility of translation” does not, however, obviate the issue. On the contrary, it makes manifest the continuous play and the tension of the inescapable contact, with all the violence it entails. The coexistence of language-cultures becomes inescapable, just as the resistance to

expresión legítimo del mundo peruano de los Andes; noble torbellino en que los espíritus diferentes, como forjados en estrellas antípodas, 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.”

⁴ Translated by Ruth Stephan in *The Singing Mountaineers*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985. This is the original excerpt in Spanish: “La terminación quechua *yllu* es una onomatopeya. *Yllu* representa en una de sus formas la música que producen las pequeñas alas en vuelo; música que surge del movimiento de objetos leves. Esta voz tiene semejanza con otra más vasta: *illa*.”



translation, which leads Arguedas to dynamically radicalize his translation practice as a strategy to simultaneously create zones of communication and opacity. The publications of his mature work *Tupac Amaru Kamaq Taytanchisman* (1962) and of the posthumous *Katatay/Temblar*, both written by Arguedas in Quechua and self-translated into Spanish, show his desire to find an alternative to the miscegenation of his fiction, in a sort of twist which takes him, through a tortuous and fruitful path, back to his seminal practice as an anthropologist, condensed in his translation of *Canto Kechwa* (1938), as well as to his important reflections on the anguish of the mestizo, from 1938, both linked to his first reflections on the translation discourse.

Arguedas's translation speech

As we pointed out above, Arguedas' anthropological works start with three cultural translations, the first of which is the bilingual volume *Canto Kechwa*, published in 1938. In examining "El discurso traductor de José María Arguedas", Fanny Arango-Keeth recognizes, in the book's opening essay on the indigenous peoples' capacity for artistic creation, Arguedas' first metadiscourse on translation. In it "the translator from Apurímac legitimates his work as such with an honest autobiography in which he recounts that his knowledge of both the Quechua language and the Quechua culture is part of his vital experience as a human being since childhood" (ARANGO-KEETH, 2012: 192). This experience, for Arguedas, aims at first to emphasize the ar-

tistic value of these creations:

For a long time, I had the project of translating the Quechua songs that I had heard and sung in the mountain towns. In my readings I did not find any poetry that would express my feelings better than the poetry of those songs. Furthermore, I had two powerful reasons to undertake this project: demonstrate that the Indian knows how to express his feelings in poetic language; demonstrate his capacity for artistic creation and show that what the people create for their own expression is essential art. Because I also believe that, although individual creation, the intimate and profound expression of a man, sometimes is able to produce a great work of art, that art in which one recognizes and experiences the entire soul and sensitivity of a people is the one that lasts and the truly universal one.

(ARGUEDAS, 1989b: 21) ⁵

Arguedas is also aware that his translation project has limits, since he is not a native, recognizing that, despite his intimacy with the Quechua language-culture, this does not guarantee that he would experience opaque areas only accessible to those who fully inhabit this worldview, which leads him to consider that:

in those versions one will undoubtedly find the influence of that part of me that is Spanish, but that I could not avoid. Later, someone else who experiences the Indian more authentically than I do will give us more pure and personal versions. But yes, I am sure that the publication of these songs will help to situate, at once, all the indigenous and *cholista* poetry that has been published until today. And it will teach the possibility of a poetry indigenous in theme and spirit.

⁵ "Hace tiempo que tenía el proyecto de traducir las canciones quechuas que había oído y cantado en los pueblos de la sierra. En mis lecturas no encontré ninguna poesía que expresara mejor mis sentimientos que la poesía de esas canciones. Además tenía dos razones poderosas para realizar ese proyecto: demostrar que el indio sabe expresar sus sentimientos en lenguaje poético; demostrar su capacidad de creación artística y hacer ver que lo que el pueblo crea para su propia expresión, es arte esencial. Porque yo también creo que, si bien la creación individual, la expresión íntima y profunda de un hombre, logra realizar, a veces, una gran obra de arte, el arte aquel en que se reconoce y se siente toda el alma y la sensibilidad de un pueblo, es el que perdura y el verdaderamente universal."



(ARGUEDAS, 1989b: 23-24) ⁶

Arguedas recognizes that his translations bear not only the inescapable marks of the Spanish language that shaped him, but also of his subjectivity as a reader-recreator. These marks, which are accentuated in his fictional narratives and in his creative translation of the *Canciones y cuentos del pueblo Quechua*, from 1949, which we have already mentioned above, are also present in *Canto Kechwa*. It is the author himself who emphasizes this:

I have not made literal translations, I have made poetic versions, the theme of the songs is pure and whole. In “*Sin nadie, sin nadie...*” [Without anyone, without anyone...], I have taken the liberty of creating a metaphor – underlined – that is not explicit in the Quechua verse, in order to agree with the poetic force of the last stanza of that song. In “*Dile que he llorado...*” [Tell him that I have cried...], I have increased the first and last foot, to describe the *siwar* hummingbird that is the theme of the song. I publish two translations of the fire song because I believe that only together they make a true version of the expressive force of the song in Quechua, the second one is more faithful. Finally, the second foot of “*Raki-raki*” is an interpretation of the theme and the symbol, because these verses are almost untranslatable.

(ARGUEDAS, 1989b: 23) ⁷

Working on the border of the untranslatable, Arguedas adopts a set of translation strategies, ranging from the creation of metaphors and the addition of verses to the inclusion of two translations

of the same song-poem and explicit paraphrases, in which he opts for an interpretation of themes and symbols. This understanding of the ultimate aim of translation as the desire and need to make the untranslatable explicit leads him to employ innumerable strategies for rewriting the Quechua language-culture, which his translation discourse highlights. In this sense, Joshua Price’s brilliant interpretation of the essay “Entre el kechwa a y el castellando, la angustia del mestizo” is especially revealing.

With the aim of illustrating some fundamentals of translation theory, Price compares Arguedas’ essay with Walter Benjamin’s “The Task of the Translator.” The American critic argues that, with regard to translation theory, Arguedas modifies, from outside of Europe, the replies given to European modernity. His comparison between the two essays leads him to recognize, in Arguedas, “translation theory as an embodied, subjectively and spiritually present activity” (PRICE, 2010: 254), and then to add that, therefore, “translation becomes an act of self-realization, of self-expression, of moving oneself into something new. The question takes us into an ontological and epistemological state of ambiguity” (PRICE, 2010: 255).

Price probably has in mind the following excerpt from the essay: “This anxiety to dominate Spanish will carry the mestizo to full possession of the language. And his reaction when confronted with Spanish will be because he will never cease to adapt Spanish to his profound necessity to express himself in clear and absolute form. That is, to translate until the final demand made by his

⁶ “(...) en esas versiones se encontrará, sin duda, la influencia de la parte que tengo de español, pero eso no lo podía evitar. Más tarde, otro que siente lo indio más auténticamente que yo nos dará versiones más propias y puras. Pero sí, estoy seguro de que la edición de estas canciones contribuirá a ubicar, de una vez, toda la poesía indigenista y cholista que se ha publicado hasta hoy. Y enseñará la posibilidad de una poesía de tema y de espíritu indígena.”

⁷ “No he hecho traducciones literales, he hecho versiones poéticas, el tema de las canciones está puro y entero. En “*Sin nadie, sin nadie...*” me he tomado la libertad de crear una metáfora –subrayada – que no está expresa en el verso kechwa, con el objeto de igualar a la fuerza poética del último cuarteto de esa canción. En “*Dile que he llorado...*” he aumentado el primero y el último pie, para describir al picaflor siwar que es el tema de la canción. Publico dos traducciones de la canción del incendio porque creo que apenas, ambas juntas, dan una versión de la fuerza expresiva del canto en kechwa, la segunda es más fiel. Por último, el segundo pie de “*Raki-raki*” es una interpretación del tema y del símbolo, porque esos versos son casi intraducibles.”



soul, in which the Indian is in control and is the root” (ARGUEDAS, 1989b: 26-27).⁸ It is precisely this necessity to translate until the “final demand made by his soul” that no doubt led Arguedas, in his maturity, throughout the 1960s, to opt (in addition to the ritualization of the narrative that we find in *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*) for writing in Quechua and then self-translating. There are two works that stand out in this period: *Tupac Amaru Kamaq Taytanchisman* (1962) and the posthumous *Katatay / Temblar* (1972). In his preface to the former, Arguedas observes:

I must warn that the *haylli-taki* that I am daring to publish was originally written in the Quechua that I know, which is my mother tongue: *Chanka*, and which I later translated into Spanish. An unavoidable impulse obliged me to write it. As I was developing the theme, my conviction that Quechua is a more powerful language than Spanish for the expression of many trances of the spirit and, above all, of one’s spirits, kept on growing, inspiring and upsetting me.

(*apud* ARANGO-KEETH, 2012: 192)⁹

This excerpt shows that, faced with his anguish, the mestizo Arguedas, despite mastering Spanish and making use of transculturation dynamics (as he did in his first fictional works), at some point seems to have been taken over by an “unavoidable impulse,” feeling “obliged” to return to the indigenous matrix. He is aware that certain dimensions of his worldview — trances of the spirit — need to be expressed in the language-culture in

which they are manifested; and those who have no access to it must make do with the supplement that translation enacts in a language that does not share the same ontology. The above observation shows, therefore, how the evocative “power” of what is expressed in the indigenous language remains intact and how Arguedas, faced with certain themes and images, had to employ this strategy to maintain the inescapable tension between worlds.

Anti-mestizaje and the anguish of the mestizo

José Antonio Kelly, in “Políticas indigenistas y ‘anti-mestizaje’ indígena en Venezuela”, analyzes the term “*mestizaje*” from the point of view of the Venezuelan Yanomami. For these Indians, “becoming *mestizo*” means “becoming *napë*,” that is, “becoming a foreigner” (KELLY, 2010: 5). For Kelly, when we adopt this perspective an inversion of the concept of “*mestizaje*” would take place. According to the anthropologist, “the ideology of *mestizaje* presents us with a history that puts an end to itself when it is declared that the mixture has been complete”¹⁰ (KELLY, 2010: 5). Becoming *napë*, in this sense, “refers more to a concatenation of virtual and actual states: otherness is a virtual state of the Yanomami person, which, incidentally, even if virtual and immaterial and latent, is no less real,”¹¹ just as in the encounters of worlds that take place in shamanic rituals. It is not, therefore, a question of fusion, but of a kind

⁸ “Esta ansia de dominar el castellano llevará al mestizo hasta la posesión entera del Idioma. Y su reacción sobre el castellano ha de ser porque nunca cesará de adaptar el castellano a su profunda necesidad de expresarse en forma absoluta, es decir, de traducir hasta la última exigencia de su alma, en la que lo Indio es mando y raíz.”

⁹ “Debo advertir que el *haylli-taki* que me atrevo a publicar fue escrito originalmente en el quechua que domino, que es mi idioma materno: el *chanka*, y que después lo traduje al castellano. Un impulso ineludible me obligó a escribirlo. A medida que iba desarrollando el tema, mi convicción de que el quechua es un idioma más poderoso que el castellano para la expresión de muchos trances del espíritu y, sobre todo, del ánimo, se fue acrecentando, inspirándome y enardeciéndome.”

¹⁰ “La ideología del mestizaje nos presenta una historia que se pone fin a sí misma ahí cuando se declara que la mezcla ha sido total.”

¹¹ “refiere más a una concatenación de estados virtuales y actuales: la otredad es un estado virtual de la persona yanomami, que de paso, por virtual e inmaterial y latente no deja de ser menos real.”



of alternation of positions.

In the same way that the animality and the humanity, the body and the soul, in mythology and shamanism, the concepts of Yanomami and *napë* and the behaviors associated with “being Yanomami” and “being *napë*” maintain a figure-ground relationship with each one creating a contrasting context for the other. Becoming *criollo* for the Yanomami, therefore, does not constitute an effort to miscegenate with and blend into the surrounding society; on the contrary, the relationship between Yanomami and *criollos* must remain so that the Yanomami of the Orinoco can alternate between the positions of being Yanomami and being *criollo*. Thus, instead of a consumption of identities in a *mestizo* fusion, we are faced with the

addition of a form of alterity – that of being *criollo*, a true anti-*mestizaje*.

(KELLY, 2010: 8-9) ¹²

The brief discussion above regarding the strategies Arguedas employs to create multiple ways of translating the Quechua language-culture into Spanish, I believe, performs in its own way this alternation of positions characteristic of the Yanomami anti-*mestizaje*, in which the *mestizo* identity does not aim at a fusion, but results in the addition of multiple forms of otherness, with translation itself playing a special role because it allows the relationship between the Quechuan world and the European world to remain productive in its ambiguity.

¹² “De esta misma manera que la animalidad y la humanidad, el cuerpo y el alma, en la mitología y en el chamanismo, los conceptos de Yanomami y *napë* y los comportamientos asociados a “ser Yanomami” y “ser *napë*” mantienen una relación de figura y fondo cada uno creando un contexto de contraste para el otro. El volverse *criollo* de los yanomami entonces no constituye un esfuerzo por mestizarse y fundirse con la sociedad envolvente, por el contrario, la relación entre yanomami y *criollos* debe permanecer para que los yanomami del Orinoco puedan alternar entre las posiciones de ser yanomami y ser *criollo*. Así pues, en lugar del consumo de identidades en fusión mestiza estamos frente a la adición de una forma de alteridad – la de ser *criollo*, un verdadero anti-*mestizaje*.”

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