

Ph.D. Thesis:

THE IDEA OF FREEDOM – FROM SOCIALIST BEGINNINGS TO A LIBERAL WORLD VIEW IN THE POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL FICTION OF MARIO VARGAS LLOSA

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O. Introduction

Being one of the *Latin American Boom* generation's youngest members – starting in the 1950s and 1960s with his profession as a writer, similar to his literary colleagues Carlos Fuentes, Julio Cortázar, and Gabriel García Márquez –, the renowned author of Peruvian fiction, Mario Vargas Llosa (1936-), aspired to a career of letters and literary criticism as soon as he arrived in Paris in 1958.¹ After having published his first short story, *Los jefes*², in 1959, two of his novels from the 1960s – *La ciudad y los perros*³ (1962), and *La casa verde*⁴ (1966) – not only received wide acclaim from the public, but obtained literary prizes such as the Rómulo Gallegos prize in 1967⁵ from the Venezuelan government. Subsequently, with Vargas Llosa's third book and second political novel, *Conversación en La Catedral*⁶, the author arrives at the apogee and endpoint of his politically 'radical' phase of Sartrean and left-leaning convictions for both literature and politics. In addition to that, Vargas Llosa's analysis and critique of the Odría regime bestowed a world-wide reputation on one of Peru's and Latin America's most controversial, but also intriguing novelists and intellectuals, who has since then become both member of the Spanish *Real Academia Española* (RAE) and the French *Académie française*.

Beginning with his estrangement from Cuba in 1971, the author's experimenting with different forms and thematic types of portrayal for his narrative increases in the 1970s and 1980s – with satire, humour, and biography adding to the ingredients of his societally more conformist literature, contrasting with his radical phase between 1959 and 1971. It is the author's abandonment of left-wing revolutionary ideologies that contributes to the emergence of such novels as the satirical *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* (1973) and his semi-autobiographical *La tía Julia y el escribidor* (1977). Then, in 1981, appears Vargas Llosa's first grand historical novel – *La guerra del fin del mundo* –, with which he renounces utopia in

¹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *El pez en el agua*, Barcelona y México, D.F. 1993, pp. 455-456, p. 458, p. 459, p. 461, p. 464, pp. 473-474; Vargas Llosa, M.: *Der Fisch im Wasser*, Frankfurt am Main 1996/1998.

² Vargas Llosa, M.: *Los cachorros. Los jefes*, Barcelona 1959-1967/2013.

³ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La ciudad y los perros*, Barcelona 1966/Madrid 2003⁹; Vargas Llosa, M.: *The Time of the Hero*, London 2004.

⁴ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La casa verde*, Barcelona 1965/1969⁸; Vargas Llosa, M.: *Das grüne Haus*, Frankfurt am Main 1976.

⁵ Vargas Llosa, M.: 'La literatura es fuego', or: <http://blog.pucp.edu.pe/blog/latravesiadelfantasma/2009/02/14/la-literatura-es-fuego-mario-vargas-llosa/> [last visited on 07-12-21].

⁶ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Conversación en La Catedral*, Barcelona 1972⁶/2015; Vargas Llosa, M.: *Gespräch in der 'Kathedrale'*, Frankfurt am Main 1984.

politics and religion – following a philosophically liberal development and the discardment of the attitudes of his political youth, which will find its literary apogee in the critical portrayal of revolution and ideology in *Historia de Mayta* (1984).

Before embarking on the presidential campaign as the main ‘liberal’ candidate – desiring to modernise the country – Vargas Llosa broadens his genre with a social crime novel, *Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* (1986), and enhances his aspirations to provide a culturally diversified vision of oral and written history in harmony with Latin American perceptions of originating from traditional indigenous cultures, while simultaneously being influenced by the Western discourse of modernity, in *El hablador* (1987). With *Lituma en los Andes* (1993) Vargas Llosa returns to his critique of left-wing terrorism and utopia – incarnated by *Sendero Luminoso*: a Peruvian terrorist group from 1980-1992 –, proposing either having recourse to traditional, but non-violent forms of ancestry or, much better, a modern and balanced way of life in a democratic and liberally modernised political culture – for both Peru and the rest of the international community.

The author continues, in a similar vein, with his modern literary portrayal of dictatorial (thus not always oligarchic) authoritarianism that is oppressing the many variants of post-colonial and multi-cultural – in a word ‘liberated’ – democracy on the planet. This series of artistic engagements with familiar themes under a liberal guise begins with the author’s monumental *La Fiesta del Chivo* (2000) – the depiction of the most long-lasting right-wing dictatorship in the Caribbean – and ends with the changing incarnations of either militarily or democratically authoritarian regime types in Guatemala, in *Tiempos recios* from 2019. With *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* (2003) and *El sueño del celta* (2010) Vargas Llosa enters the realm of the arts and the artist’s fantasies, in Gauguin’s case, complemented by the historical struggles for women’s rights, by Flora Tristán in the former novel, and enhanced by the destiny of culture, nation, and liberal gender struggles, by Roger Casement in the latter novel. Finally, in Vargas Llosa’s grand portrayal of liberal values, their fragility, but also humanity – namely in: *Travesuras de la niña mala* (2006), *El héroe discreto* (2013), *Cinco esquinas* (2016) – the author’s world view since the 1980s – a ‘liberated’ version of cosmopolitan democracy, in which citizens decide individually, but also responsibly about their actions in society – comes closest in the fictionalised portrayal of the characters of Lily, Ricardo, Felícito, Ismael, and Julieta.

Consistent with the author's world view from a. the late 1950s to the 1960s (1959-1971), b. the early 1970s to the mid-1980s (1971-1986), and c. the mid-1980s to the second decade of the new millennium (1986-), the analysis of Vargas Llosa's political and historical fiction – in total: seven novels, including the most relevant essays and articles at and after the time of the novels' publication – will be subdivided into the following three parts: A. Freedom and Socialism (Chapter 1 and 2); B. The Failure and Abandonment of Totalitarian Ideology (Chapter 3); and C. Political Reformism and Liberal Democracy (Chapter 4).

The relevant novels will be analysed, regarding their treatment of the author's world view, according to the following correlation in each chapter: *La ciudad y los perros* in Part A (Chapter 1) – Rebellion or the critique of social authorities at school; *Conversación en La Catedral* in Part A (Chapter 2) – Revolt or the critique of political authorities in government and public life; *La guerra del fin del mundo* and *Historia de Mayta* in Part B (Chapter 3) – Abandonment of political and ideological radicalism: The critical reflection on utopia and revolution; *Travesuras de la niña mala*, *El héroe discreto*, and *Cinco esquinas* in Part C (Chapter 4) – Progressive solutions for a new political culture: Economic, political and moral liberalism as the different sides of Vargas Llosa's notion of freedom.

The main focus of the analysis will comprise the *Peruvian* political and historical fiction of the author: where *Peruvian* characters or *Peruvian* politics or history form the main *nuclei* for the development of the *political* or *historical* action of the novel's plot. One exception consists of *La guerra del fin del mundo*, where characters and action are set against the background of Brazilian history and politics. Equally, some of the characters or scenes, from other novels, e.g. *Lituma en los Andes*, *La Fiesta del Chivo*, and *Tiempos recios*, have been incorporated where relevant to the analysis.

Consequently, the main body of the thesis will provide an analysis of the changes in the author's intellectual worldview and how (abiding by a three-step pattern of a. 'radical' socialism, b. pragmatism, the abandonment of ideology and social reformism in a democratic context, and c. liberal notions of democracy since the 1980s/1990s) these changes are reflected in his *Peruvian* political and historical fiction. This three-fold analysis will contribute to an adequate classification and understanding of Vargas Llosa's political and historical literature, and demonstrate how the 'fictions' of politics and literature co-opt and complement each other.

The Ph.D. thesis establishes an intellectual and philosophico-literary framework – based on Vargas Llosa’s essays, articles, and novels placed against a Peruvian background – for tracing and confirming the changes in the author’s world view and philosophico-literary portrayal in his fiction from his socialist beginnings in the 1950s and 1960s, to his pragmatism and views on social democracy in the 1970s to mid-1980s, and lastly to his full-fledged conversion to liberalism by 1986 to 1987, representing a liberal and cosmopolitan conception of the world ever since. Thereby, the *Idea of Freedom*, conceived in Isaiah Berlin’s *Two Concepts of Liberty*, will be central to understand the author’s work of political fiction. In the first part, or first two chapters, of the dissertation – Part A: Freedom and Socialism – the ‘positive’ concept of liberty, albeit in a non-dogmatic and independent sense, will be explored in the treatment of Vargas Llosa’s early novels *La ciudad y los perros* and *Conversación en La Catedral*. In line with the author’s adherence to the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre and his socially progressive beliefs, the two left-wing paradigms of freedom – *rebellion* and *revolt* – will serve as guiding visions for the depiction of social rebellion or political revolt by drawing connections to traditional grievances and political injustices from Peruvian society under the Odría regime. In the second part – Part B: The Failure and Abandonment of Totalitarian Ideology – the author acknowledges the failure of the ‘positive’ concept of liberty, discarding the utopian social freedoms of his youth, while aspiring to pursue a non-dogmatic and more pragmatic vision in life and the arts. The abandonment of ideological radicalism and the critical reflection on utopia and revolution in *La guerra del fin del mundo* and *Historia de Mayta* present the reader with a new philosophical quest by the author, reinvigorated by the moral teachings of Albert Camus and the intellectual and political leanings of Karl Popper. Finally, in the third part – Part C: Political Reformism and Liberal Democracy – the ‘negative’ concept of liberty of the individual of global society since 1990 has become the cornerstone for endowing Vargas Llosa’s newer characters in *Travesuras de la niña mala*, *El héroe discreto*, and *Cinco esquinas* with a lasting political conscience and entrepreneurial wisdom of freedom, demonstrating that economic and political liberalism are two sides of the same notion of freedom in a democracy, while not forgetting to safeguard certain moral rules of conduct whenever these basic freedoms of the individual become threatened.

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Permeating the entire first period of Vargas Llosa's work is his juxtaposition of a democratically socialist form of equality in society versus the freedom of culture, in particular for the intellectual or individual artist. In Vargas Llosa's early journalistic and essayistic work from the 1960s the basic function of literature and the writer in a free society – based on the convictions of Jean-Paul Sartre – is sharply analysed in the following way:

Nosotros debemos luchar porque la sociedad socialista del futuro corte todas las vendas que a lo largo de la historia han inventado los hombres para tapar la boca majadera del creador. No aceptamos jamás que la justicia social venga acompañada de una resurrección de las parrillas y las tenazas de la Inquisición, de las dádivas corruptoras de la época del mecenazgo, del menosprecio en que se tiene a la literatura en el mundo subdesarrollado, de las malas artes de frivolidad con que se inmunizan contra ella las sociedades de consumo. En el socialismo que nosotros ambicionamos, no sólo se habrá suprimido la explotación del hombre; también se habrán suprimido los últimos obstáculos para que el escritor pueda escribir libremente lo que le dé la gana y comenzando, naturalmente, por su hostilidad al propio socialismo. [...] Nosotros queremos, como escritores, que el socialismo acepte la *literatura*. Ella será siempre, no puede ser de otra manera, de *oposición*.⁷

As member of the editorial committee of *Casa de las Américas* – from both Paris and Havana – Vargas Llosa, furthermore, explains his rebellious and intellectual stance in his writings against official ideological dogma (starting, naturally, with socialism as a doctrine itself). Hereby, the tortured attitude of every truthful political and non-political writer can be observed in the taking position between the different extremes of individual or artistic vocation and the political or ideological cosmovision of society:

Pero, en el caso del creador se plantea un desgarramiento irremediable, ya que, en el artista, el elemento determinante no es nunca racional, sino espontáneo, incontrolable, esencialmente intuitivo. Y el escritor no puede poner ese elemento al servicio de nada, de una manera premeditada. En cierta forma, en el creador se plantea una verdadera duplicidad, o, por lo menos, una terrible tensión: quiere ser fiel a una determinada concepción política y al mismo tiempo necesita ser fiel a su vocación. Si ambas coinciden, perfecto. Si divergen, surge la tensión, el desgarramiento. No debemos, empero, rehuir esa contradicción; por el contrario, debemos asumirla plenamente, y de nuestro mismo

⁷ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea* (1962-1982), p. 88.

desgarramiento hacer literatura, crear. Es una opción difícil, torturada si se quiere, pero imprescindible.⁸

From the author's left-wing 'revolutionary' progressiveness at the time of the Cuban Revolution to his modern-day and ideological-critical pragmatism in the mid-1970s different phases can be distinguished: a. Vargas Llosa's most radical-leaning phase in support of guerrilla and left-wing revolutionary movements in Paris and Cuba (1959-1967); b. Vargas Llosa's unorthodox and independent socialist-leaning phase of travel, due to professional commitments in Europe, moving to Barcelona and promotion in Madrid, beginning of the latent, but recurrent criticism of the lack of artistic and intellectual freedoms in the Soviet Union – after his first trip, in the summer of 1968, criticism of the Red Army's invasion of Prague (1967-1971); c. Vargas Llosa's phase of abandonment of the Cuban model for Latin America and philosophico-intellectual re-orientation, contrary to socialism, but in favour of social democracy and more pragmatic and non-ideological solutions, combining individual growth with social justice (1971-1975).

Beginning with the protest against the closure of two weekly newspapers in the second half of 1974 under Gen. Velasco, Vargas Llosa manifests one of his democratic core beliefs in a culturally pluralistic, but also diverse intellectual nature in regards to journalism and freedom of expression: 'Con la misma claridad con que he declarado mi apoyo a la reforma agraria, a la política antiimperialista, a la ley de Propiedad Social y a otras medidas progresistas del régimen, quiero dejar constancia de mi absoluto desacuerdo con los síntomas de autoritarismo creciente que se manifiestan en lo que respecta a la libertad de expresión.'⁹ In 'Carta abierta al General Juan Velasco Alvarado' (Presidente del Perú: 1968-75) Vargas Llosa – before becoming president of PEN – protests, in the most forceful way, from his exile in Mexico City, against the new, but government-controlled *Ley de Prensa*: 'Quienes desde el primer momento criticamos esta ley de Prensa, no desde el punto de vista de los dueños de los diarios expropiados sino desde el punto de vista de la propia revolución, para la cual nada podría ser tan dañino como la eliminación de las voces independientes y los excesos inevitables en todo proceso revolucionario, hemos visto, con angustia creciente, ir desapareciendo, una tras otra, las revistas que se atrevían a discrepar de la política oficial, y a sus redactores ser encarcelados y exiliados.'¹⁰ All in all, this newly acquired liberal and

⁸ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea I* (1962-1972), pp. 105-106.

⁹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea I*, pp. 309-310.

¹⁰ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea I*, p. 318.

pragmatic attitude by Vargas Llosa is part of a larger and structured pattern of opinion that will have a lasting impact in defending the author's moderate convictions in his middle period of philosophico-literary creation, guided by the humanist aspirations of Albert Camus and the practical sagacity as well as philosophical serenity of Karl R. Popper (while, in the end, defending the moral traditions of Adam Smith, Immanuel Kant and Jürgen Habermas).

Fuelled by the author's new belief in liberal democracy and a free market economy as part of the author's last period of creation since the 1980s – exchanging 'revolutionary' consciousness for philosophical sagacity and individual wisdom in man –, Vargas Llosa – author, intellectual, and global citizen – embarks on his most forceful journey yet. After having fought, like so many during the 1960s, in the ideological trenches of radical social rebellion against the traditional authorities – in pursuit of recognition and a socially or politically more harmonious way of life –, the upsetting errors of Cuban or Peruvian socialism cleared the path for Vargas Llosa to adhere to the convictions of the newer liberal creed on the continent, dismissing old ideologies and moving on to find both an individual and universal framework for peace, happiness and the continuous progress of mankind. This intellectual framework can be regarded as the exploration of a liberal-democratic 'contract' for the most creative beings among us, defying authoritarian rulers and mono-cultural or statist approaches in regards to human necessities or freedoms such as for the advancement of the journalistic, literary or artistic soul – in opposition to the 'state', the 'politicians in power', or the 'social community' – in all of us.

Overall, the work of Vargas Llosa – one of the most successful *boom authors* from Latin America, yet, also, one with the most creative entrenchment in French and Spanish culture – lends itself to the establishment of certain classifications of style and belief beyond the normal modern vs. post-modern transgressions or nationalist convictions of writing and ideology. The early outlook of independent, but democratic socialism in Vargas Llosa's writings and intellectual stance gives way to a more pragmatic and critical attitude towards radical ideologies – experimenting with newer themes and societally more diverse formats of writing –, introducing his increasing notion towards a liberal and philosophically more mature world view. Consequently, for the author this has meant the defeat of authoritarianism and illiberal dictatorship, accompanied by the advent of a liberal culture embodying the democratisation of society as a whole. Altogether then, the ultimate literary and intellectual *tour de force* of Vargas Llosa's approach to life and the arts – from the 'socialist' *idea* of freedom to the many

ideas of 'liberal freedom' – keeps being reflected in the author's work as he recently celebrated his 85th birthday, from his first work of short stories to his last novel from 2019.

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In the end, the aim of this work on Vargas Llosa's essays and fiction will be two-fold: Respecting the existing scholarship on the author's publications – relating to an overall approach to his fictional work –, while providing an original contribution to the field, analysing the Peruvian political and historical fiction against the background of the author's development towards a *political philosophy of freedom*: from *socialism over ideological-critical pragmatism* to a *global form of liberalism*. In other words, the main aim of the thesis lies in establishing and verifying a chronological-intellectual framework – based on the *Idea of Freedom* – for the direct impact of the changes in Vargas Llosa's world view (from his politico-philosophical writings) onto his political and historical fiction (his politico-literary writings) – subdivided into three different time periods, the author's philosophico-literary periods of creation (A., B., and C., see above).

The findings of the dissertation will complement and enrich the research of the most important academics on Vargas Llosa – Juan E. de Castro, Sara Castro-Klarén, José Miguel Oviedo, Sabine Köllmann, and Efraín Kristal –, all of whom portray the author's work as part of a universal engagement with both his intellectual statements or essays as well as his novels. One of the most accessible studies on the relationship between politics and culture in the work of Vargas Llosa is Juan E. de Castro's *Mario Vargas Llosa: Public Intellectual in Neoliberal Latin America*¹¹, pointing towards the major intellectual and political appeal by Vargas Llosa – relating it to both the writer's creative processing of reality for the arts and the writer's social responsibilities. In Sara Castro-Klarén's *Understanding Mario Vargas Llosa*¹² the debut trilogy of the author (*La ciudad y los perros*, *La casa verde*, *Conversación en La Catedral*) is as extensively covered as the author's newer parodies, such as *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* and *La tía Julia y el escribidor*, concluding with Vargas Llosa's novels from the 1980s, *La guerra del fin del mundo*, *Historia de Mayta*, and *El hablador*. In José Miguel Oviedo's *Mario Vargas Llosa*:

¹¹ de Castro, J. E.: *Mario Vargas Llosa. Public Intellectual in Neoliberal Latin America*, Tucson 2011; de Castro, J. E., and Birns, N. (eds.): *Vargas Llosa and Latin American Politics*, New York 2010; de Castro, J. E. (ed.): *Critical Insights. Mario Vargas Llosa*, Amenia (NY) 2014.

¹² Castro-Klarén, S.: *Understanding Mario Vargas Llosa*, Columbia (SC) 1990.

*La invención de una realidad*¹³ a social determinism – evolved from a profit-oriented capitalist political reality and its oligarchic rule of government in the 1950s and 1960s – is critically detected in *La ciudad y los perros*, establishing the social and educational norms of a rigidly conservative and oppressive class in society. Similar themes are treated in Oviedo’s analysis of *Los jefes* and *Los cachorros*, juxtaposing violent or desperate social behaviour in regards to violent and socially deterministic forms of society. J. M. Oviedo also hints at the fact – relevant for my own analysis, steeped in history, of Vargas Llosa’s early novels (Chapter 1 and, in particular, Chapter 2) – that the Arequipa rebellion of 1955 has been faithfully depicted in Vargas Llosa’s third novel *Conversación en La Catedral* (three quarters of the way through the novel’s plot), providing the readership, yet again, with a social context of oligarchic pressures in the Peru of the author’s adolescence, against which not only rebelliousness, but ultimately revolt on a larger scale is necessary. There are, furthermore – approaching de Castro (regarding the author’s attitudes as a public figure) –, vital inspirations from S. Köllmann’s work¹⁴ and E. Kristal’s monography¹⁵, related to the interrelationship between literature and politics in Vargas Llosa’s *oeuvre*, to be found in my own work. However, Köllmann and Kristal differ from each other in crucial points, such as the priority given to meta-literary analysis by Köllmann, in relation to politics and the political significance of the social realities the novels are embedded in, contrasting with the reflection, by Kristal, of the changes in the author’s world view conferred upon essays and novels – observing a parallel between the changes of Vargas Llosa’s political attitudes and the literary portrayal in his writings. E. Kristal, in his own words, has summarised his approach by claiming to analyse three interrelated elements in the life and work of the author: the political changes in Vargas Llosa’s intellectual mentality, the readings of the author on important philosophers and other writers, and the lived experiences, including the people the author has met during the last decades, such as depicted

¹³ Oviedo, J. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa. La invención de una realidad*, Barcelona 1977²/1982³.

¹⁴ Köllmann, S.: *Literatur und Politik. Mario Vargas Llosa*, Bern 1996; Köllmann, S.: *Vargas Llosa’s Fiction and the Demons of Politics*, Bern 2002; Köllmann, S.: *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*, Woodbridge 2014.

¹⁵ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra. Arte literario y convicción política en las novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa*, Lima 2018, edición ampliada (Original title – Kristal, E.: *Temptation of the Word. The Novels of Mario Vargas Llosa*, Nashville 1998).

in his autobiography, *El pez en el agua*¹⁶, his essay collection, *Contra viento y marea I-III*¹⁷, and his collected works, *Mario Vargas Llosa: Obras completas (Volume I-XI)*.¹⁸

Another decisive influence for my joint philosophico-literary approach in regards to Vargas Llosa's work has been Juan E. de Castro's *Mario Vargas Llosa: Public Intellectual in Neoliberal Latin America*. In this major study of the author's intellectual and political sides Vargas Llosa's 'right turn' – after his ideological 'abandonment' of the Cuban Revolution – is set against a much larger background of social and political transformations on the Latin American continent from the 1960s until the 1990s. In particular, de Castro's findings concerning the popularity of Peruvian left-wing parties and ideologies during the 1970s and 1980s make for interesting reading and a reassessment of the resurgence of the Peruvian Right – in the form of *neoliberalism* – in response to the failures of the Peruvian Left by the end of the last Cold War decade. Vargas Llosa, both intellectual and author by then, falls neatly into that development scheme, having firmly taken sides regarding neoliberalism and a liberal political culture since the publication of Peruvian economist's Hernando de Soto's book *El otro sendero* (1986). However, de Castro complements the political changes and transformation of the *intelligentsia* in Latin America – by Vargas Llosa and other writers – with the observation that the 'radical rhetoric' of the author's 'intellectual discourse' has, more or less, remained recognisable since the advent of authentic Latin American socialism. In other words, even though politics in Latin America changed radically – reflecting the journey from the author's thoughts in the 1960s to his liberal world view in the 1990s –, the social goals in which Vargas Llosa still believed (modernity, freedom, justice) accompanied him up to his campaign as a liberal presidential candidate in 1987-1990.

Now, what my own doctoral research shares with some of the aforementioned academic research is the heightened exploration but oftentimes tension in Vargas Llosa's perception of Latin America's social reality and politics – incorporating the author's changes in his world view following both the 1960s and the 1980s/1990s. However, what my own research sets apart from these scholars is that a more detailed approach regarding the author's purely *Peruvian* or *South American* political and historical fiction is pursued, leading to a heightened

¹⁶ Vargas Llosa, M.: *El pez en el agua. Memorias*, Barcelona 1993; Vargas Llosa, M.: *A Fish in the Water. A Memoir*, London 1994/1995; Vargas Llosa, M.: *Der Fisch im Wasser. Erinnerungen*, Frankfurt am Main 1996/1998.

¹⁷ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea I-II*, Barcelona 1983; Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea III* (1964-1988), Barcelona 1990.

¹⁸ Munné, A. (ed.): *Mario Vargas Llosa. Obras completas. I-XI*, Barcelona 2012.

understanding of the author's intellectual changes in his simultaneously Peruvian, but also global attitude towards a *political philosophy of freedom*. Against the Peruvian background of the author's novels, Peruvian politics and history will be regarded as the complementary sides of the author's development as intellectual and writer, attesting to both Vargas Llosa's deeply cultural entrenchment in his native country, but also global hunger for social or political justice:

Nunca me he sentido un extranjero en Europa, ni, en verdad, en ninguna parte. En todos los lugares donde he vivido, en París, en Londres, en Barcelona, en Madrid, en Berlín, en Washington, Nueva York, Brasil o la República Dominicana, me sentí en mi casa. Siempre he hallado una querencia donde podía vivir en paz y trabajando, aprender cosas, alentar ilusiones, encontrar amigos, buenas lecturas y temas para escribir. No me parece que haberme convertido, sin proponérmelo, en un ciudadano del mundo, haya debilitado eso que llaman 'las raíces', mis vínculos con mi propio país [...] Creo que vivir tanto tiempo fuera del país donde nací ha fortalecido más bien aquellos vínculos, añadiéndoles una perspectiva más lúcida, y la nostalgia, que sabe diferenciar lo adjetivo y lo sustancial y mantiene reverberando los recuerdos. El amor al país en que uno nació no puede ser obligatorio, sino, al igual que cualquier otro amor, un movimiento espontáneo del corazón, como el que une a los amantes, a padres e hijos, a los amigos entre sí. Al Perú yo lo llevo en las entrañas porque en él nací, crecí, me formé, y viví aquellas experiencias de niñez y juventud que modelaron mi personalidad, fraguaron mi vocación, y porque allí amé, odié, gocé, sufrí y soñé. Lo que en él ocurre me afecta más, me conmueve y exaspera más que lo que sucede en otras partes. No lo he buscado ni me lo he impuesto, simplemente es así.¹⁹

Finally, my research has culminated in the selection of three groups of two to three of Vargas Llosa's *Peruvian* or *South American* writings of political and historical fiction – assigning each (Group A: 2 novels; Group B: 2 novels; Group C: 3 novels) a fixed period of the author's development in his philosophy and world view: A. Freedom and Socialism; B. The Failure and Abandonment of Totalitarian Ideology; and C. Political Reformism and Liberal Democracy. Thereby, the intellectual changes in the author's standpoint on themes portrayed in the writings – oftentimes, the essays will complement the novels – will be just as strongly reflected in the analysis as the literary and artistic sides. The experiences of the author with the

¹⁹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa. Elogio de la lectura y la ficción. Discurso Nobel – 7 de diciembre de 2010*, p. 5 [https://www.nobelprize.org/uploads/2018/06/vargas_llosa-lecture_sp-1.pdf; last visited on 31-07-22].

corruption and anti-liberal machinations of the Odría dictatorship in his youth and adolescence are just as decisive in explaining his left-wing convictions in the 1960s (together with the advent of the Cuban Revolution) as the pragmatic distancing from the larger Latin American Left in the 1970s due to the Padilla affair and readings of Camus and Popper for observing his intellectual changes towards liberalism, supported by a neoliberal political climate in South America since the 1980s. Last but not least, this overall approach regarding the author's political and historical writings, accompanied by his essays and articles, also reflects the author's public and political stance as literary critic, social critic, and intellectual. In the end, as Kristal and de Castro have pointed out, after his awarding of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2010, Vargas Llosa has become not only one of the most important writers from Latin America, but also the most important public and political intellectual in the Spanish- and English-speaking Western hemisphere.²⁰

²⁰ de Castro, J. E.: *Mario Vargas Llosa. Public Intellectual*, Tucson 2011, p. 121 and p. 126: 'This [Nobel Prize] speech shows how in Vargas Llosa – perhaps to a greater degree than in any major contemporary writer – life and literature, ideas and ideology, are intimately related. This weaving of the personal and the public, of biography and ideology, is one of the central traits of Vargas Llosa both as a writer and, more generally, as an intellectual. [...] The Nobel Prize Vargas Llosa received in 2010 has further elevated his reputation and influence. Moreover, the eloquent and emotional Nobel lecture he gave, transmitted on television in Peru, Spain, and other Latin American countries, has helped his ideas reach additional new publics. In 2011, at age seventy-five, Vargas Llosa has reached the pinnacle of his influence and reputation. Hated by many, admired by many more, he stands alone as the major Latin American intellectual.'; Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra. Arte literario y convicción política*, Lima 2018, p. 469: 'Hoy se podría decir que en la literatura de lengua española Vargas Llosa es su propio rival, porque hay muy pocos escritores en condiciones de acercarse a la calidad literaria a la que llegó con sus novelas mayores, y aún menos que hayan tenido su capacidad de renovación literaria desde que publicara su primera novela, hace ya más de medio siglo.'

PART A – FREEDOM AND SOCIALISM

Chapter 1

Rebellion or the critique of social authorities at school – *La ciudad y los perros*

1.1. Sartre, Vargas Llosa, and the social responsibility of the writer

In the following chapter analysis *rebellion* will be regarded as the first progressive concept of Vargas Llosa's *early period of creation*¹, which can be observed and interpreted against the realist and socio-politically engaged background of the author's Peruvian literature from the 1950s to the beginning of the 1970s. Due to Vargas Llosa's socially progressive aspirations as an author and intellectual throughout the 1960s the first paradigm will be depicted and analysed against the background of his first truly, socially critical and totalising fiction, *La ciudad y los perros*. *Rebellion* against both social oppression and politically authoritarian institutions will be analysed in its familial and institutional context, taking philosophical recourse to individual as well as collective forms. The main fictional example for its political portrayal will be the *Leoncio Prado* school, to which a new form of protest by Vargas Llosa – *revolt* under the political, not only educational culture of the Odría regime – will be added in chapter 2, when we consider the author's third novel. In this first chapter it will be demonstrated how the paradigm of *rebellion* in *Ciudad* – in contrast to the paradigm of *revolt* –, either in an individual or social way, is seen as the only way of Sartrean-influenced as well as socially progressive freedom for the main characters. Adding to the socially rebellious atmosphere in the 1960s at the time of publication – in the wake of the Cuban Revolution –, *La ciudad y los perros'* main protagonist Alberto will be considered as the fictional alter ego of the author in his turbulent and socially critical student years, transmitting a progressively individualist freedom until well after he leaves the school's premises.

In the following, what the reader will be presented with – before *La ciudad y los perros* is explored – is a short exposition on Vargas Llosa's stance and philosophico-literary world view on Jean Paul Sartre, related to the author's first work of socio-political fiction. Subsequently, the reader will be introduced to important criticism by Oviedo, Aguirre, Kristal, Montigny,

¹ Vargas Llosa's early period of creation (1959-1971) comprises both his philosophico-literary concepts of *rebellion* and *revolt*, while his two other periods of writing (1975-85, 1986-) defend either pragmatism or universal forms of liberalism.

Hengelbrock, Dobson, Poster, Scheerer and Köllmann. Ultimately, Vargas Llosa's relationship with Sartrean existentialism – based upon the Sartrean notion of *situation* and the transgression/rebelliousness regarding it – is just the first step of introducing the author's socially progressive approach related to *La ciudad y los perros*. In a second part the Sartrean-Vargas-Llosan paradigm of freedom and rebellion will be connected with Obando's concept of *círculos*/groups of power in the Peruvian military, through which it dominates large spheres of society. Concretely, the three main *circles* of Odría militarist society (the two inside the school, and the third one within the families) essentially form part of the three consecutive Sartrean-Vargas-Llosan *situations* in the novel, all of which will be presented and analysed in the main sections of this first chapter of the dissertation.

Put more succinctly, Sartrean notions of *existentialist* freedom point to the philosophical construction of *situations*, based on which *human freedom* (and its decision-making process) develops. In addition, authoritarian suppression – such as in the Leoncio Prado school of *La ciudad* – can lead to the fact that, due to authoritarian behaviour or socially determined rules, the choices of a free or *existentialist* individual are suppressed or minimised. Thereby, the suppression of freedom from a Sartrean perspective can result in Vargas-Llosan forms of rebellion – which, as will be demonstrated in *La ciudad y los perros*, leads to the analysis of the *suppression of freedom* from a *Sartrean-Vargas-Llosan* perspective, represented by the main figure Alberto, the author's progressive alter ego.

In his collection of journalistic articles and political essays from *Contra viento y marea* (1962-1982) – in the article 'Sartre, veinte años después'² – Vargas Llosa affirms that Sartre has been his major intellectual and artistic inspiration for writing his first novels, from his student years in Lima, but also his cultural exile in Paris. The author of *La ciudad y los perros* affirms here, specifically, that Sartre's principal meditation on literature, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?*³, has been one of the main philosophico-intellectual inspirations for Vargas Llosa's own work and progress as a young writer:

Fue uno de los primeros libros que leí al ingresar a la universidad, en 1953, y lo releí luego, por partes, muchas veces, mientras militaba en la Fracción Universitaria Comunista, de Cahuide, en busca de argumentos para las ardorosas discusiones que teníamos y en las que siempre discrepaba con mis camaradas sobre el tema cultural. Estoy seguro que este

² Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea*, pp. 324-327.

³ Sartre, J.-P.: *Situations II, Qu'est-ce que la littérature?*, Paris 1948; Sartre, J.-P.: *Was ist Literatur?*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1981/2018⁷; Sartre, J.-P.: *Escritos sobre literatura*, Paris 1947/Madrid 1985.

libro de Sartre me empujó a aprender francés y que fue el primero que leí en esta lengua [...]. Durante diez años, por lo menos, todo lo que escribí, creí y dije sobre la función de la literatura glosaba o plagiaba a este ensayo.⁴

In another major study on Vargas Llosa's work of political fiction, by Carlos Aguirre, the French philosopher and intellectual is cited as the main influence on the Peruvian writer's first novel:

Por esos años [Vargas Llosa] empezaría a leer a Sartre y quedaría deslumbrado con sus ideas sobre el existencialismo y la relación entre la literatura y el compromiso político. La influencia de Sartre, de hecho, resultó central en la concepción y redacción de *La ciudad y los perros*, novela que, según el propio Vargas Llosa, 'está construida muy dentro de lo que era el pensamiento de Sartre [...] Los personajes están vistos diríamos, por usar una expresión sartreana, *en situación*.'⁵ El crítico francés Claude Couffon ha contado que mientras escribía *La ciudad y los perros* en su modesta habitación en París, Vargas Llosa tenía sobre una mesa, apilados, los libros de su admirado Sartre.⁶

To demonstrate the strong adherence of Vargas Llosa to French literary-philosophical thought, one of the author's first articles on Sartre and his generation from 1940 proves that – similar to what the author believed in while writing his first narrative works, *Ciudad and Conversación* – the intellectual activity of desiring to influence society by writing on its moral and social injustices (creating action in the wake of words and discourse) has illuminated Vargas Llosa's philosophical and artistic path throughout the first decade of his production of *socially empowering* literature:

La generación del cuarenta se dividió y enemistó por razones políticas, pero sus mejores representantes – Camus, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Simone de Beauvoir – concibieron la literatura como una forma de acción y creyeron que escribiendo influían en la marcha de la historia.⁷

Last but not least, it is in Vargas Llosa's autobiography that the reader can find the most authentic confirmation of the author's dedication to Sartrean literary and philosophical postulates, the conviction that intellectual freedoms won't be cherished if they are not accompanied by social freedoms and activities. Having established his vision for social and political justice already during his student days – at the apogee of the Odría regime –, Vargas

⁴ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea*, p. 324.

⁵ Tusell, J.: *Retrato de Mario Vargas Llosa*, p. 71, cited in: Aguirre, C.: *La ciudad y los perros. Biografía de una novela*, Sevilla 2017, p. 57.

⁶ Aguirre, C.: *La ciudad y los perros*, p. 57.

⁷ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea*, p. 41.

Llosa refreshes his progressive world view when starting to write later on in the decade, seized by the revolutionary fever of the epoch, re-affirming that men, by themselves, can change history for the better:

Que [la] candidatura [de Raúl Porras Barrenechea] al rectorado de San Marcos hubiera sido apoyada por el APRA y la izquierda [...] Se me ocurrió redactar un manifiesto de solidaridad a su persona y recoger firmas entre intelectuales, profesores y estudiantes [...] Habíamos entregado hojas con el manifiesto a distintas personas para que lo hicieran correr, y me advirtieron que un alumno de la Universidad Católica quería echar una mano. Se llamaba Luis Loayza [...] Estaba contra la dictadura, por supuesto, pero más por razones estéticas que políticas [...] Alguna vez lo arrastré a las manifestaciones-relámpago y en una de ellas, en el Parque Universitario, perdió un zapato: lo recuerdo corriendo a mi lado, sin perder la compostura, ante una carga a caballo de la Guardia Civil [...]. Mi admiración por Sartre y su tesis sobre el compromiso social lo aburrían a ratos y a ratos lo irritaban – él prefería, por supuesto, a Camus, porque era más artista y tenía mejor prosa que Sartre – y las despachaba con una ironía sibilina que me hacía aullar de indignación. Yo me vengaba atacando a su reverenciado Borges, llamándolo formalista, artempurista y hasta *chien de garde* de la burguesía. [...] Fue seguramente Loayza [...] quien me puso el apodo con el que me tomaban el pelo: el *sartrecillo valiente*.⁸

Before the intellectual heritage in regards to Sartre can be demonstrated, an important exposition of the Sartrean notions of freedom, the construction and changing of *situations* – out of which human freedom arises and out of which authoritarian suppression, such as in *Ciudad*, can be studied –, is presented.

First, human destiny is never preordained – according to Sartre –, and, in particular, questions of the will regarding physical or personal motivations are human concerns of, following Descartes, the cognitive capacities:

[Being the first philosopher of human realisation]...Descartes was the first to acknowledge that the will is infinite and at the same time that we have to 'endeavour to conquer ourselves rather than fortune'.⁹

Compared to Heidegger, Sartre does not propose anything more than that we are, essentially by existing, freedom already (physically and humanly), choosing or, rather, being condemned to be free:

⁸ Vargas Llosa, M.: *El pez en el agua*, pp. 293-295 [The emphasis at the end has been added by me].

⁹ Sartre, J.-P.: *Being and Nothingness*, London and New York 2018/2021, p. 629; Sartre, J.-P.: *Das Sein und das Nichts*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1993/2019²¹, p. 834.

In fact, we are a freedom that chooses, but we do not choose to be free: we are condemned to freedom, as we said earlier, thrown into freedom or – as Heidegger says – ‘abandoned’.¹⁰

Consequently, this liberty of human realisation (‘freedom of the will’) is compatible with the essence of the human self, the *free existence* which realises itself through physical acting.

Secondly, this then leads us to the revelation that – as part of every physical situation human beings find themselves in – the Sartrean-Vargas-Llosa *situation* establishes the moral limits of existence, leading to its continuous transgression in the case of oppression or rebelliousness (attempting to find new *situations* and thus human freedom):

Let us say that the *situation* is freedom’s contingency within the world’s *plenum* of being, insofar as this *datum*, which is there only *in order not to constrain freedom*, is revealed to that freedom only as *already lit up* by the end that it chooses. [...] Thus we can begin to see the paradox of freedom: there is freedom only *in a situation*, and there is a situation only through freedom.¹¹

In José Miguel Oviedo’s study the following can be found on Sartre in relation to Vargas Llosa’s literature: ‘La situación es un concepto dinámico que expresa la tensión entre lo dado y el proyecto humano, y que revela el carácter finito de la libertad: existe en el acto, no como un absoluto.’¹² A few lines on, referring specifically to Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*, Oviedo expands:

Y el acto no sólo da sentido a los móviles, sino que también crea sus propios fines: ‘La libertad se hace acto y la alcanzamos ordinariamente a través del acto que ella organiza con los motivos y los fines que el acto implica’, leemos en *El ser y la nada*. Como se ve, esta teoría de la libertad en situación niega, precisamente, el determinismo y el fatalismo; afirma, por lo contrario, la idea del hombre como un proyecto de ser que se inventa espontáneamente: el ser existe cuando actúa y ejerce su libertad contra la dureza de las condiciones generales que la realidad le opone. Son esta clase de actos los que reclaman la atención del novelista: reflejan de un modo dramático una pugna que lo fascina porque sus resultados son [...] inciertos.¹³

Following on from a Sartrean understanding then – applied by Vargas Llosa in literary practice –, the consequences of this dramatic or narrative storytelling, born out of the

¹⁰ Sartre, J.-P.: *Being and Nothingness*, p. 633; Sartre, J.-P.: *Das Sein und das Nichts*, p. 838.

¹¹ Sartre, J.-P.: *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 636-638; Sartre, J.-P.: *Das Sein und das Nichts*, pp. 843-845.

¹² Oviedo, J. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa. La invención de una realidad*, Barcelona 1977², p. 110.

¹³ Oviedo, J. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa*, p. 110.

situation of the philosopher (Sartre), can be either negative or positive, largely defying any deterministic type of portrayal or social morality – apart from an *existentialist* solution for all the characters, such as in *La ciudad y los perros*.

We shall also briefly point to the study of Carlos Aguirre *La ciudad y los perros: Biografía de una novela*¹⁴, which not only addresses Vargas Llosa's reliance on Sartre, but also discusses the heterodox Marxist influences of Vargas Llosa from the early 1950s until the late 1960s, serving as the literary-historical background for large parts of both novels, *La ciudad y los perros* and *Conversación en La Catedral*:

Durante este período inicial de su carrera literaria Vargas Llosa se convertiría también en un activo intelectual que albergaba ideas claramente de izquierda aunque también independientes de toda ortodoxia y ajenas a la militancia partidaria [...] Durante sus años universitarios había ingresado a una célula comunista clandestina llamada 'Cahuide', en la cual participó con el seudónimo 'camarada Alberto'. Su rechazo a la dictadura del general Manuel A. Odría (1948-1956) se conjugó con su simpatía por la revolución y el marxismo, del cual se convertiría, según su propia versión quizás algo exagerada, en 'un lector muy devoto.' Tuvo discusiones con sus camaradas de célula en torno al realismo socialista y, según su testimonio, se convirtió en un 'comunista bastante heterodoxo' [...] Según Héctor Béjar, que fue una especie de mentor de Vargas Llosa en la célula comunista, 'Vargas Llosa se hizo ciudadano en San Marcos.'¹⁵

In a third step the basic philosophical and social concept of the Sartrean *situation* will be connected with the approach by Obando of power *círculos* or groups from the Peruvian military. In *Being and Nothingness*¹⁶ the French philosopher explains that the plenitude of freedom – expressed by its contingency – transgresses its original form (contingency) through the individual's choice as well as the ontological description of subjects and objects (for-itself vs. in-itself) as part of *situations*:

It is because freedom is condemned to be free – i.e., because it can choose itself [only] as freedom – that there are things, i.e., a plenitude of contingency, at the heart of which freedom is itself contingent. It is through my accepting and surpassing of this contingency that it is possible for there to be a *choice* [...] And it is the contingency of freedom and the

¹⁴ Aguirre, C.: *La ciudad y los perros. Biografía de una novela*.

¹⁵ Aguirre, C.: *La ciudad y los perros*, pp. 56-57.

¹⁶ Sartre, J.-P.: *Being and Nothingness: Part Four: To have, to do, and to be; Chapter 1: Being and Doing: Freedom; Section II: Freedom and Facticity: The Situation; Paragraph C: My Surroundings*, pp. 657-663; Sartre, J.-P.: *Das Sein und das Nichts*, pp. 870-879.

contingency of the in-itself that are expressed *in situation* through the unpredictability and adversity of my surroundings. Thus I am [...] free, and responsible for [*my situation*].¹⁷

Consequently, the ontological emergence of Sartrean *situations*, from which social or societal implications (such as freedom) can be derived, has been explained. In this subsequent second part we need to clarify the fictionalised transgression of the *situation* of suppression in *Ciudad*, attempting to find freedom or truth by the individual. In particular, for the *how* and *why* this is (successfully or not) implemented or attempted, recourse will be had to Enrique Obando's concept of '*círculos*' of power or *societal groups*, influencing the social and political behaviour of the Peruvian military in and out of government. Thus, it will be demonstrated how the Sartrean-Vargas-Llosa approach of 'freedom-searching' *situation* and *rebellion*, in the case of suppression of this freedom, are connected – against the fictionalised background of the *Leoncio Prado* institution in the novel – with the socio-cultural concept of *círculos* or groups used in Obando to describe the interests of the Peruvian military elite and culture across wide sectors of society.

In an interview with Vargas Llosa by José Miguel Oviedo from 2008, Oviedo points to the central aspect connecting both novels, *La ciudad y los perros* and *Conversación en La Catedral*, which is the concept of *military hierarchies*, structuring not only the basic authoritarian paradigm of education in *Leoncio Prado*, but the societal system under Odría itself, which the author has experienced first-hand:

Creo que tu primera experiencia de lo que el poder absoluto y desnudo, el poder que no se discute, basado en la supremacía, en la organización vertical, es lo que ocurre en el colegio Leoncio Prado, donde encuentras un aspecto que me parece fundamental y que estructura buena parte de tus novelas, un principio regulador de gran importancia que es el de las jerarquías militares, que reflejan la realidad de un país como el nuestro, que está estratificado, donde quien ejerce el poder no responde por él, sino que lo aplica sin discusión. Esa es la base de la organización, de la jerarquía militar. Yo pienso que allí viviste una primera experiencia de lo que era el país, de lo que era el poder ejercido en el país de una manera absoluta y sin discusión.¹⁸

In response to this observation by Oviedo, Vargas Llosa replies that this experience of militarism and social hierarchies, first experienced at school, but then under *odriísta* society

¹⁷ Sartre, J.-P.: *Being and Nothingness*, p. 663; Sartre, J.-P.: *Das Sein und das Nichts*, pp. 878-879.

¹⁸ Vargas Llosa, M., and Oviedo, J. M.: 'La literatura, la vida y el poder en la obra de Vargas Llosa', pp. 231-251, cited in: Centro Cultural Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú: Congreso *Las guerras de este mundo*, pp. 235-236.

itself at university and thereafter, has fundamentally shaped the social context of his upbringing, and, additionally, must have largely influenced his early socially and politically critical writing in the 1950s and 1960s:

Allí sí que estaban representadas todas las clases, todas las razas y en esa época también todas las regiones del Perú dentro de un sistema jerárquico y autoritario, y además muy representativo de lo que era en ese momento la sociedad peruana, que estaba viviendo la experiencia de la dictadura de Odría. Esa experiencia fue para mí fundamental. Me hizo conocer de una manera mucho más veraz la realidad peruana y creo que me descubrió un tipo de violencia social que hasta entonces yo desconocía.¹⁹

In Enrique Obando's book chapter on the Peruvian military²⁰, Obando uses the concept of rings or circles of power (*círculos de poder*) to describe certain groups of power inside a structured set of hierarchies of the military, pertaining to the history of the Peruvian military at least since the early 20th century. These power rings or groups pertain to every branch of the military, depending on different types of merits, regarding the allegiance to the higher ranks, in particular, those who influence political decision-making. The most influential military posts, in particular the highest officers of the army, navy and air force (first- and second-in-command, etc.), are, vice versa, politically co-opted by the president (at least under Manuel Odría, but also under Alberto Fujimori), leading, more often than not, to a symbiotic relationship of power by a civil-military alliance of governance. Furthermore, these decisive groups of power inside the military – spread across the different branches – become influential agents of political and societal lobbying, affecting key decisions of the government in times of election of the most senior government ministers, presidential policy making on military and defence topics, or institutional crisis. Most notably, these powerful groups inside the military, backed by the supreme commander-in-chief of the armed forces, e.g. decisively influenced and supported the authoritarian coup of Fujimori or other presidents.²¹

Now, drawing an analogy with the military regime under Odría in the 1950s, a similar concept of circles or groups of power under a militarised and hierarchical regime (here: not just the military as an institution, but the militarised and hierarchical society under Gen. Odría in power) can be used to analyse the different social and institutional actors in *La ciudad y los*

¹⁹ Vargas Llosa, M., and Oviedo, J. M.: 'La literatura, la vida y el poder en la obra de Vargas Llosa', pp. 231-251, cited in: Centro Cultural Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú: Congreso *Las guerras de este mundo*, p. 236.

²⁰ Obando, E.: 'Fujimori and the Military', in: Crabtree, J., and Thomas, J. (eds.): *Fujimori's Peru*, pp. 192-208.

²¹ Obando, E.: 'Fujimori and the Military', in: Crabtree, J., and Thomas, J. (eds.): *Fujimori's Peru*, pp. 192-208.

perros. Thus, it can be argued that *Leoncio Prado*, which symbolises the highest educational authority with a military command structure in the country, combines and displays different circles of strongly *authoritarian hierarchies* (in other words, militarist or elitist social groups) that are forced upon it by society and its *militarised* nature.

First of all, the Peruvian military itself is the highest and most important public institution under the Odría regime – forming the top circle of authoritarian hierarchies –, thereby dictating and imposing its highly hierarchical command structure as well as its military values on its most renowned educational academy, the *Leoncio Prado*. In addition to the hegemony enforced by the regime’s political and educational values – coming from the Armed Forces and Ministries for Education, Justice, and Defence –, two other circles within *Leoncio Prado* can be differentiated: the middle circle of officers and teachers who form the instructing and teaching staff of the institution, as well as the lower circle of cadets and students. Last but not least, apart from these three circles of authority (military government, teaching staff, and students), there exists one more ‘sociological’, but nonetheless authoritarian, circle or group of society depicted in the novel – the families outside of the institution (Alberto’s, Ricardo’s, Jaguar’s, etc.). This fourth and final circle or group contributes in decisive ways towards the paradigm of authoritarian hierarchies. Consequently, the conservative, authoritarian, and class-based behaviour of the military and oligarchic elites can be made responsible for the conflicting scenes and interests of the protagonists in *La ciudad y los perros*. More fundamentally, both the authoritarian relationships within the school as well as the authoritarian relationships within the families explain the double paradigm of institutional and societal hierarchies as the basic paradigm for analysing the authoritarian structures in the first novel of Vargas Llosa.

Enrique Obando’s concept of *círculos*/groups of power within the Peruvian military²² to explain the characters’ rebellious desires or attempts at transgression of the three most important *situations* will be employed throughout the chapter. This will be discussed in the following way: The tripartite structure of *situations* – in agreement with Sartrean philosophy – will be determined by Obando’s classification of circles or groups of power by the Peruvian military, applied to the societal actors dominated by these groups as part of the fictionalised portrayal of militarised hierarchies in *La ciudad y los perros*. Therefore, the first set of characters involved in authoritarian relationships – or *situations*, according to Sartre –, the

²² Obando, E.: ‘Fujimori and the Military’, in: Crabtree, J., and Thomas, J. (eds.): *Fujimori’s Peru*, pp. 192-208.

sons of the families in Lima (outside of *Leoncio Prado*), will be juxtaposed in relation to their authoritarian or abusive fathers, representing the Odría regime on the streets and outside of its core institution. The second set of characters involved in authoritarian relationships will be the main groups of cadets in *Leoncio Prado*, confronting each other violently, either desiring to liberate themselves from or, on the contrary, perpetuate the socially deterministic and anti-liberal universe of the school. The third set of characters involved in authoritarian relationships will be the main group of officers within *Leoncio Prado* (the teaching staff), suppressing the solving of the murder of cadet Ricardo or the personal objections to the case by cadet Alberto.

A Sartrean-Vargas-Llosan method – regarding the *situations* (I, II, III), in addition to the characters' chances of rebelling against their socially deterministic superiors or colleagues, either individually or socially – will be employed in relation to a detailed analysis of each character's behaviour. In Section I the humanist reactions of Ricardo or Alberto and their Sartrean desires for freedom will be explored, comparing their authoritarian father figures with the educational culture of the *Leoncio Prado* military school. In Section II the juxtaposition of individual and group behaviour is presented (Ricardo, Alberto, and the other cadets) – in which Alberto and Ricardo represent the individual striving of the self, whose individuality and personality, however, is suppressed by the non-recognition of the group. In Section III the socially conformist advancement of groups into hierarchical institutions – such as the *Leoncio Prado*, embodied by the group of officers – necessarily leads to various forms of suppression – e.g. of Alberto or Lt. Gamboa – that demonstrate socially deviant behaviour related to the school's regulations. Moreover, the socially deviant behaviour, contrasting with Sartrean or human freedoms, of the cadets, such as that triggered by the social pressures of Jaguar and his clique, can equally increase hierarchical structures against existentialist alternatives, involving violent forms of retaliation for deviation, such as psychological or physical punishment (or even death: in Ricardo's case).

Overall, the progressive or existentialist characters that are analysed (Alberto, Ricardo, Jaguar, and, to some extent, Lt. Gamboa) are regarded as striving for specific forms of Vargas-Llosan convictions of rebelliousness, transforming their individual criticism (as Alberto or Jaguar, in the life they lead in and out of school) into a social form of *rebellion*, based on their Sartrean beliefs in human freedom.

In a Cold War setting, caught between two superpowers and their ideologies, both Jean-Paul Sartre and Mario Vargas Llosa are to be regarded as independent voices of a revolutionary creed, representing similar approaches to the denunciation of social or political grievances in society. According to Efraín Kristal's wide-ranging study on the literary art and political conviction in the novels of Mario Vargas Llosa²³, the source for Vargas Llosa's early obsession with political engagement in the wake of the Cuban Revolution (1959-) lies in his understanding of literature as dictated from a social and intellectual standpoint of discontent. This form of discontent – having originated in the author's own irrational desires and social aspirations – is testimony to the Goethean concept of demonism, which belongs to every artist, and which the artist needs in order to create something entirely free or non-conformist, being able to lead even to political protest.²⁴ In the words of Sartre, literature is not only the artistic work of an author with either political or socially progressive attitudes, but even more than that, it's the 'subjective manifestation' of a 'society with permanent revolutionary convictions and ideals': 'La littérature est par essence, la subjectivité d'une société en révolution permanente.'²⁵ Summarising Vargas Llosa's progressive attitude to literature, the author of *La ciudad y los perros* conceives most modern forms of narrative fiction as being expressions as well as artistic constructs of the author's resentment or criticism in relation to society, drawing close to the Sartrean position:

Vargas Llosa no podía concebir la posibilidad de un escritor sumiso, a gusto con su sociedad; o que entablara un diálogo sereno con su tradición literaria. La literatura era para él inconcebible sin conflictos, tensiones y rebeliones [...] Según Vargas Llosa, el escritor añade su insatisfacción a su obra de ficción; por eso, el elemento añadido es un rechazo de la realidad que lo hizo infeliz.²⁶

Following on from that, in Vargas Llosa's 1967 speech for the Rómulo Gallegos prize ('La literatura es fuego'), the author of *La ciudad y los perros* compares his own intellectual world view with the exigencies of the precarious and still underdeveloped Latin American oligarchies, from whom the people might only be liberated if the writers continue to voice or display their discontent, transforming literature – in an analogy with Sartre – into a way of

²³ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, Lima 2018.

²⁴ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 37, p. 75, p. 76, p. 80, pp. 33-34, p. 35, pp. 37-38, p. 39.

²⁵ Sartre, J.-P.: *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?*, p. 162, in: Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 76; Sartre, J.-P.: *Escritos sobre literatura*, p. 286; Sartre, J.-P.: *Was ist Literatur?*, p. 122.

²⁶ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 37.

'permanent insurrection' towards society.²⁷ Vargas Llosa's early political convictions that he acquired from about the mid-1950s to the early 1970s are most aptly summarised by a political statement of the author from 1965 regarding the new guerrilla movements for national liberation, through which the capitalism of mid-20th century Latin America is condemned as the economic and political system responsible for the comprehensive exploitation of Latin American primary goods and industries as well as for the social or cultural degradation of the Latin American people. In this statement from Paris ('Toma de posición', 22 de julio de 1965) the reasons for the emergence of the revolutionary movements are to be found in the 'natural consequences' of a 'secular situation' that is characterised by the 'misery', 'injustice', 'exploitation' and 'negligence'²⁸ through which the governing class subjugates the population, coming close to a still predominantly colonial relationship between city and countryside. Vargas Llosa denounces Peru's post-colonial ruling elite for draining the country's economic and human resources in a way that prevents any form of social, political or intellectual progress: '150 años de vida republicana nos han enseñado que el poder lo han detentado alternativamente dictaduras militares o representantes civiles de la oligarquía, que no se han preocupado de otra cosa que de acrecentar sus privilegios o de crear otros nuevos, a expensas de la mayoría del pueblo peruano.'²⁹

Finally, the only solution for the author can be found in the irrevocable endorsement of the left-wing national liberation movements. What's more – complementary to the successes of the Cuban Revolution and Vargas Llosa's activism as part of different progressive media – the author's firm support for socialist regimes in Latin America will have a lasting effect on his writings until the end of the decade:

Pero dentro de diez, veinte o cincuenta años habrá llegado, a todos nuestros países como ahora a Cuba la hora de la justicia social y América Latina entera se habrá emancipado del

²⁷ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Discurso 'La literatura es fuego'*, 4 de agosto de 1967, Caracas, Venezuela: <http://blog.pucp.edu.pe/blog/latravesiadelfantasma/2009/02/14/la-literatura-es-fuego-mario-vargas-llosa/> [last visited on 09-12-21]: 'La vocación literaria nace del desacuerdo de un hombre con el mundo, de la intuición de deficiencias, vacíos y escorias a su alrededor. La literatura es una forma de insurrección permanente y ella no admite las camisas de fuerza. Todas las tentativas destinadas a doblar su naturaleza airada, díscola, fracasarán. La literatura puede morir pero no será nunca conformista. Sólo si cumple esta condición es útil la literatura a la sociedad [...] La realidad americana, claro está, ofrece al escritor un verdadero festín de razones para ser un insumiso y vivir descontento. Sociedades donde la injusticia es ley, paraíso de ignorancia, de explotación, de desigualdades cegadoras de miseria, de condenación económica cultural y moral, nuestras tierras tumultuosas nos suministran materiales suntuosos, ejemplares, para mostrar en ficciones, de manera directa o indirecta, a través de hechos, sueños, testimonios, alegorías, pesadillas o visiones, que la realidad está mal hecha, que la vida debe cambiar.'

²⁸ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea*, p. 75, *Contra viento y marea I*, p. 91.

²⁹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea*, p. 75, *Contra viento y marea I*, p. 91.

imperio que la saquea, de las castas que la explotan, de las fuerzas que hoy la ofenden y reprimen. Yo quiero que esa hora llegue cuanto antes y que América Latina ingrese de una vez por todas en la dignidad y en la vida moderna, que el socialismo nos libere de nuestro anacronismo y nuestro horror.³⁰

1.2. Vargas Llosa's first socially progressive novel

In the end, it is the existentialist and socially progressive approach of Jean-Paul Sartre that has left a lasting impression on the early narrative work of Vargas Llosa, something – in relation to the author's progressive concept of freedom supported by democratic forms of socialism – which will be demonstrated in the following analysis of Vargas Llosa's first novel *La ciudad y los perros*³¹.

Mario Vargas Llosa's first work of societal and political fiction, then, first published in 1962, evokes the critical analysis of an unjust, corrupt, and deeply authoritarian military and educational system, set against the background of the conservative right-wing military dictatorship under Gen. Odría. The plot portrays an educational and social system where orders are given, outside and inside the classroom, discipline is rewarded or ritualistically celebrated, and weaknesses are exploited or severely punished.³² Against the backdrop of Cold War politics and alignment the bourgeois class in Peru during the 1950s and 1960s was largely represented as part of the main sectors of society, in particular under the Odría dictatorship. Army generals, institutions and principles under Odría joined forces with the most conservative elements of Peruvian society at the time – the conservative elites as well as Catholic families and priests – to run the state and businesses from the top down, to send the left-leaning opposition into exile, and to structure the educational facilities around their own class-based and authoritarian needs.³³ Consequently, the *Leoncio Prado* military academy, as the main setting for the plot of the novel, is one of those key educational

³⁰ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Discurso 'La literatura es fuego'*, 4 de agosto de 1967, Caracas, Venezuela: <http://blog.pucp.edu.pe/blog/latravesiadelfantasma/2009/02/14/la-literatura-es-fuego-mario-vargas-llosa/> [last visited on 10-12-21].

³¹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La ciudad y los perros*, Barcelona 1966⁷; Vargas Llosa, M.: *La ciudad y los perros*, Madrid 2003⁹.

³² Standish, P.: *La ciudad y los perros*, London 1982.

³³ Pease García, H., Romero Sommer, G.: *La política en el Perú del siglo XX*, Lima 2013, pp. 123-136; Cotler, J.: *Clases, estado y nación en el Perú*, Lima 2005³; Contreras, C., and Cueto, M.: *Historia del Perú Contemporáneo*, Lima 2018⁶; Klarén, P. F.: *Nación y sociedad en la historia del Perú*, Lima 2004; Hunefeldt, C.: *A brief History of Peru*, New York 2004; Prieto Celi, F.: *Así se hizo el Perú*, Lima 2010; Rosas, F. (ed.): *Breve historia general de los peruanos*, Arequipa 2009.

institutions of the Peruvian military which is imbued with the conservative, traditional, and militarist values of the Odría regime. Its hierarchical command and teaching structure does not only include the military instructors as colonels, majors, captains, and lieutenants (who simultaneously serve as instructors as well as teachers), but also the cadets as third year, fourth year, and fifth year students who have to pass a long list of exercises and exams to be promoted and receive their final diploma at the end of their educational and military training. Thus, it is important to show the progressive social action and critical motivation for each character's behaviour, such as Jaguar's or that between Ricardo and his father or Alberto's within his family. According to a Sartrean analysis, the societal destiny of all three main characters is conditioned by their social environment in such a way that each one of them chooses different options to set himself free. Jaguar – being admired by Ricardo for his manliness, resembling the opposite of *the slave's* cowardice – tries to break free from a troubled past with his godfather by releasing his social frustration and turning into one of the leaders of the secret mafia, *The Circle*, that is dictating the new social norms among the cadets at school. His 'failed' pursuit of liberty seems to be founded on looking inside his body and manly pride, trying to impress and also suppress the other people around him. Ricardo has difficulties in exploring liberty in a wider or more balanced context, since his father makes him utterly dependent upon his social or physical behaviour and his mother, who is sensible, timid and shy, is not able to show him anything new that he could learn in higher educational institutions. Alberto, as the most ingenious of all the cadets, does come from a similar bourgeois and middle-class household as the other cadets, and is excessively influenced by the macho-type behaviour of his father, who, in turn, uses other women – including Alberto's mother – as a mere means to an end (setting a very negative example for Alberto himself). Alberto's ingenuity and desire for freedom contribute to his composing different literary pieces in order to increase his social standing among his classmates, visiting night clubs, or searching for the truth in order to assert his own manliness (such as vis-à-vis Lt. Gamboa). Therefore, Alberto, as an alter ego of the author himself (acknowledged by Vargas Llosa in an interview with José Miguel Oviedo³⁴), is regarded, from a Sartrean standpoint, as trying to choose his own actions independent of the judgements or values of those who are superior

³⁴ Vargas Llosa, M., in an interview with José Miguel Oviedo (in: M. Vargas Llosa, *Maestro de las voces*, hg. v. R. Roffé, Hannover, N.H. 1985: 147-172, cited in: Scheerer, T. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa*, p. 12): 'Yo me acuerdo que, en el Leoncio Prado, un poco como la figura de Alberto en *La ciudad y los perros*, escribí muchos cuentos para mis amigos, que escribí cartas para sus enamoradas a cambio de cigarrillos.' [The translation is mine]

to him, choosing his own freedom in the end, similar to Sartre's main protagonist Mathieu in *Les chemins de la liberté*³⁵:

L'existentialisme reste à la fois une doctrine du désespoir et de l'espoir infini dans nos possibilités humaines. Il est exaltant et décourageant, mais il constitue le redressement nécessaire de l'individu à une époque où l'on a trop l'habitude d'oublier que l'on 'existe', de se reposer sur les autres et de s'isoler dans une coupable quiétude. L'homme a depuis trop longtemps commencé à arranger pour l'homme un cadre douillet qui amollit et englu le 'pour-soi'. L'existentialisme nous replonge dans un monde hostile où l'homme est un étranger. 'Je suis étranger à moi-même, hors nature, contre nature, sans excuse, sans autre recours qu'en moi.' 'Je suis condamné à n'avoir d'autre loi que la mienne.' L'existentialisme nous oblige à dépouiller toutes les hypocrisies, à retourner vers la bonne foi, à sentir en nous à nouveau des forces vives pour la lutte. Il nous apprend à nous 'engager' et à agir toujours, puisque la liberté ne se manifeste que par l'action. Si vous voulez que quelque chose change autour de vous, dans le monde, dans votre pays, n'attendez l'aide de personne, pas même de Dieu, et lancez vous dans l'action. Mais prenez toute la responsabilité de vos actes puisqu'en vous engageant vous engagez l'humanité.³⁶

Coming to the main criticism in relation to Vargas Llosa's first novel, the most important author on the intertwining between Vargas-Llosan art and politics has been Efraín Kristal with his renowned study *Tentación de la palabra: Arte literario y convicción política en las novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa*.³⁷ Regarding the societal background of Peru from a progressive perspective, the study by Julio Cotler³⁸ is to be recommended, which has been used extensively for chapter two, for analysing and categorising the Odría regime as part of Peruvian history. Moreover, the following literary critics on Vargas Llosa, Sartre, and the author's early fiction have been widely consulted and used for the analysis of *La ciudad y los perros*: René Montigny, Jürgen Hengelbrock, Andrew Dobson, Mark Poster, Thomas Scheerer, and Sabine Köllmann. J. M. Oviedo³⁹ and C. Aguirre⁴⁰ have been treated in detail already in

³⁵ Sartre, J.-P.: *Zeit der Reife (Band 1)*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1986/2021⁴²; Sartre, J.-P.: *Der Aufschiebung (Band 2)*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1987/2021²⁸; Sartre, J.-P.: *Der Pfahl im Fleische (Band 3)*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1988/2010²⁵; Sartre, J.-P.: *Die letzte Chance (Band 4)*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1986/2006⁶.

³⁶ Montigny, R.: *J.-P. Sartre et l'existentialisme ou le problème de la littérature philosophique*, p. 72.

³⁷ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra. Arte literario y convicción política en las novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa*, Lima 2018.

³⁸ Cotler, J.: *Clases, estado y nación en el Perú*, Lima 2005³.

³⁹ Oviedo, J. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa. La invención de una realidad*, Barcelona 1977²; Oviedo, J. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa*, Barcelona 1982³.

⁴⁰ Aguirre, C.: *La ciudad y los perros. Biografía de una novela*, Valencina de la Concepción (Sevilla) 2017.

the first part of the chapter. E. Kristal has been cited for the socially progressive background of the author at the time, and has been consulted, once again, for the final part of the chapter. Montigny's study on Jean-Paul Sartre and existentialism in philosophy and literature⁴¹ (with examples from Sartre's fiction and other narrative writings) demonstrates the interdependence between existentialist fiction – such as Sartre's or Vargas Llosa's – and the notions of freedom as part of the characters' development or the novel's plot. Hengelbrock's⁴² analytical emphasis rests upon the different Sartrean ways or possibilities to reach freedom in and out of different philosophical or literary contexts. Both Andrew Dobson's⁴³ and Mark Poster's⁴⁴ approaches to Sartre are based on their and the author's joint understanding of history as a partially recurrent, but also progressive flux of ideas and social movements, which do not always coincide, but necessarily influence each other grounded upon individuals, groups, institutions, the dialectic and individual or collective alienation. Finally, in Thomas Scheerer's ground-breaking study⁴⁵ Sartre is described as being one of the three major intellectual and cultural role models which have had the most influence on Vargas Llosa's writing during the 1960s. Sabine Köllmann⁴⁶ attributes to both the essayistic and novelistic powers of the author an intellectual progressiveness and societal conviction, owing to the Sartrean influence on Vargas Llosa's formation, which, lastingly – right until his obtainment of the Nobel Prize for Literature – has convinced the author that 'words are acts.'⁴⁷

The novel consists of two main parts and one epilogue. Each of the two main parts consists of eight chapters with roughly 40 different sections. For the total novel, this amounts to approximately 80 sections – in which different perspectives of narration prevail. The omniscient and all-knowing narrator, who makes up the most part of the third-person narration (60-70 sections), is at certain times replaced by a personal narrator – namely Boa, the best friend of Jaguar – with a dog called *Malpapeada*, who is responsible for at least seven of the narrative sections. A couple of other forms of narration are introduced, which overall produce a high level of perfection among the narrative techniques of the novel. These include

⁴¹ Montigny, R.: J.-P. *Sartre et l'existentialisme ou le problème de la littérature philosophique*, Lindau am Bodensee 1948; Montigny, R.: J.-P. *Sartre und der Existentialismus oder Das Problem der philosophischen Literatur*, Lindau am Bodensee 1948.

⁴² Hengelbrock, J.: *Jean-Paul Sartre*, Freiburg/München 1989.

⁴³ Dobson, A.: *Jean-Paul Sartre and the politics of reason*, Cambridge 1993.

⁴⁴ Poster, M.: *Sartre's Marxism*, Cambridge 1982.

⁴⁵ Scheerer, T. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa*, Frankfurt am Main 1991.

⁴⁶ Köllmann, S.: *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*, Woodbridge 2014.

⁴⁷ Köllmann, S.: *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*, p. 50.

some sections in the second and last part of the novel, where Jaguar as a first-person narrator talks about the experiences of his difficult upbringing in Miraflores, as well as Alberto's thoughts during night duty as a *Leoncio Prado* cadet in Part I, Chapter 1,⁴⁸ where he thinks about what he will do at the weekend when he is allowed to leave the academy. Both of these two modes of narration introduce different perspectives on the relationship with Alberto's and Jaguar's dominant father or guardian, which are either conditioned by the well-intentioned interference of Alberto's mother (Part I, Chapter 1), or by Jaguar's sexual encounters with the other female partners of Jaguar's guardian, who Jaguar simply calls the 'godfather' (Part II, Chapter 7).

In the upcoming analysis three main circles or groups of authoritarian hierarchies in *La ciudad y los perros* will be investigated, against the background of Sartrean freedom: 1. The authoritarian relationships within the families of the Lima-based protagonists. 2. The authoritarian relationships as part of the group of cadets consisting of Alberto, Ricardo, Jaguar, as well as some secondary figures like Cava, Boa, Rulos, and others. 3. The authoritarian relationships as part of the group of officers who teach and form the leadership of the school.

To conclude with, the hypothesis of this first chapter is that *La ciudad y los perros* is a hidden social and progressive critique of the bourgeois class, its values, its institutions and its vision for the political culture and economy of the country, in which the author permanently resided from 1945 until 1958. In the current reading, therefore, *La ciudad y los perros* will figure as a precursor to the critique of the Peruvian oligarchy and its most important supporting pillar, the military, in Vargas Llosa's two subsequent novels (*La casa verde* and *Conversación en La Catedral*). Overall, then, *La ciudad* amounts to a political critique of the Peruvian political class in the 1950s and 1960s as a whole, only to be followed by *Conversación en La Catedral*, the apogee of Vargas Llosa's left-wing critique of conservative, militarist, and capitalist Peruvian political culture.

1.3. The suppression of freedom from a Sartrean-Vargas-Llosan perspective I: The authoritarian relationships within the families

⁴⁸ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La ciudad y los perros*, Barcelona 1966⁷, Part II: Ch. 7, pp. 298-301; Part I: Ch. 1, pp. 16-18.

First, the authoritarian relationships between father and mother, father and son, as well as male and female physical or psychological behavioural constraints of the leading protagonists such as Ricardo and Alberto – suffering from the suppression of their personalities, driven by the social and behavioural determinism of their fathers (pertaining to *odriísta* society) – will be analysed. All of these relationships are placed against the background of Sartre's *existentialist* philosophy, which progressively investigates how and under which aspects personal freedom is reached, or transformed by other freedom-inhibiting or militarist values (as in Alberto's or Jaguar's case), or liberties and personal desires undermined (as in Ricardo's case).

Ricardo is one of the few characters who is shy, timid, and, due to his submissive behaviour towards older cadets, not very well-liked at school. In contrast to students such as Alberto or Jaguar he is not from Lima, but has come from the coastal provinces (Chiclayo), where he spent his childhood in a rather quiet and peaceful neighbourhood – which stands in stark contrast to the overwhelming metropolis of Peru's capital.⁴⁹ His full name is Ricardo Arana, but for the other cadets he is simply *the slave*, a coward when it comes to military exercises, or also a traitor, when he betrays the other cadets when they leave the school in secret or steal the exam questions. In addition to that, Ricardo is also a very sentimental being and thus not fit for army life – at least in the eyes of the other cadets who form part of their own groups and exclude him. On various occasions he gets abducted, mistreated as well as psychologically violated by the other cadets of his year.⁵⁰

In the first part of the novel there are four different sections dedicated to Ricardo's private life at home. Ricardo is shown living with his weak, but caring mother, and the reader is also introduced to his authoritarian and emotionally unbalanced father – a father who hits Ricardo for being too weak and too feminine in comparison to the other men in Lima or the other cadets at school.

Chapter 1, Part I, portrays how Ricardo arrives with his mother in Lima, coming from Chiclayo, while being welcomed by his father, waiting for both of them.⁵¹ This is, no doubt about it, a clear allusion to Vargas Llosa's own life – the father meeting his mother in Piura and driving down to Lima with Mario when he was a little boy, only 12 years old, as depicted

⁴⁹ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 15-16, pp. 71-73, pp. 104-105, p. 119, pp. 150-152.

⁵⁰ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 46-49.

⁵¹ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 15-16.

in his memoirs *A Fish in the Water*.⁵² Lima is now described as a big and dark city with many cars and people that are unknown to *the slave*, all of whom he is frightened of.

In this first scene and encounter the relationship between Ricardo and his father still seems quite normal: His father addresses him by holding him up in the air, and then kisses him on the cheek – however, Ricardo, having been brought up mainly by his mother, already starts to dislike the artificial and reserved manner his father displays towards him.⁵³ During his first night in Lima Ricardo's early feelings of anxiety and solitude are clearly evoked: 'Ha olvidado también el resto de aquella noche, la frialdad de las sábanas de ese lecho hostil, la soledad que trataba de disipar esforzando los ojos para arrancar a la oscuridad algún objeto, algún fulgor, y la angustia que hurgaba su espíritu como un laborioso clavo.'⁵⁴

In the next scene between Ricardo, his mother and his father, Ricardo already reflects negatively upon his new life in Lima – feeling surrounded by his oftentimes absent mother, his all-dominating father, and his own anxiety and loneliness. Ricardo only greets his father now with a cold and ritual 'Good Morning!', and other actions are highly limited or avoided (usually confined to the breakfast or dinner table, walks, trips, and tours for sightseeing).⁵⁵

During one of the following nights, after he goes to bed, Ricardo's parents start a heated argument – and that's when his fears and nightmares connected to an authoritarian father figure begin to haunt him in his sleep: 'Tuvo miedo y dejó de pensar. Las injurias llegaban hasta él con pavorosa nitidez y, por instantes, perdida entre los gritos y los insultos masculinos, distinguía la voz de su madre, débil, suplicando.'⁵⁶ After Ricardo enters the bedroom of his parents – desiring to help his mother –, his father hits him twice so that he falls to the floor, after which he is carried back to his own bedroom:

Desde allí vio, en un lento remolino, a su madre que saltaba de la cama y vio a su padre detenerla a medio camino y empujarla fácilmente hasta el lecho, y luego lo vio dar media vuelta y venir hacia él, vociferando, y se sintió en el aire, y de pronto estaba en su cuarto, a oscuras, y el hombre cuyo cuerpo resaltaba en la negrura le volvió a pegar en la cara, y todavía alcanzó a ver que el hombre se interponía entre él y su madre que cruzaba la

⁵² Vargas Llosa, M.: *A Fish in the Water*, p. 3, pp. 8-9, p. 14, pp. 23-26, pp. 25-26.

⁵³ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 16.

⁵⁴ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 16.

⁵⁵ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 71-72.

⁵⁶ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 73.

puerta, la cogía de un brazo y la arrastraba como si fuera de trapo y luego la puerta se cerró y él se hundió en una vertiginosa pesadilla.⁵⁷

In another scene in the authoritarian relationship between Ricardo and his father, Ricardo gets woken up by his father and reprimanded that he shouldn't continue to act like a woman – by not speaking to him, by not getting up early, and by not behaving dutifully towards him.⁵⁸ In this scene Ricardo's father steals the bed cover from his sleeping son, and the words he receives from him are the following: '–Sólo las mujeres se pasan el día echadas, porque son ociosas y tienen derecho a serlo, para eso son mujeres. Te han criado como a una mujerzuela. Pero yo te haré un hombre.–'⁵⁹ In this scene the fears of Ricardo about his authoritarian father are drastically portrayed as well as physically described as the following: After his father speaks to Ricardo in a harsh voice, Ricardo mistakes the right shoe for the left, buttons up his shirt in a bad way, doesn't find his belt, his hands shiver, which is why he can't tie up his shoes.⁶⁰ Right after this horrible scene, reminding the reader of a typical morning ritual at the *Leoncio Prado* military school, Ricardo appears to be changed forever, since his father says to him: '–Todos los días, cuando baje a tomar desayuno, quiero verte en la mesa, esperándome. Lavado y peinado. ¿Has oído?–'⁶¹

After this conversation – displaying the father's authoritarian attitude towards the son and the son's fears in coping with it – Ricardo listens to him quietly, but remains fearful ever since. He takes solitary walks in the neighbourhood, feeling apprehensive about the people in Lima's city centre, making him long for Chiclayo, the city of his childhood. Here, clearly, the fears of a foreign environment one is physically surrounded by, like having moved to a new city, mix with the estrangement towards a person who is physically close, leading to Ricardo's characteristic sensation of solitude and insecurity throughout those parts of the novel's plot that are located outside of the military academy.

This whole series of scenes between Ricardo and his authoritarian father – with Ricardo suffering under the missed opportunities for the development of his freedom – can be read as a critique of capitalist and militarist, and in the end, bourgeois morality of the Lima in the 1950s. Jean-Paul Sartre argues, referring to *existentialist* human beings, that societal prejudices of a bourgeois nature – work, obligations, fear of existence, harmony with nature,

⁵⁷ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 73.

⁵⁸ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 150-151.

⁵⁹ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 150.

⁶⁰ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 150-151.

⁶¹ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 151.

God – are, basically, attempts to bury freedom as a human value under the pressure of being without having thought about human nature in itself: ‘These abortive attempts to stifle freedom beneath the weight of [bourgeois being] – they collapse when anguish in the face of freedom suddenly arises – are sufficient to show that, basically, freedom coincides with the nothingness that lies at man’s heart.’⁶² In Sartre’s own words this means that freedom is not just *a* being, but [essentially] being of mankind:

In this way freedom is not *a* being: it is man’s being [...] If we conceived man in the first instance as a fullness, it would be absurd to seek afterward within him for moments or psychological regions where he might be free: we might as well look for a gap inside a container that we have previously filled right up to the rim. Man cannot be sometimes free and sometimes be a slave: he is free in his entirety and always, or he is not.⁶³

Put more succinctly – in relation to the scenes in *La ciudad y los perros* –, the social, freedom-inhibiting pressures of work, household, and marriage (in particular for Ricardo’s father, but, to some extent, also for Alberto’s father, as can be seen below) – as part of a *bourgeois* familial context – lead to scenes of domestic and deterministic violence, where personal wishes are neglected and humanist or *existentialist* liberties destroyed.

Another major male protagonist of the novel is Alberto, *the poet* and only friend of Ricardo, who also shows mentally and intellectually the most mature character traits of all the cadets. Alberto writes small pieces of erotic short stories that he reads to his fellow cadets in his dormitory, and for which he is later on punished at the officers’ council following the investigative report about Ricardo’s death handed in by Lt. Gamboa. Alberto falls in love with Ricardo’s girl-friend, Teresa or *Tere*, who he begins to date in the course of the novel, in particular in Part II. But before having recourse to serious relationships and aspiring to a more bourgeois lifestyle, Alberto sneaks frequently out of school, like some other cadets, to go to Lima city centre in order to see the well-known masseuse *Pies Dorados* – thereby imitating his dominant, sexist, and macho-like father.

The authoritarian relationship between Alberto’s father, mother, and Alberto himself can be most visibly studied in Chapter 4, Part I. In this scene the father of Alberto comes home, and makes his physical as well as material presence felt in relation to the rest of the family – towards Alberto, and most of all, towards Carmela, Alberto’s mother.⁶⁴ Carmela is a strong-

⁶² Sartre, J.-P.: *Being and Nothingness*, p. 578; Sartre, J.-P.: *Das Sein und das Nichts*, p. 765.

⁶³ Sartre, J.-P.: *Being and Nothingness*, p. 579; Sartre, J.-P.: *Das Sein und das Nichts*, pp. 765-766.

⁶⁴ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 79-81.

willed, but nevertheless hopelessly dependent woman, dependent upon a husband who controls her materially, physically, and in the end, psychologically.

This scene can be exemplarily used to introduce, through the father of Alberto, the bread-winning male husband with macho and dominant characteristics, typical of a Lima family in the 1950s and 1960s.

In the third part of chapter 4, as Alberto adjusts his tie and observes his suit from military school, his father comes home, while his mother is already in a state of apprehension, but also suppressed fury. Despite the material superiority of her deeply disloyal husband, Carmela is prepared to raise Alberto alone, even though she knows that this will be difficult. The father reminds her after entering the house that he will support her further financially (this support would eventually amount to a generous pension), because, so he says, the 'social conventions of society' must be respected: '–Yo te comprendo, hay que respetar las convenciones sociales.–'⁶⁵ The father further pressurises Carmela by proposing to buy a beautiful villa, either in the rich Miraflores district or a house in San Antonio, but only under one condition: to dispose of absolute freedom of action as the sole breadwinner of the family. In other words, this would amount to a *carte blanche* for deciding what to do with his job, his salary, and most of all, his private life – such as going out at night, meeting other women, and coming back home whenever he wants to.⁶⁶

Even though Carmela insults the father of Alberto (with 'adúltero', 'corrompido', 'bolsa de inmundicias'⁶⁷), the father simply ignores the mother by saying to Alberto – who is the only son and thus male heir of the family (displaying further the *macho* and patriarchal values of his own upbringing):

–Sí, muchacho–, dijo. –Trataré de convencer a tu madre. Es la mejor situación. Y no te preocupes. Estudia mucho; tienes un gran porvenir por delante. Ya sabes, si das buenos exámenes te mandaré a Estados Unidos el próximo año.–⁶⁸

This whole scene between Alberto's father, mother, and Alberto – where the mother and only female person is gravely hurt, but the two other male persons are confirmed as the heads of the family and household – underscores the macho-like and male-driven characteristics of a typical Lima family at the time of Vargas Llosa's novel. The authoritarian and all-

⁶⁵ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 79-81, p. 81.

⁶⁶ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 80-81.

⁶⁷ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 81.

⁶⁸ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 81.

encompassing behaviour of Alberto's father can also be seen as reflected in the acts and attitudes of other male figures in the novel, such as Ricardo's father, some of the officers at school, as well as the director – and eventually Alberto himself. That this male-driven and dominant behaviour, frequently depicted in the Lima of *La ciudad y los perros*, was on the one hand authoritarian and lamentable, but on the other hand hard to evade and possibly even appreciated can finally be confirmed in the very first scene of the homecoming of Alberto's father, where the mother observes Alberto in the mirror with his army suit, moved by the similar male appearance and characteristics she has associated with his father beforehand: '– Estás muy buen mozo–, dijo su madre, desde la sala. Y añadió, tristemente: –Te pareces a tu padre.–'⁶⁹

These parallels in the depiction of honouring authoritarian and, simultaneously, militarised societal customs, outside as well as inside the military academy, are recurring features of Vargas Llosa's story-writing in *La ciudad y los perros*. In particular, the *bourgeois* scenes – strict, conservative, macho-like and directed towards the conformity of the wife or the son – within the private homes of Ricardo's and Alberto's family lead to the impression that their socially rigid and deterministic portrayal in the novel is, essentially, comparable to important social or behavioural aspects of the formational training of the cadets as part of the *Leoncio Prado* military school.

What will be presented in the next two sections is the fundamental assumption that:

The military academy is a parallel world with its own rules, yet in its brutality, corruption and hypocrisy it mirrors society as a whole [or vice versa]. The snapshots of family life in various segments of society show a world ruled by machismo, double standards and violence, where betrayal and abuse are rife. Jaguar's mother feels sorry for herself, neglects her son, but takes the money from his criminal activities. Alberto's father is a ruthless womanizer who forces the mother 'to keep up appearances' and put up with his betrayals. Ricardo had been led to believe that his father was dead, until one day he brutally enters his life, beating his mother and reproaching her for spoiling Ricardo and bringing him up like a girl. (The theme of the abusive father will run through Vargas Llosa's whole work, in various incarnations, but this is the first and clearest allusion to Vargas Llosa's own traumatic experience.)⁷⁰

⁶⁹ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 79.

⁷⁰ Köllmann, S.: *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*, p. 91.

1.4. The suppression of freedom from a Sartrean-Vargas-Llosan perspective II: The authoritarian relationships within the school – the cadets

In this section, the authoritarian relationships as part of the group of cadets consisting of Alberto, Ricardo, Jaguar, and the friends of Jaguar (Cava, Boa, Rulos, etc.) will be analysed in detail. It is part of this sociological context of friendship or hostility and schooling that *Sartrean* desires or wishes for freedom – to either explore the outside world beyond the educational institution or to release oneself from the social, non-existentialist pressures at home – become a more than necessary reality.

In order to understand the role and character of the cadet at the *Leoncio Prado* military school it is necessary to start with an investigation and explanation of the cadet's first day at the academy. The cadets ('students' of a military school) are welcomed by Lt. Gamboa, and are reminded of their duties as soldiers, but also of being part of their group of fellow cadets.⁷¹ They are expected – not in spite, but because of their racially, ethnically, and geographically mixed background, coming from all corners of Peru – to sacrifice themselves for the group and nation they serve through military duty, and to leave behind their civil roles in order to become ardent supporters of the *Leoncio Prado* institution, the army as a defender of their people and of Peru (and, of course, the military regime of Gen. Odría):

Venían de todos los rincones del Perú; no se habían visto antes y ahora constituían una masa compacta, instalada frente a los bloques de cemento cuyo interior desconocían. La voz del capitán Garrido les anunciaba que la vida civil había terminado para ellos por tres años, que aquí se harían hombres, que el espíritu militar se compone de tres elementos simples: obediencia, trabajo y valor.⁷²

In Vargas Llosa's autobiography the author describes the initiation ritual for third-year students of the school. It was an exercise which was unusually hard and particularly shameful – which is why the author condemns and criticises a lot of the macabre games and individual practices of both cadets and teachers. Vargas Llosa sums up his own analysis of this initiation ritual critically, whereby civilian persons are transformed by military life, practice and rituals:

Guardo un recuerdo siniestro de ese bautizo, ceremonia salvaje e irracional que, bajo las apariencias de un juego viril, de rito de iniciación en los rigores de la vida castrense, servía

⁷¹ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 45-46.

⁷² *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 45-46.

para que los resentimientos, envidias, odios y prejuicios que llevábamos dentro pudieran volcarse, sin inhibiciones, en una fiesta sadomasoquista.⁷³

There are three main characters who – as cadets, but equally as the most active protagonists of their last year at *Leoncio Prado* – form the core personnel of the kaleidoscope that student life at the military academy entails. These main figures, and their interacting relationships, will be analysed in detail here: Alberto, *the poet* and intellectual; Ricardo, *the slave* and most timid cadet; and Jaguar, the most macho-like and dominant of all the cadets, who is also the boss of the secret group *The Circle* (Jaguar's mafia) that tries to exercise its dominance over the other students such as Cava, Boa, and Rulos.

The introduction of another secondary character, Cava, explains how the interaction with the other characters and, in particular, the relationship between Jaguar and Cava, Alberto and Cava, as well as Ricardo and Cava functions. Cava, together with Boa and Rulos, is the best friend of Jaguar, who has founded his exclusive gang inside the school, *The Circle*. Alberto is distrustful of Cava, and Ricardo is the only friend of Alberto. Ricardo, finally, as *the slave*, is sympathetic only towards the weakest or most friendly members of the groups at school, mainly coming from the fifth year.

The following scene in Chapter 1, Part I illustrates most clearly the relationship between Alberto, Ricardo, and Jaguar – with Jaguar exhibiting dominance in relation to the other characters (Alberto and Ricardo). In this scene Alberto meets Ricardo, who is on night duty. This passage in the novel is exemplary, as it illustrates the cadets' different attitudes towards military life at *Leoncio Prado*. The initial trigger for the conversation is Alberto's need for cigarettes and search for Jaguar, but the deeper theme of their talk evolves around the military as well as personal duties of the cadets towards each other, as well as being fearful and to overcome one's own fears in the face of pressure or adversity.⁷⁴

Consequently, Alberto expresses his incomprehension of Ricardo's cowardice towards the dominant male stereotype of the novel – namely, Jaguar.⁷⁵ What's more, Ricardo's servitude towards Jaguar goes well beyond normal social behaviour in authoritarian military institutions like *Leoncio Prado*, where one is obedient towards others in an oftentimes rationalised chain of command. Ricardo's relationship of servitude can only be explained through the analysis of his psychologically fragile, physically weak, and domestically subservient character:

⁷³ Vargas Llosa, M.: *El pez en el agua*, p. 103.

⁷⁴ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 22-24.

⁷⁵ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 22-23.

[Alberto:] –¿Por qué eres tan rosquete?–, dice Alberto. –No te da vergüenza hacerle su turno al Jaguar?–

[Ricardo:] –Yo hago lo que quiero–, responde el Esclavo. –¿A ti te importa?–

[Alberto:] –Te trata como a un esclavo–, dice Alberto. –Todos te tratan como a un esclavo, qué caray. ¿Por qué tienes tanto miedo?–

[Ricardo:] –A ti no te tengo miedo.–

Alberto ríe. Su risa se corta bruscamente.

[Alberto:] –Es verdad–, dice. –Me estoy riendo como el Jaguar. ¿Por qué lo imitan todos?–

[Ricardo:] –Yo no lo imito–, dice el Esclavo.

[Alberto:] –Tú eres como su perro–, dice Alberto. –A ti te ha fregado.– [...] –Sí–, dice Alberto. –Te ha fregado.–⁷⁶

In this exemplary passage and dialogue Alberto criticises Ricardo's servile behaviour towards Jaguar. He rightly claims that Ricardo is a very fearful cadet who does everything for Jaguar, the boss of the secret *El Círculo*, and thus isn't a good role model for the other cadets.

In the second passage, Alberto explains to Ricardo that by betraying his own values he also betrays the values of his fellow cadets, and thus endangers the positive sentiments of Alberto and other morally integral people of the army. In order to ensure the survival of the class and passing of the exams at the end, he should learn to survive for himself, and also learn to defend himself against other people who think they are physically stronger or mentally more apt in giving commands to other people, like Jaguar:

[Alberto:] –Tú no has peleado nunca, no?–

[Ricardo:] –Sólo una vez–, dice el Esclavo.

[Alberto:] –¿Aquí?–

[Ricardo:] –No. Antes.–

[Alberto:] –Es por eso que estás fregado–, dice Alberto. –Todo el mundo sabe que tienes miedo. Hay que trompearse de vez en cuando para hacerse respetar. Si no, estarás reventado en la vida.–

[Ricardo:] –Yo no voy a ser militar.–

[Alberto:] –Yo tampoco. Pero aquí eres militar aunque no quieras. Y lo que importa en el Ejército es ser bien macho, tener unos huevos de acero, ¿comprendes? O comes o te comen, no hay más remedio. A mí no me gusta que me coman.–

[Ricardo:] –No me gusta pelear–, dice el Esclavo. –Mejor dicho, no sé.–

[Alberto:] –Eso no se aprende–, dice Alberto. –Es una cuestión de estómago.–

⁷⁶ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 23.

[Ricardo:] –El teniente Gamboa dijo eso una vez.–

[Alberto:] –Es la pura verdad, ¿no? Yo no quiero ser militar pero aquí uno se hace más hombre. Aprende a defenderse y a conocer la vida.–⁷⁷

In the end, Alberto – who is more *macho* – thinks, in contrast to Ricardo – who is timid and submissive –, that army discipline can have many positive impacts on a man’s behaviour and life, such as that one grows physically and mentally stronger, as well as gets to know basic rules throughout one’s formation, such as taking back oneself or defending others as something worthy – values and experiences which then can be transferred to and applied in real life after leaving the academy.⁷⁸

In a last scene Ricardo, the most sensitive and, in many ways, the most inept cadet for many of the military exercises at school, reflects more deeply upon the psychology behind the other cadets’ authoritarian behaviour. In Chapter 6, Part I, after Ricardo gives Cava away to Lt. Huarina as being responsible for the theft of the questions for the chemistry exam, the cadets start to discuss class discipline and the behaviour of running away from class during the day or night.⁷⁹ Ricardo thinks that all of them are part of the same authoritarian hierarchies at school, and thus accomplices of the same militarised system that they all adhere to. Seeing it from a different, more human angle, Ricardo believes that, even though this is unjust, it’s also fun for them. They are either stronger, in physical terms, or more intelligent, in mental terms, than he is, regarding the survival within and clever circumvention of the military rules that are dictated by the educational training at *Leoncio Prado* – the main supporting pillar of the ultra-conservative and socio-fascist culture under Odría: ‘El Esclavo pensó: En el fondo, todos ellos son amigos. Se insultan y se pelean de la boca para afuera, pero en el fondo se divierten juntos. Sólo a mí me miran como a un extraño.’⁸⁰

In the aforementioned scene – between Ricardo and the other cadets, from whom Ricardo *alienates* himself – the socio-deterministic universe of the school, guarded by strict military discipline, does not let ‘bourgeois’ class antagonisms visibly appear or decisively alter the course of the cadets’ life: at least not in a socially progressive way. Ricardo’s only alternative for psychologically processing his social anxieties, as coming from a lower middle-class family with weak ties to his father, consists, thus, unfortunately, not in rebelling against his social

⁷⁷ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 23-24.

⁷⁸ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 23-24, p. 24.

⁷⁹ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 119-124.

⁸⁰ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 124.

environment, but, rather, due to its uniformist and militarist rigidity, in fearfully giving in to its atmosphere of social oppression and violence.

In *Critique of Dialectical Reason*⁸¹ Sartre argues forcefully – in relation to the development towards either socio- or political fascism – that the ever more authoritarian organisation of the group transforms itself into hierarchy, giving birth to a proper, hierarchically structured institution – just like *Leoncio Prado* –, which is, moreover, ideologically held together by way of military oaths, resolving the conflict between individuality and a sense of community:

This untranscendable conflict between the individual and the common, which oppose and define each other and each of which returns into the other as its profound truth, is naturally manifested in new contradictions within the organised group; and these contradictions are expressed by a new transformation of the group; the organisation is transformed into a hierarchy, and oaths give rise to institutions.⁸²

Following on from that, the absence of a sense of belonging grows stronger, including the inability to free oneself from the surrounding social norms or educational constraints, as in Ricardo's case, which finally leads to fear, despair and emptiness as having become a fixed part of a socially bound community or 'self-alienating' totality:

If we look at it closely, we can see that the basis of terror is the fact that the group has not, and cannot have, the ontological statute which it claims in its *praxis*; conversely, it is that each and all are produced and defined in terms of this non-existent totality. There is a sort of internal vacuum, an unbridgeable and indeterminate distance, a sort of malaise in every community, large or small; and this uneasiness occasions a strengthening of the practices of integration, and increases with the integration of the group.⁸³

Eventually, Ricardo – in addition to his socially weak family background – has increasingly become the victim of his own fears and social alienation as part of the sociological group behaviour pertaining to the institutional premises of *Leoncio Prado*. Arguably, Ricardo's failure to progressively move forward as an *existentialist* and *individual* human being can be underlined by the fact that other characters from school have lost most of their individuality, lapsing into serious practices of self-alienation and de-humanisation, while distancing themselves, increasingly, from Sartrean decision-making processes of freedom. In Andrew

⁸¹ Sartre, J.-P.: *Critique de la raison dialectique, Tome I*, Paris 1960; Sartre, J.-P.: *Critique de la raison dialectique, Tome II*, Paris 1985; Sartre, J.-P.: *Critique of Dialectical Reason, I*, London 1982.

⁸² Sartre, J.-P.: *Critique of Dialectical Reason, I*, p. 583; Sartre, J.-P.: *Kritik der dialektischen Vernunft, I. Band*, p. 617.

⁸³ Sartre, J.-P.: *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, p. 583; Sartre, J.-P.: *Kritik der dialektischen Vernunft*, pp. 617-618.

Dobson's words, having similar recourse to Sartre, different paradigms of alienation by the individual as well as by the group can be found in *La ciudad y los perros*, explaining – for some of the most defining scenes of the novel – the socially deviant behaviour of Jaguar's group *El Círculo* or the shooting of Ricardo Arana by Jaguar himself:

To conclude, Sartre's position on the alienation of human beings among themselves is hardly encouraging. The group is presented as the means of escape from seriality: 'the project of removing man from the statute of alterity which makes him the product of his produce, in order to transform him hot [*à chaud*], by appropriate practices, in a *product of that group*, that is to say – as long as the group is freedom – *into his own product*' (*CDR I*, pp. 672-3). However, the group as 'freedom' is permanently threatened with instability: 'It is formed in opposition to alienation, in so far as alienation substitutes the practico-inert field for the free practical field of the individual; but it cannot escape alienation any more than the individual can, and it thereby lapses into serial passivity' (*CDR I*, p. 668).⁸⁴

Without doubt – referring to Ricardo's death here, triggered by another student, at the end of Part I –, Sartre's analysis of group behaviour and the different types of alienation related to it (either as part of the group or outside of it) contains useful methodological tools for explaining the other cadets' violently oppressive reaction to the divergent behaviour of Ricardo – in particular, in the wake of a social situation of exam stealing, enacted and controlled by Jaguar's dominant, but secret group inside the school, all of which leads to the harassment and death of the main individual responsible for subverting the socially dominant order of the different groups and actors in *Ciudad*.

1.5. The suppression of freedom from a Sartrean-Vargas-Llosan perspective III: The authoritarian relationships within the school – the officers

In this third part, the authoritarian relationships as part of the group of officers who teach and form the leadership of the school will be analysed – that top circle or group of authoritarian hierarchies which controls most of the educational norms of the *Leoncio Prado* academy as well as the norms of military life inside the institution. In order to analyse the relations among the teaching staff of the school, the most relevant trigger for exposing the double standards of military valour and socially corrupted behavioural norms will be

⁸⁴ Dobson, A.: *Jean-Paul Sartre and the Politics of Reason*, p. 93.

presented as the ‘accidental’ shooting of cadet Ricardo Arana (*the slave*), after whose *post mortem* examination only two basic lines of development seem possible: the institutional perspective of concealment of an accidental crime (no matter whether immoral or not), or, from the cadet Alberto’s perspective, the uncovering of the truth (even though this means going all the way to the top decision-making body of the school, the officers’ council). In the end, a Sartrean analysis of deciding to speak the truth in front of an almost overwhelming mountain of obstacles is what is at stake for Alberto – and, it can only be assumed, for the author as an intellectual or political figure (Alberto being here an autobiographical incarnation of the author’s life and mind) in similar circumstances of social, political and even ideological discontent towards the current regime of either authoritarian educational or societal formation.

In the last chapter of Part I, Chapter 8, the officers prepare the cadets for the usual military exercises during their final year at school.⁸⁵ Above all, Lt. Gamboa reminds his fellow officers, e.g. Lt. Pitaluga, to adhere to discipline and the rules of the military academy, which are two traits that have always been important to him.⁸⁶ Lt. Gamboa thinks that most of the other officers lack the military spirit and enthusiasm which he so greatly admires: ‘El amaba la vida militar precisamente por lo que otros la odiaban: la disciplina, la jerarquía, las campañas.’⁸⁷

What follows from this observation will be analysed in greater detail, but one preliminary assertion might be allowed: Looking at the facts of the plot, at the end of Part I of the novel Ricardo is wounded and dies during a regular military exercise on the premises of the academy. His death is then the trigger for an investigation, forcefully demanded by Alberto and supported by Lt. Gamboa, in which at the end of Part II the entire directorate of the school gets involved. Now after closer reading, what becomes clear, is that Ricardo’s death was no accident, as the last chapter of the novel, the epilogue, clearly demonstrates. What’s more, it will be shown that the exemplarily negative and undemocratic behaviour of an authoritarian educational institution is responsible for the following: Namely, the hypocritical display as well as desperate belief in its values of discipline and honour becomes more important than demanding a truthful and orderly investigation into a case of its own misconduct.

⁸⁵ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 153-168.

⁸⁶ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 153-154.

⁸⁷ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 154.

This cannot only be said of the *Leoncio Prado* school, but also for the army as an institution in Peru at the time of the Odría regime. That's why, *rebellion* under the leadership of main protagonist Alberto seems to be the only option for realising the way towards institutional change (replaced by *political revolt* in chapter 2 of this thesis) as part of societal practices which are morally rotten from within and authoritarian and undemocratic from without.

In chapter 2 (Part II) the first scene between the *Colonel* (the school's director), Capt. Garrido, and Lt. Gamboa starts off with the discussion about the deadly consequences of the military exercise.⁸⁸ The question that needs to be answered is whether the cadet Ricardo was shot dead by accident or intentionally. After the funeral, the Colonel wants to declare publicly that the cadet died in a tragic accident, but the other captains and lieutenants start to argue with the Colonel about the truthfulness of the portrayal of Ricardo's death. In the end, the officers discuss three explanations: 1. The most credible and most easily to distribute one: The cadet wounded and thus fatally injured himself. 2. The less likely, but still plausible one: The rifle was broken and not functioning well, in particular where the sight was. 3. The most outrageous and unthinkable one, which needs to be denied at all cost: Some other cadet shot the cadet Ricardo Arana, either by accident, or even worse, intentionally.⁸⁹

Finally, the Colonel sums up his line of thought, transmitting a traditionalist and utterly conservative picture regarding the rules and oaths of military discipline *Leoncio Prado* consists of as an institution (mirroring Odría society in its fundamental aspects):

–Está en juego el prestigio del colegio, e incluso el del Ejército. Felizmente, los médicos han sido muy comprensivos. Harán un informe técnico, sin hipótesis. Lo más sensato es mantener la tesis de un error cometido por el propio cadete. Hay que cortar de raíz cualquier rumor, cualquier comentario. ¿Entendido?–⁹⁰

The next steps of the investigation triggered by Alberto – who believes that Jaguar is responsible for Ricardo's death – are progressively developed and presented in chapter 3, first part of chapter 4, second part of chapter 4, chapter 5, and finally, chapter 6. In the end, only Lt. Gamboa sides with Alberto's complaint and helps him to open a formal investigation, ignoring the doubts of Capt. Garrido and the Major.⁹¹ Lieutenant Gamboa is determined to

⁸⁸ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 210-216.

⁸⁹ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 214-216.

⁹⁰ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 215.

⁹¹ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 256-257, p. 257.

hand in the request for a full investigation, because he says: ‘–Un militar no arruina su carrera cumpliendo con su deber, mi capitán.–’⁹²

The Lieutenant’s behaviour demonstrates his exemplary and courageous stance, unique in that respect among the officers. Lt. Gamboa, thus, seems to be much more good-willed and upright than his authoritarian superiors: His fight for individual justice, similar to that of Alberto, symbolises the fight for righteousness within a corrupt and unjust system. Moreover, the rest of the officer corps – Lt. Pitaluga, Lt. Huarina, Capt. Garrido, the Major, and the Colonel himself – seems to consider the militarily induced compliance with orders, by both their fellow officers as well as the students, as the only legitimate system of rules the *Leoncio Prado* academy adheres to. That being said, it is clear from the development of the novel’s plot that the officers do not only let everyone inside the school adhere to the rules purely based on their own tactical thinking or formational training, but – much more than that – they are part of a cultural paradigm of authoritarianism deeply ingrained in a politically elitist mentality, derived from a traditionalist and militarist understanding of Peruvian history, while – simultaneously – receiving instructions from ministers, defence advisors and institutional government employees, all of whom represent one of the most ‘obsessive’ military dictatorships throughout Peru’s 20th century. One of the reasons for this can be seen, most evidently, in the interdependency between oligarchic and military rule since the end of the 19th century in Peru, and consequently, as a result of times of hardship for the economic exports and oligarchic governance, in a re-emergence of the paradigm of the seizure of power by the military, defending the traditional agro-industrial export model of Peru – safeguarding the country and the ‘people’ by preserving the traditional values of Peru’s oligarchic class.⁹³ In other words, by legitimising and increasingly fomenting the militarist values within the *Leoncio Prado* military school – one of the most important centres of military formation apart from the national military school in Chorrillos – the officers do not only legitimise the transference of military values from their own ranks to the cadets, but also from the cadets to their families as well as to the rest of society. In perpetuating a militaristic education permeated with *odriísta* values, they perpetuate a militarist societal system and ideology, imbuing the remainder of the school’s students and civilians influenced by the school with the uncompromising banner of the regime under Gen. Odría. From a Sartrean-Vargas-Llosan

⁹² *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 263.

⁹³ Cotler, J.: *Clases, estado y nación en el Perú*, pp. 338-339.

perspective, then, two forms of civil commitment in search of human freedom seem to be warranted: either *rebellion* from within the school's premises, or *revolt* from without the school's compounds, coming from the streets of Lima or Arequipa, such as the protests by the opposition against the most important minister under Odría, by the end of the second half of Vargas Llosa's successor novel of *Ciudad, Conversación en La Catedral*.

The final outcome of Alberto's petitioning and Lt. Gamboa's supporting him is portrayed in chapter 6, as the Colonel and the officers' council formally request the presence of Alberto, the main initiator of the investigation, where he is interrogated, defamed and finally forced to remain silent.⁹⁴

Consequently, in this last, decisive scene of the novel, the Colonel condemns Alberto's behaviour, since his petitioning is not based on any formal type of evidence – merely on suppositions from Jaguar's behaviour and Alberto's relations with other classmates.⁹⁵ The school's director believes the doctor's report proves that the shot that killed Ricardo did come from his own rifle. In addition to the Colonel's last word in handling the case – dominating the council and suppressing opinion that diverges from his own – Alberto is now also accused of lying and, when confronted with his erotic story-writing found in his dormitory,⁹⁶ silenced into ultimate submissiveness.⁹⁷ As Alberto is confronted with his story-writing about different types of women and their sexual encounters he is again reminded of his first day at school, where he had to take part in the initiation ritual:

Alberto pensó súbitamente en el bautizo de los perros. Por primera vez, después de tres años, sentía esa sensación de impotencia y humillación radical que había descubierto al ingresar al colegio. Sin embargo, ahora era todavía peor: al menos, el bautizo se compartía.⁹⁸

Alberto has to read some of the passages from his writing to the other officers – a highly humiliating exercise; one from which he doesn't recover. First, the Colonel threatens Alberto with kicking him out of school, but then – reconsidering the circumstances –, keeps the writings for himself, while offering Alberto the chance to finish his final year, but only under

⁹⁴ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), Part II: Ch. 6, pp. 281-288.

⁹⁵ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 283-287, pp. 283-284.

⁹⁶ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 285-286.

⁹⁷ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 286-287.

⁹⁸ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 285.

the condition that everything shady regarding Ricardo's death will not be revealed again to anyone else: no matter, whether inside or outside the institution.⁹⁹

The whole last scene between the Colonel and Alberto is framed by Alberto's fearful and metaphorical description of the military building where the officers' council takes place.

This description provides further evidence of Alberto's apprehension towards military hierarchies and his uneasiness towards higher military personnel, vividly portraying the theme of *authority* and *authoritarian hierarchies* in *La ciudad y los perros*. As Alberto is led to the place of the officers' council, he describes the building where the offices of the directorate and the director are (the 'administration' of the school). His descriptions take on a slightly negative, ridiculing and alienating undertone, expressing pain and estrangement:

Vedado para los cadetes, monstruo grisáceo y algo satánico porque allí se elaboraban las listas de consignados y en él tenían sus madrigueras las autoridades del colegio. El edificio de la administración estaba tan lejos de las cuadras, en el espíritu de los cadetes, como el palacio arzobispal o la playa de Ancón.¹⁰⁰

In the moment of entering the room of the officers' council, Alberto describes the room as simple, clean and in a way so efficiently and purely structured that it resembles the interior of a room for interrogation from police or military headquarters:

Lanzó una mirada circular: un escritorio de madera, diplomas, banderines, cuadros, una lámpara de pie. El piso no tenía alfombra: el encerado relucía y sus botines se deslizaban como sobre hielo. Caminó muy despacio, temía resbalar.¹⁰¹

As Alberto finally exits the room again, after having been questioned or rather 'interrogated', defamed, and – after a prolonged period of humiliation – allowed to leave the council's meeting, he describes the stairs again as polished and shiny as a mirror (pictures and symbolism here: one has to be clean and wear shiny uniforms as typical character traits of army officers and their physical surroundings, such as the rooms and buildings they live in):

Alberto volvió a hacer sonar los tacones y salió. El civil ni siquiera lo miró. En vez de tomar el ascensor bajó por la escalera: como todo el edificio, las gradas parecían espejos.¹⁰²

Finally, the dark, sterile, and oppressive atmosphere of the main administrative and military building of the school, together with the militarist and strictly conformist behaviour of his military superiors, leads to Alberto's recognition that the authoritarian predisposition

⁹⁹ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), pp. 285-287.

¹⁰⁰ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 281.

¹⁰¹ *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 282.

¹⁰² *La ciudad y los perros* (Barcelona), p. 287.

of the officers and teachers is caught in a vicious cycle, where military discipline, rewards, and behaviour are reflected in everything, not only the faces and attitudes of the people he encounters at the school's administration, but also forever sewn into the fabric and structure of the entire institution of *Leoncio Prado*. In a Sartrean way, then, the entire will towards *existentialist* or *individualist* freedom is quashed as a result of authoritarian discipline and rigidity, leading to a military-style behaviour of submission and surrender. The only option for a Sartrean liberty to materialise, supported by Vargas-Llosan forms of rebellion, would be, consequently, to leave school and immerse oneself in other individual or societal activities more akin to one's own desire regarding individual growth and political conviction.

Furthermore, an illuminating juxtaposition can be made between the Sartrean desire for an *existentialist* and freedom-loving universe and the contrast in the literary portrayal of a military institution that denies all individual and social development of freedom. Having recourse to Sartrean methodological tools such as the *group* vs. the *individual* – to be found in Sartre's monumental *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (Vol. 1) –, the individual aspiration towards freedom as part of group thinking is generally possible, unless – and this is clearly the case for the characters in *Ciudad* – the individual's hopes or motivations (such as those by the Sartrean characters Alberto or Ricardo) become increasingly subdued by institutional and hierarchical swearing-in processes of a military nature. Put more succinctly, the hierarchical and automatised allegiances of many of *Ciudad's* army officers leave no more room for an in-depth critique of institutional behaviour, explaining the obligation towards strict conformity and rigidity of all the characters by the end of the novel. In Sartre's words, for the group or its successor, the hierarchical institution, to persist, the act of non-conformity (Ricardo's, Alberto's, but also Gamboa's) must be violently punished or suppressed, visibly facilitated by the taking of military oaths or pledges:

But *this* is precisely what a pledge is: namely the common production, through mediated reciprocity, of a statute of violence; once the pledge has been made, in fact, the group has to guarantee everyone's freedom against necessity, even at the cost of his life and in the name of freely sworn faith. Everyone's freedom demands the violence of all against it and against that of any third party as its defence against itself (as a free power of secession and alienation). To swear is to say, as a common individual, you must kill me if I secede.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Sartre, J.-P.: *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, p. 431; Sartre, J.-P.: *Kritik der dialektischen Vernunft*, pp. 458-459.

Coming back to the novel's plot, Ricardo's betrayal and secession from the dominant group of cadets inside the school headed by Jaguar (*The Circle*) must – according to those rules – inevitably lead to Ricardo's death.

Sartre further says:

Thus the intelligibility of the pledge derives from the fact that it is a rediscovery and an affirmation of violence as a diffuse structure of the fused group and that it transforms it reflexively into a statutory structure of common relations. [...] But as soon as the danger of disintegration appears, every third party produces him- or herself for everyone else as the one who passes sentence in the name of the group and who then carries out the sentence.¹⁰⁴

This verdict of any third party, who 'passes and executes' its judgement upon the main element responsible for socially deviant behaviour towards the group (like Jaguar's group *The Circle* vis-à-vis Ricardo's case) or towards the institution (like the Colonel and the officers' council vis-à-vis Alberto's case), does, consequently, decide over life and death, conformity or social frustration and misery regarding the destiny of some of the main characters, particularly Ricardo and Alberto, in Vargas Llosa's first realistic reflection on Lima in the 1950s, the literal '*The City and the Dogs*'.

Apart from Ricardo's and Alberto's socially deviant behaviour (regarding the oaths of the group and the hidden norms of the institution), Jaguar's actions in relation to the main group that has formed itself within the school – controlling the socio-fascist universe of *Leoncio Prado* – can only have led to Jaguar's personal conviction that taking revenge on Ricardo is an act which will defend and strengthen the uniform and determined character of the main group, being a vital part of the academy as a whole:

–No he cambiado de opinión–, dijo el Jaguar. –Sólo que [...] ahora comprendo mejor al Esclavo. Para él no éramos sus compañeros, sino sus enemigos. ¿No le digo que no sabía lo que era vivir aplastado? Todos lo batíamos, es la pura verdad, hasta cansarnos, yo más que los otros. No puedo olvidarme de su cara, mi teniente. Le juro que en el fondo no sé cómo lo hice. Yo había pensado pegarle, darle un susto. Pero esa mañana lo vi, ahí al frente, con la cabeza levantada y le apunté. Yo quería vengar a la sección, ¿cómo podía saber que los otros eran peores que él, mi teniente?–¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Sartre, J.-P.: *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, pp. 431-432; Sartre, J.-P.: *Kritik der dialektischen Vernunft*, p. 459.

¹⁰⁵ *La ciudad y los perros* (Madrid), p. 524.

In addition to the pride of Jaguar and the weaknesses of Ricardo – who demonstrates, as *the slave*, a rather passive role in relation to the circumvention of the rules as part of *Leoncio Prado* until he snitches on the main players –, Alberto's, *the poet's*, much more active way of rebellion, with the aid of Lt. Gamboa, against the institutional authorities at school is a risky business of similar defiance, for which he could have equally been threatened with his life:

The material force which unites the sworn parties is the force of the group as a totalisation which threatens to totalise itself without them (if they lose sight of the common interest) and this force as the corrective power of a hostile totality is, for everyone, directly and constantly, the possibility of losing one's life.¹⁰⁶

In the end, *rebellion* or *revolt* (the second concept will feature prominently in the next chapter of this dissertation) are the only viable and sustainable options as part of a socially progressive, Sartrean-influenced variant of freedom, supported by Vargas Llosa's early philosophical and literary convictions. The main alternative to these consists in the formation of authoritarian patterns of social oppression – adapted, in its most radical way, for educational and uniform indoctrination, leaving the enlightened and creative individual with nothing but despair, frustrated hopes and the impossibility to earn a righteous place in a community of progressive equals.

1.6. The fight for rebellion and freedom in *La ciudad y los perros* as progressive critique of the socio-fascist relationships of an ultra-conservative and militarist society

Coming back to the author's early and progressive convictions acquired during his student days and first years as a professional writer – in Lima, in Paris, and Cuba –, a socio-historical conceptualisation of Vargas Llosa's first work of fiction – forming the essential backdrop of his socio-revolutionary attitude from the early 1960s onwards – is more than warranted. As has been claimed in the Introduction, in this renowned debut novel the Vargas-Llosan intellectual path towards freedom (or *Idea of Freedom*) – from socialism over pragmatism to liberalism – finds its political beginning. Having recourse to a critique of the authoritarian societal structures of families and schooling during the Lima-based *odriista* regime (1948-1956), a

¹⁰⁶ Sartre, J.-P.: *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, p. 432; Sartre, J.-P.: *Kritik der dialektischen Vernunft*, p. 459.

Sartrean and humanist portrayal in relation to the longing and striving for liberty – by *rebell*ing against morally and socially unjust norms in education and society – is deeply embedded in Vargas Llosa’s *mimesis* of Peruvian unscrupulousness and corruption.

Moreover, the reflection of morally unscrupulous behaviour by the military and teaching staff at *Leoncio Prado* is just the most visible sign of the corruption and ideological decadence of the middle- to upper *limeñan* political class, embodying – what was at the time of writing – a more than three-decade long symbol of nepotistic capitalist enrichment and extractivist economic exploitation of Peruvian industrial as well as agricultural labour. What’s more, industrial exploitation and political management of industries and businesses by the decision-making families who usually come from Lima, Piura or Arequipa contributed – in particular during the Odría regime – to values of social prestige tied to economic prowess, political influence or military valour. On top of that, this conservative political cosmivision establishes a double standard of political bourgeois ideology of strength and ‘sense of community’ on the one hand, as well as social exploitation and a morally decrepit sense of education and culture on the other hand.

Viewing *odriista* political and ideological customs from a profoundly socialist perspective (in accordance with the author’s views at the time of writing), material enrichment in connection with a morally indifferent attitude merely safeguards the appearance of militarily influenced forms and behaviour taken over from the decade-long Peruvian oligarchy – denying any real chances of success for social and political ascension of the characters in *La ciudad y los perros*. At the end, this socially progressive analysis translates into the following observation regarding the character of Jaguar as well as the protagonists surrounding the family of Alberto:

El triunfo social en la novela no está destinado, sin embargo, a individuos como el Jaguar, sino a los miembros del sector dominante, a hombres socialmente exitosos y de alcurnia, como el padre de Alberto, que saben lo que quieren: una familia que guarde las buenas apariencias para, en privado, hacer de las suyas.¹⁰⁷

What can be inferred from this analysis of *Ciudad* is not simply the necessity of portraying the relation between the pedagogical failures of military education (governmentally subsidised by the regime) and social or moral hypocrisy. Much more than that, the socio-critical portrayal of the Peruvian oligarchy – in connection with its most important societal

¹⁰⁷ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 120.

accomplice, the military – leads, inevitably, to a lasting critique and social accusation of the oligarchic class as a whole, representing the failures and hypocrisies of the capitalist economic and societal system which can only be supplanted by either social rebellion or socialist revolution.

In Kristal's words, this leads to the aforementioned observation of the relation between the character development as part of the *Leoncio Prado* institution in *Ciudad* and a society without scruples or morality, which regards its main objective as determining *a priori* – based on socio-economic efficiency or military performance – where its disciples will end up leading their lives:

Si la revelación del pasado del Jaguar señala un espíritu noble, la transformación final de Alberto en un individuo indiferente a la inmoralidad aclara el tema principal de la novela: el éxito de la institución corrupta para contribuir a la reproducción de una sociedad viciada que los cadetes creían violentar con sus secretas transgresiones, pero que en realidad estaban ayudando a consolidar [...] El tema de *La ciudad y los perros* entronca, así, con la convicción que Vargas Llosa tenía de la burguesía peruana – la clase social que quería contribuir a liquidar en su época socialista –, porque carece de escrúpulos morales y se beneficia de la corrupción, que entonces creía congénita al capitalismo.¹⁰⁸

In sum, all three main circles or groups of authoritarian hierarchies were thoroughly investigated as part of my analysis regarding freedom, education, authoritarian behaviour, and rebellion in Vargas Llosa's *La ciudad y los perros* – against a background of the possibilities for the development of the Sartrean-Vargas-Llosan human being.¹⁰⁹

What becomes clear from the analysis is that the civic and educational culture at the *Leoncio Prado* military academy, as Peru's most important centre for educational formation under the auspices of the Odría regime, is caught up in a web of suppression of individual liberty in the classrooms or dormitories, shady dealings with personal accidents of

¹⁰⁸ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 121.

¹⁰⁹ As a matter of fact, in Vargas Llosa's understanding of Sartrean philosophy regarding a liberatory existentialism and humanism, the following – by the author himself – has to be complementarily said on the Sartrean concept of freedom, in particular relating to the main literary figure of Alberto, Vargas Llosa, M.: 'El Mandarin', in: Vargas Llosa, M: *Entre Sartre y Camus*, p. 121: 'La libertad es el eje de la filosofía sartreana. El hombre, desde que viene al mundo, está enteramente librado a sí mismo, es un proyecto permanente que se va realizando según la manera como él elige entre las diarias, múltiples opciones que debe enfrentar (todas ellas: las importantes y las triviales). El hombre siempre es libre de elegir – la abstención es, por supuesto, una elección – y por eso es responsable de los errores y aciertos que componen su vida, de sus dosis de miseria y de dicha. El hombre no es una esencia inmutable (un 'alma') que precede y continúa a su trayectoria carnal, es una existencia que, a medida que se hace en el tiempo y en la historia, va constituyendo su propia e intransferible esencia. Existen los hombres, no la 'naturaleza' humana.'

misbehaviour, and, most of all, in the obstruction of juridical clarification when this misbehaviour or misconduct becomes too obvious or unbearable for the leaders of the institution.

As a matter of fact, these military norms as well as the highly hierarchical military conduct, which is not only forced upon by society, but by the militarised codes of *Leoncio Prado* itself, make it almost impossible for individual action or justice to materialise in any meaningful way. This is why the Sartrean *existentialist* propensities of the cadets are suppressed as well as their *existentialist* desires of freedom denied or punished, leading to social frustration, anxiety, despair and even death. Even Alberto, the enlightened alter ego of the author, must give in by the end of the novel. The reason is obvious: His morally courageous, but nevertheless critical and socially subversive stance against the school's directorate had to be doomed to fail from the start.

In addition to that, authoritarian patterns also shape the personal behaviour of the father of Ricardo or Alberto, thereby imitating the punishment meted out by the Colonel on Alberto – e.g. when Ricardo's father reprimands Ricardo for not getting up, being a 'woman', and not being an example for the other men in Lima. Thus, it could be argued that the other men in this scene – that is, fathers and husbands of conservative Peruvian families – are indirectly compared to the other officers and generals of the *Leoncio Prado* institution, obeying the orders of a macho-dominated, bourgeois-driven, patriarchal and catholic country, which Peru still was in the 1950s and 1960s.

In the end, all three circles or groups of authoritarian hierarchies, creating Sartrean-constructed *situations* – within the school and within the families – establish a vivid picture of an authoritarian country, namely the Peru of the Odría regime, of which the *Leoncio Prado* military academy is just the forefront and tragically its most visible institution of socially oppressive formation for the societal elites of the population. In this Peru of Odría, where the inhabitants are dominated by these control mechanisms of an oligarchic elite, a Sartrean *existentialist* form for the individual or, in similar ways, a desire for freedom of the socially progressive elements of society is a far cry from what could be realised in a democratic country, like France, where the author has lived since 1958. This socially violated and oppressed Peru – repeatedly denounced by Vargas Llosa himself¹¹⁰ –, with all its

¹¹⁰ Vargas Llosa, M.: *A Fish in the Water*, Ch. 11, p. 230, pp. 240-241, pp. 243-244.

authoritarianism, corruption, and injustices, again forms the central backdrop for the analysis of Vargas Llosa's third novel, *Conversación en La Catedral*.¹¹¹

All in all, in the author's first literary portrait of the social and political cosmos of his native Lima the forceful defence of an independently constructed, socially imbued form of Sartrean-Vargas-Llosan *rebelliousness* pursuing freedom (complemented by decisive 'Marxist elements' as part of the author's education) can be clearly traced and analysed. The central objective for both the author and his philosophical mentor Sartre during Vargas Llosa's early years of literary activity and civil commitment, comprising the decade of the 1960s, has been: *human freedom*. Therefore, the act of rebelling against the corrupt or politically authoritarian personnel in society's vital institutions and locations of power must, necessarily – either philosophically or physically – involve the desire to liberate oneself from the clutches of one's past or the social injustices of the present one is being surrounded with. Alonso Cueto defines the motivations for attaining liberty in Vargas Llosa's fiction as tragic incidents, which do, however, inspire the deeply human act of social and in the end, righteous rebelliousness:

Ejercer la libertad frente al poderoso se convierte en un dilema trágico para sus personajes, como ocurre con Alberto al denunciar al Círculo en *La ciudad y los perros* [...] Frente al ejercicio o a los abusos del poder, es decir, en el riesgo, en el peligro, sus personajes adquieren su identidad. Son quienes son en el acto de rebelión. La rebeldía es un definidor.¹¹²

This common and progressive act of rebelling in order to reach freedom for many of Vargas Llosa's main protagonists can, thus, not only be observed in Alberto in *La ciudad y los perros*, but also in Santiago in *Conversación en La Catedral*. Consequently, *rebellion* – as the first paradigm of freedom in the Vargas-Llosan literary universe, being part of the author's early phase of writing (1959-1971) – will be regarded as the first step of the progressive and intellectually defiant individual, emerging as victorious and in harmony with himself as well as his environment. This first step will, in the following chapter, be taken a couple of steps further in order to confront the individual conscience with one further literary paradigm from the author's progressive period, borrowed from Vargas Llosa's historical fiction: *political revolt*.

¹¹¹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Conversación en La Catedral*, Barcelona 1972⁶/2015; *Conversation in The Cathedral*, London 1993; *Gespräch in der 'Kathedrale'*, Frankfurt am Main 1984.

¹¹² Cueto, A.: 'Las novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa. Una teología del poder', pp. 33-56, cited in: Flores Heredia, G. (ed.): *La invención de la novela contemporánea*, p. 36.

Chapter 2

Revolt or the critique of political authorities in government and public life – *Conversación en La Catedral*

2.1. Revolt as historical and political necessity under the Odría regime

In the first chapter, *rebellion* has been considered as delivering the necessary inspiration for the author's progressive and emancipatory mind towards the artistic reflection on *rebellious (civil) society* against bourgeois or military dictatorship. Transformed into both a literary and a societal work of art, in agreement with the demands of Jean-Paul Sartre, it's an invocation to not only fantasise, but decisively *act* against the social injustices of society. Thus, in both writing and real life, implementing social progressiveness as a core element of history becomes the necessary realisation of both the Sartrean and Vargas-Llosan *human being*.

The best example in the political fiction by the author, thus far, has been the 'rebellious' portrayal of transgression of *situation* in the depiction of family, school, and social rebellion in his first novel *La ciudad y los perros*. In this second chapter, now, *revolt* will be introduced as the second paradigm of freedom in Vargas Llosa's political and historical fiction, applying, first, a Lukács-, then, a Gramsci-based approach – drawing upon their independent Marxist world view of class-conscious action based upon the left-wing convictions of the author in the 1960s. To that end, the best fictional example by the author for the analysis will be the political portrayal in *Conversación en La Catedral*, the alienation and rebellion of its left-wing protagonists as well as the popular revolt – in a classical Gramscian sense – of Arequipa's *historic bloc* against the oligarchic embodiment of political power, Odría's first minister of government – Don Cayo Bermúdez.

Throughout Peru in the 1950s and 1960s – by whose end Vargas Llosa had finished his second great social-literary critique regarding the Peruvian political class in power, *Conversación en La Catedral* – the author's native country is involved in a series of different types of political governance, ranging from authoritarian military dictatorship (Odría: 1948-1956) to oligarchic types of governance with the inclusion of parliament (Prado: 1956-1962)

to the populistically nationalist reform government of *Acción Popular* (Belaúnde: 1963-1968).¹ However, in the wake of the failure of the agrarian and economic reforms of *Popular Action* (AP) – its governmental efforts constantly blocked by the APRA-UNO opposition in parliament – the government itself is deposed by a coup d'état by the left-wing *Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces* under Velasco Alvarado (GRFA: 1968-1980).²

The most crucial element of societal formation during this period – defending the old oligarchic regime before Leguía, and then again under Sánchez Cerro and Benavides – is the military government under Gen. Manuel A. Odría, being the supreme head of state from 1950 to 1956. The ultimate taking of power by the military generals at the end of 1948 can only be regarded in relation to developments tied to the emergent social and working class movements in Peru since the demise of the Leguía regime in 1930.³ The Leguía authoritarian presidency (1919-1930) was built upon a newly introduced liberal ideological hegemony connected to an export-oriented Creole-based oligarchy and extractivist political class who contributed to a governmental and liberal elite that was largely dependent upon foreign (in particular, US- or European-led) investment, revenues and the exploitation of Peru's natural resources. Sánchez Cerro, Leguía's successor who deposed Leguía violently at the end of 1930, was assassinated at the beginning of 1933 by dissatisfied APRA members, leading, in turn, to another military government under a constitutional guise (led by Óscar Benavides), before being replaced by the democratically elected government under Manuel Prado (1939-1945). Unfortunately, Prado's democratic and progressive successor regime under Bustamante y Rivero (1945-1948) was cut short, once again, by a military coup d'état by Odría with lasting socio-political consequences for the country as a whole – delaying progressive social and political developments in Peru well until the decade of the 1960s.⁴

¹ Contreras, C., and Cueto, M.: *Historia del Perú Contemporáneo*, Lima 2018⁶, Capítulo 8: La restauración oligárquica, pp. 331-358; Klarén, P. F.: *Nación y sociedad en la historia del Perú*, Lima 2004, pp. 365-409; Cotler, J.: *Clases, estado y nación en el Perú*, Lima 2005³, pp. 211-334; Prieto Celi, F.: *Así se hizo el Perú*, Lima 2010, pp. 77-107.

² Contreras, C., and Cueto, M.: *Historia del Perú Contemporáneo*, pp. 352-356; Klarén, P. F.: *Nación y sociedad en la historia del Perú*, pp. 409-433; Cotler, J.: *Clases, estado y nación en el Perú*, Lima 2005³, pp. 295-340.

³ Contreras, C., and Cueto, M.: *Historia del Perú Contemporáneo*, pp. 259-289; Cotler, J.: *Clases, estado y nación*, Lima 2005³, pp. 179-246.

⁴ Cotler, J.: *Clases, estado y nación*, pp. 179-246; Contreras, C., and Cueto, M.: *Historia del Perú Contemporáneo*, pp. 260-324; Domínguez, N.: 'Fascismo a la peruana', cited in: <https://www.noticiasser.pe/fascismo-a-la-peruana>: 'La crisis económica y política que siguió al *Oncenio* de Leguía (1919-1930), con la expansión de las nuevas agrupaciones políticas de izquierda (el APRA y el Partido Comunista), que desafiaban al antiguo Civilismo de la 'República Aristocrática' (1899-1919), hicieron temer el final del orden oligárquico en el Perú. Al final, fue el ejército el que protegió a esa oligarquía, especialmente con las dictaduras de Benavides (1933-1939) y de Odría

Summarising this larger pattern of societal crisis in Peru between socially oppressed or progressive actors and the de facto organised oligarchic or military forms of exploitative governance of the state – forming the backdrop of social frustration and disillusionment in Vargas Llosa's *Conversación* – is Julio Cotler's portrayal of political class struggle between left- and right-wing forces, ending with the installation of one of Peru's most reactionary military regimes, going all the way back to the social struggles in the country since the 1930s:

Es así como se hizo evidente la problemática planteada en los años treinta. La clase dominante se encontraba imposibilitada para negociar con las clases populares las condiciones de su participación en la vida del país, sin dejar de ser lo que era: una heterogénea coalición de fuerzas que representaba políticamente los intereses de su patrocinador, el capital imperialista. Por su parte, el Estado se mostró incapaz de arbitrar los conflictos entre las clases sociales, al no contar con los recursos fiscales y legales necesarios que debía aportar la clase dominante. También resultó evidente el fracaso aprista, que con su política de 'transición' procuraba abrir – moderada y gradualmente – el Estado a los intereses populares, manteniendo en consecuencia la legalidad oligárquica [...] A raíz de este fallido levantamiento, el gobierno puso al Partido Aprista fuera de la ley e inició la persecución de sus dirigentes. Ahora sí, las fuerzas oligárquicas tenían todas en su haber para erradicar al [...] gobierno de Bustamante y Rivero que había perdido las bases sociales y políticas que lo habían sustentado hasta entonces. Al cabo de tres semanas el general Manuel A. Odría, con el claro y abierto patrocinio político y económico de la Alianza Nacional, dio el golpe que acabó con el frustrado experimento democrático [...] A partir de estas circunstancias se inició en el Perú un nuevo proceso de desarrollo del capitalismo, impulsado por las inversiones extranjeras que, tal como en las primeras décadas del siglo XX, promovieron una reestructuración de la sociedad y la constitución de nuevos intereses sociales y políticos que se erigieron contra el régimen oligárquico-dependiente determinando la agonía del sistema de dominación.⁵

With the advent of Manuel Odría's military regime – wresting from the Peruvian people the post-WWII triumphs of democracy and freedom – Vargas Llosa's socially progressive political attitude starts to evolve (as has already been mentioned in Chapter 1). In particular, during Vargas Llosa's student years at San Marcos University (1953-1958), the author's clandestine political activities on behalf of the Peruvian Communist Party shape his intellectual

(1948-1956), hasta que el gobierno militar iniciado en 1968 por el General Velasco Alvarado le dio fin, especialmente con la Reforma Agraria.' [last visited on 19-12-21]

⁵ Cotler, J.: *Clases, estado y nación*, p. 246.

life in the 1950s to a large extent, such as influencing him in his societal engagement with the *littérature engagée* of Sartre or in backing the socialist political measures of the Cuban Revolution. In Peru itself, Vargas Llosa's renowned rebellious stance against the Odría dictatorship arrives at the forefront of the debate in university seminar discussions and family reunions, in addition to journalistic commitments (e.g. in *La Crónica* in Lima or *La Industria* in Piura) and, most famously, as part of his autobiography (published in 1993), *El pez en el agua*.⁶

It is in his memoirs that Mario Vargas Llosa acknowledges his, on the one hand, gratitude towards the progressive administration of government before the coup d'état under Odría (being responsible for providing the author's grand-father with a steady and politically high-profile job as the prefect of Piura under Bustamante y Rivero from 1946-48⁷), and, on the other hand, starting, from an early age on, to harbour deeply held sentiments regarding the development of societal liberation towards different forms of socialism. It is this second political character trait of the author which will permeate his early Peruvian writings, and that, regarding the advent of socialism in Latin America – in an either democratic (such as in Peru) or revolutionary way (such as in Cuba) –, will strongly influence his narrative fiction from the beginning of the 1960s until the first half of the 1970s. Particularly remarkable here is the fact that in two of his first three publications, being part of his trilogy of the portrayal of the author's native Peru, the politically progressive attitude of the author can most clearly be analysed. Last but not least, in this second chapter on *Conversación en La Catedral*, a re-newed and yet more forceful critique of the Peruvian oligarchy is presented, depicting lasting socio-political or societal frustrations for which civil protest or revolutionary change seem to be the only options.

Moreover, as might be remembered from Vargas Llosa's short stories and novels (in particular, *Los jefes*, but also *La ciudad y los perros*) a frustrated standing up to or rebelling against the all-powerful (in addition to, immoral) authorities at school becomes one of the recurrent themes in the author's early and socially progressive fiction. Being derived from that, it is surely to be welcomed that the author has found in his rebellious youth and political action an identity that will help to shape an artistic literary portrait and vibrant writing style of engagement with the modern world of crisis and civil struggle.

⁶ Vargas Llosa, M.: *El pez en el agua*, Capítulo VII: pp. 141-155; Capítulo IX: pp. 193-196; Capítulo XI: pp. 231-255.

⁷ *El pez en el agua*, p. 28, p. 71, pp. 71-72, p. 73.

In the five years following Vargas Llosa's last term at high school, the author – who had decided to study literature and law at San Marcos, after having worked at *La Crónica* (like *Conversación's* main protagonist Santiago) – starts to explore at university, apart from his studies, his socially progressive as well as politically intellectual side of a not only rebellious, but increasingly revolutionary nature.

In the first part of *Conversación* the initiation and militancy rites of the PCP are depicted, adding to the socialist convictions of the author – desiring to form a union between the progressive urban *intelligentsia* (as part of the public universities, like San Marcos) and the industrial proletariat:

[Llaque:] –Ahora me toca preguntar a mí, camaradas–, sonrió Llaque [...] –¿Quieren entrar a Cahuide? Pueden trabajar como simpatizantes, no necesitan inscribirse en el Partido todavía.–

[Aída:] –Yo quiero entrar al Partido ahora mismo–, dijo Aída.

[Llaque:] –No hay apuro, pueden tomarse tiempo para reflexionar–, dijo Llaque.

[Jacobo:] –En el círculo hemos tenido de sobra para eso–, dijo Jacobo. –Yo también quiero inscribirme.–

[Santiago:] –Yo prefiero seguir como simpatizante– [...] –Tengo algunas dudas, me gustaría estudiar un poco más antes de inscribirme.–

[Llaque:] –Muy bien, camarada, no te inscribas hasta que superes todas las dudas–, dijo Llaque. –Como simpatizante se puede desarrollar también un trabajo muy útil.– [...]

¿Juran consagrar su vida a la causa del socialismo y de la clase obrera?, había preguntado Llaque, y Aída y Jacobo sí juro, mientras Santiago observaba; después eligieron sus seudónimos.

[Llaque:] –No te sientas disminuido–, le dijo Llaque a Santiago. –En la Fracción Universitaria, simpatizantes y militantes son iguales.–⁸

In Vargas Llosa's memoirs, *El pez en el agua*, the author gives the reader his very personal point of view regarding his involvement with *Cahuide* during his university years – something which has not only contributed to the author's support for the Marxist guerrillas of the ELN and MIR in the 1960s, but also to awakening his critical spirit when it comes to writing, turning the main figures of the author's fiction into either the heroes or demons of his own political past:

⁸ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Conversación en La Catedral*, Barcelona 1972⁶, pp. 160-162.

Nos confesamos enemigos de la dictadura y simpatizantes de la revolución y del marxismo. Pero ¿quedarían comunistas en el Perú? ¿No los había matado, encarcelado o deportado a todos Esparza Zañartu? [...] Sin embargo, la Universidad de San Marcos, fiel a su tradición rebelde, el año anterior, 1952, había desafiado a Odría [...] Lea sabía detalles de lo ocurrido, de los debates en la Federación de San Marcos y los centros federados, la guerra sorda entre apristas y comunistas (perseguidos ambos por el gobierno pero encarnizados enemigos entre sí) que yo le escuchaba boquiabierto [...] Creo que ella me habló por primera vez de José Carlos Mariátegui y de los *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* [...] Nuestro primer instructor [...] fue Héctor Béjar, quien sería en los años sesenta jefe de la guerrilla del ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional) y pasaría por ello varios años en la cárcel [...] Era algo mayor que nosotros – estaba ya en Derecho – y estudiar con él marxismo resultó agradable, pues era inteligente y sabía armar las discusiones [...].⁹

In 1958 Vargas Llosa finishes his university studies with a profound analysis of the work of Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío – founder of the Latin American literary movement *modernismo*. During the author's first year in Paris (1958-59) the most significant political event on the Latin American continent takes place: the Cuban Revolution. The Cuban Revolution (1959-) is the watershed moment in Latin America's newer political history (since the middle of the 20th century) – and also for the newer literature on the continent since the Latin American Boom. Both Gabriel García Márquez and Mario Vargas Llosa, defenders of Cuban socialism during the 1960s – the one, correspondent of *Prensa Latina* in the first years of the revolution, the other, member of the editorial committee of *Casa de las Américas* –, publish their first internationally acclaimed novels in 1966 (Vargas Llosa: *La casa verde*) and 1967 (García Márquez: *Cien años de soledad*), respectively. Most importantly, with the publication of Vargas Llosa's successor novel in 1969, *Conversación en La Catedral*, the most complete portrait of a socially progressive, if not socialist, critique of a military dictatorship empowered by the oligarchic class – similar to the Batista military regime of pre-revolutionary Cuba – is thus presented to a wider audience.

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⁹ *El pez en el agua*, pp. 232-240.

In total, *Conversación en La Catedral* is subdivided into four books, consisting of Part I, II, III, and IV. One approach to *Conversación* is to divide its narrative storytelling into the different plot lines of its main characters, such as Santiago, Ambrosio, and Don Cayo Bermúdez. However, we will summarise the main events and threads of the figures in *Conversación* in a chronological and biographical order. After the two narrators, Santiago and Ambrosio (former acquaintances through the work of Ambrosio for Santiago's father), meet in chapter 1 – in order to start talking about their lives throughout the regime –, the main narrative story line gets going. In the chapters of Part I the biographical and politico-ideological evolution of the main protagonist Santiago Zavala can be traced – being an alter ego of the author. Thereby, the development from his university days to participating as activist of the Communist Party is forcefully portrayed, ending in idealist disillusionment and the frustrated pursuit of a bourgeois lifestyle. In Part II the lives of both Don Cayo and Hortensia – the main lover of Don Cayo in San Miguel, after his work for the government – are depicted, together with the intertwining of the destinies of Amalia – who had been together with Trinidad – and Ambrosio (being the driver of Cayo), getting to know and falling in love with each other. In some of the sections as part of these chapters Ludovico and Hipólito – paid henchmen of the government for dissolving political protests – are introduced, who also reappear at the end of Part III, during the 'government-sponsored' counter-manifestation against the protest in Arequipa. Part III begins with the solving of the murder of Hortensia, intertwining the destiny of Hortensia (narrated in flashbacks together with the life of her friends, such as Queta) with the lives of Santiago, Carlitos, Becerrita, Ivonne – and ultimately, also, with Ambrosio's and Don Fermín's destiny. At the end of Part III the central narrative scene of *Conversación* – the historical revolt of Arequipa in 1955 – is fictionalised, politically as well as artistically. Finally, in Part IV the secret relationship between Ambrosio and Queta and Ambrosio's escape and adventures in Pucallpa (in a secondary plot line) are both portrayed in alternating sections of the chapters.

For the subsequent analysis of *Conversación en La Catedral* the following literary scholars, apart from works on the history and politics of Peru and the Odría regime¹⁰, have been

¹⁰ Contreras, C., and Cueto, M.: *Historia del Perú Contemporáneo*, Lima 2018⁶; Klarén, P. F.: *Nación y sociedad*, Lima 2004; Cotler, J.: *Clases, estado y nación*, Lima 2005³; Palmer, D. S.: *Peru. The Authoritarian Tradition*, New York 1980; Prieto Celi, F.: *Así se hizo el Perú*, Lima 2010; Pease García, H., and Romero Sommer, G.: *La política en el Perú del siglo XX*, Lima 2013; Aljovín de Losada, C., and López, S. (eds.): *Historia de las elecciones en el Perú*, Lima 2018²; Caravedo Molinari, B.: *Desarrollo desigual y lucha política en el Perú, 1948-1956*, Lima 1978; Vargas

consulted. That also includes literature for the socio-literary analysis of either the main or secondary characters of *Conversación*.

For the socio-literary analysis on *Conversación* Yolanda Westphalen Rodríguez¹¹ has been consulted regarding the main protagonist Santiago's socially critical attitude, Iván Hinojosa¹² for the portrayal of history and society in *Conversación*, Julio Roldán¹³ for the philosophical discourse in Vargas Llosa's early works, and, finally, Edmundo Bendezú Aibar¹⁴ from San Marcos for putting *Conversación* not only into the right historical and political, but also literary context. For Bendezú Aibar '*Conversación en La Catedral* es lo mejor que se había escrito en la novela urbana hasta 1969. Si pasamos por alto su erotismo artificial y gratuito, que más tiene que ver con los demonios de Vargas Llosa y con la mecánica del éxito internacional, *Conversación en La Catedral* es una obra maestra [...] del siglo XX.'¹⁵ Miguel Ángel Barreto Quiche¹⁶ from Lima analyses the dialectic of power and its transgression in *Conversación*, with power defined, in a Foucaultean sense, by its many, not always governmental, but also personal and mobile forms. Transgression resembles then, among other things, the direct confrontation with power in society (as well as its failures when it isn't successful), such as, first, regarding the cultural environment of Santiago relating to his father (the father-son conflict), and secondly, the socio-economic relationship of Ambrosio towards his employers Don Cayo or Don Fermín (the boss-servant conflict). Pedro Novoa¹⁷ from Lima presents the concept of *novela total* ('total novel') for his analysis of *Conversación*, defining it, in the terms of Vargas Llosa, with the description of a total reality, juxtaposing, with regards to the really existing forms of reality, an image that becomes, simultaneously, reality's expression and

Llosa, M.: *El pez en el agua*, Barcelona 1993; Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea I-III*, Barcelona 1983-1990; Setti, R. A.: *Sobre la vida y política. Diálogo con Vargas Llosa*, São Paulo 1986 / México D.F. 1990³.

¹¹ Westphalen Rodríguez, Y.: 'La mirada de Zavalita hoy - ¿en qué momento se jodió el Perú?', pp. 341-368, cited in: Forgues, R. (ed.): *Mario Vargas Llosa. Escritor, ensayista, ciudadano y político*, Lima 2001.

¹² Hinojosa, I.: 'Una aproximación histórica a *Conversación en La Catedral*', pp. 175-181, cited in: Centro Cultural de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú: Congreso *Las guerras de este mundo*, Lima 2008.

¹³ Roldán, J.: *Vargas Llosa. Entre el mito y la realidad*, Marburg 2012⁴.

¹⁴ Bendezú Aibar, E.: 'Conversación en La Catedral', pp. 89-115, cited in: Rodríguez Rea, M. A.(ed.): *Mario Vargas Llosa y la crítica peruana*, Lima 2011.

¹⁵ Bendezú Aibar, E.: 'Conversación en La Catedral', cited in: Rodríguez Rea, M. A.(ed.): *Mario Vargas Llosa y la crítica peruana*, pp. 114-115.

¹⁶ Barreto Quiche, M. A.: 'La idea de la transgresión fallida en el constructo narrativo de *Conversación en La Catedral* de Mario Vargas Llosa', pp. 175-190, cited in: Flores Heredia, G. (ed.): *La invención de la novela contemporánea*, Lima 2016.

¹⁷ Novoa, P.: 'Desvelamiento de la novela total en *Conversación en La Catedral: Artificios y falsificaciones*', pp. 191-208, cited in: Flores Heredia, G. (ed.): *La invención de la novela contemporánea*, Lima 2016.

negation. Following the analysis of Segundo Castro García¹⁸ from Huaraz (Ancash) *Conversación* can also be interpreted – alluding to the psychological term discipline – as a portrayal of bodily functions (Ambrosio vis-à-vis Don Fermín, Don Cayo vis-à-vis Hortensia and Queta) or political obedience (Ludovico and Hipólito vis-à-vis Don Cayo, Trifulcio vis-à-vis senator Arévalo) to different forms of power or relationships. Another concept by Foucault derived from the powers of society or government, such as ‘power strategies’, can be observed between Don Fermín (entrepreneur) and Don Cayo (government), between Don Cayo and his henchmen (Lozano, Hipólito, Ludovico), and between Santiago (distancing himself from his social class) and his parents Don Fermín and Doña Zoila (re-affirming a bourgeois lifestyle of the upper-middle class in Lima).

In Efraín Kristal’s study *Tentación de la palabra*¹⁹, *Conversación* is lauded for being one of Vargas Llosa’s great novels of his first trilogy of fiction, summarising – similar to Sabine Köllmann – first, the left-wing and progressive criticism from the 1960s to the mid-1980s (attesting MVLL “una limpia correspondencia’ entre sus novelas y ‘su adhesión a la Revolución cubana”²⁰), and secondly, recognising – in agreement with the modern criticism and politico-cultural world view since the 1990s –, a vision of non-conformism and rebelliousness of ‘those who aren’t disposed to participate in the corruption, from which they could benefit – even though this could mean failure or humiliation’.²¹ T. M. Scheerer²² focuses on the details of narrative technique and the theory of the novel, while associating with the portrayal of the regime under Odría a really existing dictatorship that produced ‘neither heroes nor martyrs’²³, admitted by Vargas Llosa in an interview. Overall, contrasting the political history with philosophy and technique, the historico-political analyses of *Conversación* seem to be the most fruitful and abundant, as can be derived from Oviedo’s *Mario Vargas Llosa: La invención de una realidad*²⁴ and Köllmann’s *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*.²⁵ In addition to his section relating to the socio-literary portrayal of *odriísta* decadence and human corruption, Oviedo’s analysis starts off with a pronouncement by Vargas Llosa on the interrelation

¹⁸ Castro García, S.: ‘Disciplina y estrategia en *Conversación en La Catedral*’, pp. 209-224, cited in: Flores Heredia, G. (ed.): *La invención de la novela contemporánea*, Lima 2016.

¹⁹ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, Lima 2018.

²⁰ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 169.

²¹ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 172 [The translation is mine].

²² Scheerer, T. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa. Leben und Werk*, Frankfurt am Main 1991.

²³ Scheerer, T. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa*, p. 41; also in Oviedo, J. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa. La invención de una realidad*, p. 245.

²⁴ Oviedo, J. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa*, Barcelona 1977²/1982³.

²⁵ Köllmann, S.: *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*, Woodbridge 2014.

between history and fiction in *Conversación*: 'Ese hecho, concretamente la huelga de Arequipa, es el único hecho histórico que aparece directamente en la novela. Es la primera vez que yo he intentado una cosa así, asimilar ficción con historia. Y es uno de los episodios que más trabajo me ha costado.'²⁶ Sabine Köllman comes to a similar conclusion: 'The period covered by the novel stretches over fifteen years, recognizable by the political history mentioned. [...] The absence of a central narrative perspective seemed essential [...] This becomes clear in the way the single recognizably historical event in the novel, the general strike in Arequipa directed against Odría's rule, is narrated: here, in chapter 4 of book 3, we find the biggest proliferation of dialogue fragments in the whole novel [...]. It represents the first of many attempts to turn history into fiction.'²⁷

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I shall now turn to my own approach to the novel, which is informed by the work of Georg Lukács and Antonio Gramsci. I shall split the sections of this main part into an analysis of Lukács-based class consciousness (2.2.) and an analysis of Gramsci-based class and social struggle (2.3. and 2.4.). Santiago and Ambrosio will be analysed according to a Lukács-informed perspective of class, while Don Cayo serves as the hegemon for the counter-hegemonic struggle of Arequipa's newly emergent bloc of Gramsci-related social forces.

The first modern philosopher who introduced the concept of *class struggle* was Karl Marx, together with Friedrich Engels, in the Communist Manifesto of 1848. In its opening paragraphs the following can be found on class struggle and the history of class struggles, marking the first political and scientific appearance of the term:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes [...] The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones [...] Our epoch,

²⁶ Oviedo, J. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa*, p. 205.

²⁷ Köllmann, S.: *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*, pp. 114-115.

the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.²⁸

In one of Vargas Llosa's articles from Paris – from early 1965 (at the height of the guerrilla struggle in Peru) – the author explains his current support for Marxism based on a Sartrean as well as Lukács-informed reading, personally endorsing a class-based approach when it comes to a modern conception for a progressively socialist vision of society and its political culture. At the end of *Sartre y el marxismo* Vargas Llosa summarises the following, from a Marxist point of view coherent method of regarding the proletarian class (with the Communist Party as its vanguard instrument of political leadership) as representing an ideological unity of the progressive and organised elements of society, leading – hopefully – to a classless form of society ('intención') in the very end ('operación fechada'):

Sartre reprocha a algunos sociólogos, entre ellos Gurvitch, hablar del proletariado como de una especie zoológica, y considerar a sus miembros 'productos inertes de factores objetivos'. La burguesía [...] tiende constantemente a convertir al proletariado en masa, reunión de 'torbellinos moleculares, en una multiplicidad de reacciones infinitesimales que se refuerzan o se anulan y cuya resultante es una fuerza más física que humana'. Inversamente, es contra esta tendencia que la clase se hace y se rehace sin tregua: 'Ella es unidad real de muchedumbres y de masas históricas y se manifiesta por una operación fechada y que expresa una intención.'²⁹

Following the traditional Marxist distinction between social classes (between the bourgeois class and the proletariat, introduced by Marx and Engels, or equally, of oligarchic class and the democratic revolution) another Marxist writer, born in Budapest – but also having lived in Vienna, Berlin, and Moscow –, namely Georg Lukács, presented his renowned anthology of studies on *History and Class Consciousness*.³⁰ In the wake of the Russian Revolution, consciousness of the proletarian worker and his class is analysed as the most vital ingredient for the discipline and organisation of the revolutionary working class and its vanguard party,

²⁸ Marx, K., and Engels, F.: *The Communist Manifesto*, Oxford 1992/1998.

²⁹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Entre Sartre y Camus*, pp. 50-51; *Contra viento y marea*, p. 74; *Contra viento y marea I*, p. 90.

³⁰ Lukács, G.: *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*, Berlin 1923; Lukács, G.: *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*, Darmstadt 1968/1979⁶; Lukács, G.: *History and Class Consciousness*, London 1971; Lukács, G.: *Existentialismus oder Marxismus?*, Berlin 1951; Arato, A., and Breines, P.: *The Young Lukács and the Origins of Western Marxism*, London and New York 1979.

which, only if it acts consciously and in unified fashion, is able to dismantle the bourgeois state and lead the way to socialism.

One last and decisively Marxist thinker we will incorporate into the analysis is Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), and, in particular, his concepts of hegemony, historic bloc, and counter-hegemonic struggle in civil society, which challenges the *hegemonic* or 'established' order.

In Stephen Hobden's and Richard Wyn Jones' book chapter on Marxist theories of international relations³¹ Gramsci is regarded as the intellectual pioneer of critical theory and Neo-Marxism. With Karl Marx having invented the renowned base-superstructure model – means or relations of production vs. the political, legal, and cultural system –, a common error of 20th century or later Marxists, in their critical analysis of capitalist society, has been to solely analyse the material or economic relationships of society, or, in contrast, concentrating on politics or culture as the most important societal phenomena.

In the section on Gramscianism the following is said on hegemony, the hidden consent of social or cultural forces by the oppressed groups in society, but also, how 'subaltern' and 'pro-active' democracy can successfully establish a consciousness and a path to challenge the order of thinking and acting in bourgeois culture:

Consent, on Gramsci's reading, is created and re-created by the hegemony of the ruling stratum in society. It is this hegemony that allows the moral, political, and cultural values of the dominant group to become widely dispersed throughout society and to be accepted by subordinate groups and classes as their own. [...] Several important implications flow from this analysis. The first is that Marxist theory needs to take superstructural phenomena seriously, because while the structure of society may ultimately be a reflection of social relations of production in the economic base, the nature of relations in the superstructure is of great relevance in determining how susceptible that society is to change and transformation. Gramsci used the term *historic bloc* to describe the mutually reinforcing and reciprocal relationships between the socio-economic relations (base) and political and cultural practices (superstructure) that together underpin a given order. [...] Another crucial implication is for political practice. If the *hegemony* of the ruling class or stratum is a key element in the perpetuation of its dominance, then society can only be transformed if that hegemonic position is successfully challenged. This entails a

³¹ Hobden, S., and Wyn Jones, R.: 'Marxist theories of international relations', pp. 225-249, cited in: Baylis, J., and Smith, S.: *The Globalization of World Politics*, Oxford 2005.

counter-hegemonic struggle in civil society, in which the prevailing hegemony is undermined, allowing an *alternative historic bloc* to be constructed.³²

Now, we shall introduce and put into the right political context the main content of *Conversación*, which is Vargas Llosa's literary portrayal of social frustration and protest against the oligarchically traditionalist Odría regime that cannot help but dominate its accomplices ideologically and suppress its political opponents by military force. From the start, it has to be said that the two revolutionary moments, imbuing the novel with these central, socially progressive elements of critique, are, on the one hand, Santiago's student years at San Marcos and work at the PCP (*Cahuide*) and, on the other hand, the student-led, but opposition-supported rebellion in Arequipa, which causes the downfall of the first minister of government, Don Cayo, and the regime under Odría itself, as a consequence.

To start with, I shall explain the politically dictatorial structure of Odría's state confronting a classless mass of followers with a supreme and highly authoritarian leadership. First, I shall present the analysis of both of the progressive main protagonists Santiago and Ambrosio, who, however, have to struggle, throughout the course of the novel, with their social or political endeavours related to either their professional or human marginalisation (their job or their relationships), exposing – as in *La ciudad y los perros* – the socially deterministic and politically cruel universe of the oligarchic-militarist society under Odría. The main character Santiago's socially progressive, but oftentimes unsuccessful behaviour will be contrasted with the behaviour of Santiago's largely regime-dependent father Don Fermín Zavala, representing a typical embodiment of a rich and socially despised capitalist entrepreneur in the Peru of the 1950s and 1960s. Ambrosio, Santiago's conversational partner in the 1960s, will be portrayed, in particular in the scenes relating to Don Fermín and Queta, Ambrosio's secret, also dark-skinned girl-friend, as someone who manages to survive in Lima, in spite of his extremely precarious and socially marginalised position as part of Odría's Peru. Apart from Santiago's frustrated progressiveness as part of the left-wing *intelligentsia* against the oligarchy, Ambrosio's insufficient progressiveness as belonging to the non-organised working class under Odría can be considered, in part, as being characteristic for someone quietly resisting the oppressive structures of an authoritarian, ethno-centric and economically exploitative regime.

³² Hobden, S., and Wyn Jones, R.: 'Marxist theories of international relations', pp. 225-249, cited in: Baylis, J., and Smith, S.: *The Globalization of World Politics*, p. 236.

Secondly, after having analysed the socially progressive intentions, but ultimate failures of the class-conscious individuals in *Conversación*, namely Santiago (in relation to Santiago's father) and Ambrosio (in relation to Don Fermín), we will come to the critical portrayal of the highest embodiment of power in relation to the Odría regime itself, Don Cayo Bermúdez. The literary figure of Don Cayo, analogous to the real security and interior minister from the 1950s, embodies one of the highest positions of authoritarian power as part of the regime, while representing – more generally – an undemocratic, corrupt, and macho-type attitude towards his subordinates and citizens, symbolising the militarist and uncritical cosmivision for society under Odría.

Thirdly, departing from a Marxist standpoint of *Conversación* in connection to Vargas Llosa's understanding of Sartrean *littérature engagée* and his own Lukács-informed political commitment, what will be conclusively analysed is one of the central expressions of political revolt in the novel (if not, one of the central *themes*), surpassing the manifestations of rebellion in *Ciudad*: namely, the successful Arequipa revolt of December 1955.³³ What's being fictionalised in this part of the novel are the historical democratic movements for social and political change in Arequipa since 1945 (being part of Vargas Llosa's family history and biography), which were motivated by an alliance between the emerging bourgeois class, the Communist and APRA Party, giving birth to the Peruvian political ideology of *Democracia Cristiana* (PDC: abbreviation of the political party movement).³⁴

Hereafter, the social frustrations of many of the main characters with many of the more prominent secondary characters – in particular, Santiago and Ambrosio in relation to Santiago's father, Don Fermín, and Don Cayo Bermúdez – will be regarded as Marxist critiques of an ultra-capitalist and ultra-fascist regime based on the conservative masses in contrast to the conscious struggle of the progressive labourers or *intelligentsia*. In this way, the intellectual and material rebellion against the entrepreneurial and supportive father by Santiago, or, the material and social submission to the exploitative employer by Ambrosio are both critiques of relationships of a class-based nature, through which the oligarchic and capitalist ruling class during the 1950s and 1960s in Lima and Peru, in particular their fictionalised embodiments, is condemned. Furthermore, in sections two and three of the main

³³ *Conversación en La Catedral*, Barcelona 1972⁶, Part III, Chapter 4: pp. 482-517.

³⁴ Caravedo Molinari, B.: *Desarrollo desigual y lucha política en el Perú, 1948-1956*, pp. 127-146; Vargas Llosa, M.: *A Fish in the Water*, pp. 294-300.

part of the analysis, the apogee of class antagonisms will be presented as the relationship between the regime-supporting and right-wing minister of the regime, Don Cayo, and the left-wing student as well as labour movement from Arequipa. Therefore, the fictionalised incarnation of Don Cayo Bermúdez as Peruvian capitalism's most daunting evils – extractivism, militarism, and US-supported imperialism – will serve, in the second part of the analysis, as the central point of departure for the political portrayal and victory of the progressive social classes against a reactionary military government, embodying the final and undemocratic vestiges of the Peruvian oligarchic class in power.

2.2. The critique of the oligarchic class and the defence of class consciousness in *Conversación en La Catedral*

In the following section, the class-conscious behaviour of both main protagonists – Santiago and Ambrosio – towards their middle-class-imbued 'role models' (Santiago's father) as well as material and political exploiters (Ambrosio's employer in Lima, Don Fermín) will be analysed.

In the very last scene of the first part of *Conversación* (Chapter 10) the quintessential conflict between the existentialist, independently socialist or progressive individual (already praised by the author's intellectual role model at the time: Sartre) and the patriarchal or capitalist exigencies of society – in particular, during the oligarchically influenced 1950s and 1960s in Lima – is forcefully illustrated. The scene concerns the main protagonist Santiago Zavala, the author's alter ego, and the entrepreneur Don Fermín Zavala, Santiago's father. The decisive conversation between both occurs after Santiago is freed from the headquarters of the interior ministry led by Cayo Bermúdez (having been arrested for 'subversive' activities) – confronting his father, Don Fermín, with the conflict of desiring to be independent, but without having to fulfil the political exigencies of the regime.

Here, the critical attitude of the author can be observed, revealing itself as part of the phrase 'No quieres depender de un capitalista' by Don Fermín, because what's problematic about it are two conflicts, characteristic of the society under Odría. The dual nature of the conflict is obvious: The person who is responding to Santiago is not only someone with a materially secure position, but also Santiago's father, due to being the main person of authority in a patriarchal system that ruled the country in the 1950s. Consequently, in order

to make himself independent of this *odriísta* vision for society, the main protagonist has to either adopt leftist or socially progressive attitudes, or become entirely sovereign in his actions or intellect without having to depend upon the ideology of the regime itself:

[Santiago Zavala:] –No estoy enojado contigo, papá. Pero no puedo seguir viviendo de una manera y pensando de otra. Por favor, trata de entenderme, papá.–

[Don Fermín Zavala:] –¿No puedes seguir viviendo cómo?– [...] –¿Qué hay aquí que vaya contra tu manera de pensar, flaco?–

[Santiago Zavala:] –No quiero depender de las propinas.– [...] –No quiero que cualquier cosa que haga recaiga sobre ti. Quiero depender de mí mismo, papá.–

[Don Fermín Zavala:] –No quieres depender de un capitalista.– [...] –¿No quieres vivir con tu padre porque recibe contratos del gobierno? ¿Es por eso?–³⁵

Moreover, Santiago's decidedly progressive attitudes stand in sharp contrast to those of his father (a strong allusion to the author's own life). In agreement with Vargas Llosa's socialist worldview from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s Santiago's socially alienated side towards his father does seem to complement Santiago's political attitude and societal rebelliousness.

Santiago, thus, is the most important social and intellectual actor, embodying two of the most progressive professions at the time – politics and journalism –, however, he is unable, in the end, to change the regime's policies or political direction. Working for *La Crónica* in later chapters, the reader is reminded of Santiago's previous convictions – *La Revolución* – before entering into a steadier job on a low-to-middle-class income, from which *revolution* can obviously not directly be practised, but *rebellion* or *revolt* still supported. In a later scene (Part III, Chapter 1) Carlitos, Santiago's colleague at *La Crónica*, reminds *Zavalita* of their joint background as failed social and political rebels from the literary and societal scene, despising the artistic and intellectual atmosphere under the Odría regime:

–Aquí tuvimos nuestra primera conversación de masoquistas, Zavalita–, dijo. –Aquí nos confesamos que éramos un poeta y un comunista fracasados. Ahora somos sólo dos periodistas. Aquí nos hicimos amigos, Zavalita.–³⁶

Don Fermín, the father of Santiago, functions as the most decisive supporting column of the dictatorship Santiago denounces – representing one of the most important entrepreneurs of nation-wide investment and governmental lobbying, indispensable for the survival of the regime itself. Don Fermín Zavala, however, respected by the first minister of government (Don

³⁵ *Conversación en La Catedral*, p. 215.

³⁶ *Conversación en La Catedral*, p. 397.

Cayo) and admired by some representatives from the more liberal political circles, also becomes a victim of the regime, due to his lenience towards the political opposition as well as his homosexual propensities towards his personal driver, Ambrosio.

Adding to the critical portrayal of the characters by the author, in terms of their failed progressiveness, Yolanda Westphalen presents her own analysis of the main protagonist Santiago, in connection with the slow decay of oligarchic power under Odría and the frustrations regarding any meaningful intellectual or social counter-movement:

La oligarquía y sus funcionarios, con su podredumbre económica y moral son vistos desde arriba, desde la mirada sancionadora de Zavalita, quien se aleja de su familia y opta por la automarginación de su clase [...] Pasividad e indolencia, corrupción y servilismo, degradación e impotencia se dan de la mano para mantener las cosas como están.³⁷

After having analysed Santiago's socially progressive attitude and class-conscious behaviour (which, however, lets itself become increasingly corrupted by the bourgeois main trends of society by the second half of the novel) – defending a Marxist intellect, forged during adolescence and at university, against his father's entrepreneurial lifestyle under Odría – a second character analysis regarding Ambrosio will be presented. Here, what's important is that the focus of the analysis will shift from the social and political frustration of the main character Santiago to forms of social alienation in the development of Santiago's conversational partner and second main character of the novel, Ambrosio.

The progressive concepts from social philosophy of *self-realisation* and *self-expression* will be introduced, before the problems concerning social and human alienation in relation to the main character Ambrosio, failing to realise his class-conscious personality, are illustrated. The need for a social and political identity, comprising a democratically socialist and ethically humanist character, is summarised by the two philosophical constructs of *need for recognition* (realisation) as well as *self-expression through work* (expression), delineated in the chapter on Hegel and self-realisation in Richard Norman's *The Moral Philosophers: An Introduction to Ethics*³⁸:

The concept of self-realization takes up and develops the Kantian idea of persons as ends in themselves. It recognizes that human beings need to have a sense of existing as persons in their own right, with a life of their own and with aims and ideas of their own. There are

³⁷ Westphalen Rodríguez, Dra. Y.: 'La mirada de Zavalita hoy - ¿en qué momento se jodió el Perú?', Lima 2001, pp. 341-368, cited in: Forgues, R. (ed.): *Mario Vargas Llosa. Escritor, ensayista, ciudadano y político*, pp. 358-359.

³⁸ Norman, R.: *The Moral Philosophers*, Oxford 1998².

two important pre-conditions of this sense of identity. The first of these is the *need for recognition*. This is a major theme in Hegel's philosophy – the idea that the individual's consciousness of himself depends upon its being confirmed by others.³⁹ [...] A second and closely-linked pre-condition of a sense of identity is the *need for self-expression through work*. This too is a point made by Hegel, and it is taken up and developed more extensively by Marx in his discussion of alienated labour. I shall refer again briefly in the next chapter to Marx's idea that it is through their work on the world that human beings give objective expression to their own identity, in a public and visible form.⁴⁰

In order to explain the essence of human well-being connected to labour – from a non-bourgeois and progressively socialist perspective –, a very short exposition of the topic seems warranted, providing the reader with a familiarity with the political abuses of economic *exploitation* and social *alienation*. In Lukács' *The Ontology of Social Being: Hegel's False and Genuine Ontology (Volume 1)*⁴¹ Marx, based on his economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844⁴², criticises Hegelian dialectics supporting the review of Hegel by Feuerbach, coming to the conclusion that idealist philosophy (the main current of German philosophy from Kant to Hegel), as religion in the wake of German Enlightenment, results in the alienation or estrangement of the human being from himself.⁴³ Put more succinctly, human consciousness – dependent upon the economic and materially productive structure of society – must be transformed into a social and material existence of equality and freedom for the workers and their oppressors, the capitalist or bourgeois class. In other words, an authentic human materialism should define social relationships, neither the spiritualism of Hegel nor the idealist utopian dreams of other, earlier German philosophers. In Marx's words from the *Preface of a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*⁴⁴, social and human existence, leading to progress and human equality (in Marx's own dialectical analysis in the Communist

³⁹ Cited in Norman, R.: *The Moral Philosophers*, p. 124: Hegel's discussion of the need for recognition and self-expression through work can be found in the section 'Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage' in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and in the corresponding section 'Self-Consciousness Recognitive' in his *Philosophy of Mind*.

⁴⁰ Norman, R.: *The Moral Philosophers*, p. 124.

⁴¹ Lukács, G.: *The Ontology of Social Being. Hegel's False and Genuine Ontology (Volume 1)*, London 1978; Lukács, G.: *Zur Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins*, Berlin und Neuwied 1971.

⁴² Marx, K.: *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and the Communist Manifesto*, New York 1988; Marx-Engels-Werke (MEW), *Band 40*, Berlin 2012³.

⁴³ Lukács, G.: *Zur Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins*, p. 43.

⁴⁴ Marx, K.: *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, January 1859: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm> [last visited on 22-02-22]; Marx, K., and Engels, F.: *Ausgewählte Schriften in zwei Bänden. Band I*, pp. 336-340.

Manifiesto⁴⁵), must necessarily replace spiritual and older forms of property-related consciousness:

The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.⁴⁶

In the following – justifying why labour can and must be regarded as the ‘original phenomenon’⁴⁷ of human nature, as the ‘model for social being and practice’⁴⁸ – both Hegelian-Marxist concepts of *need for recognition* and *need for self-expression through work*, comprising the socially progressive terms of identity and alienation, will be exemplified regarding the behaviour of the main character Ambrosio against the historical background of the Odría regime in *Conversación*. Thus, in the first set of scenes as part of *Conversación* (Part IV: Ch. 4, Section II, Ch. 5, Section II, Ch. 6, Section II, Ch. 7, Section II) Ambrosio’s *exploitation* and the need for *recognition* are portrayed (in relation to Lima and Don Fermín), and contrasted with the second set of scenes (Part IV: Ch. 1, Section IV, Ch. 2, Section IV, Ch. 3, Section IV, Ch. 4, Section IV, Ch. 5, Section III, Ch. 6, Section III, Ch. 7, Section III, Ch. 8, Section III), in which Ambrosio’s liberation from *alienation* and the need for *self-expression through work* (related to Pucallpa) is depicted.

In Part IV, Ch. 5, Section II the exploitative relationship between Don Fermín and Ambrosio – socially as well as sexually – is portrayed, demonstrating how, in a first step, Ambrosio’s *need for recognition* is violently abused by his employer in Lima, Don Fermín, not just as Fermín’s driver, but also as the victim of the projection of Fermín’s homosexual fantasies. In this scene Ambrosio’s dependency in relation to his boss – in connection with the non-stable position as chauffeur and darker-skinned ethnic background as a *zambo* (a mixture of African and indigenous blood) – can be experienced as part of a situation in which Don Fermín decides, while being driven in his car by his driver to his private mansion, to sexually harass Ambrosio as they make their way to Ancón (Northern Lima) – all of which is, once again, set against the background of the dialogue between Ambrosio and Queta:

[Queta:] –¿Era la primera vez?–, dijo Queta. –¿Antes nunca nadie te había?–

⁴⁵ Marx, K., and Engels, F.: *The Communist Manifesto*, Oxford 1992/1998.

⁴⁶ Marx, K.: *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, January 1859: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm> [last visited on 22-02-22]; Marx, K., and Engels, F.: *Ausgewählte Schriften in zwei Bänden. Band I*, p. 338.

⁴⁷ Giesbert, A.: ‘The Ontology of Alienation: Lukács Normative Theory of History’, pp. 116-151, cited in: Thompson, M. J.: *Georg Lukács and the Possibility of Critical Social Ontology*, Chicago 2020, p. 133.

⁴⁸ Giesbert, A.: ‘The Ontology of Alienation: Lukács Normative Theory of History’, p. 133.

[Ambrosio:] –Sí, sentía miedo–, se quejó él. –Subí por Brasil, por Alfonso Ugarte, crucé el Puente del Ejército y los dos callados. Sí, la primera vez. No había ni un alma en las calles. En la carretera tuve que poner las luces altas porque había neblina. Estaba tan nervioso que empecé a acelerar. De repente vi la aguja en noventa, en cien ¿ve? Fue ahí. Pero no choqué.–

[Queta:] –Ya apagaron las luces de la calle–, se distrajo un instante Queta, y volvió: – ¿Sentiste qué?–

[Ambrosio:] –Pero no choqué, no choqué–, repitió él con furia, estrujando la rodilla. – Sentí que me desperté, sentí que, pero pude frenar.–

De golpe, como si en la mojada carretera hubiera surgido un intempestivo camión, un burro, un árbol, un hombre, el auto patinó chirriando salvajemente y chicoteó a derecha e izquierda y zigzagueó, pero sin salirse de la carretera. Brincando, crujiendo, recuperó el equilibrio cuando pareció que se volcaba y ahora Ambrosio disminuyó la velocidad, temblando.

[Ambrosio:] –¿Usted cree que con el frenazo, con la patinada me soltó?–, se quejó Ambrosio, vacilando. –La mano seguía aquí, así.–

[Fermín Zavala:] –Quién te ordenó parar–, dijo la voz de don Fermín. –He dicho a Ancón.–

[Ambrosio:] –Y la mano ahí, aquí–, susurró Ambrosio. –Yo no podía pensar y arranqué de nuevo y no sé. No sé ¿ve? De repente otra vez noventa, cien en la aguja. No me había soltado. La mano seguía así.–

[Queta:] –Te caló apenas te vio–, murmuró Queta, echándose de espaldas. –Una ojeada y vio que te haces humo si te tratan mal. Te vio y se dio cuenta que si te ganan la moral te vuelves un trapo.–

[Ambrosio:] –Pensaba voy a chocar y aumentaba la velocidad–, se quejó Ambrosio, jadeando. –La aumentaba ¿ve?–

[Queta:] –Se dio cuenta que te morirías de miedo–, dijo Queta con sequedad, sin compasión. –Que no harías nada, que contigo podía hacer lo que quería.–

[Ambrosio:] –Voy a chocar, voy a chocar–, jadeó Ambrosio. –Y hundía el pie. Sí, tenía miedo ¿ve?–

[Queta:] –Tenías miedo porque eres un servil–, dijo Queta con asco. –Porque él es blanco y tú no, porque él es rico y tú no. Porque estás acostumbrado a que hagan contigo lo que quieran.–

[Ambrosio:] –La cabeza me daba sólo para eso–, susurró Ambrosio, más agitado. –Si no me suelta voy a chocar. Y su mano aquí, así. ¿Ve? Así hasta Ancón.–⁴⁹

In this very important scene, involving Ambrosio, Don Fermín, and Queta (with Queta being Ambrosio's first conversational partner, and Fermín being Ambrosio's second conversational partner), the sexual harassment and exploitative employer-employee relationship between Don Fermín and Ambrosio is exposed. Furthermore, in this scene one of Vargas Llosa's most renowned narrative techniques – *los vasos comunicantes* – is employed, defining itself in the following way: '[The technique] consists in inserting into a sole unit of narration events, persons or situations, which belong to other literary spaces or time periods; consists in, further, merging and linking aforementioned events, persons or situations with one another [...]'⁵⁰ What's characteristic of this technique in the aforementioned scene is that one joint character – in this case: Don Fermín – is the main *theme* of the conversation or situation in both dialogues: first, involving Ambrosio and Queta talking about Don Fermín in the present dialogue, and secondly, Don Fermín as the main *theme* of the conversation or situation in the past dialogue, involving Ambrosio and him together in the car driving towards Ancón. Consequently, Ambrosio's present existence is determined by past events in such a way that both temporal stages merge, through the liaison of both conversations, into only one stage. All in all, the past (the act of sexual harassment and exploitation by Don Fermín) and the present time (the conversation regarding Don Fermín) increasingly belong to one joint temporality. Finally, the *indetermination* or *superimposition* of narrative perspectives can clearly be recognised in this scene between Ambrosio, Queta, and Don Fermín. For example, different objects or body parts – such as the hand of Ambrosio on Queta's knee and the hand of Don Fermín on Ambrosio's genital area – seemingly merge into one action (that of sexual abuse by Don Fermín, representing the 'employer' or the bourgeois class), portrayed from different perspectives.

In a second scene between Don Fermín and Ambrosio – still set against the background of the conversation between Ambrosio and Queta – Ambrosio is physically abused by his employer, Don Fermín, depicted in all its detail:

⁴⁹ *Conversación en La Catedral*, pp. 614-615.

⁵⁰ Martín, J. L.: *La narrativa de Vargas Llosa. Acercamiento estilístico*, Madrid 1974, pp. 181 (ff.), cited in: Scheerer, T. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa. Leben und Werk*, p. 51 [The translation is mine].

[Ambrosio:] –Se pone de rodillas ¿ve?–, gimió Ambrosio. –Quejándose, a veces medio llorando. Déjame ser lo que soy, dice, déjame ser una puta, Ambrosio. ¿Ve, ve? Se humilla, sufre. Que te toque, que te lo bese, de rodillas, él a mí ¿ve? Peor que una puta ¿ve?– [...]

[Ambrosio:] –Le da vergüenza, también–, gimió Ambrosio. –Se va al baño, se encierra y no sale nunca. Yo voy al otro bañito, me ducho, me jabono. Hay agua caliente y todo. Vuelvo y él no ha salido. Se está horas lavándose, se echa colonias. Sale pálido, no habla. Anda al auto, dice, ya bajo. Déjame en el centro, dice, no quiere que lleguemos juntos a su casa.–⁵¹

Ambrosio, even though he is psychologically and physically abused, let's Don Fermín proceed, nevertheless, since he's materially entirely dependent upon his middle-class boss from Lima. In contrast, Don Cayo – the other main embodiment of political power in *Conversación*, differing from entrepreneurial embodiments of power related to Don Fermín – does not, as the de facto first minister of government, oppress his *political* and *social* 'victims' *sexually* like Don Fermín. However, both Don Fermín and Don Cayo are corrupt, and are, in the truest sense, culturally and politically *decadent subjects* – who are raised with as well as shaped, but eventually disfigured and socially deformed, by the same corrupt principles and values of the Odría dictatorship that are forced upon the rest of society.

Coming back to Lukács and an independent assessment of Marxist forms of economic and social alienation, resulting from class-based exploitation – embodied as well as resisted by Ambrosio –, the following can be said regarding the aforementioned fictionalised settings of *frustrated* need for recognition:

'A non-objective being is a non-being.' Connecting the Hegelian approach to concepts that regard alienation as a *condition humaine*, [Lukács] then locates the problem exclusively in the realm of social being. In opposition to objectification, alienation is a strictly socio-historical phenomenon that arises at a specific state of human history and can therefore be abolished.⁵²

In other words, the progressively enlightened individual of an independent Marxist nature – such as Ambrosio – will find the key to its nature, not in resisting or rebelling against the exploitative desires of his employer, but rather in finding, external to its entirely class-based relationship, his own libertarian and socialist relationship with society. Therefore, in *Conversación*, Ambrosio – in choosing his own, Lukács-related *identity* – decides to turn his

⁵¹ *Conversación en La Catedral*, pp. 630-631.

⁵² Giesbert, A.: 'The Ontology of Alienation: Lukács Normative Theory of History', p. 126 [The italics have been added by me].

back on Lima – the capital of the Creole elite in Peru –, making his way to the regional capital of orientally imbued and tropically influenced Pucallpa (Ucayali), where his social and cultural *alienation* will hopefully end, while individually labouring to fulfill his Hegelian and Marxist form of *self-expression through work*:

[Amalia:] –¿De dónde sacaste tanta plata?–, le había preguntado Amalia esa noche.

[Ambrosio:] –Todos esos años había estado ahorrando–, dice Ambrosio. –Para instalarme y trabajar por mi cuenta, niño.–

[Amalia:] –Entonces deberías estar contento–, había dicho Amalia. –Pero no estás. Te pesa haberte venido de Lima.–

[Ambrosio:] –Ya no tendré jefe, ahora yo mismo seré mi jefe–, había dicho Ambrosio. –Claro que estoy contento, tonta.–⁵³

What can aptly be inferred from these last passages regarding the individual development of one of the main characters of *Conversación* (independent of the success of his or her class-based actions) – adding a socio-ethnic element in relation to the other main figure Santiago –, is that a progressive vision for individually pursuing a non-alienated form of democracy, comprising non-exploitative labour relations, is still relevant, if not necessary, for constructing a non-ideological and non-dogmatic form of socialism until today:

Lukács' humanist understanding of Marx demands a realization of communism that allows for the growth of each individual. By that, it is a forceful corrective against alienated forms of socialism and is still helpful to discern Marx's idea of socialism and communism from its historically 'realized' forms. It keeps the idea of a radical new form of social being alive and delegates this task to each and every one without forgetting about the overwhelming power of cultural habits and economic reality.⁵⁴

In Lukács' last part of the ontology of social being – conferring on labour the central function of human and society-wide freedom –, labour relationships have to be based on a social set of conscious and non-alienated individuals.⁵⁵ Differing from the existentialist vision of freedom related to individual action,⁵⁶ the non-dogmatic and post-Stalinist vision of Lukács for the dialectical liberation of humanity can be found in the joint observation of freedom being part of a newly formed being belonging to a freed civil society. Regarding critically the

⁵³ *Conversación en La Catedral*, p. 537.

⁵⁴ Giesbert, A.: 'The Ontology of Alienation: Lukács Normative Theory of History', p. 151.

⁵⁵ Lukács, G.: *Zur Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins. Die Arbeit*, p. 152, pp. 158-159; Lukács, G.: *The Ontology of Social Being, Vol. 3: Labour*, London 1980.

⁵⁶ Lukács, G.: *Zur Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins. Die Arbeit*, p. 159; Lukács, G.: *The Ontology of Social Being, Vol. 3: Labour*, London 1980.

liberal view of human development since his leaving behind the instinct-led *laws of nature* – following the discoveries of the Scottish Enlightenment –, the path of Lukács and other Neo-Marxists tries to establish a still valid third way of Western Marxism, where labour isn't primarily based on wage-dependent or property-related exploitation on an industrial scale, but on free and creative beings of economic and cultural aspirations that are projected against a societal background of egalitarianism, social non-alienation, and mutual recognition.

2.3. Don Cayo Bermúdez as the highest embodiment of the class interests of the oligarchy

In this section on class consciousness and revolt against the oligarchic class in *Conversación*, the juxtaposition of class antagonisms – the governing class vs. the progressive social classes from Arequipa – will commence with the portrayal of the embodiment of governmental hierarchies and their oppressive superstructure, the military, represented, physically, by the de facto first minister of government, Don Cayo Bermúdez.⁵⁷ Here, it will be demonstrated how one person in particular, as the virtual *prime* minister of the regime, presides over the entire security apparatus of the government, unifying – in his sole figure – the various interests of the oligarchic classes against any attempt at social reform or, even worse, revolution.

Therefore, the following must be said on conceptualising this second chapter on Vargas Llosa's *Idea of Freedom*: Whereas *rebellion* was the main focus for categorising and explaining the socially progressive behaviour of the main, Sartrean-influenced 'rebels' in *La ciudad y los perros* (Chapter 1), now *revolt* – the second Vargas-Llosan paradigm of freedom of the author's progressive period –, will be used to conceptualise the actions of the progressive and popular forces of the political opposition from Arequipa, heralding the advent of social and political change under Odría in *Conversación en La Catedral* (Chapter 2).

Don Cayo is Odría's most visible *bête noire*, not only for the nationally progressive entrepreneurial opposition, but, most of all, for the political opposition of a *socially* (either for

⁵⁷ As a matter of fact, Don Cayo Bermúdez, as the most important character besides the two main protagonists Santiago and Ambrosio, appears in 20 of 31 chapters of the novel, followed numerically by Santiago (18), Amalia (17), Ambrosio and Queta (both 15), Hortensia (12), and Don Fermín (11), establishing Don Cayo as the character who is the one with the highest number of appearances – underlining the central role he is playing in the novel, and also for the regime, which is fundamentally criticised by the author. Don Cayo's appearances: Part I, Chapters 3, 7, 9, 10; Part II, Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; Part III, Chapters 2, 4; Part IV, Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8.

social democrats or socialists) as well as *politically* (for the political parties who support parliament and a purely civically engaged democracy) progressive nature. In order to illuminate some aspects of Don Cayo's authoritarian leadership role related to the military, government, and business class (in most cases: US-led), a profound portrayal of Don Cayo's reactionary political convictions as well as support for the export-oriented capitalist entrepreneurs is warranted.

Don Cayo's extremely right-wing political predisposition can already be observed in chapter 3⁵⁸ and chapter 7⁵⁹ of Part I of *Conversación*. In the first chapter where the fictionalised alter ego of Esparza Zañartu, Don Cayo Bermúdez, appears (Part I, Chapter 3), he is picked up by a lieutenant on the orders of Col. Espina – serving Gen. Odría as minister of the interior –, manifesting, thereby, similar ultra-conservative and socially elitist convictions comparable to the other generals and ministers of the regime. Don Cayo's attitude exhibits clearly that the answer to revolt and the disturbance of public order is repression, and that the answer to insurgence is death, imprisonment or persecution, criminalising *apristas*, socialists and communists by calling them common 'thieves' and 'scoundrels'.⁶⁰ In an important part of the conversation between the lieutenant and Don Cayo, Don Cayo reveals a stronger political awareness, combined with a highly conservative mindset, showing open disdain and arrogance towards any type of left-wing opposition in the country:

[El Teniente:] –Bueno, por eso hemos hecho la revolución–, dijo el Teniente, de buen humor. –Se acabó el caos. Ahora, con el Ejército arriba, todo el mundo vereda. Ya verá que con Odría las cosas van a ir mejor.–

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –¿De veras?–, bostezó Bermúdez. –Aquí cambian las personas, Teniente, nunca las cosas.–

[El Teniente:] –¿No lee los periódicos, no oye la radio?–, insistió el Teniente, risueño. –Ya comenzó la limpieza. Apristas, pillos, comunistas, todos en chirona. No va a quedar un pericote suelto en plaza.– [...]

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Saldrán otros–, dijo ásperamente Bermúdez. –Para limpiar el Perú de pericotes tendrían que lanzarnos unas bombitas y desaparecernos del mapa.– [...]

[El Teniente:] –¿Eso va en serio o en broma?–, dijo el Teniente. [...]

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –No me gusta bromear–, dijo Bermúdez. –Siempre hablo en serio.–⁶¹

⁵⁸ *Conversación en La Catedral*, Part I, Chapter 3: pp. 53-73.

⁵⁹ *Conversación en La Catedral*, Part I, Chapter 7: pp. 130-154.

⁶⁰ *Conversación en La Catedral*, p. 60, p. 62, p. 63, pp. 67-68.

⁶¹ *Conversación en La Catedral*, p. 60.

Furthermore, what can be inferred from this type of politically hegemonic thinking by the oligarchic class, is that radical solutions, such as military action, are preferred to 'left-wing chaos' in political culture and society. Thus, the Peruvian oligarchic state, following the guidelines of industrial evolution by militarily authoritarian regimes of an export-oriented nature, has to impose itself by military force upon the rest of civil society, without the possibility for any type of opposition to emerge. In other words, to ensure leadership and stability of governance, the oligarchic form of government has to be transformed into a military government or junta, in particular during times of social unrest or political turmoil.⁶²

Now, in one of the scenes at the end of this introductory chapter on Cayo Bermúdez, it is revealed why the regime needs a specialised person responsible for the entire security apparatus of Odría's government. The reason is – not surprisingly – that Peru has always been dependent upon different groups of oligarchic elites of exporters, US-American investors and, of course, the conservative and right-wing core of the army, all of which is summarised by Don Cayo in one expression: '*la platita y la fuerza*'⁶³. Don Cayo, hereby, basically believes that money and military power have always been the two decisive factors in traditional Peruvian politics, which have always been managed through the generals that support the key players in the elite circles of the political administration of the state. This, moreover, affirms the above-mentioned belief that social change is unlikely, because the economic, and from a right-wing perspective, corporatist, base of workers and employees is dependent upon an oligarchic-military elite that suppresses opposing forces or at least influences decisively the head of government, when this economic and ideological base is threatened:

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Los exportadores, los antiapristas, los gringos y además el Ejército–, dijo Bermúdez. –La platita y la fuerza. No sé de qué se puede quejar Odría. No se puede pedir más.–

[Coronel Espina:] –El Presidente conoce la mentalidad de estos hijos de puta–, dijo el coronel Espina. –Hoy te apoyan, mañana te clavan un puñal en la espalda.–

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Como se lo clavaron ustedes a Bustamante–, sonrió Bermúdez, pero el coronel no se rio. –Bueno, mientras los tengan contentos, apoyarán al régimen. Después, se conseguirán otro general y los sacarán a ustedes. ¿Siempre no ha sido así en el Perú?–⁶⁴

⁶² Cotler, J.: *Clases, estado y nación*, pp. 338-339, p. 339.

⁶³ *Conversación en La Catedral*, p. 68.

⁶⁴ *Conversación en La Catedral*, p. 68.

That's exactly when Colonel Espina responds that he is familiar with power politics in Peru and the impatience of the mentality of the military, which is why they need someone like Don Cayo for the police and intelligence services to make sure that the army and the law enforcement officers are unconditionally backing Odría and his government throughout the course of the next years.⁶⁵ Reluctantly, Don Cayo accepts the offer, and is later on also confirmed in the position as head of national security as well as first minister of government by Gen. Odría himself, admitted only in hindsight in the last part of chapter 3.⁶⁶

In Part II of the novel it can be observed how Don Cayo's life – from an unprecedented position of power – has improved materially and politically, as he has established relations with the leading elites of the country, as well as having become, as director for national security, the main 'supporting column' of the oligarchic-industrial and military complex of power in Peru.⁶⁷ As one of the ideological *top dogs* in the political spheres of government under Odría, Don Cayo puts his predecessors under regular surveillance (e.g. Gen. Espina), influences trade union leaders (e.g. Pereira), uses vital information via the knowledge of regime-supporting entrepreneurs (e.g. Don Fermín), and monopolises the budgets of both interior and defence ministries for the exercise of illegitimate activities.⁶⁸

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Lo que cuestan las directivas sindicales adictas, las redes de información en centros de trabajo, universidades y en la administración–, recito él, mientras sacaba un expediente de su maletín y lo ponía sobre el escritorio. –Lo que cuestan las manifestaciones, lo que cuesta conocer las actividades de los enemigos del régimen aquí y en el extranjero.–

El doctor Arbeláez no había mirado el expediente; lo escuchaba acariciando un gemelo, sus ojitos odiándolo siempre con morosidad.

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Lo que cuesta aplacar a los descontentos, a los envidiosos y a los ambiciosos que surgen cada día dentro del mismo régimen–, recitaba él. –La tranquilidad no sólo es cuestión de palo, doctor, también de soles. Usted pone mala cara y tiene razón. De esas cosas feas me ocupo yo, usted no tiene siquiera que enterarse. Échele una ojeada a estos papeles y me dirá después si usted cree que se pueden hacer economías sin poner en peligro la seguridad.–⁶⁹

⁶⁵ *Conversación en La Catedral*, pp. 68-69.

⁶⁶ *Conversación en La Catedral*, pp. 69-73.

⁶⁷ *Conversación en La Catedral*, Part II, Chapter 1-6: pp. 219-320.

⁶⁸ *Conversación en La Catedral*, Part II, Chapter 1-6: pp. 219-320.

⁶⁹ *Conversación en La Catedral*, p. 312.

Most importantly, the relations between the government and the entrepreneurial community are presented, whose key actors, coming from the most important businesses, are a fundamental component for the material prosperity as well as political stability of the regime. Santiago's father and renowned construction company boss Don Fermín Zavala, who stands for the oligarchic class in *Conversación* (figuring prominently through his 'entrepreneurial activities' and 'political connections'), is largely sympathetic in his political attitude towards the regime, but can also be quite self-interested when it comes to the profitability of his business.⁷⁰

After having analysed Don Cayo's rise to power, embodying the rule of the oligarchic class as a whole, as well as the functioning of its political reign and relations, in the last section on Don Cayo (in particular, chapters 2 and 4 of Part III⁷¹), the 'dirty' and corrupt sides of the regime are displayed, through which Don Cayo expands government, but ultimately renounces his own power and influence over his enemies and the opposition (with Arequipa being the decisive trigger for initiating regime change).

In the novel the best example of resisting the official structures of political power and law enforcement under Don Cayo – via a traditional approach of civil protest, based on a progressive, class-conscious or trade-unionist background – is the character of Trinidad in Part I, Chapter 5.⁷² His numerous protests against the political asylum of Haya de la Torre (the leader of the oppositional APRA party under Odría) and verbal insulting (after taken captive by the police) of *odriísta* law enforcement officers in front of the Colombian embassy (where Haya is held) – as well as his physical torture by regime-loyal henchmen – illuminates the futility of individual resistance against an already fascistically organised and militarily 'uniformised' dictatorship.

A second form or tactic to revolt against the dictatorial superstructure of an oligarchic-military complex (such as the Odría regime) has been – in *Conversación*, but also *historically* – the social protest and political revolt by the students of the public and nationally progressive universities, such as San Marcos in Lima (traditionally being the base of the left-wing *intelligentsia* in Peru). This form of protest against an authoritarian and politically fossilised regime – to which the regime's answer is violent repression of students by the army and police

⁷⁰ *Conversación en La Catedral*, Part I: Chapter 7, pp. 148-154; Part III: Chapter 2, pp. 415-452.

⁷¹ *Conversación en La Catedral*, Part III: Chapter 2, pp. 415-452; Part III: Chapter 4, pp. 482-517.

⁷² *Conversación en La Catedral*, Part I: Chapter 5, pp. 92-106.

– is displayed in Part I, Chapter 7.⁷³ In this tripartite dialogue between Don Cayo, the prefect of Lima, and Col. Espina – throughout which other dialogues are interspersed, being characteristic of Vargas Llosa’s narrative technique of *Chinese boxes* and *telescopic dialogues*⁷⁴ – military arrogance and a personalistic greed for power lead to the physical destruction of some parts of the main building of San Marcos, while the specialised assault guard under Odría arrests 26 students, solely out of politically motivated reasons (among them 9 *apristas* and 3 communists):

[El Prefecto:] –Quince estaban fichados–, dijo el Prefecto. –Nueve apristas, tres comunistas, tres dudosos. Los otros once sin antecedentes. No, don Cayo, no se les tomó declaraciones todavía.– [...]

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Que los interroguen de una vez–, dijo Cayo Bermúdez. –¿Los lesionados están mejor?– [...]

[El Prefecto:] –A dos estudiantes hubo que internarlos en el Hospital de Policía, don Cayo–, dijo el Prefecto. –Los guardias no tienen nada, apenas pequeñas contusiones.– [...]

[El Prefecto:] –Dejamos una compañía en San Marcos y estamos haciendo reparar la puerta que el tanque echó abajo–, dijo el Prefecto. –También pusimos una sección en Medicina. Pero no ha habido ningún intento de manifestación ni nada, don Cayo.–

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Déjeme las fichas ésas para mostrárselas al Ministro–, dijo Cayo Bermúdez. [...]

[Coronel Espina:] –¿Tú diste la orden de tomar San Marcos?–, dijo el coronel Espina. –¿Tú? ¿Sin consultarme?– [...]

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Antes de hablar de San Marcos cuéntame qué tal ese viaje–, dijo Bermúdez. –¿Cómo van las cosas por el Norte?– [...]

[Coronel Espina:] –Van bien pero yo quiero saber si tú estás loco–, dijo el coronel Espina. –Coronel han tomado la Universidad, coronel la guardia de asalto en San Marcos. Y yo, el Ministro de Gobierno, en la luna. ¿Estás loco, Cayo?– [...]

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Ese forúnculo de San Marcos reventado en un par de horas y sin muertos–, dijo Bermúdez. –Y en vez de darme las gracias me preguntas si estoy loco. No es justo, Serrano.– [...]

[Coronel Espina:] –Va a haber protestas en el extranjero, justo lo que no conviene al régimen–, dijo el coronel Espina. –¿No sabías que el Presidente quiere evitar líos?–

⁷³ *Conversación en La Catedral*, pp. 130-136.

⁷⁴ Scheerer, T. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa. Leben und Werk*, pp. 51-55.

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Lo que no convenía al régimen era un foco subversivo en pleno centro de Lima–, dijo Bermúdez. –Dentro de unos días se podrá retirar la policía, se abrirá San Marcos y todo en paz.– [...]

[Coronel Espina:] –Y por último no tenías autorización y la decisión correspondía al Ministro y no a ti–, dijo el coronel Espina. –Muchos gobiernos no han reconocido al régimen. El Presidente debe estar furioso.– [...]

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Nos ha reconocido Estados Unidos y eso es lo importante–, dijo Bermúdez. –No te preocupes por el Presidente, Serrano. Le consulté anoche, antes de actuar.– [...]

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Le prometí al Presidente no habrá muertos y he cumplido–, dijo Bermúdez. –Aquí tienes las fichas políticas de quince detenidos. Limpiaremos San Marcos y podrán reanudarse las clases. ¿No estás satisfecho, Serrano?–⁷⁵

Consequently, the first two forms of *revolt* in *Conversación* – individual rebellion belonging to a trade-unionist background as well as left-wing student revolt – can be discarded as effective methods for revolting against the authoritarian and oppressive nature of the oligarchic regime under Odría. What can be derived from this, however, is that only one final form of class struggle – being the topic of this last section – will practically be applicable, and de facto, also successful regarding the results of democratic overthrow in relation to the regime. Therefore, as part of this third form of *political revolt* against the oligarchic-military complex of power, a genuine class-based struggle of all relevant social actors from the left and centre-left political spectrum – such as those from Arequipa in 1955: workers, students, the nationally progressive opposition, etc. – has to jointly and collectively take on the revolutionary task of demanding democratic and labour rights, re-structure society along the needs of the nation's wealth in relation to its land and people, ensure civilian control over the generals, and diminish Peru's export-oriented predisposition and post-colonial dependence on the investment of foreign or US-owned companies. Since it's exactly thanks to these capitalist and imperialist groups, if nothing else happens, that the resources of the country are drained, leading to lasting social and ethnic conflicts in domestic politics, from which, once again, the right-wing military results as the only actor who is winning, re-establishing, with ever more force, the vested interests of the traditional oligarchic class.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ *Conversación en La Catedral*, Part I: Chapter 7, pp. 130-133.

⁷⁶ Cotler, J.: *Clases, estado y nación*, Lima 2005³.

2.4. Arequipa's political revolt as manifestation of successful class struggle and symbol of societal overthrow of Peru's *ancien regime*

Gramsci, Lukács, and Sartre will be incorporated into this final analysis of *political revolt* against Odría's oligarchic regime – with revolt being the central outcome evolving out of social and political corruption and thereby, literarily-sociologically, interlacing the different strands of the plot of *Conversación*, reaching the artistic result of reflecting upon one of the worst tragedies in recent Peruvian history. Meditating, once more, upon Sartre, then – before coming to progressive alternatives in the post-Odría period, relating to Gramsci and Lukács – history, if no profound reflection on its authoritarian and political abuses is made, can – neither Stalinist nor Nazist, nor liberal-democratic – lead to even larger despair as part of either Cold War or post-Cold War humanity. For it is not history itself that has to find a determined way of life for society, but – eventually – the people themselves, with their changeable, however always enlightened character, who define history based on their collective action. Therefore, *Conversación en La Catedral* cannot simply be read as the product of the social frustration of an author in his period of rebellious youth, but also as a testimony and literary portrayal of the revolutionary fervour of a young Peruvian author, living in exile in Paris, but reflecting, more profoundly than many of his countrymen, on the shattered hopes and broken promises of a society ripe for social reform – including a nationally democratic revolution similar to Cuba, leading to the lasting freedoms the Peruvian people truly and authentically deserve.

First – in this last part on *revolt* against an authoritarian and oligarchic-military regime (*ancien* in the Peruvian sense) as part of Vargas Llosa's political fiction – Antonio Gramsci's concept of *hegemony* and the dominant *historic bloc* will be invoked in order to conceptualise the socially predominant vs. the politically subaltern forces of society (facing each other in a recurrent historic dilemma). After this brief exposition of Gramscian thought – related to Peru and Arequipa – both Sartre and Lukács will figure in the second part of this section, demonstrating class-consciousness against reactionary and oligarchic governance, as well as – representing counter-hegemonic struggle and revolution – the desire for freedom by a broad range of working class and socially progressive actors.

In Robert W. Cox's *Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method*, the following is said on Gramsci and Marxist-inspired forms of political hegemony, in the beginning:

Gramsci's concepts were all derived from history – both from his own reflections upon those periods of history which he thought helped to throw an explanatory light upon the present, and from his personal experiences of political and social struggle.⁷⁷

Cox then summarises succinctly the Gramscian concept of *historic bloc* in relation to the hegemonic or counter-hegemonic social classes. Cox provides a classic insight into the subject of dominant social classes and the emerging struggles of counter-hegemonic classes, leading to a universal history – in the Gramscian sense – of constant wars of movement or position:

An historic bloc cannot exist without a hegemonic social class. Where the hegemonic class is the dominant class in a country or social formation, the state (in Gramsci's enlarged concept) maintains cohesion and identity within the bloc through the propagation of a common culture. A new bloc is formed when a subordinate class (e.g., the workers) establishes its hegemony over other subordinate groups (e.g., small farmers, marginals). This process requires intensive dialogue between leaders and followers within the would-be hegemonic class. Gramsci may have concurred in the Leninist idea of an avant-garde party which takes upon itself the responsibility for leading an immature working class, but only as an aspect of a war of movement. Since a war of position strategy was required in the Western countries, as he saw it, the role of the party should be to lead, intensify and develop dialogue within the working class and between the working class and other subordinate classes which could be brought into alliance with it.⁷⁸

Finally, before presenting the decisive scene in *Conversación* regarding revolt and political revolution a final citation on Gramsci and the political or ideological division of social classes into blocs (illuminating their dynamic of either social fossilisation or transformation) is necessary, so that we can refer to it later on in the text:

For Gramsci, an historic bloc is more than a simple alliance of classes or class fractions. It encompasses political, cultural, and economic aspects of a particular social formation, uniting these in historically specific ways to form a complex, politically contestable and dynamic ensemble of social relations. An historic bloc articulates a world view, grounded in historically specific socio-political conditions and production relations, which lends

⁷⁷ Cox, R. W.: 'Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method', pp. 49-66, cited in: Gill, S. (ed.): *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*, p. 49.

⁷⁸ Cox, R. W.: 'Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method', pp. 56-57.

substance and ideological coherence to its social power. [...] They can be conservative or revolutionary.⁷⁹

This main classification between conservative or revolutionary *historic blocs*, facing each other in a perpetual 'development of a historical, dialectical conception of the world, which understands movement and change'⁸⁰, constitutes the core element for the analysis of the successful political revolt of a large coalition of socially progressive classes against the oligarchic and ultra-capitalist governing class under Odría.

In the last pages of Part III of the novel (Chapter 4)⁸¹, the main trigger for Don Cayo's removal from office – embodying the 'brain' of the regime – is philosophically realised and artistically depicted, transforming the Arequipa revolt into the narrative watershed moment of political significance. Organised by the agglomeration of oppositional forces dubbed 'The Coalition', the political opponents' (DC), students' and workers' protests eventually lead to widespread despair among police officers and hesitation among the army to politically support the instructions of Don Cayo as director for national security. The protests – in the end successful in achieving the dismissal of Don Cayo – go back historically to the famous Arequipa revolt of 1955, which did initiate changes in civil governance and a free and fair election process in the summer of 1956.⁸²

Motivated by the wave of mass protests in *Conversación*, senator Landa summarises swiftly the main incidents of the political course of action: the use of tear gas grenades by the government in a closed facility, in addition to people fighting with each other, including several gun shots, producing a certain number of dead, but an even higher number of wounded people – all under the responsibility of first minister of government, Don Cayo Bermúdez.⁸³ Nevertheless, the events leading up to this final clash between opposing forces – government and *Coalition* – can be most visibly illustrated, once again, by a juxtaposition drawn from Neo-Gramscianism, where the oligarchic and restorative governing class responds with utter violence and human indifference towards the progressive forces of organised groups of

⁷⁹ Rupert, M.: 'Alienation, Capitalism and the Inter-State System: Towards a Marxian/Gramscian Critique', pp. 67-92, cited in Gill, S. (ed.): *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*, p. 81.

⁸⁰ Gramsci, A.: *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, pp. 34-35, cited in: Gill, S. (ed.): *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*, p. 77.

⁸¹ *Conversación en La Catedral*, Part III: Chapter 4, pp. 482-517.

⁸² *Conversación en La Catedral*, Part III: Chapter 4, pp. 482-517; Pease García, H., and Romero Sommer, G.: *La política en el Perú del siglo XX*, pp. 123-137, pp. 165-178; Aljovín de Losada, C., and López, S. (eds.): *Historia de las elecciones en el Perú*, pp. 123-197, pp. 481-509.

⁸³ *Conversación en La Catedral*, Part III: Chapter 4, pp. 505-514.

subaltern democracy (in short: the newly emergent *historic bloc*, according to a Gramscian reading). As part of the following series of dialogues – set against the background of the revolt in Arequipa – the Vargas-Llosan literary style of *Chinese boxes* and *telescopic dialogues* is brought to perfection:

[Doctor Lama:] –La gente del partido Restaurador está repartida por las barriadas haciendo propaganda–, dijo el doctor Lama. –Las vaciaremos a las puertas del Municipal. Y hemos convocado otra manifestación en el Mercado, a las cinco. Reuniremos miles de hombres. Aquí morirá la Coalición, señor Ministro.–

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Está bien, Molina, llevaremos las cosas adelante–, dijo Cayo Bermúdez. –Ya sé que Lama exagera, pero no hay más remedio que confiar en él. Sí, hablaré con el Comandante para que doble las fuerzas en el centro, por si acaso.– [...]

[Ludovico:] –Inocentes por dos cosas–, dijo Ludovico. –Creíamos que los Restauradores de Arequipa eran más. Y no sabíamos que la Coalición había contratado tantos matones.– [...]

[El Prefecto:] –Acabo de pasar por el Municipal, don Cayo–, dijo el Prefecto. –Todavía vacío. La guardia de asalto ya está instalada en los alrededores.– [...]

[Ludovico:] –La contra-manifestación del Partido Restaurador en el Mercado–, dijo Ludovico. –Fuimos a ver y la cosa estaba que ardía.– [...] –Nosotros entrábamos al teatro y armábamos el lío adentro–, dijo Ludovico. –Y cuando salieran se iban a dar de bruces con la contra-manifestación. Como idea estaba bien, sólo que no resultó.– [...]

[El Prefecto:] –Vamos a colocar unos cuantos guardias en el teatro, don Cayo–, dijo el Prefecto. –Uniformados y armados, sí. Se lo advertí a la Coalición. No, no se opusieron. Es una precaución que no está demás, don Cayo.– [...]

[Ludovico:] –Nos dividieron en grupos de a dos–, dijo Ludovico. –A Hipólito y a mí nos separaron.– [...]

[Molina:] –Bueno, ya me las aclaraste–, dijo Molina. –Aquí el señor da la señal y ustedes organizan el terremoto. Empujan la gente a la calle y ahí estará ya la contra-manifestación. Se unen a los del partido Restaurador y después del mitin en la Plaza de nuevo reunión aquí.–

Repartieron más trago y cigarros, y después periódicos para envolver las cadenas, las manoplas, las cachiporras [...] En la calle esperaban los taxis [...] Llegaron al teatro antes que los otros [...] Ya llegaban las otras parejas y se acomodaban en sus sitios. Unos jovencitos se habían puesto a gritar Li-ber-tad, Li-ber-tad. Seguía entrando gente y la platea se iba llenando [...]

En el escenario, una veintena de sillas, un micrófono, una bandera peruana, cartelones que decían Coalición Nacional, Libertad [...]

Trifulcio no le contestó, escuchaba al señor de azul erguido frente al micrófono: Odría era un Dictador, la Ley de Seguridad Interior anticonstitucional, el hombre común y corriente quería libertad. Y los adulaba a los arequipeños: la ciudad rebelde, la ciudad mártir, la tiranía de Odría habría ensangrentado a Arequipa el año cincuenta pero no había podido matar su amor a la libertad [...]

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Qué?–, dijo Cayo Bermúdez. –¿La contra-manifestación un fracaso total, Molina?–

[Molina:] –No más de doscientas personas, don Cayo–, dijo Molina. –Les repartirían mucho trago. Yo se lo advertí al doctor Lama, pero usted lo conoce. Se emborracharían, se quedarían en el Mercado. Unas doscientas, a lo más. ¿Qué hacemos, don Cayo?– [...]

[Trifulcio:] –Menos mal, me estaba ahogando. Y ahí está el silbato–, dijo Trifulcio, poniéndose de pie. –¡Viva el General Odría!–

[Ludovico:] –Todo el mundo se quedó alelado, hasta el que discurseaba–, dijo Ludovico. – Todos miraban a la galería.– [...]

Las granadas cayeron desde la galería como un puñado de piedras pardas, rebotaron con golpes secos sobre las sillas de la platea y las tablas del escenario, y al instante comenzaron a elevarse espirales de humo. En pocos segundos la atmósfera se emblanqueció, endureció, y un vapor espeso y ardiente fue mezclando y borrando los cuerpos [...]

[Senador Landa:] –Gases lacrimógenos en un local cerrado, varios muertos, decenas de heridos–, dijo el senador Landa. –No se puede pedir más ¿no, Fermín? Aunque tenga siete vidas, Bermúdez no sobrevive a esto.– [...]

[Molina:] –La guardia de asalto ha comenzado a entrar al teatro–, dijo Molina. –Ha habido tiros adentro. No, no sé todavía si hay muertos, don Cayo.– [...]

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Que la policía despeje todas las calles, Prefecto–, dijo Cayo Bermúdez. –No permita ninguna manifestación, detenga a todos los líderes de la Coalición. ¿Ya tiene lista de víctimas? ¿Hay muertos?– [...]

[Molina:] –Sí, una gran manifestación en la Plaza de Armas, don Cayo–, dijo Molina. –El Prefecto está con el Comandante ahora. No creo que convenga, don Cayo. Son miles de personas.– [...]

[Molina:] –Las cosas están empeorando, don Cayo–, dijo Molina. –Han desempedrado las calles, hay barricadas por todo el centro. La guardia de asalto no puede disolver una manifestación así.– [...]

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Cálmese, Molina–, dijo Cayo Bermúdez. –Con calma, con detalles, vaya por partes. Cuál es la situación, exactamente.–

[El Prefecto:] –La situación es que la policía ya no está en condiciones de restablecer el orden, don Cayo–, dijo el Prefecto. –Se lo repito una vez más. Si no interviene el Ejército aquí va a pasar cualquier cosa.–

[General Llerena:] –¿La situación?–, dijo el general Llerena. –Muy simple [...] La imbecilidad de Bermúdez nos ha puesto entre la espada y la pared. Las embarró y ahora quiere que el Ejército arregle las cosas con una demostración de fuerza.– [...]

[General Alvarado:] –La huelga es seguida cien por ciento, mi General–, dijo el general Alvarado. –El pueblo es amo y señor de la calle. Han formado un Comité donde hay abogados, obreros, médicos, estudiantes. El Prefecto insiste en que saque la tropa desde anoche, pero yo quiero que la decisión la tome usted.– [...] –Sinceramente, creo que el Ejército no tiene por qué ensuciarse las manos por el señor Bermúdez, mi General–, dijo el general Alvarado. –Aquí no está en veremos ni el Presidente, ni el Ejército ni el régimen. Los señores de la Coalición vinieron a verme y me lo han asegurado. Se comprometen a tranquilizar a la gente si Bermúdez renuncia.– [...]

[General Llerena:] –Está bien, mantenga la tropa acuartelada, Alvarado–, dijo el general Llerena. –Que el Ejército no se mezcle en esto, a menos que sea atacado.– [...]

[General Llerena:] –Mire, Paredes, el Ejército no va a enlodarse para salvarle el Ministerio a Bermúdez–, dijo el general Llerena. –No, de ninguna manera. Eso sí, hay que poner fin a esta situación...– [...]

[Doctor Alcibíades:] –No me guarde usted rencor, don Cayo–, dijo el doctor Alcibíades. – Las presiones eran muy fuertes. No me dieron chance para actuar de otro modo.–

[Cayo Bermúdez:] –Claro que sí, doctorcito–, dijo Cayo Bermúdez. –No le guardo rencor. Al contrario, estoy admirado de lo hábil que ha sido. Llévase bien con mi sucesor, el comandante Paredes. Lo va a nombrar a usted Director de Gobierno. Me preguntó mi opinión y le dije tiene pasta para el cargo.–

[Doctor Alcibíades:] –Aquí estaré siempre para servirlo, don Cayo–, dijo el doctor Alcibíades. –Aquí tiene sus pasajes, su pasaporte. Todo en orden. Y por si no lo veo, que tenga buen viaje, don Cayo.–⁸⁴

Similar to 1950, then, in 1955, triggered by the contempt for public criticism by the government, the Arequipa protesters transform themselves, supported by increasing manifestations on the streets, into the subaltern groups of socially progressive democratism.

⁸⁴ *Conversación en La Catedral*, Part III: Chapter 4, pp. 495-514.

The imperialist and militarist forces under Odría – most drastically incarnated through the actions of their main *bête noire* vis-à-vis civil society, Don Cayo Bermúdez – are, thus, trying to wage a final struggle against the regionally and nationally democratic representatives of *Democracia Cristiana* (DC) in Arequipa – posing a serious alternative to the economic and political model of the centralised government in Lima.

Historically, the strong presence of the social-Christian student movement as part of the DC – coordinating strike or revolutionary actions, similar to the *apristas* or the PCP, with the tram workers, bank employees, and universities in Arequipa⁸⁵ – was, in its capacity for organisation, the main reason for the success of the Arequipa revolt in December 1955: ‘La presencia estudiantil permitió a la DC asumir la conducción de la ciudad durante los sucesos de diciembre de 1955, pues la organización estudiantil pudo proveer las personas necesarias que necesitó la defensa política de la ciudad.’⁸⁶

According to Neo-Gramscianism, then – and the international opposition of *historic blocs* – , the socially progressive and counter-hegemonic group of students, lawyers, physicians, and workers under the *arequipeñan* banner of the DC is the newly emergent *historic bloc*, which contests the hegemony of the governing class and its *bloc* of historical export-orientation and imperialist oppression of the domestic production process. The hegemonic regime under Odría is, consequently, suppressing the alternative forces of regionally and societally more integrated development of a pluralist and democratic nature, based on the principles of the DC, endorsed and adhered to by Vargas Llosa himself,⁸⁷ concurring with the author’s larger sympathies for the Cuban Revolution when it comes to the support of subaltern groups and the struggle for progressiveness on a not only regional, but also nation-wide scale.⁸⁸

In the end, the resurgence of this Gramscian bloc of subaltern groups against the current political hegemony as well as its exploitative modes of production does not only lead to the resignation of the de facto first minister of government, Don Cayo, but also – missing in the second half of the novel’s plot, based on historic events – to the realisation of democratic elections in mid-1956 and the resignation of the entire military government under Odría.

⁸⁵ Caravedo Molinari, B.: *Desarrollo desigual y lucha política*, pp. 120-121.

⁸⁶ Caravedo Molinari, B.: *Desarrollo desigual y lucha política*, p. 120.

⁸⁷ Vargas Llosa, M.: *A Fish in the Water*, pp. 294-300.

⁸⁸ Invocación a la ciudadanía por los líderes del movimiento demócrata-cristiano (DC), 25 de abril de 1955, cited in: Caravedo Molinari, B.: *Desarrollo desigual y lucha política*, p. 117.

2.5. Left-wing paradigms of revolt and freedom as part of *Conversación* and Arequipa

In Chapter 1 *rebellion* – consistent with Vargas Llosa’s first paradigm of freedom – was presented as the physical and humanistic reaction against individual or social oppression, leading to social rebelliousness and political progressivism. This simultaneously encompasses cases of individual vs. group behaviour – creating a new, Sartrean-influenced *situation* (here: the *Leoncio Prado* and its families as part of *La ciudad y los perros*) –, as well as group vs. institutional behaviour, such as in Vargas Llosa’s first renowned short story *Los jefes*, depicting the failure of collective revolt by a group of students against the school’s directorate. In Chapter 2 *revolt*, being the social precursor of revolution, is presented as the desire to change the *political* situation in a given setting of political injustice and societal frustration (here: the Odría regime as part of *Conversación en La Catedral*), supported by the alienation of Marxist being and Gramscian counter-hegemonic struggle.

Following Gramsci, Lukács, and, eventually, Sartre, left-wing paradigms of freedom in relation to the social and artistic analysis of revolt in society – in this case: in the political fiction of Mario Vargas Llosa –, can be detected through the dynamic of opposing struggles of *historic blocs*, determining, in the end, which social class or newly emergent force of society will lead the way to progressive change.

Another hint at the complexity of freedom in relation to revolt or revolution – comparing Arequipa and the Odría regime with other regimes in world history – might be warranted – in particular, if the Arequipa of 1955 is seen against the background of world revolutionary movements such as those of Russia, and more concretely: the revolution of 1905. If the congregation of social classes of the *arequipeñan* working, labourer, and progressive middle-class against the oppressive governing class during the events of Arequipa in 1955 – leading to the demise of the Lima-led *odriísta* state – is a successful unification for political change, then something analogous to Russian history from the very early 20th century – democratising an *ancien regime* of traditionalist forces – can be observed, causing, in Lenin’s words from 1905, the ‘larger consolidation of one progressive and democratic will of the people’:

The absence of unity on questions of socialism and in the struggle for socialism does not preclude singleness of will on questions of democracy and in the struggle for a republic. To forget this would be tantamount to forgetting the logical and historical difference

between a democratic revolution and a socialist revolution. To forget this would be tantamount to forgetting the character of the democratic revolution as one *of the whole people*: if it is 'of the whole people', that means that there *is* 'singleness of will' precisely in so far as this revolution meets the needs and requirements of the whole people.⁸⁹

To put it more succinctly, having contemplated matters from a more philosophical perspective – in agreement with the positive portrayal of the class-conscious and self-liberating being in Vargas Llosa's early writings from 1959 until 1971 –, we note that Lukács ends, affirmatively, with his analysis of the post-WWII resurrection of human evolution and progressive enlightenment for society. For both the non-dogmatic Vargas Llosa and the orthodox Lukács (from a plurality of cultural and geographic backgrounds, similar to the author), the liberation of being and mankind can only be brought about by the objective reflection upon human nature and its material reality, leading to the increased endorsement of the socialist, enlightened and liberated – beyond any forms of economic or social alienation – human being:

The approximately adequate recognition of inexhaustible objectivity does require the multifaceted and complete human being. In contrast to the impotent opposition of romanticism, which only increases the inner conflict of the human being in the face of capitalism, Lenin's dispassionate and deliberate theory of human realisation presents the way towards the re-establishment of the totality of the human being in the field of self-realisation. This is accomplished by putting human realisation into the inseparable context of experience, which is labour. This theory of human realisation is – in particular in its sobriety, resulting from its recognition of the objectivity of the external world – the concise expression of that humanism, which amid the humanly and humanistically distorting repercussions of imperialism not only withdraws towards a defensive position, but actively educates humanity towards struggle, emancipation, realisation and conquest of the world, a humanism, which actually prepares – in theory as well as practice – the emergence of the new, complete, multifaceted human being.⁹⁰

Finally, we will end this chapter's exposition of the progressive Vargas-Llosan paradigm on freedom in relation to *revolt* similar to how we started chapter one on Vargas Llosa's attitude to intellectual and social forms of *rebellion* – with a final reflection on Jean-Paul Sartre, Vargas Llosa's philosophical mentor during the 1960s. In *Critique of Dialectical Reason* the most

⁸⁹ Lenin, I.: *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, pp. 81-82.

⁹⁰ Lukács, G.: *Existentialismus oder Marxismus?*, pp. 159-160 [The translation is mine].

transformative events in French history of the 18th to the 20th century – some of which are comparable to the revolt of Arequipa against Odría as well as the democratic revolution in the summer of 1956 – are analysed by Sartre against the background of his progressive as well as regressive methodology of posing individuals vs. groups, groups vs. institutions, movement vs. stability, and self-realisation vs. alienation. Thus – analogous to Vargas Llosa's vision of progressive national movements as well as his fervent support for Cuba –, a most *vargas-llosista* and *anti-odriísta* picture is evoked of a bloody government machinery of a bourgeois and hegemonic nature. Consequently – in analogy to the monarchic and bourgeois oppression during the class struggles of 1830, 1848, and 1870-71 in France and Germany – Sartre manifests a clear consciousness concerning these struggles on an international scale, equivalent to other movements in solidarity with labour or against the government in Peru, such as the student- and worker-led protests under Haya de la Torre in the 1920s to 1930s, the Trujillo uprising of 1932, as well as, most significantly, the Arequipa revolts of 1950 and 1955. The Vargas-Llosan and Lukács-supported humanism is, in Sartre's philosophy, a 'bourgeois humanism' in which a Gramsci- or Marx-related situation of two dialectical blocs face each other: oppressor and oppressed, with either the oppressed being triumphant or the oppressor (the bourgeois, monarchic or oligarchic class) further suppressing the oppressed classes, splitting them into different social factions or triggering, thereby, the re-awakening of the dialectical process between oppressor and oppressed, once again:

The organised action was that of the *State apparatus*, thereby revealing itself as a class apparatus, whereas the bourgeoisie, terrified by universal suffrage and the rise of the petty bourgeoisie, was ready to disown it. But the worker was subjected to the action in so far as it was approved by the series, and thus he interiorised it in his being as a class-action, as an actual totality (*totalité en acte*), or as the only possible totalisation of the bourgeois class: divided in the process of exploitation, it was one and indivisible in oppression. [...] We can conclude by saying that the dialectic, as the practical consciousness of an oppressed class struggling against its oppressor, is a reaction which is produced in the oppressed by the divisive tendency of oppression.⁹¹

Overall, while affirming Lukács' integral vision of man and society, Sartre's methodological understanding of history seems to be the most fruitful alternative for analysing both the progressive-, but also regressiveness in many of the politically fictionalised characters of

⁹¹ Sartre, J.-P.: *Critique of Dialectical Reason: I*, pp. 757-758, p. 803.

Conversación en La Catedral. In other words, what can be said of Sartre's most important study on Marxist-influenced history can, to some extent, also be said of Vargas Llosa's dialectical and ingenious literary depiction of the progressive portrayal and mutual destruction of the main forces of societal composition under the Odría regime in Peru:

The goal Sartre set for himself in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* was nothing less than a synthesis of these positions, one that would resolve the epistemological riddle of history, grounding it in revolution and at the same time accounting for the reverses, breaks, fissures and discontinuities of the past. Sartre sought to save the Marxist vision of man's future by rewriting the past in existentialist hues, by recapturing freedom in history.⁹²

By recapturing the existentialist and independently socialist freedoms in the wake of the demise of the Odría regime in *Conversación* – embodied by the main characters, such as Ambrosio, and the people of Arequipa –, imperialism and militarism on the governmental level, just as submissiveness and self-alienation on the individual level, can be increasingly overcome. Therefore, despite the loss of morals and social weaknesses of some of the characters, one should end – in agreement with Vargas Llosa and Sartre – on a positive note, involving the central Sartrean assumption of individual action as the key characteristic of human and humanistic change, set against the background of a mutual and liberatory vision for society.

This progressive and non-dogmatic socialist kind of liberty permeates the entire early work of Vargas Llosa from about 1960 until 1971, starting with the central piece of the author's reputation, *La ciudad y los perros*, and ending, literarily, with *Conversación en La Catedral* and, politically, with the *Padilla affair* in Cuba, after which the author – showing an increasing estrangement from revolutionary ideologies – starts to experiment with lighter and societally more conformist literature, such as his satirical *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* (1973) and his semi-autobiographical *La tía Julia y el escribidor* (1977). Then, in 1981, appears Vargas Llosa's first grand historical novel – *La guerra del fin del mundo* –, with which he renounces utopia or radical belief systems – following a pragmatist development and discarding of his political youth, which will find its literary apogee in the critical portrayal of revolution in *Historia de Mayta* (1984). Consequently, since the analytical thread of this dissertation on Vargas Llosa focuses on the interrelationship between the author's philosophical paradigms of freedom

⁹² Poster, M.: *Sartre's Marxism*, p. 30.

(existentialism, socialism, communism, pragmatism, social reformism or democracy, liberalism) and their portrayal as part of his political and historical fiction, the author's purely historical and political novels *La guerra del fin del mundo* and *Historia de Mayta* – where different forms of utopia regarding national liberation and/or a critical analysis of revolutionary action is presented – will be analysed in the following chapter. Thereby, societal *revolution* – in contrast to social *rebellion* (in *Ciudad*) and political *revolt* (in *Conversación*) – will be – in *La guerra*, but also *Mayta* –, first, religiously, politically and ideologically explored, before – seeing in it a forceful, but also violent alternative to the existing socio-political system – being gently examined under its humanist aspects, and finally, criticised – as part of the author's new pragmatic stance on politics and culture – in relation to its dehumanising aspects of terrorism and radical political beliefs.

**PART B – THE FAILURE AND ABANDONMENT OF
TOTALITARIAN IDEOLOGY**

Chapter 3

Abandonment of political and ideological radicalism: The critical reflection on utopia and revolution – *La guerra del fin del mundo* and *Historia de Mayta*

3.1. Farewell to utopia or disillusion with Cuba – The rise of intellectual reason and human pragmatism in the author's world view

In Chapter 1 *rebellion* has been introduced as belonging to the first paradigm of freedom in the Vargas-Llosan philosophical and literary universe during his early period of creation. Adhering to the existentialist writings of Jean-Paul Sartre, Vargas Llosa's intellect as a writer has been formed since his early student days and cultural exile in Paris – preaching, in line with his mentor, a socially progressive as well as independently Marxist attitude towards topics regarding the individual and society. Acts of *rebellion* – as part of human freedom to be found in existentialist *situations* of Sartrean philosophy – can therefore be traced in the plot development of *La ciudad y los perros*, the author's first novel. Consequently, the critique of social authorities in school and at home – imitating a rigid and oppressive education system – does not only lead to Sartrean-Vargas-Llosan desires of *rebellion* regarding the institution or family, but also to a socially progressive denunciation of conservative and militarist society under Odría as such. In Chapter 2 political and fictionalised *revolt* is presented as part of Vargas Llosa's novel *Conversación en La Catedral* – envisioning the core paradigm of a socialist or independently Marxist critique in relation to the Odría dictatorship, or: the second paradigm of freedom in the author's intellectual and literary-sociological discourse from the 1960s.

Before, however, the political and historical fiction of Vargas Llosa from the 1980s can be introduced, the intellectual and thematic changes in the author's world view since the beginning of the 1970s must be explained. Since 1971 four main politico-philosophical developments in the author's biography can be discerned, attesting to his estrangement from the revolutionary Left and orientation towards a more pragmatic world view based on reason and mutual, in particular, *less utopian* and thus, *falsifiable*, understanding.

First, the main watershed event for the transformation in Vargas Llosa's thinking consists of the ideological self-correction of Cuban poet and supposed regime critic Heberto Padilla –

the so-called Padilla affair or *caso Padilla*. Secondly, the re-reading of Albert Camus in 1975 triggers a lasting philosophical change in Vargas Llosa's thought relating to social change and the individual's protest. Thirdly, the intensive reception of the pragmatically liberal writings of Karl Popper – related to both of the author's posts as visiting lecturer in Cambridge and Washington D.C., between 1978 and 1980 – must have influenced Vargas Llosa's growing sympathy for a moderate approach to politics, in particular, in regards to civil society and parliamentary democracy. Consequently, this has caused the manifestation of a less socially radical, more realistic approach to societal change in the author's essays and writings, from the end of the 1970s onwards. Fourthly, with the appearance of the terrorist group *Sendero Luminoso* in Peru (1980), the notion of utopian terror and its violent side effects is condemned by the author, leading to Vargas Llosa's denunciation of both religious fanaticism and political totalitarianism of any kind.

To start with, in early April 1971 – about two weeks after the imprisonment of Heberto Padilla – on behalf of Vargas Llosa and other writers, such as J.-P. Sartre, S. de Beauvoir, C. Fuentes, O. Paz, and J. Cortázar –, a protest letter is signed and directed to the Communist party leadership under Fidel Castro. On April 5th 1971 Vargas Llosa, personally, sends another protest letter to the director of the *Casa de las Américas*, Haydée Santamaría, in order to resign from the membership committee. In this letter – published in the author's article and essay series *Contra viento y marea* – the author renounces his early vision of Cuban socialism, providing an intellectual platform for a plurality of views and *credos*. What's more, the recent scandals relating to the stifling of regime criticism convinced Vargas Llosa that totalitarian-like tribunals, known from Stalinism, had been resurrected – quashing any progressive dissent against the 'utopia' of communism:

Le presento mi renuncia al Comité de la revista de la Casa de las Américas, al que pertenezco desde 1965 [...] De todos modos, había decidido renunciar al Comité [...] desde que leí la confesión de Heberto Padilla y los despachos de Prensa Latina sobre el acto en la UNEAC en el que los compañeros Belkis Cuza Malé, Pablo Armando Fernández, Manuel Díaz Martínez y César López hicieron su autocrítica. Conozco a todos ellos lo suficiente como para saber que ese lastimoso espectáculo no ha sido espontáneo, sino prefabricado como los juicios estalinistas de los años treinta. Obligar a unos compañeros, con métodos que repugnan a la dignidad humana, a acusarse de traiciones imaginarias y a firmar cartas donde hasta la sintaxis parece policial, es la negación de lo que me hizo abrazar desde el

primer día la causa de la revolución cubana: su decisión de luchar por la justicia sin perder el respeto a los individuos. No es éste el ejemplo del socialismo que quiero para mi país.¹

On the author's return to Peru in the summer of 1971, in an interview with César Hildebrandt from *Caretas*, Vargas Llosa once more defends his political position on Cuba regarding the *Padilla affair*, and explains how it influenced his criticism of socialism regarding the difficult harmonisation – on the societal level – between intellect and ideology:

Yo no he hecho más que protestar por estos sucesos que contradicen lo que siempre he admirado en la revolución cubana: haber mostrado que la justicia social era posible sin desprestigiar la dignidad de los individuos, sin dictadura policial o estética. Pienso que lo ocurrido en estas últimas semanas me da esta imagen ejemplar de Cuba y que ha levantado trascendentales protestas en el mundo. Hablo únicamente, claro está, de las protestas de la izquierda, como la carta enviada a Fidel por 61 escritores y artistas – Sartre, entre ellos, y José Revueltas, a quienes nadie se atreverá a llamar reaccionarios –, que habían hecho suya desde el primer momento la causa de la revolución cubana.²

In late 1974 Vargas Llosa defends, for the last time, basic socialist reforms that establish the following: 'Un orden social, para la mayoría, más equitativo y decente que el que puede garantizar el sistema capitalista.'³ That is why the author can be quoted, eventually – alongside his appraisal of a book by Jorge Edwards in which Vargas Llosa's independent criticism relating to Cuban intellectual and artistic liberties is presented, not its system of society as such –, as making a last effort to support the political thinking of the Cuban regime, however, in a much more mitigated way:

Por eso, a pesar del horror biológico que me inspiran las sociedades policiales y el dogmatismo, los sistemas de verdad única, si debo elegir entre uno y otro, aprieto los dientes y sigo diciendo: 'con el socialismo.' Pero lo hago ya sin la ilusión, la alegría y el optimismo con que durante años la palabra socialismo se asociaba en mí, gracias exclusivamente a Cuba.⁴

Overall, however, since the mid-1970s the author's declining support for orthodox forms of socialism is clearly recognisable. In the wake of Vargas Llosa's studying of the politico-

¹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea*, pp. 164-165; *Contra viento y marea I*, pp. 248-249.

² Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea*, p. 170; *Contra viento y marea I*, p. 254; Vargas Llosa, M.: *Entrevista exclusiva a Vargas Llosa por César Hildebrandt*, publicada en *Caretas*, cited in: Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 187.

³ Vargas Llosa, M.: 'Un francotirador tranquilo', cited in: *Contra viento y marea*, pp. 211-212; *Contra viento y marea I*, pp. 298-299.

⁴ Vargas Llosa, M.: 'Un francotirador tranquilo', cited in: *Contra viento y marea*, p. 212; *Contra viento y marea I*, p. 299.

philosophical writings of Albert Camus – in particular, *L'homme révolté* –, an estrangement from Jean-Paul Sartre and the author's former Marxist methodology for analysing social injustices can be detected. As part of this reading experience of Camus something happens to Vargas Llosa, which will be explained in detail, later, together with the intellectual reception of Karl Popper: namely, the rejection and final discardment of all models of political utopia, no matter whether from the Left or Right. The unequivocal criticism of the dangers that spring from utopian beliefs leading to religious or politico-ideological fanaticism is a recurrent characteristic of the author's newly acquired world view since, at least, the end of the 1970s:

Hace algunos años perdí el gusto a las utopías políticas, esos Apocalipsis que prometen bajar el cielo a la tierra: ahora sé que más bien suelen provocar iniquidades tan graves como las que quisieran remediar. Desde entonces pienso que el sentido común es la más valiosa de las virtudes políticas.⁵

By then, the de facto adherence of Vargas Llosa to the politically moderate ideology of social democracy is something which is inextricably linked to his political and intellectual attitude of the day up to the mid-1980s – such as, e.g., with his activities after the demise of the Velasco regime (Uchuraccay, 1983) or his duties as the chair of the international writers' association PEN, 1977-1979.

Just as the author's world view – in the wake of the *Padilla affair* – has become more pragmatic and *less revolutionary* regarding democracy and reaching social reforms, Vargas Llosa's conviction of the writer's and intellectual's role has become more realistic – in particular, in relation to society's ends.

Whereas Vargas Llosa's metaphor of the writer as a revolutionary or 'socialistically imbued' vulture, who has been nurturing his intellect and artistic work with the societal carcass of the failing remnants of bourgeois culture, is part of the author's political convictions of the 1960s, his new beliefs take on a lighter and more pragmatic tone: 'Reaparecen, en su libro sobre Flaubert, los temas predilectos de sus ensayos sobre el compromiso político del escritor, pero han desaparecido sus implicaciones socialistas.'⁶ In Kristal's words, the following can be said on Vargas Llosa's combining of his writing with the perception of Latin American reality since the 1970s, from which his novels are constructed, while jettisoning the more radical or revolutionary beliefs from his early phase from 1959 to 1969: 'Reaparece el tema de la

⁵ Vargas Llosa, M., cited in: Roldán, J.: *Vargas Llosa. Entre el mito y la realidad*, p. 296.

⁶ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 195.

duplicidad del escritor, pero ha dejado de ser la del que se siente desgarrado porque no puede conciliar sus convicciones políticas con su vocación literaria, y es ahora ‘este vivir y compartir la experiencia humana y al mismo tiempo ser un frío observador explotador de la vida propia y ajena’.⁷ After Vargas Llosa’s publication of his literary essay *La orgía perpetua: Flaubert y Madame Bovary*⁸ in 1975, the author’s refreshed vision for literature and society, while contemplating Flaubert, can be summarised thus:

Esta vocación ‘monstruosa’ por la cual un hombre llega a considerar la vida como un mero pretexto para la literatura otorga al escritor una libertad extraordinaria: puede usarlo todo para su trabajo. Pero se trata de un arma de doble filo: la vertiginosa abundancia podría también paralizarlo. Sin embargo, no todas las experiencias son incentivos; sólo aquellas que originaron y mantienen su vocación, y esto, en el caso de Flaubert, quiere decir la *misère humaine*. Ningún novelista vio tan claro como él – y en ninguno ha sido más cierto – que esta vocación, como los buitres, se alimenta preferentemente de carroña [de la sociedad en general]. Se lo dijo, sin rubor, a Louise Colet: ‘Quand on a son modèle net, devant les yeux, on écrit toujours bien, et où donc le vrai est-il plus clairement visible que dans ces belles expositions de la misère humaine?’⁹

In a second step, we can detail how the re-reading of the philosophical and humanist tenets of Camus – in Vargas Llosa’s article ‘Albert Camus y la moral de los límites’¹⁰ from 1975 – leads to the author’s deeper understanding and appreciation of Camusian thought. Much more than that, it also leads to the transformation of Vargas Llosa’s world view, his lasting farewell to totalitarian-leaning utopia and ideology, while embracing the clear-thinking pragmatism of the men from the Mediterranean Sea like Camus.

In the author’s philosophical writings in *Contra viento y marea* and *Entre Sartre y Camus* the renewed reception of Albert Camus’ main political work *The Rebel (L’homme révolté*, published in 1951) is quoted as having set in motion Vargas Llosa’s democratic and *individualist* tendencies in his intellectual and artistic career:

No volví a leer a Camus hasta hace algunos meses, cuando, de manera casi casual, con motivo de un atentado terrorista que hubo en Lima, abrí de nuevo *L’homme révolté*, su ensayo sobre la violencia en la historia, que había olvidado por completo (o que nunca entendí). Fue una revelación. Ese análisis de las fuentes filosóficas del terror que

⁷ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 195.

⁸ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La orgía perpetua*, Barcelona 2015.

⁹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La orgía perpetua*, p. 93.

¹⁰ Vargas Llosa, M.: ‘Albert Camus y la moral de los límites’, in: *Entre Sartre y Camus*, pp. 79-108; *Contra viento y marea*, pp. 231-252; *Contra viento y marea I*, pp. 321-342.

caracteriza a la historia contemporánea me deslumbró por su lucidez y actualidad, por las respuestas que sus páginas dieron a muchas dudas y temores que la realidad de mi país provocaba en mí y por el aliento que fue descubrir que, en varias opciones difíciles de política, de historia y de cultura, había llegado por mi cuenta, después de algunos tropezones, a coincidir enteramente con Camus.¹¹

Furthermore, the power of nature and the natural environment, in contrast to urban historicism, in which both philosopher and writer are immersing themselves – defining their character and socio-ethnic origins –, encourages, in Camus' case, the move to define humanist or Camusian human qualities based upon that quality of nature belonging to human beings per se, reinforced through the standpoint of Mediterranean culture:

En efecto, fue su religión, o más bien una convicción a la que permaneció fiel toda su vida: la de que el hombre se realiza íntegramente, vive su total realidad, en la medida en que comulga con el mundo natural, y la de que el divorcio entre el hombre y el paisaje mutila lo humano. Es quizá esta convicción, nacida de la experiencia de alguien que creció a la intemperie [...] la que separó a Camus de los intelectuales de su generación. Todos ellos, marxistas o católicos, liberales o existencialistas, tuvieron algo en común: la idolatría de la historia. Sartre o Merleau-Ponty, Raymond Aron o Roger Garaudy, Emmanuel Mounier o Henri Lefebvre, por lo menos en un punto coincidieron: el hombre es un ser eminentemente social y entender sus miserias y padecimientos, así como proponer soluciones para sus problemas, es algo que sólo cabe en el marco de la historia. Enemistados en todo lo demás, estos escritores compartían el dogma más extendido de nuestro tiempo: la historia es el instrumento clave de la problemática humana, el territorio donde se decide *todo* el destino del hombre. Camus no aceptó nunca este mandamiento moderno. [...] En *L'été* (1948) escribió: '*La historia no explica ni el universo natural que existía antes de ella ni tampoco la belleza que está por encima de ella.*' Y en ese mismo ensayo objetó la hegemonía de las ciudades, a las cuales asociaba el absolutismo historicista en el que, más tarde, en *L'homme révolté*, vería el origen de la tragedia política moderna, es decir, la época de las dictaduras filosóficamente justificadas en la necesidad histórica: '*Vivimos en la época de las grandes ciudades. De modo deliberado se amputó al mundo aquello que hace su permanencia: la naturaleza, el mar, la colina, la meditación de los atardeceres. Ya no hay conciencia si no es en las calles, porque no hay historia sino en las calles; tal es lo que se ha decretado.*' A este hombre ciudadano, al que los pensadores modernos han convertido en un mero producto histórico,

¹¹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Entre Sartre y Camus*, pp. 79-80.

al que las ideologías han privado de su carne y su sangre, a este ser abstracto y urbano, separado de la tierra y del sol, desindividualizado, disgregado de su unidad y convertido en un archipiélago de categorías mentales, Camus opone el hombre natural, unido al mundo de los elementos, que reivindica orgullosamente su estirpe física, que ama su cuerpo y que procura complacerlo, que encuentra en el acuerdo con el paisaje y la materia no solamente una forma plena y suficiente del placer sino la confirmación de su grandeza.¹²

There are two characteristics in Camus's philosophy and writings that have influenced Vargas Llosa's convictions as a writer and intellectual: (natural) *beauty* and *freedom* (based upon the beauty of the *Camusian* human being). The main protagonist Meursault in one of Camus' central literary works – the novel *L'Étranger* – is described by Vargas Llosa as the frank, simple, spartan, down-to-earth, but truth-loving defender of natural righteousness and human truthfulness: a form of higher, incorruptible beauty based on universal morals the Camusian literary and philosophical world view aspires to. Then, the author of *La guerra del fin del mundo* and *Historia de Mayta* expounds in detail how Meursault, in *L'Étranger*, represents the love for the non-conventional beauty of the earth in all its forms, how only the non-alienated harmony between men and nature can lead to an integral vision of justice for mankind:

Meursault es en muchos aspectos un *alter ego* de Camus, que amó también este mundo con la intensidad con que los místicos aman el otro, que tuvo también el vicio de la verdad y que por ella – sobre todo en política – no vaciló en infringir las convenciones de su tiempo. Sólo un hombre venido de lejos, desenterado de las modas, impermeable al cinismo y a las grandes servidumbres de la ciudad, hubiera podido defender, como lo hizo Camus, en pleno apogeo de los sistemas, la tesis de que las ideologías conducen irremisiblemente a la esclavitud y al crimen, a sostener que la moral es una instancia superior a la que debe someterse la política y a romper lanzas por dos señoras tan desprestigiadas ya en ese momento que su sólo nombre había pasado a ser objeto de irrisión: la libertad y la belleza.¹³

Coming back to the Camusian two-fold distinction that was made above between *beauty* and *freedom*, it's important to point out that the affirmation of man can only be made in relation to nature, in order to combat *the absurd* associated with modernist city life – which

¹² Vargas Llosa, M.: *Entre Sartre y Camus*, pp. 82-84.

¹³ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Entre Sartre y Camus*, p. 86.

is the Camusian definition of *human beauty*. Following on from that, the *freedom* of the human being is thus achieved when man – based on his connection with his natural surroundings – asserts himself against the urban and nihilistic weaknesses of modern culture, rebelling, not in a socially progressive, but rather a philosophical, moral and cultural way against elitist, Euro-centric and historicist forms of modernity.

Now, we'll come to Vargas Llosa's reception of one of Camus' main philosophical works, *The Rebel (L'homme révolté)*, which is Camus' testimony to Mediterranean man and culture, and, eventually, Vargas Llosa's justification for his moderate and pragmatic turn in his social and political world view. Camus' rejection of political and utopian fanaticism, born, originally, out of Christian and European culture, is something that's on a par with Vargas Llosa's newly adopted refusal of the *historicist* conviction that politics by itself will transform mankind into a better place for all of its members. Alluding to ancient Greek notions of society (including the recognition of the limitation of one's own existence), Vargas Llosa translates Camus' discoveries into the main vocabulary for his own intellectual development:

Vivió convencido de que la política era sólo una provincia de la experiencia humana, que ésta era más ancha y compleja que aquélla, y que si (como, por desgracia, ha pasado) la política se convertía en la primera y fundamental actividad, a la que se subordinaban todas las otras, la consecuencia era el recorte o el envilecimiento del individuo.¹⁴

Some years later, during the politically highly divisive electoral campaign of FREDEMO (*Frente Democrático*: 1988-1990), presidential candidate Vargas Llosa remembers a politically and religiously fanatical climate, something which he recalls with certain resentment and which is also the central theme in *La guerra del fin del mundo*:

A partir de entonces la lucha electoral fue adoptando un semblante de guerra religiosa, en la que los ingenuos temores, los prejuicios y las armas limpias se mezclaban con las sucias y los golpes bajos y las más pérfidas maniobras, de uno y otro lado, hasta extremos que lindaban con la mojiganga y el surrealismo.¹⁵

The answer in response to *absurd* modernity, then – in particular, as part of a world system caught between different ideologies and fanaticisms –, lies in rebelling as a strong and conscious individual against nihilistic totality, but also against totalitarian history, and thus ideologically, against both fascism and Marxism:

¹⁴ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Entre Sartre y Camus*, pp. 92-93.

¹⁵ Vargas Llosa, M.: *El pez en el agua*, p. 496.

La Europa que Camus defiende, aquella que quisiera salvar, vigorizar, ofrecer como modelo al mundo, es la Europa de un pagano moderno y meridional, que se siente heredero y defensor de valores que supone venidos de la Grecia clásica: el culto a la belleza artística y el diálogo con la naturaleza, la medida, la tolerancia y la diversidad social, el equilibrio entre el individuo y la sociedad, un democrático reparto de funciones entre lo racional y lo irracional en el diseño de la vida y un respeto riguroso de la libertad. De esta utopía relativa (como él la llamó) han sido despedidos, por lo pronto, el cristianismo y el marxismo.¹⁶

In a later passage the concept of political or religious *dogma* is condemned as belonging to the critical as well as essentially *historicist* cornerstone of all modern politics and culture. Vargas Llosa – siding emphatically with Camus here – elevates the central question of *morality* in Camus’ belief system to the highest sphere of man’s existence, because all other political questions of the day – being part of bourgeois Christianity or a Marxism increasingly betrayed by Stalinism – have become rotten from within or without during the decisive events of the 20th century: ‘Este horror del dogma, de todos los dogmas, es un fuego que llamea en el corazón mismo del pensamiento de Camus, el fundamento de su concepción de la libertad. [El está convencido] de que toda teoría que se presenta como absoluta – por ejemplo el cristianismo o el marxismo – acaba tarde o temprano por justificar el crimen y la mentira.’¹⁷

In Efraín Kristal’s words, what makes Camusian thought defining for an entire epoch, is that core problematic of ideology and violence that makes his philosophy refreshingly distinctive and radically different in relation to his contemporary political thinkers. That independent strand of critical thinking about the violent and destructive ends of all ideology is, however, what makes the Camusian philosophical universe entirely compatible with Vargas-Llosa thought.¹⁸

Finally, Vargas Llosa summarises the critical distinction in Camusian thought between *revolution* (which is to be condemned) and *rebellion* (which is to be endorsed), differentiating between ‘utopía absoluta’ and ‘utopía relativa’:

El revolucionario es, para Camus, aquel que pone al hombre al servicio de las ideas, el que está dispuesto a sacrificar al hombre que vive por el hombre que vendrá, el que hace de la moral una técnica gobernada por la política, el que prefiere la justicia a la vida y el que

¹⁶ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Entre Sartre y Camus*, p. 91.

¹⁷ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Entre Sartre y Camus*, p. 94.

¹⁸ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, pp. 228-230.

se cree en el derecho de mentir y de matar en función del ideal. El rebelde puede mentir y matar pero sabe que no tiene derecho de hacerlo y que el hacerlo amenaza su causa, no admite que el mañana tenga privilegios sobre el presente, justifica los fines con los medios y hace que la política sea una consecuencia de una causa superior: la moral. Esta 'utopía relativa' ¿resulta a simple vista demasiado remota? Tal vez sí, pero ello no la hace menos deseable, y sí más digna que otros modelos de acción contemporánea.¹⁹

In Camus' philosophical essay *L'homme révolté* this whole problematic of the failures of revolution and its historical or existing ideologies (in particular, fascism and Marxism) is depicted. The causal chain of events leading up to the revolutionary travails of the 20th century have been, chronologically, the destruction of God through the Enlightenment, the subsequent adoration of secular nihilistic pleasures, or the murder of history – in an either Sartrean (with dialectical pro- and regresses) or Camusian sense (leaving the dialectical or totalitarian picture altogether, seeing man as a more ancient, separate and dignified unit in relation to modernity). Particularly, the death of reason and the extermination of different races or politico-religious ideas in either German concentration camps or Stalinist gulags have led to the jointly Camusian-Vargas-Llosan abhorrence and condemnation of the utopian terror and trials of an era which has cast its shadows right up to the end of the 20th century – at least, until the fall of the Berlin Wall. In *L'homme révolté*, regarding the atrocities of Marxism(-Leninism) and Stalinism, the following can be found:

Marx reintroduced crime and punishment into the un-Christian world, but only in relation to history. Marxism in one of its aspects is a doctrine of culpability on man's part and innocence on history's. His interpretation of history is that when it is deprived of power, it expresses itself in revolutionary violence; at the height of its power, it risked becoming legal violence, in other words, terror and trial.²⁰

In a later section of the work *Caesarism* – mirroring the fanatical madness of dictators like Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Mao or Kim Il-Sung – is introduced into history, once again, and history, from a critically Camusian perspective, absolved of any responsibility of the decision of free men, of singular conscience, of ethnic diversity or cultural pluralism:

The revolution based on principles kills God [...] The revolution of the twentieth century kills what remains of God in the principles themselves, and consecrates historic nihilism. Whatever paths nihilism may proceed to take, from the moment that it decides to be the

¹⁹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Entre Sartre y Camus*, pp. 102-103.

²⁰ Camus, A.: *The Rebel*, p. 211.

creative force of its period and ignores every moral precept, it begins to build the temple of Caesar. To choose history, and history alone, is to choose nihilism, contrary to the teachings of rebellion itself. Those who rush blindly to history in the name of the irrational, proclaiming that it is meaningless, encounter servitude and terror and finally emerge into the universe of concentration camps. Those who launch themselves into it, preaching its absolute rationality, encounter servitude and terror and emerge into the universe of the concentration camps. Fascism wants to establish the advent of the Nietzschean superman. It immediately discovers that God, if he exists, may well be this or that, but he is primarily the master of death. If man wants to become God, he arrogates to himself the power of life or death over others. The rational revolution, on its part, wants to realise the total man described by Marx. The logic of history, from the moment that it is totally accepted, gradually leads it, against its most passionate convictions, to mutilate man more and more, and to transform itself into objective crime. [...] The nihilists to-day are seated on thrones. Methods of thought which claim to give the lead to our world in the name of revolution have become, in reality, ideologies of consent and not of rebellion.²¹

In the last part of the essay, then, Camus affirms his humanistic vision of rebellion – which is part of the individualistic, anti-historicist nature of human beings. The creative rebellion of man – not only in society, but also in culture and the arts – will, thus, lead the re-newed way to a plural and non-totalitarian tomorrow, dismissing the nihilistic complexities and diversions of the modern and destructive sides of mankind:

Rebellion's claim is unity, historic revolution's claim is totality [...] One is creative, the other nihilist. [...] Revolution, in order to be creative, cannot do without either a moral or metaphysical rule to balance the insanity of history. Undoubtedly, it has nothing but scorn for the formal and meretricious morality to be found in bourgeois society. But its folly has been to extend its scorn to every moral attitude [...] Rebellion, in fact, will say – and will say more and more explicitly – that revolution must try to act, not in order to come into existence at some future date, but in terms of the obscure existence, which is already made manifest in the act of insurrection [...] Let us only note that to the 'I rebel, therefore we exist' and the 'We are alone' of the metaphysical rebellion, rebellion at grips with history adds that instead of killing and dying in order to produce the being that we are not, we have to live and let live in order to create what we are.²²

²¹ Camus, A.: *The Rebel*, pp. 215-216.

²² Camus, A.: *The Rebel*, pp. 220-221.

In a third step, it will be demonstrated how the rationalist arguments of Karl Popper – of whose thought Vargas Llosa became an ardent admirer by the late 1970s – have helped the author distance himself from the *historicist* and, eventually, totalitarian arguments for an ideological ‘solution’ regarding history. Both right-wing fascist ideology and left-wing socialist ideologies – born out of the utopian desire to remedy the social and political grievances of failed progressiveness – have contributed to establishing societal paradigms against pragmatic thought, based on ‘utopian’ or society-wide construction of human tenets to mould people for the future and, additionally, to become part of large-scale planning, forgetting about their immediate or ‘privately induced’ necessities.

In his philosophical memoirs that take the form of an exploration of liberalism, *La llamada de la tribu*, Vargas Llosa summarises, succinctly, the two main dangerous trends – throughout the 20th century – of utopian belief systems and ideology of an either reformist or revolutionary character, fundamentally criticised by Karl Popper:

Aún más objetable es el empleo de las expresiones ‘ingeniería fragmentaria’ e ‘ingeniería utópica u holística’ para lo que, más sencillamente, podría llamarse ‘reformismo’ y ‘radicalismo’ (o ‘actitud liberal’ y ‘actitud totalitaria’). Hayek, por ejemplo, criticó el uso de la palabra ‘ingeniero’ para señalar al reformador social por la asociación inconsciente con el vocabulario comunista ya que Stalin definía a los escritores como ‘ingenieros de almas’.²³

Now, I shall briefly introduce Popper’s ‘Criticism of the anti-naturalistic doctrines’ (in *The Poverty of Historicism*²⁴), which is part of the criticism Popper directs against the technological approach to sociology – out of which ideological fanaticism or religious utopianism evolve. In contrast to a more logical naturalistic approach of a classic Popperian ‘trial and error’-method stands the technological distinction of *piecemeal social engineering* versus *utopian social engineering* (referred to above in the citation from Vargas Llosa).

In the third section of Part III of one of Popper’s main works of social criticism – apart from his other main work *The Open Society and Its Enemies*²⁵ – a juxtaposition of these two forms of social engineering can be found. ‘*Piecemeal social engineering*’ is described in the following way:

²³ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, p. 195.

²⁴ Popper, K. R.: *The Poverty of Historicism*, pp. 55-104.

²⁵ Popper, K. R.: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, London/Princeton 1950.

Just as the main task of the physical engineer is to design machines and to remodel and service them, the task of the piecemeal social engineer is to design social institutions, and to reconstruct and run those already in existence. The term 'social institution' is used here in a very wide sense, to include bodies of a private as well as of a public character. Thus I shall use it to describe a business, whether it is a small shop or an insurance company, and likewise a school, or an 'educational system', or a police force, or a Church, or a law court. The piecemeal technologist or engineer recognises that *only a minority of social institutions are consciously designed while the vast majority have just 'grown', as the undesigned results of human actions.*²⁶ But however strongly he may be impressed by this important fact, as a technologist or engineer he will look upon them from a 'functional' or 'instrumental' point of view.²⁷

Having established the first half of this equation between social engineering and its *piecemeal* variant, Popper aims to get the facts straight regarding the *utopian* form of social engineering, leading to the controlled transformation of 'society' as a whole – which oftentimes involves the either successful or unsuccessful establishment of politically or religiously utopian states. In Popper's own words this radical form of engineering comprises the following:

Holistic or Utopian social engineering, as opposed to piecemeal social engineering, is never of a 'private' but always of a 'public' character. It aims at remodelling the 'whole of society' in accordance with a definite plan or blueprint; it aims at 'seizing the key positions' and at extending 'the power of the State [...] until the State becomes nearly identical with society', and it aims, furthermore, at controlling from these 'key positions' the historical forces that mould the future of the developing society: either by arresting this development, or else by foreseeing its course and adjusting society to it.²⁸

Finally, derived from this two-fold distinction is Popper's unequivocal attitude condemning the utopian or holistic approach, whose vision for society has been variously criticised, besides

²⁶ Popper, K. R.: *The Poverty of Historicism*, p. 65: 'The two views – that social institutions are either 'designed' or that they just 'grow' – correspond to those of the Social Contract theorists and of their critics, for example, Hume. But Hume does not give up the 'functional' or 'instrumentalist' view of social institutions, for he says that men could not do without them. This position might be elaborated into a Darwinian explanation of the instrumental character of undesigned institutions (such as language): if they have no useful function, they have no chance of surviving. According to this view, undesigned social institutions may emerge as *unintended consequences of rational actions*: just as a road may be formed without any intention to do so by people who find it convenient to use a track already existing (as Descartes observes). It need hardly be stressed, however, that the technological approach is quite independent of all questions of 'origin'.'

²⁷ Popper, K. R.: *The Poverty of Historicism*, pp. 64-65.

²⁸ Popper, K. R.: *The Poverty of Historicism*, p. 67.

the criticism by Vargas Llosa himself – heeding the Popperian advice of small steps or small-scale scientific falsifiability:

Of these two doctrines, I hold that the one is true [*piecemeal* social engineering], while the other is false and liable to lead to mistakes which are both avoidable and grave [*utopian* social engineering]. Of the two methods, I hold that one is possible [*piecemeal*], while the other simply does not exist: it is impossible [*utopian* or *holistic*] [...] One of the differences between the Utopian or holistic approach and the piecemeal approach may therefore be stated in this way: while the piecemeal engineer can attack his problem with an open mind as to the scope of the reform, the holist cannot do this; for he has decided beforehand that a complete reconstruction is possible and necessary. This fact has far-reaching consequences. It prejudices the Utopianist against certain sociological hypotheses which state limits to institutional control; for example, the one mentioned above in this section, expressing the uncertainty due to the personal element, the ‘human factor’. By a rejection *a priori* of such hypotheses, the Utopian approach violates the principles of scientific method. On the other hand, problems connected with the uncertainty of the human factor must force the Utopianist, whether he likes it or not, to try to control the human factor by institutional means, and to extend his programme so as to embrace not only the transformation of society, according to plan, but also the transformation of man.²⁹

To end this analysis of utopian social engineering versus the pragmatic and liberal freedoms a large amount of people should cherish – in other words: the *closed society* versus the *open society* – with a shared denunciation contained in both Popper’s and Vargas Llosa’s convictions relating to the early modern and pre-scientific failures of tribalism (with the tribe or *tribu* being a constant danger for the *open society*), the following has to be added. Not only can utopian or holistic engineering lead to fanaticism and revolutionary experiments of the most irresponsible kind, it can also lead to totalitarian paths or mentalities of development which are almost impossible to correct, leading to larger social misery or human poverty than that which originally existed: ‘Yet holists not only plan to study the whole society by an impossible method, they also plan to control and reconstruct our society *as a whole*. They prophesy that ‘the power of the State is bound to increase until the State becomes nearly identical with society’. The intuition expressed by this passage is clear enough. It is the *totalitarian*

²⁹ Popper, K. R.: *The Poverty of Historicism*, pp. 69-70.

intuition.³⁰ In an earlier section Popper comes to the following conclusion on holism and utopianism: 'I personally believe that quite a good case may be made for the view that the holistic way of thinking (whether about 'society' or about 'nature'), so far from representing a high level or late stage in the development of thought, is characteristic of a pre-scientific stage.'³¹ In Vargas Llosa's philosophical meditations *La llamada de la tribu* – with the longest chapter on *Sir Karl Popper* – Vargas Llosa adds to Popper's analysis the practical dangers and negative repercussions which have resulted from fascism and communism in the 20th century: 'A través de errores que supo rectificar, la cultura democrática ha ido asegurando a los hombres, en las sociedades abiertas, mejores condiciones materiales y culturales y mayores oportunidades para decidir su destino. [...] Popper muestra que el 'historicismo' y el 'utopismo social' van siempre de la mano. El fascismo y el comunismo pretendían interpretar las leyes de la historia con sus políticas encaminadas a establecer sociedades perfectas y ambos regímenes practicaban una 'ingeniería utópica' que era más un acto de fe, una religión, que una filosofía racional, es decir, algo esencialmente anticientífico.'³² Last but not least – before we come in a few concluding remarks to Vargas Llosa's views on terrorism and terroristic beliefs – the following is argued by Karl Popper, not only on utopia and societal engineering due to authoritarian beliefs, but on utopia and violence, since this authoritarian attitude transforms itself into violence, when oppositional views arise that compete with these utopian imaginations: 'Para Popper, la actitud utópica llevada a la acción es una actitud autoritaria que se presta a la violencia; y para controlar la violencia que proviene de esta actitud, hay que abandonarla: *Only if we give up our authoritarian attitude in the realm of opinion, only if we establish the attitude of give and take, of readiness to learn from other people, can we hope to control acts of violence inspired by piety and duty.*'³³

In a last step, some of the intellectual and political attitudes of the author regarding terrorism and radical societal beliefs – during the apogee of left-wing terrorism in Peru during the 1980s – are demonstrated. For these the following applies: Vargas Llosa's affirmation of an independent and multi-faceted thinking as well as a pluralist world view regarding society serves as a recognition of the author's newly acquired democratic and realist vision for politics

³⁰ Popper, K. R.: *The Poverty of Historicism*, p. 79; *Totalitarian intuition*: The formula quoted is nearly identical with one by C. Schmitt [The italics have been added by me].

³¹ Popper, K. R.: *The Poverty of Historicism*, p. 76.

³² Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, p. 163, p. 184.

³³ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 245 [The English citation of Popper pertains to Kristal (Karl Popper, 'Utopia and Violence', in: *Conjectures and Refutations*, pp. 356-357)].

and culture in Peru. Alluding to the other end of the societal or political spectrum – the condemnation of ‘ideology’ and its subsequent advancement: terrorism, as the ‘highest’ manifestation of political radicalism –, Vargas Llosa’s critical political portrayal in *La guerra del fin del mundo* and *Historia de Mayta* likewise serves as the artistic denunciation of the religiously or politically fanatical (essentially: anti-democratic) societal conditions or reactions as part of the two historical epicentres for the creation of ideological myths on the Latin American continent: *Canudos* and *Jauja*.

In an article from April 1984 – ‘Las metas y los métodos’, from the time of the publication of *Historia de Mayta* – Vargas Llosa expresses his views on the defence of the plurality of standpoints in one country, contributing to individual tolerance as well as to a democratic climate for society:

Para que haya diálogo es preciso un denominador común entre quienes dialogan. ¿Existe alguno que puede inducirnos a levantar las barreras y a salvar las distancias que nos mantienen encerrados en soliloquios estériles? Sí y se puede resumir en esta fórmula: pongámonos de acuerdo sobre los métodos y discrepemos sobre las metas. Es utópico creer que una sociedad entera puede comulgar en un objetivo final, coincidir en el modelo de sociedad ambicionado. Tampoco es deseable esa unanimidad de pareceres. Ella se alcanza de manera artificial, mediante imposiciones autoritarias o a través del fanatismo. No existe un ideal único válido. La meta ideal es cambiante y compuesta, aquella a la que nunca se llega pero a la que una comunidad se va siempre aproximando mediante transacciones y conjugaciones de los proyectos disímiles que rivalizan en su seno.³⁴

In other words, terror – and its by-product, organised terrorism – is an unnecessary means to an end, being able to become transformed, by itself, into an end for which the most violent or utopian resources are applied. In Peru, from the late 1970s or early 1980s onwards, radical left-wing political groups tended to propagate terror for advancing their aims, with the best examples being *Sendero Luminoso* (PCP-SL) from 1980 to 1999, as well as the *Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru* (MRTA) from 1984 to 1997. Violent reasons for revolution out of ideological beliefs can thus become transformed into a religious advocacy for changing society, becoming part of a non-democratic and non-reasonable chain of events – destroying state-led stability, reason, and, in the end, political liberalism itself:

³⁴ Vargas Llosa, M.: ‘Las metas y los métodos’, in: *Contra viento y marea II*, pp. 406-407; ‘Las metas y los métodos’, in: Munné, A. (ed.): *Mario Vargas Llosa. Obras completas X. Piedra de toque II (1984-1999)*, p. 31.

Su objetivo [de los terroristas] es provocar la represión, obligar al régimen a dejar de lado los métodos legales y a responder a la violencia con la violencia. Paradójicamente, ese hombre convencido de actuar en nombre de las víctimas, lo que ardientemente desea, con las bombas que pone, es que los organismos de seguridad se desencadenen contra aquellas víctimas en su búsqueda de culpables, y las atropellen y abusen. Y si las cárceles se repletan de inocentes y mueren obreros, campesinos, estudiantes, y debe intervenir el ejército y las famosas libertades ‘formales’ se suspenden y se decretan leyes de excepción, tanto mejor: el pueblo ya no vivirá engañado, sabrá a qué atenerse sobre sus enemigos, habrá descubierto prácticamente la necesidad de la revolución.³⁵

After this outline of Vargas Llosa’s pragmatic changes in his political attitude as well as newer philosophical positions on Albert Camus, Karl Popper, and his denunciation of terrorism, the author’s brilliant fictionalised critique of religious versus secular utopia as well as revolution in both *La guerra del fin del mundo* and *Historia de Mayta* will be analysed. A few introductory remarks will serve to present the main narrative features and events of the two novels.

In *La guerra del fin del mundo*, published in 1981, Vargas Llosa’s fictionalised critique and personal depiction of the religious-utopian war between the messianic community of *Canudos* (1893-1897) and the secular Republic of Brazil (1889-) clearly portrays the author’s abandonment of historical and political radicalism. In a similar vein, *Mayta*’s utopian attempts, in *Historia de Mayta*, to overcome his party political comrades in the fight for greater social justice, but – eventually – the failure of the de facto implementation of the promised reforms by force of arms is a pessimistic account of the revolutionary wishfulness of a determined minority: desiring to transform reality in a violent and non-deliberative way.

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For the analysis of both *La guerra del fin del mundo* and *Historia de Mayta* the most relevant publications on or by Vargas Llosa have been consulted. Hereby, it is important to start with the artistic self-portrait in Vargas Llosa’s *A Writer’s Reality*³⁶, which pertains to the author’s assessment of his own writing of the novels from the 1960s, 1970s, and, in particular, the

³⁵ Vargas Llosa, M.: ‘La lógica del terror’, in: *Contra viento y marea*, p. 427.

³⁶ Vargas Llosa, M.: *A Writer’s Reality*, Syracuse (NY) 1991.

1980s. In it the author's ingenious procedures during the creation of *La guerra*³⁷ – based on a true story in 19th century Brazil – are presented, as is his critical portrayal of ideology or fiction – as two fictions in one single work of art – in *Historia de Mayta*.³⁸ The most widely acclaimed studies on Vargas Llosa's work, such as by E. Kristal – *Tentación de la palabra*³⁹ – and S. Köllmann – *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*⁴⁰ – have been used regarding the chapters on *La guerra del fin del mundo*⁴¹ and *Historia de Mayta*.⁴² In Ricardo A. Setti's *Sobre la vida y la política - Diálogo con Vargas Llosa*⁴³ are included all the interviews by Setti, as well as the most important political statements by Vargas Llosa on the *themes*, which have moulded the intellectual forms of his life. However, in the first section of the interviews all the issues regarding Vargas Llosa's fictional writing or thinking connected to his novels are presented, in particular on *La guerra* and *Mayta*. In Cornejo Polar, A.'s *Crítica de la razón heterogénea. Textos esenciales (II)*⁴⁴ one of the author's main Peruvian critics characterises the main approach of *Historia de Mayta*'s interpretation as a fictionalised portrayal of apocalypse – set against the different historical dilemmas and political catastrophes of Peruvian society –, from which, together with the global ideological dispute during the Cold War, there is no return. In both Rodríguez Rea, M. A. (ed.)'s *Mario Vargas Llosa y la crítica peruana*⁴⁵ and Cornejo Polar's own *Crítica de la razón heterogénea* the author's new philosophical attitude regarding a pragmatic liberalism explains the critical portrayal of fanaticism and human surrender in *La guerra del fin del mundo*, by which history is condemned and men, in themselves the most 'vicious' species, are forced to admit the necessity to dialogue and compassion towards one another. In Sara Castro-Klarén's *Understanding Mario Vargas Llosa*⁴⁶ the revolutionary Mayta is regarded as a failed individual, who could neither achieve the unity of his former party political colleagues nor the unification of a left-wing Peru based on the harmonisation of progressive class interests. Furthermore, in relation to *La guerra del fin del mundo*, Castro-Klarén proposes the perspective of modern genocide, which has, adding to the pessimistic

³⁷ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La guerra del fin del mundo*, Barcelona 2015.

³⁸ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Historia de Mayta*, Lima 2018.

³⁹ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, Lima 2018.

⁴⁰ Köllmann, S.: *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*, Woodbridge 2014.

⁴¹ Kristal, E.: *Tentación*, pp. 279-306; Köllmann, S.: *A Companion*, pp. 150-168.

⁴² Kristal, E.: *Tentación*, pp. 306-310, pp. 312-325; Köllmann, S.: *A Companion*, pp. 168-180.

⁴³ Setti, R.: *Sobre la vida y la política*, Brasil 1986/México D.F. 1990.

⁴⁴ Cornejo Polar, A.: *Crítica de la razón heterogénea*, Lima 2013.

⁴⁵ Rodríguez Rea, M. A. (ed.): *Mario Vargas Llosa y la crítica peruana*, Lima 2011.

⁴⁶ Castro-Klarén, S.: *Understanding Mario Vargas Llosa*, Columbia (SC) 1990.

tone of other critics, ravaged the continent like so many times in history.⁴⁷ In J. J. Armas Marcelo's *Vargas Llosa: El vicio de escribir*⁴⁸ Canudos serves many different paradigms, from the romantic savages à la Rousseau to the failed revolutionaries of a long gone past, including Mayta, Che Guevara, and *Sendero Luminoso*. In Héctor Azzetti's *Historia y ficción*⁴⁹ fanaticism, military arrogance and irrational violence are considered to be the main causes for the bloodshed in *La guerra del fin del mundo*, against whose utopian prerequisites, which have evolved into the blurring of the lines between truth and lies, only a rational analysis or pragmatic course of action can ultimately be triumphant. A similar approach, regarding *La guerra*, has been pursued by Leopoldo M. Bernucci – *Historia de un Malentendido*.⁵⁰ The failure to communicate between the main protagonists in the novel, leading to the fanaticism of the religious representatives and the disillusion of the political representatives, can be verified not only on the fictional level of portrayal, but also in the fictionalised employment of the historical sources for *La guerra*, such as *Os Sertões* by Euclides da Cunha. In *Ideologías y poder* Mariela de la Torre Agostinho⁵¹ reflects on the relation between Mayta's Jauja and the historically proven events of Uchuraccay (even though from 25 years later), the missing links or open questions between Mayta and *Sendero Luminoso*, and the liberal and increasingly acclaimed attitude by the author, in addition to, the ideological aspiration in the depiction of his work. In chapters 4 and 5 on *La guerra del fin del mundo* and *Historia de Mayta* in Jacques Joret's *Historias cruzadas de novelas hispanoamericanas*⁵² politically or ideologically significant images from history (Simon Bolívar for *La guerra* or the Inquisition for *Mayta*) are compared intertextually to enrich the analysis and point towards some of the hidden meanings of both texts. Finally, Peter Elmore's *La estación de los encuentros* – including the articles 'Os sertões, de Euclides da Cunha: Lecciones de la sangre'⁵³, and 'La guerra del fin del mundo, de Mario Vargas Llosa: Los duelos de la historia'⁵⁴ – as well as Juan Luis Orrego's

⁴⁷ Castro-Klarén, S.: *Understanding Mario Vargas Llosa*, p. 184, p. 205.

⁴⁸ Armas Marcelo, J. J.: *Vargas Llosa. El vicio de escribir*, pp. 377-391.

⁴⁹ Azzetti, H.: *Historia y ficción*, Resistencia (Argentina) 2008, pp. 79-85.

⁵⁰ Bernucci, L. M.: *Historia de un Malentendido*, New York 1989.

⁵¹ de la Torre Agostinho, M.: 'Discurso literario y crisis: *Historia de Mayta* de Mario Vargas Llosa', cited in: Sawicki, P., and Baczyńska, B. (eds.): *Ideologías y poder*, Wrocław 1996, pp. 107-117.

⁵² Joret, J.: *Historias cruzadas de novelas hispanoamericanas*, Madrid/Frankfurt am Main 1995.

⁵³ Elmore, P.: 'Os sertões, de Euclides da Cunha: Lecciones de la sangre', pp. 148-153, cited in: Elmore, P.: *La estación de los encuentros*, Lima 2010.

⁵⁴ Elmore, P.: 'La guerra del fin del mundo, de Mario Vargas Llosa: Los duelos de la historia', pp. 154-157, cited in: Elmore, P.: *La estación de los encuentros*, Lima 2010.

conference paper ‘Vargas Llosa y *La guerra del fin del mundo*’⁵⁵ from the PUCP’s Cultural Centre *Las guerras de este mundo: Sociedad, poder y ficción en la obra de Mario Vargas Llosa* have been consulted where relevant to the analysis.

3.2. The critical reflection on utopia in *La guerra del fin del mundo*

La guerra del fin del mundo is partitioned into four parts, which consist of the following structure: Part I – 7 chapters, Part II – 3 chapters, Part III – 7 chapters, Part IV – 6 chapters (in total: 23 chapters). Part I consists of the introduction of the main characters and the depiction of the first two invasions by the Brazilian army against Canudos. Here, the main literary figures – fictionalised embodiments of religious utopia or secular ideologies of an utopian character – are presented: Antonio Conselheiro, simply called the *counsellor*, his followers like João Grande, the Lion of Natuba, Maria Quadrado, and other protagonists, like the monarchist Baron of Cañabrava, the liberal Epaminondas Gonçalves of Bahía, and the anarchist Galileo Gall. Part II comprises the journalistic, but contemporary portrayal of the liberal demands – evoked by the newspaper belonging to Gonçalves – from the Republican delegates of the federal state of Bahía, who call for the relocation of the army from Rio de Janeiro towards the interior of the country, where the insurrection of Canudos takes place. Part III and Part IV illustrate the advancement of the third military campaign and its Seventh Regiment by Col. Moreira César towards Canudos. Col. Tamarindo – direct subordinate of Col. Moreira César – salutes the departure of the troops, after which – from different narrators and narrative perspectives – the movements of the army as well as of its tactical and political foe, the *jagunço* rebels from Canudos, are depicted. In one of the last chapters of Part IV it is portrayed how the fifth and final brigade Girard advances towards the city of the rebels, and how Canudos, including its most messianic leader and followers, becomes destroyed.

In Vargas Llosa’s earlier fictional literature, such as *La ciudad y los perros*, *La casa verde* and *Conversación en La Catedral*, authoritarian politics as well as the culture of the Peruvian armed forces is displayed as one of its leading themes – determining the destiny of the Peruvian government throughout the 19th century, while defining its wider international outlook during the critical stages of its denouement at the turn of the century and thereafter. During the last

⁵⁵ Orrego, J. L.: ‘Vargas Llosa y *La guerra del fin del mundo*’, pp. 183-190, cited in: Centro Cultural de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú: Congreso *Las guerras de este mundo*, Lima 2008.

phase of the Pacific War, the government of Leguía, and, in particular, the militarist presidencies of Sánchez Cerro (1930-33) and Benavides (1933-39), authoritarian and one-sided state measures – aimed at oppressing the opposition, such as APRA and the Communist Party – led to the advancement and preparation of the hard-line policies of the first authentic right-wing military dictatorship in Peru, the Odría regime (1948-1956).

In José Miguel Oviedo's study *Mario Vargas Llosa: La invención de una realidad* one central narrative element of Vargas Llosa's early to intermediate fiction – from *La ciudad over Pantaleón y las visitadoras* to *La guerra* – is military life or military hierarchies – 'el mundo militar' or, more precisely, 'el de la jerarquía militar'.⁵⁶ Oviedo has illustrated what type of personal experiences regarding military life the author refers to, while confronting the reader with the author's main ontological distinction between 'el mundo *de fuera*' – pertaining to the author's enlightened, deliberative and distinctively non-patriarchal vision for Peruvian culture – and 'el mundo *de dentro*' – the social customs that are dictated by the authoritarian or military rites of oligarchic society:

Borges dijo inmejorablemente que la obra de Kafka se rige por dos ideas claves: la subordinación y el infinito: 'En casi todas sus ficciones hay jerarquías y esas jerarquías son infinitas.' Kafka descubrió esos rasgos en la sutil y ominosa burocracia que hormigueaba en las oficinas públicas de Praga; Vargas Llosa los halló en la estructura rígida y vertical que constituye la esencia de la vida militar. El primer impacto directo – el del sistema militar o paramilitar del Leoncio Prado – no se borró y seguramente no se borrará jamás: la formación juvenil del autor, su almacén de recuerdos novelísticos, tiene marcas profundas de ese radical desencuentro entre la incauta libertad del mundo civil – el mundo 'de fuera' – del que él provenía, y la espartana dureza del mundo militar – el mundo 'de dentro' –, que se le imponía como una norma inapelable. Él es, todavía, el adolescente 'cadete' leonciopradino, ese fantasma a la vez odiado y querido que lo habita o la visita cuando escribe. Militares, soldados, policías, guardianes, esbirros, pueblan las tres novelas anteriores de Vargas Llosa: son los personeros de la temida y fascinante verticalidad, del sistema de órdenes/actos, reglamentos/violaciones, jefes/subordinados; se gobiernan por el principio fundamental que rige a las criaturas del autor: el de la *imposición*.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Oviedo, J. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa*, Barcelona 1982³, p. 266.

⁵⁷ Oviedo, J. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa*, pp. 266-267.

One fundamental assumption concerning Vargas Llosa's historical novel about Canudos – regarding the utopian beliefs of a radical religious minority of a progressively positivist state (whose values of government are represented by a military elite, *imposing* its secular world view by force) – is that if two totalitarian belief systems face each other, based on a militaristic logic of annihilation, one of them has to be destroyed, for want of faith or better judgement. Therefore, what Vargas Llosa's novel *La guerra del fin del mundo* sets out to accomplish is a critical portrayal of either religious or militaristic faith in ideology – to the point where a realistic point of view, advocated by Popper, is no longer possible, since the outcome of every action is judged against the utopian picture of society that must be established. This criticism of modern variants of ideology and their militarist forms of destruction – going back to the turpitudes of the violence of the 20th century – is something that lies at the heart of the author's intermediate to recent narrative storytelling, with both *La guerra* and *Mayta* constituting the main works.

Both Thomas Scheerer's introduction to Vargas Llosa's work and Sabine Köllmann's study on *Literature and Politics – Mario Vargas Llosa* posit that Vargas Llosa's poetic and literary creations are 'ideological-critical works by means of narrative fictions'⁵⁸ as well as portrayals of revolt and the artistic revelation of societal lies or historical truths (no matter how much politically or ideologically tainted they are).⁵⁹ In Köllmann's published dissertation from the University of Zurich – pursuing a similar approach to the author's fictional work as Efraín Kristal's study *Tentación de la palabra* – the following connection between Vargas Llosa's *oeuvre*, politics, and *La guerra del fin del mundo* can be found:

The critical exposure – contained within that novel – of one-dimensional perspectives and the criticism of ideology, connected to it, constitute the essence of the political statements by Vargas Llosa.⁶⁰

Canudos – a messianic movement founded by Antonio Conselheiro during the early 1890s as part of Brasil's *sertão* – had received a large influx of followers, becoming religiously devoted supporters of the *conselheiro* in order to leave their poor or crime-stricken lives behind, defying the foundation of the new Brazilian Republic (1889-). One of the most renowned historiographic portrayals of the War of Canudos in *Os Sertões* (Rebellion in the

⁵⁸ Scheerer, T.: *Mario Vargas Llosa*, p. 110.

⁵⁹ Köllman, S.: *Literatur und Politik*, pp. 55-264, pp. 110-219, pp. 219-264.

⁶⁰ Köllmann, S.: *Literatur und Politik*, p. 56 [The translation is mine].

Backlands)⁶¹ – by one of Brazil’s most renowned journalists at the time, Euclides da Cunha (1866-1909) – became the literary role model for Vargas Llosa’s novel *La guerra del fin del mundo*.

Unquestionably, one of the essential themes of *La guerra del fin del mundo* comprises religious fanaticism in its many variants originating in the rebellion of Canudos. From a historical point of view, it should come as no surprise that, right at the foundation of the progressive and secular Republic of Brazil, a counter-movement emerges which questions all modern forms of state, of positivist and of civilian authority, going all the way back to culturally alternative or religiously different post-colonial movements. Its appearance has been, though, literarily justified, in Vargas Llosa’s *La guerra*, with the support of monarchic beliefs and religious practices by the *conselheiristas* (non-separation between church and state, the non-introduction of the decimal system, and the non-obligatory conscription to the army). On the literary level of Vargas Llosa’s novel then, both religious – ‘¡Viva el Consejero!’⁶² – and secular fanaticism – ‘¡Viva la República!’⁶³ – seem to complement each other, leading – in a non-Gramscian sense – not to the hegemony of one over the other, but, rather, to an entire kaleidoscope of fanatical or radical beliefs, as a result of which no one of the former participants in the fictionalised War of Canudos can really say whether the perceived incidents have been truth, lies or deceit:

En este nivel de lectura es donde se aprecia mejor las repercusiones del carácter de la oposición básica de la novela. Puesto que se optó por el enfrentamiento mecánico, la situación y función de los términos de la oposición resultan aleatorios y sus valores, consecuentemente, intercambiables. Los errores de unos y otros son, en el fondo, los mismos y derivan de una misma fuente: el fanatismo. Es importante advertir que en la obra la condena del fanatismo es constante y enfática y que subyace en ella una recusación global contra todas las ideologías, cualquiera que sea su raíz.⁶⁴

Before we come to the character analysis of the main figures, A. Conselheiro, representing *religious* utopia, Moreira César, representing politically *liberal* utopia, and Galileo Gall, representing politically *anarchist* utopia, we will come to a metaphor that is used by the author (in both *La guerra* and *Mayta*) to condemn the excesses of both religious and political

⁶¹ da Cunha, E.: *Rebellion in the Backlands (Os Sertões)*, Chicago 1944.

⁶² *La guerra del fin del mundo*, p. 648.

⁶³ *La guerra del fin del mundo*, p. 671.

⁶⁴ Cornejo Polar, A.: ‘La guerra del fin del mundo’, pp. 141-146, cited in: Rodríguez Rea, M. A.(ed.): *Mario Vargas Llosa y la crítica peruana*, p. 146.

utopias in general, transforming them into dystopias or societal catastrophes. In both novels then, the metaphor of *vultures* is evoked, in order to portray the societal destruction wrought by religious or political utopia.

At the end of *La guerra del fin del mundo* the destroyed and burned remnants of Canudos, in particular the human carcass of its last members, is attacked and dissolved by a mass of vultures that physically extinguish the misguided supporters of fanaticism, utopia, and religious terrorism:

Esos miembros, extremidades, cabezas, vértebras, vísceras, pieles que el fuego respetó o carbonizó a medias y que esos animales ávidos ahora trituraban, despedazaban, tragaban, deglutían. ‘Miles y miles de buitres’, había dicho el coronel Murau. Y, también, que espantados ante lo que parecía la materialización de una pesadilla, el hacendado de Formosa y sus peones, comprendiendo que ya no había nadie a quien enterrar, pues los pajarracos los estaban haciendo, habían partido de allí a paso vivo, tapándose bocas y narices. La imagen intrusa, ofensiva, había arraigado en su mente y no conseguía sacarla de allí. ‘El final que Canudos merecía’, había respondido al viejo Murau, antes de obligarlo a cambiar de tema.⁶⁵

In *Historia de Mayta*, on the other hand, a voracious crowd of vultures appears in the wake of a military invasion in order to support the left-wing rebels against the Peruvian right-wing oligarchic state (a clear allusion to *Sendero Luminoso*) – depicted in Cusco –, attacking and annihilating everything that is still alive:

¿Y esos puntitos negros, volanderos, innumerables, que acudían de los cuatro puntos cardinales hacia el Cusco? No eran cenizas sino aves carniceras, voraces, hambrientas, que, aguijoneadas por el hambre, desafiando el humo y las llamas, caían en picada hacia las presas codiciables. Desde las alturas, los sobrevivientes, los parientes, los heridos, los combatientes, los internacionalistas, podían, con un mínimo de fantasía, escuchar la trituración afanosa, el picoteo enfebrecido, el aletear abyecto, y sentir el espantoso hedor.⁶⁶

In this scene – similar to the one in *La guerra*, where religious fanaticism is cruelly judged by history and nature – a critical perspective is introduced, by which the results of secular and left-wing political utopia (here: Mayta and his ideological brothers-in-arms: *comunistas* and

⁶⁵ *La guerra del fin del mundo*, p. 868.

⁶⁶ *Historia de Mayta*, p. 264.

internacionalistas) can lead to a destructive degradation of society that is worse than the injustices with which the remedies for social change are justified.

In the words of the baron of Cañabrava, representing the pragmatic political attitude of Vargas Llosa during his presidential campaign in the late 1980s, the fanatic or terrorist ends up destroying himself, after bringing havoc and human destitution to the people he surrounds himself with: ‘Venticinco años de sucia y sórdida política, para salvar a Bahía de los imbéciles y de los ineptos a los que tocó una responsabilidad que no eran capaces de asumir, para que todo termine en un festín de buitres.’⁶⁷ Then, immediately following these lines, the fanatical results of radical beliefs in utopia are supplanted by the simple, but humanist faith in love and enjoyment, signalling Vargas Llosa’s adoption of Camusian thought regarding freedom in relation to the absurdity of existence: ‘Y en ese instante, sobre la imagen de hecatombe, reapareció la cara tragicómica, el hazmerreír de ojos bizcos y acuosos, protuberancias impertinentes, mentón excesivo, orejas absurdamente caídas, hablándole afiebrado del amor y del placer: ‘Lo más grande que hay en el mundo, barón, lo único a través de lo cual puede encontrar el hombre cierta felicidad, saber qué es lo que llaman felicidad.’’⁶⁸ In a Camusian way, affirming the beliefs of the French intellectual in Vargas Llosa from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, Oviedo summarises one of the main stipulations in the author’s work, embodied by the short-sighted journalist and Jurema: ‘El placer señala los límites de la historia y es una negación de la muerte; según lo afirma Vargas Llosa: ‘Hay un reducto de lo humano que la Historia no llega a domesticar ni a explicar: aquel que hace del hombre alguien capaz de gozar y de soñar, alguien que busca la felicidad del instante como una borrachera que lo arranca al sentimiento de la absurdidad de su condición, abocada a la muerte.’’⁶⁹

In the following, four main literary figures will now be presented and analysed as part of the critique of religious and political fanaticism in *La guerra del fin del mundo*: the baron of Cañabrava, the messianic leader Antonio Conselheiro, the military leader Col. Moreira César, and the anarchist Galileo Gall.

The baron of Cañabrava – originally a monarchist, but, by the end of the plot, evolving towards a skilful negotiator between the parties of Bahía – comes closest to Vargas Llosa’s ideal of a more rational and pragmatic way of doing politics in Brazil.⁷⁰ This is why the baron,

⁶⁷ *La guerra del fin del mundo*, p. 868.

⁶⁸ *La guerra del fin del mundo*, pp. 868-869.

⁶⁹ Oviedo, J. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa*, Barcelona 1982³, p. 322.

⁷⁰ Köllmann, S.: *Literatur und Politik*, pp. 188-198.

who also loses the land on which Canudos is built at the beginning of the novel, can be considered as opting to take up a counterbalancing position in regards to the two extremist attitudes of religious fanatic A. Conselheiro and secular utopist Moreira César. In Sabine Köllmann's words, the baron is presented positively and affirmatively, in relation to rationalism and societal harmony:

As a matter of fact, the baron is, in a consistent way, positively portrayed. In interviews Vargas Llosa has addressed the dynamic in writing on the baron of Cañabrava, from the originally envisaged negative embodiment of a large landowner towards a positive image of a sensitive, realistic and pragmatic individual.⁷¹

Furthermore, the baron of Cañabrava shows Popperian instincts in comprehending the fanaticisms on both sides, without, however, thoroughly understanding the main cause for the militarisation and final tragedy of the conflict: 'Historia de locos...El Consejero, Moreira César, Gall. Canudos enloqueció a medio mundo. A usted también, por supuesto.'⁷² Thus it has become obvious that, apart from the fanaticism and ideologisation of Canudos, many of its daily aspects – including the behaviour of its main characters – have resulted from sheer ignorance and the most primitive insanity, or in a word – the *misconception* of reality:

[El Periodista Miope:] –Es algo [...] difícil de expresar. Demasiado irreal, ¿ve usted? Parece una conspiración de la que todo el mundo participara, *un malentendido generalizado, total*.– [...]

[El Periodista Miope:] –Más que de locos es una historia de *malentendidos*–, volvió a corregirlo el periodista miope.⁷³

In an interview with Roland Forgues in 1983 Vargas Llosa explains the deeper motivations behind writing *La guerra del fin del mundo*, not only alluding to the criticism of absolute truth, but also to the negative repercussions of myths and lies. These are not only able to re-create man, but to fabricate politically or religiously fictive narrations, causing society-wide portrayals of fabulous convictions, including expectations of positive or negative reactions in regards to their beliefs:

Lo que la novela quiere mostrar, más que la historia misma de Canudos [...] es no las verdades sino las mentiras de Canudos, es decir cómo Canudos se convirtió en cosas tan distintas en función del fanatismo político, del fanatismo religioso, o simplemente en función de los intereses con los que mucha gente trató los temas de Canudos, la prensa

⁷¹ Köllmann, S.: *Literatur und Politik*, p. 193 [The translation is mine].

⁷² *La guerra del fin del mundo*, p. 751.

⁷³ Köllmann, S.: *Literatur und Politik*, p. 203.

por ejemplo, en los congresos, los políticos. A mí eso es lo que me apasionó más, y lo fui descubriendo a medida que estaba haciendo la investigación, que iba reuniendo la documentación: ver cómo Canudos era cosas tan distintas según la perspectiva desde la cual se contaba.⁷⁴

Now, after the analysis of the baron of Cañabrava, we come to the portrayal of the other main literary figures in *La guerra del fin del mundo*. Hereby, we shall find that the career politicians with a rationalistic outlook, such as the baron of Cañabrava – owner of the newspaper *Diário de Bahia* – and Epaminondas Gonçalves – owner of the newspaper *Jornal de Notícias* – stand in contrast to the religiously and politically fanatical figures A. Conselheiro, Moreira César, and Galileo Gall.

In Héctor Azzetti's study *Historia y ficción* the main religious figure of *La guerra* and cause for the unleashing of the War of Canudos, *El Conselheiro*, is succinctly summarised and contextualised:

El Conselheiro, ascético mendicante dominado por una inspiración mística y redentorista, recorrió durante 25 años los sertones [...], vaticinando el cumplimiento de la profecía milenarista [...] y pregonando el regreso del rey portugués Sebastián [...] Instalada la república después de la caída del Rey Pedro II y la extinción de la monarquía, el Consejero agrega a su pregón la demonización de las ideas republicanas, [...] aquellas que establecen la separación de la Iglesia del Estado [...] y el matrimonio civil. Con un discurso simple [...] exhortaba a los pobres e ignorantes sertoneros y *cangaceiros* a torcer el rumbo de sus vidas en procura de la salvación de sus almas, ante la inminencia del Juicio Final, para cuya apoteótica recepción impulsaba la restauración de iglesias y cementerios.⁷⁵

Following on from that – based on the first chapters in the novel –, *El Conselheiro* receives the numerous and devout followers of his messianic religion, those of good, but also, in particular, of bad deeds – such as the *cangaceiros* –, desiring to bring their life into harmony with God. Preaching the purity of the soul and the traditional belief in religious communion, as well as the derivation of the units of measurements from the Christian laws of nature, the counsellor's ideology leads to the rejection of the modern cosmivision of the Brazilian state (a republic since 1889) and its positivist and anti-monarchic model of 'República': the incarnation of the Anti-Christ.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Vargas Llosa, M.: Entrevista con R. Forgues en 1983, cited in: Köllmann, S.: *Literatur und Politik*, p. 119.

⁷⁵ Azzetti, H.: *Historia y ficción*, pp. 79-80.

⁷⁶ *La guerra del fin del mundo*, pp. 41-45, pp. 46-47, pp. 48-50.

In spite of all the forms of depicted mystification and worshipping of A. Conselheiro, *La guerra* contains concrete scenes of the fanaticism – critically portrayed by Vargas Llosa – of both the counsellor and of his followers. The first one consists of pious religiosity, expressed in the face and movements of *El Conselheiro*, as he tears down the new decrees of the republic regarding the collection of taxes:

Y, sin embargo, instantes después, al tiempo que una suerte de explosión interior ponía sus ojos ígneos, echó a andar, a correr, entre la muchedumbre que se abría a su paso, hacia las tablas con los edictos. Llegó hasta ellas y, sin molestarse en leerlas, las echó abajo, con la cara descompuesta por una indignación que parecía resumir la de todos. Luego pidió, con voz vibrante, que quemaran esas maldades escritas. Y cuando [...] el Consejero, antes de ir a rezar a la iglesia de la Concepción, dio a los seres de ese apartado rincón una grave primicia: el Anticristo estaba en el mundo y se llamaba República.⁷⁷

In the second scene the death and post-mortem rites of the counsellor's disciples are depicted. The *Beatinho* (the *first* follower of the counsellor) supervises the burial of A. Conselheiro and suppresses his extreme emotions connected to the religious leader's sanctuary. He also obliges all witnesses to take an oath to never reveal the funeral location of their leader, alluding to the extreme fanaticism of all his followers:

Mientras trabaja, controla su tristeza. Se dice que este velatorio humilde y esta tumba pobre, sobre la que no se pondrá inscripción ni cruz, es algo que el hombre pobre y humilde que fue en vida el Consejero seguramente hubiera pedido para él. Pero cuando todo termina y el Santuario queda como antes – con el camastro vacío – el Beatito se echa a llorar. En medio de su llanto, siente que los otros lloran. Luego de un rato, se sobrepone. A media voz les pide jurar, por la salud de sus almas, que nunca revelarán, sea cual sea la tortura, el lugar donde reposa el Consejero. Les toma el juramento, uno por uno.⁷⁸

In other studies – such as that by S. Köllmann – Canudos is interpreted, through A. Conselheiro's and his followers' eyes, as a second Jerusalem, constructed in the New World.⁷⁹ Regarding the traditional repercussions of droughts or excesses of human violence in the poverty-stricken *Sertão*, Köllmann concludes that '[*El Conselheiro*] creates a new paradigm of understanding for the established phenomena of violence, including a higher form of [fanatical] legitimisation: the relentless struggle against evil in the name of 'Buen Jesús''.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ *La guerra del fin del mundo*, pp. 49-50.

⁷⁸ *La guerra del fin del mundo*, pp. 839-840.

⁷⁹ Köllmann, S.: *Literatur und Politik*, p. 152.

⁸⁰ Köllmann, S.: *Literatur und Politik*, p. 153 [The translation is mine].

Hereafter, it is to the politically *liberal* utopia of Col. Moreira César and the politically *anarchist* utopia of Galileo Gall that we will turn our attention. The former, Moreira César, serves as a republican and secular counterweight to the *religious* utopia of *El Conselheiro*. The latter, Galileo Gall, embodies anarchist beliefs in a classless form of society – thus, sharing the secular outlook of M. César –, but, in pronounced contrast to him, supports the collectivist forms of organisation of the inhabitants of Canudos.

Col. Moreira César is depicted, in many scenes in the novel, as a charismatic leadership figure of the Brazilian army, not only to his own subordinates, but – in particular – to those people influenced by his speeches regarding the republic and the keenness of his guiding hand in battle. The radiance of his personal charisma and secular beliefs in positivism, including the liberal postulates the new Republic is built on, extend far beyond his place of formation, Rio de Janeiro, reaching the least urban and less cultivated corners of Brazil.

His main convictions as part of republican freedom are: the myth of statehood, self-discipline and belief in progress, as well as a fanatical belief in liberty as the re-affirmation of independence and salvation of the nation – proven so many times on the battlefield (such as against Paraguay, where he has become the ‘saviour’ of the Brazilian Republic). For Moreira César the rebellious ‘disciples’ living in Canudos belong to the same group of backward-looking landowners who only think of defending their conservative interests, wanting to destroy the national unity of Brazil as well as its progressive secular world view (enshrined as the central motto in the Brazilian national banner: ‘ordem e progresso’.)

Galileo Gall, the adherent of the political utopia of anarchism, is one of the most interesting secondary figures in *La guerra del fin del mundo*. In the following words by Köllmann, Gall can be compared to M. César, by linking and intertwining the – on the level of personal commitment, not regarding the tenets of their ideology – intentions and actions of both characters: ‘Gall likewise believes in an inherent sense of history, similar to Moreira César, who still, on his deathbed, invokes the responsibility in the light of history.’⁸¹ Galileo Gall, furthermore, exhibits a fanatical expectation of the salvation of mankind, however, not in religious – like A. Conselheiro – but rather secular terms. These utopian expectations based on anarchist principles can be found at the end of chapter 1 of Book I: ‘Aunque vagabundeaba por el país, volvía siempre a Salvador, donde solía encontrársele en la Librería Catilina, a la sombra de las palmeras del Mirador de los Afligidos o en las tabernas de marineros de la

⁸¹ Köllmann, S.: *Literatur und Politik*, p. 208 [The translation is mine].

ciudad baja, explicando a interlocutores de paso que todas las virtudes son compatibles si la razón y no la fe es el eje de la vida, que no Dios sino Satán – el primer rebelde – es el verdadero príncipe de la libertad y que, una vez destruido el viejo orden gracias a la acción revolucionaria, la nueva sociedad florecerá espontáneamente, libre y justa.⁸² They can also be observed in the middle of chapter 4 of Book III: ‘Un día desaparecerá la palabra patria [...] La gente mirará hacia atrás, hacia nosotros, encerrados en fronteras, entrematándonos por rayas en los mapas, y dirán: qué estúpidos fueron.’⁸³

I shall end the character analysis of *La guerra*, connecting idolatrous fanaticism with the personal destinies of the figures, with a final commentary on another secondary figure like Gall – the short-sighted journalist –, one of the most iconic characters of Vargas Llosa’s entire literary universe. In an interview on the novel with R. A. Setti, Vargas Llosa concedes: ‘Hay otro escritor que es el periodista, que está inspirado un poco en Euclides da Cunha.’⁸⁴ For the fictitious journalist in *La guerra* – in contrast to the dogmatically liberal and strictly historiographic da Cunha – love and (com)passion are the main alternatives in light of the idolatry and mutual destruction of history and its fanaticisms, the latter leading to unrestrained abuses of power among the people. Köllmann remarks that other critics – such as Rama and Oviedo – have also seen in the search for love and pleasure (‘amor’ and ‘placer’), encouraged by the journalist and put into effect by the baron of Cañabrava, an expression of a central message in the final chapters of the novel:

Both [Ángel] Rama and [José Miguel] Oviedo, who equally interprets the quest to find ‘amor y placer’ as a key aspect of the message of the novel, consider the experiences of both the baron and the journalist as identical. However, the baron is given more attention, because the erotic scene with Sebastiana and Estela forms the epilogue to the dialogue with the journalist, and is, therefore, regarded as a kind of ‘solution’ for the problems illuminated by Canudos.⁸⁵

The quest for journalistic truth and the non-sectarian acceptance of universal forms of peace and love, by the short-sighted journalist, is something so progressive that, regarding its problematic, we can observe a reappearance of his character type and motivations in Vargas Llosa’s later political fiction, such as in *Cinco esquinas*. There it is the *liberal* journalist Julieta

⁸² *La guerra del fin del mundo*, pp. 38-39.

⁸³ *La guerra del fin del mundo*, p. 384.

⁸⁴ Setti, R.: *Sobre la vida y la política*, p. 52.

⁸⁵ Köllmann, S.: *Literatur und Politik*, pp. 211-212 [The translation is mine].

Leguizamón, who solves the political murder amidst the corruption and illegal machinations of the Fujimori regime, embodying one of the last dictatorships in Peru at the end of the 20th century. Finally, it is thanks to Julieta that the regime perishes, destroying, in a democratic and reformist way, the final vestiges of authoritarianism and ideological fanaticism based on either an oligarchic elite or a military circle of political power.

In the end, *La guerra del fin del mundo* can be read as 1. A critical excursion into the realms of ideological history and totalitarianism – dismantling all concepts in relation to the liberality of the development of history (Antonio Cornejo Polar)⁸⁶; 2. The final interpretation of the war of Canudos as a form of historical genocide (caused by the histories of both religion and ideology) (Sara Castro-Klarén)⁸⁷; or 3. As something even more ambitious or artistic than any preceding portrayal of Latin American history, an absolute narration of the highest religious or political aspirations of human beings, leading to the ultimate destruction – expressed in all its epic detail – of the singular results of this unilineal method of thinking or acting: religion and the military, the latter being the secular manifestation of the modern positivist state in the 19th century.

At the end of his chapter on *La guerra* Armas Marcelo draws a last comparison regarding the treatment of ideology, truth and fanaticism in both *La guerra del fin del mundo* (1981) and *Historia de Mayta* (1984):

Pero han pasado los años y *La guerra del fin del mundo* se ha ido afianzando como título novelesco que implica, en su lectura y relectura, una reflexión ideológica y literaria, no sólo sobre la verdad de las mentiras que siempre es una novela, sino sobre la mentira ideológica y de verdad, *excesivamente verdadera*, que hay en las posturas iluministas, frenéticamente suicidas, en muchas partidas, facciones y banderías políticas de América Latina, tradicionalmente revolucionarias, intocables, impolutas y éticamente celestiales. MVLL insistirá en este ‘peligroso recorrido reflexivo’ por la Historia con la *Historia de Mayta*, sintética narración que vuelve a señalar acusadoramente al iluminismo ideológico como uno de los más grandes males de América Latina.⁸⁸

Last but not least, Cornejo Polar asserts that, when leaving the realm of ideology and entering into the realm of history (informed by a critical perspective on liberalism), the realist

⁸⁶ Cornejo Polar, A.: *Crítica de la razón heterogénea. Textos esenciales (II)*, Lima 2013; Cornejo Polar, A.: ‘*La guerra del fin del mundo*’, pp. 141-146, cited in: Rodríguez Rea, M. A.(ed.): *Mario Vargas Llosa y la crítica peruana*, Lima 2011.

⁸⁷ Castro-Klarén, S.: *Understanding Mario Vargas Llosa*, Columbia (South Carolina) 1990.

⁸⁸ Armas Marcelo, J. J.: ‘El regreso a la novela total: *La guerra del fin del mundo* (1981)’, pp. 377-391, cited in: Armas Marcelo, J. J.: *Vargas Llosa. El vicio de escribir*, p. 388.

and pragmatist vision of the accusing eyes and fictional pen of Vargas Llosa is a manifest expression of the enlightened landscapes of other continents, across different times – something which might not always be transferable to the historical and political space of Latin America:

De esta manera el relativismo extremo del significado que propone *La guerra del fin del mundo* [...] desemboca en un escepticismo también extremo (nadie tiene la razón y la historia íntegra es un cruel sinsentido). [...] Es a todas luces expresiva la [...] coincidencia de estos significados con la posición anti-ideológica que ha asumido Vargas Llosa en nombre de un realismo pragmático [...] y con ciertas interpretaciones de la violencia que sacude a América Latina como enfrentamiento de dos bandos igualmente enloquecidos – los subversivos y el ejército – que se destrozan y destrozan a los países en razón del exacerbamiento fanático de sus respectivas (e igualmente falsas) ideologías. Es posible que una perspectiva de este tipo pueda representar la visión propia del liberalismo ilustrado que condena globalmente la violencia, sin ninguna discriminación acerca de su origen y dirección histórica, porque carece de los valores e instrumentos conceptuales para jerarquizar e interpretar las convulsiones de una sociedad hirviente.⁸⁹

3.3. The critical reflection on revolution in *Historia de Mayta*

In *Historia de Mayta* a formal division into chapters is preferred as opposed to one in parts. Chapters I-IX represent the main plot development (starting and ending in Lima, with alternating narrative sequences in Jauja and the Peruvian Andes). In Chapter I the early political years of Mayta – the main character – are depicted, including Mayta's getting to know his prospective comrade-in-arms, Vallejos. In Chapter II the character of Moisés Barbi Leyva, a humanist and progressive political activist (reflecting the increasingly pragmatist political convictions of the author), is introduced, providing information on Barbi Leyva's and Mayta's joint ideological past as part of the Communist Party of Peru (PCP), as well as – in Mayta's case – the POR(T), the Trotskyist section that separated from it. Before coming to Chapter III, Mayta's forceful commitment to supporting an armed, Trotskyist-led uprising in the central *sierra* of Peru points to the heart of the plot development in the next three chapters. In the main part of Chapters III and IV, the conversation with the sister of Vallejos and her friend, as

⁸⁹ Cornejo Polar, A.: *Crítica de la razón heterogénea*, pp. 356-357; also, in Cornejo Polar, A.: *'La guerra del fin del mundo'*, pp. 141-146, cited in: Rodríguez Rea, M. A.(ed.): *Mario Vargas Llosa y la crítica peruana*, p. 146.

well as the interview with senator Campos – confirming the political activities of Mayta at the time – serve as the main background in order to get the story from Lima towards the rest of Peru going. Starting in Chapter V, finally, Vallejos introduces Mayta to his home region in the Andes, where left-wing professors, ambitious students, and *campesinos* are ‘ripe for revolution’. In Chapter VI Blacquer, a former party member of the PCP, is presented, and he talks of his secret meetings with Mayta, which had the singular purpose of shifting the political and propagandistic dynamic towards the Trotskyists, supporting the peasant population in the countryside, materially endorsed by the ‘Communists’ in Lima. While Chapter VII introduces the wife of Mayta, Chapters VIII and IX depict the dramatic insurrection attempt by the guerrilla unit of Mayta, Vallejos, and their followers in Jauja, Quero, and – almost – Uchubamba. This final failure to start a revolution in central Peru as the main theme of the novel (already announced by the development of the plot in the previous chapters), is something which leads from Chapter IX to Chapter X: the epilogue of the novel. Here, the author, 25 years after the main events of the novel, – in a last twist to the plot’s development – interviews, meta-narratively, the ‘revolutionary’ Mayta, who seems to evade the finality of all truths: He fights on, neither entirely defeated nor entirely victorious, against the more than ordinary problems of a present-day Lima (1980s) caught in terroristic plights and economic starvation.

We now come to the analysis of this second novel from the early 1980s, part of the middle period of Vargas Llosa’s literary work (1971-1986). During the time of writing *La guerra*, whilst the author leaves his ideology- and crisis-ridden world view behind, taking on a more and more pragmatic stance on society and politics, he starts to reside in Washington D.C. (US). There he contemplates both North American literary realism as well as politico-philosophical liberalism – very much in vogue due to both Ronald Reagan’s election in the United States and Margaret Thatcher’s election in the United Kingdom. While leaning closer towards the approach of Karl Popper and abiding by Camusian ideals of individuality and rebelliousness of ‘self’ (neither of ‘society’ nor in relation to class), Vargas Llosa arrives at the conclusion that every ideology can be questioned and for every socio-political conflict a pragmatic or humanist solution be found.

The best example for elucidating the author’s newly acquired critical attitude to ideology and radical political beliefs – regarding the core element of *revolution* – is the real-life murder of eight journalists in the Andean village of Uchuraccay in 1983. The report on Uchuraccay by

an independent commission, of which Vargas Llosa had been its chairman, concluded that the murder of the journalists had been caused, rather, by the frightened and dissatisfied *campesinos* of Uchuraccay (in their eyes, fanatically resisting the assault on their village, believing the journalists to be terrorists), than by the left-wing guerrilla Shining Path. *Incomprehension* as the central theme, yet again, not only of *La guerra del fin del mundo*, but also in real life – as in Uchuraccay – shows us the disillusionment of the author in regards to secularly inspired fanaticisms, which either destroy people’s domestic beliefs or cause terror with a tremendous impact; changing people’s lives often for the worse rather than for the better. This is to be observed in both Vargas Llosa’s fictional and non-fictional writing during this period.⁹⁰

Moreover, this literary denunciation of the most barbarous forms of anti-social, and fanaticised or totalitarian behaviour towards other people – only believing in the goals of the group or ‘utopian’ form of society, for which revolution is necessary – happens not only in *Historia de Mayta*, but also through the portrayal of radical *senderistas*⁹¹ in Vargas Llosa’s *Lituma en los Andes*, published in 1993.⁹² Admittedly, 10 years earlier the author of *Mayta*, published in 1984, denounces the disastrous effects of the violence of the fanatical guerrilla movements, not only on an ideological, but in particular on a cultural and psychological level:

Quizá esta historia [de Uchuraccay] ayude a comprender el por qué de la violencia vertiginosa que caracteriza a las acciones guerrilleras en América Latina. Los movimientos guerrilleros no son, en estos países, ‘campesinos’. Nacen en las ciudades, entre intelectuales y militantes de las clases medias, seres a menudo tan ajenos y esotéricos – con sus esquemas y su retórica – a las masas campesinas, como Sendero Luminoso para los hombres y mujeres de Uchuraccay.⁹³

Now, coming to the literary analysis of *Historia de Mayta*, Vargas Llosa admits that the literary portrayal of the political story of Mayta and his comrades aimed at projecting a fiction within a fiction.⁹⁴ Namely, the political and ideological fantasising of Mayta, Vallejos and Co. about staging a revolution in Peru (the *ideological* fiction), being part of the narrative of an

⁹⁰ Köllmann, S.: *Literatur und Politik*, p. 218.

⁹¹ Members of Shining Path.

⁹² Vargas Llosa, M.: *Lituma en los Andes*, Barcelona 1993.

⁹³ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea III*, p. 191, cited in: de la Torre Agostinho, M.: ‘Discurso literario y crisis. *Historia de Mayta* de Mario Vargas Llosa’, pp. 107-117, cited in: Sawicki, P., and Baczyńska, B. (eds.): *Ideologías y poder*, p. 108.

⁹⁴ Vargas Llosa, M.: *A Writer’s Reality*, pp. 143-158; Vargas Llosa, M.: *Die Wirklichkeit des Schriftstellers*, pp. 173-191.

omniscient narrator, who is another fictional alter ego of the author, portraying the events in hindsight and by interviewing the people who lived through these same experiences with Mayta (the *literary* fiction).

Overall, it can be said that the novel *Mayta* – as part of the fictionalisation of history by the author – is an impressive portrayal of the failed political ideologies of Mayta and his comrades. The main story of the plot, narrated by the narrator through interviewing different witnesses from that time, is all about Mayta's life and development from left-wing party ideologue in Lima to practical, but ultimately failed revolutionary in the Andean *sierra* around Jauja. Thereby, Mayta develops a heightened consciousness of what he wants to pursue, based on Trotskyist ideology and its 'visions' of revolution, but, faced with more and more obstacles along the way, the result is a series of negative outcomes – in the end, even imprisonment. In the first chapter Mayta gets to know Lt. Vallejos and discovers his practical convictions free of all ideological constraints regarding a revolutionary uprising. In the following chapters Mayta's and Vallejos' friendship becomes more intimate, with Vallejos' inviting Mayta to his hometown Jauja, where both want to convince the teacher and students of Vallejos' old school to join them in triggering a revolution in that region. Tragically, of course, the attempted revolt stumbles from one operation to another: from the absence of Ubilluz, over to the, only half-way successful robbery in Jauja, until the leaving behind of the mules in the High Sierra of Central Peru, where the protagonists were to expropriate one of the haciendas in Uchubamba.

In the words of the author, the depiction of the ideological fiction is the core component in the portrayal of the literary fiction in *Mayta*, juxtaposing both fictions next to one another, obliging the reader to appreciate the fiction of a narrative event that is told, while, simultaneously, grasping the misconceptions of real life, pertaining to radical and utopian ideologies:

That is what the story of Mayta is, a novel about fiction, about two kinds of fiction, ideological fiction and literary fiction. Ideological fiction is what Mayta and his comrades live. Mayta is an ideologue, a man totally convinced that reality can be captured by the mechanisms of reason, by the mechanisms of a doctrine that is Marxism enriched and improved by Lenin and Trotsky, that provides all the instruments to understand exactly what society is, what forces are involved in history and how, knowing this, a revolutionary can act and produce qualitative changes in reality. The reader can perceive in the novel how this ideology is, in fact, a fiction – something that is constantly rejected or falsified

by objective reality – but how in spite of that, Mayta has a mechanism that is immediately put into action whenever this falsification of reality and ideas occurs; and how the ideology immediately adapts itself to the new situation and finds a theoretical justification to move forward in the same illusory way. And the reader will perceive how all this leads Mayta and his followers into something that produces exactly the opposite result and consequences from what they expect. [...] At least fantasy and imagination can psychologically provide a way to survive in spite of the fact that in objective reality there is no longer any hope. [...] This fiction that is accepted as fiction, accepted as an illusion, can very easily be incorporated into our real experiences and give us a better understanding of ourselves and of what society is. On the other hand, fiction considered as objective science, as in the case of this ideology that compels Mayta and his comrades to act as they do, is something that precipitates in reality a very destructive process because it misguides people about what reality is and sometimes establishes a gap between the mind, the ideas, and the possibility to make effective changes.⁹⁵

Different critics – such as Cornejo Polar⁹⁶, Castro-Klarén⁹⁷ and Köllmann⁹⁸ – have pointed out the ambiguity of the novel, regarding its content, in relation to its political validity as part of the author's *oeuvre* as a whole, in spite of the formal questions of the narrative.

For Antonio Cornejo Polar *Historia de Mayta* conveys different political interpretations – apart from the semi-autobiographical portrayal by the writer-protagonist. First, extreme violence is regarded as the result of an uncontrollable spiral of public, but socially antagonising events; secondly, against this type of guerrilla warfare – alluding to *Sendero Luminoso* – the establishment of a military type of regime is hardly welcomed, since democratic rights will be abolished; thirdly, the armed struggle between government and insurgent groups (Mayta, MIR, ELN, SL, MRTA, etc.) could, eventually, lead to the political and socio-economic disintegration of Peru, ending in apocalypse and holocaust.⁹⁹ In Cornejo Polar's words, referring to Albert Camus, but also to the fanatical events in *La guerra del fin del mundo*, the reader must have recourse to the philosophical claim that 'el mundo es absurdo y nadie puede entenderlo'¹⁰⁰:

⁹⁵ Vargas Llosa, M.: *A Writer's Reality*, pp. 153-154.

⁹⁶ Cornejo Polar, A.: 'La historia como apocalipsis (sobre *Historia de Mayta* de Vargas Llosa)', pp. 363-381, cited in: Cornejo Polar, A.: *Crítica de la razón heterogénea*, Lima 2013.

⁹⁷ Castro-Klarén, S.: *Understanding Mario Vargas Llosa*, Columbia (SC) 1990.

⁹⁸ Köllmann, S.: *Literatur und Politik*, Bern 1996; Köllmann, S.: *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*, Woodbridge 2014.

⁹⁹ Cornejo Polar, A.: 'La historia como apocalipsis', p. 377.

¹⁰⁰ Cornejo Polar, A.: 'La historia como apocalipsis', p. 380.

Un mecanismo ideológico similar funciona como sustrato de la *Historia de Mayta*. La figura del apocalipsis es convincente: si *este* Perú se acaba es porque *el* Perú desaparece y desaparece en un holocausto final y definitivo. Pero esta ilegítima universalización de lo que en realidad es conciencia de un sector, un grupo o una clase, se formaliza en la última novela de Vargas Llosa a partir de una interpretación de la historia peruana también – y hasta más – ilegítima: en el Perú sólo quedan – o quedarán – dos fuerzas: el ejército y Sendero. Por supuesto, planteado así el asunto, y sin ninguna otra alternativa, el apocalipsis es inevitable.¹⁰¹

Sara Castro-Klarén, complementing the dark and negative picture Cornejo Polar projects, adds in a skilfull, but pessimistic manner, in regards to Mayta and his followers:

Mayta's story presents a wretched revolutionary deprived of all means of possible success. In this pessimistic story neither history nor the individual revolutionary has anything to do with glory, affirmation of the individual self, or the destiny of a nation. On the contrary, Mayta [...] represents not only the demythification of the revolutionary (Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Sandino, Bolívar) but also the very denial of any such image. [...] The importance of *The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta* rests on the possibility of its being read as a text wrestling with the questions of ideology and its place in writing (*écriture*) and in the coming to pass of history.¹⁰²

Eventually, one of the most well-balanced and politically nuanced perspectives on *Mayta* is offered by Sabine Köllmann in her *Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*:

The political message of *Historia de Mayta* is thus hidden behind various smokescreens of which the dual structure, with its 'past' and 'present', 'fiction' and 'reality', is the most important. [...] Despite its metafictional ambiguities, *Historia de Mayta* turns out to be part of Vargas Llosa's battle against Utopian models for change in a future society, and a *plaidoyer* for the politics of small steps in the present.¹⁰³

One of the most defining issues in the critical portrayal of Mayta's political involvement is contained in the scenes depicting the oppressive atmosphere of Mayta's party political meetings with POR(T) (Peruvian Trotskyists) and Blacquer of the PCP (Peruvian Communist Party) – showing the sclerotic party discipline of Mayta's (ex)-comrades from Lima. The negative atmosphere as part of these meetings does not only lead to Mayta's setting out to Jauja on his own (with the support of Vallejos), but ultimately serves to illustrate the critical

¹⁰¹ Cornejo Polar, A.: 'La historia como apocalipsis', p. 380.

¹⁰² Castro-Klarén, S.: 'Myth, Ideology, and Revolution: From Mayta to Tasurinchí', pp. 189-223, cited in: Castro-Klarén, S.: *Understanding Mario Vargas Llosa*, p. 205.

¹⁰³ Köllmann, S.: *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*, pp. 178-180.

attitude, contained in the author's depiction, to left-wing obsessions as well as reactions from Vargas Llosa's own time in the wake of leaving Cuba due to the *Padilla affair*.

The portrayal of one-sided party political debates, the non-diversification of party political opinion, the aggressive denying of 'opinions' other than the 'official' or 'party ideological' ones (relating, here, to Cuba, the Soviet Union, the Fourth International, etc.) clearly remind the reader of Vargas Llosa's socialist youth and, in the end, abandonment of his left-wing political radicalism.

Furthermore, the negative political descriptions of the actual condition of Lima and Peru in 1982-84 – interspersed between the ideological dialogues of Mayta and Vallejos, as well as in between the conversations of Mayta's comrades in the late 50s – are clear accusations, of the author, of the social and political injustices resulting from totalitarian ideologies:

Comenzamos hablando de Mayta y de Vallejos, pero, sin darnos cuenta, hemos pasado a comentar los crímenes en el barrio. Los revolucionarios eran aquí bastante fuertes al principio: hacían colectas a plena luz y hasta mítines. Mataban a alguien, de cuando en cuando, acusándolo de traidor. Luego, aparecieron los escuadrones de la libertad, decapitando, mutilando y desfigurando con ácido a reales o supuestos cómplices de la insurrección. La violencia se ha multiplicado.¹⁰⁴

In another scene senator Campus – interviewed by the writer-protagonist in the Peru of today (1980s), echoing the more pragmatist and less progressive views of the author – critically compares the early adventures of Mayta and Vallejos with the disastrous repercussions of the new Left in Peru at the time of writing:

–Sólo que esto ya no es la revolución sino el apocalipsis. ¿Alguna vez se imaginó alguien que el Perú podía vivir una hecatombe así?–, me mira. –Lo de ahora ha enterrado definitivamente la historia de Mayta y Vallejos. Hoy no se acuerda nadie de ella, estoy seguro. En fin ¿qué más?–¹⁰⁵

At the beginning of chapter 6, Blacquer – the writer-protagonist's first professor of Marxism and Mayta's political liaison from the PCP – is introduced as having gone through a process, more 'orthodox' than Mayta, of critically engaging with Communist Party doctrine, becoming expelled, but then re-admitted after a process of self-criticism for his past actions. Arguably, this whole passage reminds us of Vargas Llosa's involvement with the Cuban government in

¹⁰⁴ *Historia de Mayta*, p. 83.

¹⁰⁵ *Historia de Mayta*, p. 124.

the wake of the *Padilla affair* and its self-criticism, as well as the author's decision to resign from all his politico-cultural posts, before being forced to do the same:

¿Había cometido el crimen superlativo: criticar a la URSS? Si lo hizo ¿por qué la criticó? Lo cierto es que estuvo expulsado algunos años, viviendo en el tristísimo limbo de los comunistas purgados – nada tan huérfano como un militante expulsado del Partido, ni siquiera un cura que cuelga los hábitos –, deteriorándose en todos los sentidos, hasta que, parece, pudo volver, haciendo, supongo, la debida autocrítica.¹⁰⁶

Finally, the creation of a sterile party atmosphere by the politically uncompromising Left (Trotskyists vs. Communists), which invades the thoughts and actions of the characters over large passages of the novel, has a two-fold function: First, it suffocates the possibilities for the emergence of a democratic intellectual or politically tolerant climate in a century that saw the triumph of ideologies, and secondly, it creates the impression that there simply is no more moderate world view left supporting democratic actions – pragmatic and reasonable like the author's –, in particular, among the parties and superpowers of the fictionalised plot. The almost parodic imitation of phrases from totalitarian party discourses like those of Blacquer towards Mayta, such as '–¿Vas a hacer tu autocrítica y a pedir tu inscripción en el Partido?–, terminó por reírse Blacquer'¹⁰⁷ or 'Se acerca la victoria de la guerra popular'¹⁰⁸ in the middle of downtown Lima, alluding to a *Sendero Luminoso* which controls the capital of Peru (something which doesn't happen until the end of the 80s), provides disastrous images of two moments when the country was on the brink of civil war: in 1958-59 and in 1982-84. Not surprisingly, in the second half of the novel, Mayta's published notice of resignation from POR(T) in 1958 and subsequent militancy in Jauja coincide with the Soviet-Cuban-Bolivian invasion of Eastern Peru, only to be confronted with the deployment of troops by the United States along the Northern and Western coast. In agreement with Cornejo Polar's analysis, then, this drastic depiction of ideological 'apocalypse' is not only a condemnation of the political status quo of Peru in the 1980s, but a condemnation of all previous fanatical experiments – such as Mayta's: contributing only to further bloodshed, promoting dogmatic blindness and terroristic forms of violence.

Karl Popper argues famously that the *historicist* and *scientific* model promoted by real existing socialism, based on the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, cannot compete with the

¹⁰⁶ *Historia de Mayta*, pp. 197-198.

¹⁰⁷ *Historia de Mayta*, p. 220.

¹⁰⁸ *Historia de Mayta*, p. 223.

intelligibility of democratically promoted science – resulting in the freedom of opinion and political culture:

Yet there can be no worse obstacle to the growth of science than a reinforced dogmatism.

There can be no scientific development without the free competition of thought – this is the essence of the anti-dogmatic attitude once so strongly supported by Marx and Engels [however, later to be replaced by dogmatism]; and in general there cannot be free competition in scientific thought without freedom for all thought.¹⁰⁹

Contrary to the dogmatic tenets of religion or ideology, as well as its devastating results for intellectual and public life¹¹⁰, true rationalism and true pragmatism – accompanied by a healthy conviction related to the democratic institutions of a country (in Popper and Vargas Llosa) – are the only options for all modern democrats and liberals with universal aspirations:

What I might call, by analogy, the ‘false religion’, is obsessed not only by God’s power over men but also by His power to create a world; similarly, false rationalism is fascinated by the idea of creating huge machines and Utopian social worlds. Bacon’s ‘knowledge is power’ and Plato’s ‘rule of the wise’ are different expressions of this attitude [...] The true rationalist, in opposition, will always be aware of the simple fact that whatever reason he may possess he owes to intellectual intercourse with others. He will be inclined, therefore, to consider men as fundamentally equal, and human reason as a bond which unites them. Reason for him is the precise opposite of an instrument of power and violence: he sees it as a means whereby they may be tamed.¹¹¹

Overall, at the end of chapter 4, the visit to the Museum of the Inquisition in Lima by the writer-protagonist can be perceived as a last hint by the author to the tragic unalterability of historical processes connected to violence, resulting in fanaticisms and societal catastrophes. As Köllmann suggests ‘the identification of the writer with his character Mayta is strongest during this visit to the museum whose subject matter is close to the subject matter of the novel – the use of violence in pursuit of an ideological truth.’¹¹²

In this essential scene historical violence is depicted as part of the interior of the museum, and the results of current political violence are portrayed as soon as you leave the museum:

Pensó: ‘Es un museo que vale la pena.’ Instructivo, fascinante. Condensada en unas cuantas imágenes y objetos efectistas, hay en él un ingrediente esencial, invariable, de la

¹⁰⁹ Popper, K. R.: *Conjectures and Refutations*, p. 335.

¹¹⁰ criticised by Popper, Hayek, Aron, Berlin, Camus, and others.

¹¹¹ Popper, K. R.: *Conjectures and Refutations*, p. 363.

¹¹² Köllmann, S.: *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*, p. 174.

historia de este país, desde sus tiempos más remotos: la violencia. La moral y la física, la nacida del fanatismo y la intransigencia de la ideología, de la corrupción y de la estupidez que han acompañado siempre al poder entre nosotros, y esa violencia sucia, menuda, canalla, vengativa, interesada, parásita de la otra. Es bueno venir aquí, a este museo, para comprobar cómo hemos llegado hasta lo que somos hoy, por qué estamos como estamos. En la puerta del Museo de la Inquisición, a la familia de andrajosos hambrientos se ha unido por lo menos otra docena de viejos, hombres, mujeres, niños. Forman una pequeña corte de milagros de hilachas, tiznes, costras. Al verme aparecer estiran inmediatamente unas manos de uñas negras, pidiendo. *La violencia detrás mío y delante el hambre*. Aquí, en estas gradas, resumido mi país. Aquí, tocándose, las dos caras de la historia peruana. Y entiendo por qué Mayta me ha acompañado obsesivamente en el recorrido del museo.¹¹³

To conclude, the most memorable narrator figure in *Historia de Mayta* – the writer-protagonist – embodies Vargas Llosa’s enlightened ideal of a non-dogmatic and anti-totalitarian modernity: writing against false or utopian beliefs, getting, as much as possible, to the core of universal truth, against societal oblivion. For *Historia de Mayta* the author himself provides the answer to why the writer-protagonist has so much power in portraying the plot around Mayta, and why so much space is dedicated to his figure and personality. Against the witnessing of the inexplicable violence he is surrounded with, the narrator defends human reason for constructing an alternative discourse against the political machinations of ideology and power:

On the other hand *Historia de Mayta* is a description of the other kind of fiction, a fiction that the narrator/writer is trying to write. The reader sees in the novel how this other fiction, which is also an imaginary construction that has some roots in reality, as in the case of this ideological fiction built by Mayta, does not have these negative or even catastrophic results but has positive ones because at least in this world, which is going to pieces, which is practically disappearing in an orgy of violence, this man who is writing finds a reason to resist, to live. He tells one of the witnesses when asked how he can stupidly write a novel at this time when the country is disappearing, when there is civil war and terrorism and people are dying from hunger: ‘No, it’s not stupid. At least to write a novel is something that can create a way in which I can defend myself against all this catastrophe that surrounds me.’¹¹⁴

¹¹³ *Historia de Mayta*, pp. 148-149 [The italics are mine].

¹¹⁴ Vargas Llosa, M.: *A Writer’s Reality*, p. 153.

In the end, compared to the novels *Conversación en La Catedral* and *La guerra del fin del mundo*, *Historia de Mayta* exhibits a literary-philosophical discourse of anti-ideological statements tied to a meta-reflection on the intellectual expression of opinion.¹¹⁵ Put more forcefully, the writer-protagonist is one of Vargas Llosa's fabulous inventions, in a way pertaining to Cervantes or Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache*, providing the story with a narrator of a certain significance, who, however, becomes at times independent in his own right, leaving the narrative level and transgressing into the meta-literary level (such as in Chapter X, the epilogue of *Mayta*). The narrator of *Mayta*, a fictional alter ego of the author, is someone who does everything in order to portray the truth in that novel's plot in the most adequate way – in contrast to the ideological lies and mutual destruction all around him. Thus, he interviews one historical witness after another (from *Mayta's* time): *Mayta's* former political companions, then *Mayta's* old ideological foes, followed by Vallejos' sisters and family, *Mayta's* former wife, and finally, *Mayta* himself. Overall, the first-person narrator of *Historia de Mayta* – politically interested, but even more uncompromising in regards to social reality – tries to carry out research, investigate, and write to discover the truth as best as he can: just like the author Vargas Llosa, the uncompromising journalist, but even harsher critic of the crises of the social engineering and political ideologisation of our modern times.

3.4. The abandonment of political and ideological radicalism in the author's world view and affirmation of the belief in the progressiveness of human reason

The distancing from ideological dogmatism in the wake of the *Padilla affair* in Cuba, the critical reading of Albert Camus, and most importantly, the propagation of Popperian beliefs in reason and pragmatism comprise the main pillars of Vargas Llosa's newly found world view from the mid-1970s onwards. Due to the author's increasing political commitment to social democracy, his moral lessons in regards to the 'open societies' in the UK (1978 and 1980s) and the US (1977, 1979-80), and further civil commitment in Peru (Uchuraccay in 1983), his gradual intellectual development from socialism or left-wing reformism towards pragmatism, and, starting in the mid-1980s: political liberalism, can be traced. In other words, the idea of

¹¹⁵ Köllmann, S.: *Literatur und Politik*, p. 264.

defending human liberty based on socialist ideals – increasingly, however, crushed by the ideological fallacies of Latin American regimes at the height of the Cold War – is replaced by the author’s conviction in reason and the belief in Western values for the, not only political, but also economic and material progress of Latin American statehood.

Hereby, the progressiveness of human reason, philosophically claimed by the author at the time, is turned into a remedy against the political errors of ideology and their most dangerous consequence – radicalism in history.

In *Historia de Mayta Mayta*, the purest political radical of all, accusingly asks Blacquer, the apparently ideologically blind representative of the PCP, if, in failing to support a non-sectarian collaboration of all left-wing forces in Peru, he is ready to face history all by himself: ‘–¿Se van a negar a entrar en la historia, a hacer la historia?–’.¹¹⁶ The dogmatic Marxist belief system and idolatry of a scientifically Marxist-and Leninist-based history are, in the end, responsible for nurturing the political motivations of many guerrilla leaders from the 1950s to the 1980s in Peru, leaving in their wake, in the majority of cases, more destruction than the progressive debates for all future generations, based on reason and deliberation, to build upon.

As the revolutionary Mayta and his followers get caught by the *guardia civil* in the mountains between Quero and Uchubamba, Mayta is still convinced of the righteousness of his deeds regarding the *revolution* – steadfastly believing in it like a religion. His unwavering ideological spirit and dogmatic vision of history – culminating in class struggle and then classless socialism – simply doesn’t seem to know failure. Based on that ideological vision every political event in Peru and beyond is divided into the historical categories of taking or not taking action in regards to it (the party, the victorious social class, the men connected to it, like Mayta). At the end of chapter 9, finishing with the fictionalised plot of the main story, Mayta reflects in ideological terms on his attempt at left-wing revolt and revolution:

¿Te arrepentías, Mayta? ¿Habías actuado con precipitación? ¿Habías sido un irresponsable? No, no, no. Al contrario. A pesar del fracaso, los errores, las imprudencias, se enorgullecía. Por primera vez tenía la sensación de haber hecho algo que valía la pena, de haber empujado, aunque de manera infinitesimal, la revolución. No lo aplastaba, como otras veces al caer preso, la sensación del desperdicio. Habían fracasado, pero estaba hecha la prueba: cuatro hombres decididos y un puñado de escolares habían ocupado una ciudad, desarmado a las fuerzas del orden, expropiado dos bancos, huido a las montañas.

¹¹⁶ *Historia de Mayta*, p. 225.

Era posible, lo habían demostrado. En adelante, la izquierda tendría que tener en cuenta el precedente: alguien, en el país, no se contentó con predicar la revolución sino intentó hacerla. ‘Ya sabes lo que es’, pensó, a la vez que perdía una zapatilla. Mientras se la calzaba recibió un nuevo culatazo.¹¹⁷

Now, beyond the critical depiction of the novel’s political atmosphere in the 1980s, the author tries to reflect on his new beliefs in democratic pragmatism and liberal moderation, while taking a stance against both the left- and right-wing totalitarian forms of the politics of the decade (*Sendero Luminoso* or PCP-SL, MRTA, the military dictatorships in Argentina and Uruguay, etc.). This candid and reasonable politico-philosophical attitude can be seen reflected in both *La guerra del fin del mundo* and *Historia de Mayta*. In the preface to *Entre Sartre y Camus* (1981) Vargas Llosa says:

Las razones de la Historia son siempre las de la eficacia, la acción y la razón. Pero el hombre es eso y algo más: contemplación, sinrazón, pasión. Las utopías revolucionarias han causado tanto sufrimiento porque lo olvidaron y, por eso, hay que combatir contra ellas cuando, como ha ocurrido con el socialismo, los medios de que se valen empiezan a corromper los fines hermosos para los que nacieron. El combate contra la injusticia es moral antes que político y puede, en términos históricos, ser inútil y estar condenado al fracaso. No importa. Hay que librarlo, aun cuando sea sin hacerse ilusiones sobre el resultado, pues sería peor admitir que no hay otra alternativa para los seres humanos que escoger entre la *explotación económica* [capitalism under the oligarchic regimes in Latin America] y la *esclavitud política* [socialism under Soviet or similar socialist regimes in Latin America].¹¹⁸

Karl Popper, the great mentor of Vargas Llosa in the 1970s and 1980s, contrasts the ‘romantic historicist morality of fame’¹¹⁹ with the need for the emergence of democratic beliefs in the power of the self, but also in the reasonable support towards those people we are surrounded by. Both Socratic tenets of dialogical interaction with society and the anti-Hegelian principles of democratically uniting opposites can help us to achieve these goals. In *The Open Society and Its Enemies* Popper advocates that 1. ‘We must find our justification in our work, in what we are doing ourselves, and not in a fictitious ‘meaning of history’’.¹²⁰ 2. ‘History has no meaning, I contend. [...] It is the problem of nature and convention which we

¹¹⁷ *Historia de Mayta*, pp. 358-359.

¹¹⁸ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Entre Sartre y Camus*, p. 13 [The italics are mine].

¹¹⁹ Popper, K. R.: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, p. 461.

¹²⁰ Popper, K. R.: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, p. 461.

meet here again. Neither nature nor history can tell us what we ought to do.’¹²¹ 3. ‘Instead of posing as prophets we must become the makers of our fate. We must learn to do things as well as we can, and to look out for our mistakes. And when we have dropped the idea that the history of power will be our judge, when we have given up worrying whether or not history will justify us, then one day perhaps we may succeed in getting power under control. In this way we may even justify history, in our turn. It badly needs such justification.’¹²²

This negation of the belief in the progressiveness of human reason is something that is, similar to the warnings of Karl Popper related to human understanding, denounced by the author-philosopher Vargas Llosa. In regards to the critical portrayal of competing ideological views in both *La guerra del fin del mundo* and *Historia de Mayta*, the author makes it clear that the real-life investigation of the interrelation between history and politics has been broadened, transforming itself into artistic fiction – using two exemplary cases, such as Canudos and Jauja, as micro-laboratories for the analysis on which the novels are based:

Para mí, quizá eso es lo que tiene Canudos de ejemplar para un latinoamericano, porque eso, esa ceguera recíproca, a partir de la visión fanática de la realidad, de la que participan tanto republicanos como *jagunços*, es la misma ceguera para admitir la crítica que la realidad hace a la visión teórica. Esa es la historia de América Latina. La tragedia de América Latina es que, en distintos momentos de nuestra historia, nosotros nos hemos visto divididos, enfrentados en guerras civiles, en represiones, y a veces en matanzas peores que la de Canudos, por cegueras recíprocas parecidas. Quizá es una de las razones por las que Canudos me impresionó tanto, porque en Canudos eso se puede ver en pequeño, casi como en un laboratorio. Pero el fenómeno es general: es el fenómeno del fanatismo, básicamente, de la intolerancia que pesa sobre nuestra historia. En algunos casos, eran rebeldes mesiánicos; en ocasiones eran rebeldes utópicos o socialistas; en otras eran las luchas entre conservadores y liberales. Y si no era la mano de Inglaterra, era la del imperialismo yanqui o la de los masones o la mano del Diablo. Nuestra historia está plagada de esa intolerancia, de esa incapacidad de aceptar divergencias.¹²³

On *Historia de Mayta* the author says something similar in relation to politico-religious utopianism and the fanaticised radicals who want to transplant those beliefs from either heaven or a fictitious history to the reality on Latin American soil, pertaining to so many

¹²¹ Popper, K. R.: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, p. 461.

¹²² Popper, K. R.: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, p. 463; Popper, K. R.: *Conjectures and Refutations*, Chapter 16.

¹²³ Setti, R.: *Sobre la vida y la política*, p. 48.

different ethnicities and socio-cultural beliefs that a pragmatic vision for a majority of the populace is inevitable:

[El caso de Jauja, ficcionalizado en *Mayta*] creo que fue como un detonante de toda una época, la legitimación de la violencia política, y al mismo tiempo este sueño, esta utopía de que la única solución es la *tabula rasa*: acabar con todo lo existente, partir de cero. Eso, por una parte, desde el punto de vista individual, ha generado tipos y episodios que pueden ser fascinantes, a veces de un enorme heroísmo y de una gran generosidad, pero desde el punto de vista social e histórico creo que ha sido una tragedia para América Latina, una verdadera catástrofe.¹²⁴

Finally, in this last citation by the author – regarding a critical approach to all forms of violence and fanaticism –, an enriching philosophical connection between the pragmatic rationalism of the individual by Popper and the fight for the liberty and dignity of men by Camus has been found (affirming a Camusian-Popperian world view), concluding the analysis for both *La guerra* and *Mayta*:

Es posible que esta voz de Camus, la voz de la razón y de la moderación, de la tolerancia y la prudencia, pero también del coraje y de la libertad, de la belleza y el placer, resulte a los jóvenes menos exaltante y contagiosa que la de aquellos profetas de la aventura violenta y de la negación apocalíptica, como el Che Guevara o Frantz Fanon, que tanto los conmueven e inspiran. Creo que es injusto. Tal como están hoy las cosas en el mundo, los valores e ideas [...] que Camus postuló y defendió han pasado a ser tan necesarios para que la vida sea vivible, para que la sociedad sea realmente humana, como los que aquéllos convirtieron en religión y por los que entregaron la vida. La experiencia moderna nos muestra que disociar el combate contra el hambre, la explotación, el colonialismo, del combate por la libertad y la dignidad del individuo es tan suicida y tan absurdo como disociar la idea de la libertad de la justicia verdadera, aquella que es incompatible con la injusta distribución de la riqueza y de la cultura. Integrar todo ello en una acción común, en una meta única, es seguramente una aventura muy difícil y riesgosa, pero sólo de ella puede resultar esa sociedad que habrá encarnado verdaderamente en este mundo, ese paraíso que los creyentes confían hallar en el otro y donde, como escribió Camus, '*la vida será libre para cada uno y justa para todos*'.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Setti, R.: *Sobre la vida y la política*, pp. 57-58.

¹²⁵ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Entre Sartre y Camus*, pp. 107-108; *Contra viento y marea*, pp. 251-252; *Contra viento y marea I*, pp. 341-342.

In Vargas Llosa's earlier novels, such as *Conversación en La Catedral* (1969) and *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* (1973), the 'fanatical' element as part of the narration is connected to, either the depiction of the historically verifiable, political spheres of power under the Odría regime – representing the oligarchic-military complex of power in Peru –, or to the satirical portrayal of the 'fanaticised' institutional behaviour of the military when faced with problems that do not correspond with their traditional sphere of responsibilities. In contrast, with *La guerra del fin del mundo* (1981) and *Historia de Mayta* (1984) both religious-political utopianism and fanaticism are critically or philosophically exposed, confirming the impression that the author has reached a new world view in which radical or violent ideologies are discarded, and the results or repercussions of terrorism altogether denounced. This apogee of Vargas Llosa's critique of ideology and dogma in his writings – together with the exhibition of pragmatism and realism in the author's intellectual attitude – can still be observed in the author's literary exposition of indigenous forms of violent and fanatical belief systems from the early 1990s, such as in *Lituma en los Andes* (1993), with a critical portrayal of, yet again, the destruction related to *Sendero Luminoso*. Simultaneously, the author acquires confidence in regards to the occidental values of liberalism, turning pluralism, tolerance, and individual freedom into the cornerstones of his personal convictions. It is thanks to them that, starting in the late 1980s, a democratically progressive and informed vision of the possibilities of liberty since the fall of the Soviet Union has enriched the literary variety of themes in Vargas Llosa's work. After the critique of dictatorship in the Dominican Republic with *La fiesta del Chivo* (2000), the author returns to topics related to his native country and its countrymen, however, using a plurality of characters and plot lines, connected to their origins or their exploring of other regions of the world, such as in *Travesuras de la niña mala* (2006). Furthermore, what follows from the early 2000s onwards is a stronger focus on the new core beliefs of the author: the different, economic, political, and moral variants of *liberal* freedom. These, regarding the Peruvian context, can be most thoroughly appreciated as part of the cultural and political portrayals in *El héroe discreto* (2013) and *Cinco esquinas* (2016). It is to these three last novels by Vargas Llosa that we will turn our attention in the final chapter of the dissertation.

PART C – POLITICAL REFORMISM AND LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Chapter 4

Progressive solutions for a new political culture: Economic, political and moral liberalism as the different sides of Vargas Llosa's notion of freedom – *Travesuras de la niña mala*, *El héroe discreto*, and *Cinco esquinas*

4.1. Liberalism, Vargas Llosa, and the different perspectives on liberal freedom in the author's political commitment and newer fiction

After having presented four great novels of political and historical fiction by Mario Vargas Llosa – *La ciudad y los perros*¹, *Conversación en La Catedral*², *La guerra del fin del mundo*³, and *Historia de Mayta*⁴ –, which have developed from rebellion over to revolt, while finally, arriving at an encompassing critique of political and ideological utopia, in this last chapter it's important to portray Vargas Llosa's conviction that a new political culture in Peru has arrived, which optimistically replaces more traditional forms of social, political, and governmental authoritarianism. Accompanying this Peruvian modernity and self-reform of civil society is a renewed belief – visible in the developments of Peru's recent political history of the last 20-30 years – in social and human progress, in liberty, and in individual growth while being supported by a liberal and entrepreneurial climate of the government.⁵ Beginning with the first government after the demise of the Fujimori era – the Toledo presidency from 2001 until 2006 –, consecutive governments under García, Humala, Kuczynski, Vizcarra, and Sagasti have consistently supported a market-friendly atmosphere of state and politics. Some, like Ollanta Humala or Martín Vizcarra, introduced social policies under a liberal and democratic guise, whereas the presidencies of Alejandro Toledo, Alan García, and Pedro Pablo Kuczynski

¹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La ciudad y los perros*, Barcelona 1966/2003.

² Vargas Llosa, M.: *Conversación en La Catedral*, Barcelona 1972/2015.

³ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La guerra del fin del mundo*, Barcelona 2015.

⁴ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Historia de Mayta*, Lima 2018.

⁵ Contreras, C., and Cueto, M.: *Historia del Perú Contemporáneo*, Lima 2018⁶, Capítulo 10: pp. 405-464; Wise, C.: *Reinventing the State*, Ann Arbor 2003.

primarily focused on individual growth concepts and neo-liberal policies for the state and society as a whole.⁶

Now, as part of Vargas Llosa's newer fiction published between 2000 and 2021 – part of the author's liberal period of creation (1986-) –, authoritarianism is replaced by authoritarian regimes or conservative political culture and political injustices by social reform and political or cultural grievances within liberal society. Furthermore, the propagation and defence of the new liberal beliefs in politics and civil society will become the main task of the protagonists in Vargas Llosa's three more recent novels on Peru – *Travesuras de la niña mala* (2006), *El héroe discreto* (2013) and *Cinco esquinas* (2016). On the basis of this new discourse by the author, a liberal and socially inclusive political culture can only be defended through the defence of liberalism by the individual self and his or her immediate surroundings – leading to the enduring liberalisation as well as pluralisation of the democratic discourse in the 'public sphere'⁷ of society.⁸

Before arriving at an in-depth analysis of these three more recent novels – which centrally address the democratic beliefs and progress of its individual citizens, forming part of the political culture since the 1980s in many Latin American countries –, the author's deeply held convictions regarding the economic and political tenets of a globally implemented liberalism have to be expounded. Thereby, it's important to make a distinction between neo-liberalism as a political and economic system and classic economic and political liberalism, in particular as part of Vargas Llosa's political philosophy.

Therefore, first, neo-liberalism and classic economic liberalism will be introduced in relation to Vargas Llosa's intellectual and political biography, after which, secondly, liberalism as a personal philosophy of the author will be presented, through which economic, political

⁶ Contreras, C., and Cueto, M.: *Historia del Perú Contemporáneo*, Lima 2018⁶, Capítulo 10: pp. 405-464; Klarén, P. F.: *Nación y sociedad en la historia del Perú*, Lima 2004; Aljovín de Losada, C., and López, S. (eds.): *Historia de las elecciones en el Perú*, Lima 2018; Hunefeldt, C.: *A brief History of Peru*, New York 2004; Paap, I., and Schmidt-Welle, F. (eds.): *Peru heute*, Frankfurt am Main/Madrid 2016; Pease García, H., Romero Sommer, G.: *La política en el Perú del siglo XX*, Lima 2013; Prieto Celi, F.: *Así se hizo el Perú*, Lima 2010; Rosas, F. (ed.): *Breve historia general de los peruanos*, Arequipa 2009; Wiarda, H. J., and Kline, H. F. (eds.): *Latin American Politics and Development*, Boulder 2007; Williamson, E.: *The Penguin History of Latin America*, London 2009.

⁷ Habermas, J.: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Cambridge 1992.

⁸ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, pp. 451-469, pp. 451-453; pp. 451-452:

'*El héroe discreto* y *Cinco esquinas* anuncian un nuevo período en la trayectoria literaria de Mario Vargas Llosa y, con ello, un cambio respecto a sus novelas anteriores...[En estas nuevas novelas aparecen]...personajes que defienden – a veces de manera instintiva – el valor de la libertad, tal y como Vargas Llosa la concibe en *La llamada de la tribu* (2018) [...] *El héroe discreto* es la primera novela de Vargas Llosa en la cual la libertad individual no está realmente amenazada.'

and moral liberalism are portrayed and affirmed as the different sides of Vargas Llosa's notion of freedom in *El héroe discreto*, *Cinco esquinas* and *Travesuras de la niña mala*.

Neo-Liberalism – as an international political doctrine going back to the leading teachings of the School of Economics at the University of Chicago in the 1970s, with Milton Friedman as its main advocate – was first introduced into Latin American politics on 11 September 1973 in Chile. In the wake of the removal of elected president Salvador Allende through a military *coup d'état* by Augusto Pinochet, liberal monetary and privatisation policies were established in order to back up the new regime.⁹ Whereas Chile was one of the first countries promoting market-friendly and state-wide liberalisation and privatisation policies, other countries in the region such as Peru (1968-1975/80) or Ecuador (1972-1976) experimented with a state-led industrialisation programme – accompanying social and agrarian reforms – in order to substitute importation from the more industrialised countries (so-called import substitution through state-led industrialisation, or simply, ISI). At the beginning of the 1980s, however – in particular with the debt crisis in Mexico following the falling oil prices from 1981-82 onwards –, Mexico, whose national economy largely depended on oil revenues, had to declare itself bankrupt due to not being able to service its debt to foreign creditors any longer. In response to the Mexican debt crisis – affecting other countries' markets such as Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia and Peru – many Latin American states had to abandon their import substitution industrialisation models (ISI) and adopt export-oriented industrialisation strategies, most commonly the neoliberal reforms encouraged by the IMF – together with private sector reforms and a liberalisation of the capital markets.¹⁰

In this context of liberalisation and privatisation through wide-ranging reform programmes by the IMF and World Bank in the 1980s in Latin America¹¹ Mario Vargas Llosa entered the political stage in Peru (for instance, with his chairmanship of the final report on Uchuraccay in 1983). Nevertheless, apart from having contemplated a stronger commitment in public life, Vargas Llosa's active involvement in Peruvian politics, defending a liberal political position, didn't come about until the proposed nationalisation of the Peruvian banking system during

⁹ Dávila, J.: *Dictatorship in South America*, Oxford 2013.

¹⁰ Meade, T. A.: *A History of Modern Latin America*, Oxford 2010; <https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/latin-american-debt-crisis> [last visited on 20-06-21].

¹¹ Meade, T. A.: *A History of Modern Latin America*; Williamson, E.: *The Penguin History of Latin America*, London 2009; <https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/latin-american-debt-crisis> [last visited on 20-06-21].

the third presidential speech by Alan García in July 1987 in Lima.¹² From that moment on Vargas Llosa, after giving a speech at Plaza San Martín in August 1987, founding his own political movement – *Movimiento Libertad* –, contested the presidential elections of July 1990 as the main contender – before, however, being beaten in the second round by the unknown, but popular dark-horse candidate Alberto Fujimori from *Cambio 90*.¹³

Vargas Llosa was thus the first contemporary Peruvian politician who dared to go back to a liberal and agro-industrial export model based on unrestricted economic freedoms for the middle class and further monetary and financial incentives for smaller entrepreneurs and rurally based *campesinos*. This mainly agro-industrial export model of Peru's core natural resources – regarded by the second García government (2006-2011) as being fundamental for transforming Peru's impoverished hinterland into a *sierra exportadora*¹⁴ – was one of the central liberal propositions in FREDEMO's presidential programme:

Nosotros estamos convencidos de que de esta manera va a surgir una agroindustria, por ejemplo, en el Perú con una gran posibilidad exportadora que [...] se va a convertir en una de las fuentes principales del desarrollo nacional; va a traer divisas, recursos extranjeros que nos permitan abrir las minas, [que nos faciliten] desarrollar las industrias pesqueras, [que posibiliten de explotar] los inmensos recursos naturales de nuestro suelo.¹⁵

After having finished his controversial political fiction on the revolutionary Mayta (1984), the political attitude of the author loses its strict adherence to socialism or social democracy, pursuing an increasingly liberal and market-friendly outlook in politics, which would lead Vargas Llosa to support the orthodox policies of president Belaúnde Terry, but heavily criticise the heterodox and social-reformist policies of Alan García – failing dramatically in the course of the last three years of García's presidency (1987-1990). Analysing Jean-François Revel's convictions of liberal and pragmatic anti-elitist grassroots democracy (defending the ideas and behaviour of 'las gentes del comun'¹⁶), Vargas Llosa comes to the conclusion, accepting the ultra-liberal optimism espoused by entrepreneur Hernando de Soto, that the social potential of Peru's masses from the countryside has to be used not for socialist, but for liberal economic and individual growth. Taking as the presidential candidate's point of departure Hernando de

¹² García, A.: *Mensaje a la nación, Presidente Dr. Alan García Pérez*, pp. 15-18, *Congreso de la República*: www.congreso.gob.pe [last visited on 07-04-21].

¹³ Vargas Llosa, M.: *A Fish in the Water*, pp. 27-46, pp. 76-96, pp. 152-179, pp. 401-447, pp. 468-523.

¹⁴ García, A.: *Sierra Exportadora*, Lima 2005.

¹⁵ *El Debate Presidencial, 3 de junio de 1990*, p. 45.

¹⁶ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea III*, p. 499.

Soto's renowned book *El otro sendero*¹⁷ informal economic workers (comprising between 60-70% of non-agricultural employment)¹⁸ are regarded as having the potential to substantially become transformed into popular agents of proprietor- and entrepreneurship, leading to growth and a formal economy for the country as a whole. This decisive fact is considered to be important for the further advancement of liberalism and unrestricted rights for the general, entrepreneurial-minded population, portraying it as the central proposal in the speech by Vargas Llosa, as the FREDEMO-candidate, in order to be elected as president:

Hace ya bastantes años que se publicó en el Perú el libro del doctor Hernando de Soto, muy importante para entender el fenómeno de la informalidad, 'El otro sendero', que yo tuve el honor [...] de promocionar por el mundo porque me pareció tan importante que el mundo entero conociera el fenómeno de los informales, de esos peruanos humildes, de esos peruanos de los estratos más pobres de la población, que han construido todo un capitalismo popular sin ayuda del Estado [...]. Para mí, el fenómeno de la informalidad me dio [...] una esperanza nueva en mi país que – confieso – había comenzado a perder [...] Y conocer el fenómeno de la informalidad, ver que [...] en millones de humildes del Perú, lo que había era una firme iniciativa individual, una desconfianza en las prácticas intervencionistas del Estado [...] y una capacidad de crear trabajo, incluso, sin capitales, sin créditos, me devolvió la esperanza en mi país y me hizo pensar que sí, que aquí se podía también – como en los países más modernos – crear un auténtico capitalismo popular, un capitalismo enraizado en la inmensa masa de la población.¹⁹

Another two important aspects of liberalism understood by the author and FREDEMO-candidate Vargas Llosa entail the core characteristics of privatisation and liberalisation, which will lead – employed successfully and in balance with social sector policies – to a liberal climate of competition and growth in a free market with only the minimal interference of the government. This in turn will usher in an economy where free and dynamic citizens compete with one another, based on the liberal and creative distinction of their social, cultural, ethnic and racial, as well as intellectual and artistic character traits. This, consequently, must then lead to free enterprises and companies which will not only compete on a regional or national level with one another, but – increasingly – on an international level, as well:

¹⁷ de Soto, H.: *El otro sendero*, Lima 1986.

¹⁸ ILO (FORLAC): *Trends in informal employment in Peru – 2004-2012*, www.oit.org/wcmstp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/documents/publication/wcms_245891.pdf [last visited on 11-04-21].

¹⁹ *El Debate Presidencial*, 3 de junio de 1990, pp. 68-69.

Se calcula que en la primera etapa de la privatización se crearían 40 mil nuevos empleos, gracias a ese dinero fresco que vendría para la reconversión de muchas de estas empresas públicas que pasarían a convertirse en grandes empresas privadas, empresas que competirían, por supuesto, en un mercado libre, porque un aspecto fundamental de la privatización es la desaparición de los monopolios. Desaparecerían automáticamente todos los monopolios mediante una ley antimonopólica, de tal manera que esas empresas carezcan de privilegios y se vean obligadas a ser eficientes y a competir en un mercado que de esta manera, gracias a la libertad y a la competencia, será un mercado sano y un mercado además, gracias a la liberalización, íntimamente en contacto a los mercados de todo el mundo. Esa será una de las maneras con las que el Frente Democrático insertará al Perú en la vida internacional.²⁰

Consequently, Vargas Llosa's personal awakening as a liberal – as well as his subsequent staunch defence of the liberal school of thought for Peru, but also for Latin America as a whole –, can be traced back to the foundation of his political party, the Liberty Movement (*Movimiento Libertad*) as part of the Democratic Front (*Frente Democrático*).²¹ Pursuing his political objectives right after the founding of his liberal movement, Vargas Llosa declared to his supporters in Lima, Arequipa, and Piura – filling the public squares with large audiences – that *economic* and *political* liberalism were two sides of the same notion of freedom.²² Control of the banking and financial system by the state would amount to a huge transgression of public liberties, inhibiting the judiciary from checking the public finances, and the people from retaining legitimate control via legislation or transparent complaint mechanisms. Therefore, the indivisibility of powers must be guaranteed in a democratic country like Peru, and the political and cultural rights accompanied by material and economic progress. At the beginning of 1987 – something that Vargas Llosa will repeat constantly since then – the author makes this important distinction between economic and political liberalism, being two sides of the same notion of liberty:

²⁰ *El Debate Presidencial, 3 de junio de 1990*, p. 80.

²¹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea III*, pp. 417-420, pp. 421-422; Vargas Llosa, M.: *El pez en el agua*, Barcelona 1993; Vargas Llosa, M.: *A Fish in the Water*, London 1994/1995, Ch. II: pp. 27-46, Ch. IV: pp. 76-96, Ch. VI: pp. 120-136, Ch. VIII: pp. 152-179, Ch. X: pp. 205-228, Ch. XII: pp. 255-269, Ch. XIV: pp. 301-317, Ch. XVI: pp. 345-374, Ch. XVIII: pp. 401-447, Ch. XX: pp. 468-523; Vargas Llosa, M.: *Der Fisch im Wasser*, Frankfurt am Main 1996/1998.

²² Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea III*, pp. 410-411, pp. 346-348.

La libertad es indivisible y [...] sin la caución y el complemento de la libertad política, la libertad económica es un fraude. Pero también el reverso de esta fórmula es cierto: que sin libertad económica, toda libertad política está siempre recortada.²³

In a speech in September 1987 Vargas Llosa introduces a similar condemnation of the distinction between liberty and justice in his modern and liberal political discourse.²⁴ Economic liberalism or political freedom cannot and shall not be suppressed by any higher concept of justice, such as, e.g., by a certain ideology, government, or political programme, because, again, political liberty and social justice are inseparable from one another according to a liberal point of view:

Defender la libertad, reclamar que ella se aclimate y se transubstancie en nuestra vida política, en nuestras leyes, en nuestra economía, en nuestras costumbres, no es, como grotescamente pretende la propaganda oficial contra nosotros, elegir una opción distinta a la de la justicia. Sólo para los enemigos de la libertad, para la ideología dogmática de los totalitarios, existe diferencia entre la justicia y la libertad. Los hombres y mujeres libres sabemos que ambas cosas son inseparables, que una no existe sin la otra, que quienes las separan terminan siempre suprimiendo la libertad en nombre de una justicia que nunca llega, que se vuelve un espejismo al que el gobierno y su ejército de burócratas vacía de sustancia y realidad. Pedir libertad, creer en la libertad, es la única manera de pedir justicia y de creer en la justicia. Porque ésta sencillamente no es real sin aquello que sólo la libertad hace posible: la fiscalización del poder, el derecho de crítica, la denuncia de la corrupción y del abuso de quienes ocupan una función pública, el debate aleccionador, la creatividad y las iniciativas de todos en la solución de los problemas.²⁵

In another speech, which was broadcast on radio and television, Vargas Llosa already alluded to the coming demise of totalitarian Soviet ideology and the defence of freedom and a liberal political spirit in Peru as well as the rest of the world.²⁶ Following on from that, it's necessary for the defence of these values, paradoxical as it may seem, to still be applied to a world that has become a new breeding ground for cultural nationalism and political chauvinism as a consequence of newer pandemics and civil wars – a world in which the liberal voice of the individual has become scarce or superficial, including a determined group of people or politicians who still uphold morally or politically righteous values that either have a

²³ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea III*, p. 410.

²⁴ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea III*, pp. 436-437.

²⁵ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea III*, pp. 436-437.

²⁶ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea III*, pp. 461-462.

supra-national outlook or a global reach regarding their policies and liberal convictions. As a matter of fact, direct parallels between the conflictive political culture in Peru between 1987 and 1990 and the political and economic divide as part of the country's current crisis in the electoral year 2021 – exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic – can be drawn:

Nuestro país fue grande y próspero en el pasado y volverá a serlo, con nuestro entusiasmo y nuestro esfuerzo. No mediante el odio, el resentimiento, la lucha de clases, sino por aquello que hace de veras progresar a los países: el trabajo, el ahorro, la inversión, la difusión popular de la propiedad, el respeto a la ley, la creatividad, la economía de mercado, la descentralización del poder. En suma, la cultura del éxito y no la de la envidia y la derrota [...] Eso es lo que ha traído desarrollo, paz y cultura a los países más modernos del mundo, que son los países libres. Y ésa es la gran revolución pacífica que está aún por hacerse en nuestra patria: la que a través de la libertad política y económica da a todos los ciudadanos la posibilidad de crear riqueza y mejorar su suerte y la de los suyos. Tarde o temprano ese camino nos sacará de donde estamos y entonces, como en las páginas de aquella crónica, nuestros Andes volverán 'a florecer y el desierto verdeará y en nuestra montaña el canto de los pájaros festejará nuestros triunfos.' Que en este trance difícil nos acompañe la visión de ese Perú posible, de la prosperidad en la libertad, por el que estamos trabajando.²⁷

Finally, the newer criticisms in regards to the dangerous social imbalances of economic liberalism – since the early 21st century – have led to a more balanced view of capitalist production, moral philosophy, and social or individual psychology. The downsides of a liberally radicalised capitalism or the emergence of a neo-liberal doctrine – rooted, unfortunately, in the aberrations from a Christian path of the Enlightenment – contribute even to the astute criticism of one of the most fervent supporters of liberal thought, such as Vargas Llosa himself. In *La llamada de la tribu* the author of *Travesuras*, *El héroe*, and *Cinco esquinas* acknowledges that public morality – encompassing the juridical as well as political system – has been negatively affected in the wake of the 2008 worldwide economic and financial crisis, as part of one of the great tragedies of liberalism:

La moral pública, a la que Hayek concede tanta importancia, se ha resquebrajado también por doquier debido al apetito de lucro, que prima sobre todos los valores, y que lleva a muchas empresas y a particulares a jugar sucio, violentando las reglas que regulan la libre

²⁷ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea III*, p. 462.

competencia. La gran crisis financiera moderna ha sido una expresión dramática de ese desplome de las ideas y valores hayekianos.²⁸

This, eventually, leads the Nobel Prize winner of 2010 to the conviction that modern expressions of liberal production or material accumulation need to be accompanied by a socially and intellectually embedded fundament of morals, without which no individual forms of existence – either in society, politics, or the arts – can truly thrive:

La última crisis financiera que ha sacudido a los Estados Unidos y a Europa desde 2008 resulta en buena parte de esa voluntad de lucro que llevó a bancos y empresas a groseras violaciones de la ley. Éstas precipitaron el colapso de las economías, aquéllos se arruinaron y debieron ser rescatados con dinero público, es decir, el dinero de sus víctimas. Lo cual ha hecho un daño enorme al capitalismo y a la economía de mercado [...] De ahí que sea conveniente recordar la vieja idea de los fundadores del pensamiento liberal, como Adam Smith, de que sin sólidas convicciones morales (él las creía inseparables de la religión) el liberalismo no funciona.²⁹

Coming to a preliminary conclusion, economic and political liberalism comprises – and has done so since its founder Adam Smith in the 18th century – the strict defence of private property, the free development of entrepreneur and enterprise, as well as the consequent emergence of the liberal individual, including the protection of his or her civil rights before the law. However, the historical economic malaise of neo-liberalism in Latin America in the 1980s and its restructuring and modernisation in the early 2000s have led to the conviction that the *invisible hand* of economic liberalism cannot function without moral constraints. More importantly – as this is mostly embodied by the main figure of *Travesuras de la niña mala* –, individual beings have human weaknesses, for which a moral system of basic guidelines is necessary – a position established by Hutcheson³⁰ and Smith³¹, and supported by Hume³² –,

²⁸ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, pp. 119-120.

²⁹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, p. 123.

³⁰ Hutcheson, F.: *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, Treatise II, Section I: pp. 89-100, Section IV: pp. 136-147, Section V: p. 148, pp. 149-151, Section VI: pp. 163-176, Section VII: pp. 177-198; Hutcheson, F.: *Über den Ursprung unserer Ideen von Schönheit und Tugend*, Zweite Abhandlung, Kapitel 1: pp. 17-31, Kapitel 4: pp. 85-97, Kapitel 5: p. 98, pp. 99-101, Kapitel 6: pp. 116-131, Kapitel 7: pp. 132-159; Hutcheson, F.: *Untersuchung unsrer Begriffe von Schönheit und Tugend in zwei Abhandlungen*, Frankfurt und Leipzig 1762; Hutcheson, F.: *Erläuterungen zum moralischen Sinn*, Stuttgart 1984; Butler, J.: *Five Sermons preached at the Rolls Chapel and A Dissertation upon the Nature of Virtue*, New York 1950, pp. 26-27, pp. 37-38, p. 41, p. 43, pp. 81-82, p. 82.

³¹ Smith, A.: *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, New Rochelle (N.Y.) 1969; Smith, A.: *La teoría de los sentimientos morales*, Madrid 2013³.

³² Hume, D.: *A Treatise of Human Nature*, London 1969; Hume, D.: *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Cambridge 1983.

to not only find social peace towards others, but also within oneself. Thus, paradoxically, the freedom-loving development of liberalism is bound by a comprehensive arrangement of moral discipline for all those individuals who bravely dare to be or become free.

Now, after having introduced classic economic liberalism as well as the political understanding of liberalism as part of the Peruvian context, with which the author has been familiar since the late 1980s and early 1990s, it will be expounded how these liberal values on an economic and political level are transformed into the progressive and humanist ideas of culture and literature. In addition to that, literary or cultural liberal practices seek to portray the emancipation of the (female or LGBTQ-affected) individual as well as the depiction of liberal or post-colonial gender struggles, demonstrating the emancipatory humanism and liberatory freedoms for both sexes.

4.2. Three political novels of Vargas Llosa's liberal period of creation

In *El héroe discreto* a local entrepreneur of one of the author's former hometowns, Piura, has to defend himself and his business against a clique of protection money extortioners. Felícito's entire economically liberal reputation, as someone who has honestly worked his way up to fortune – being a societal role model for all *Piurans* –, is threatened with ruin and utmost poverty. In the end, Felícito, in defending his liberal and Smithian way of life, protecting his private and industrial property as well as the self-acquired values that are dear to him (proposed by Hayek and further advocated by Vargas Llosa), becomes one of the champions of the promotion of liberalism in Piura: representing the artistic reflection of these political themes. Similar to Felícito, Ismael embodies the pride and ambition of a classic liberal lifestyle, coming, however, in pronounced contrast to Felícito, from an urban city of nation-wide significance – Peru's capital, Lima – expressing different manifestations of a liberal societal attitude in the author's newer fiction.

A couple of years later, one of the author's most obsessive themes since his conversion to liberalism – the criticism against the dictatorial Fujimori regime from the 1990s – is posed in the form of brilliant fictionalisation of newer political crime and corruption during that period, *Cinco esquinas*. The consequences of the historical trauma inflicted on civil society, such as the destruction of journalism and the freedom of opinion, are only the larger reflection, in this novel, of the demagoguery and deceit of an entire government clique known from earlier anti-

liberal regimes such as that of Gen. Odría, and now revived under Fujimori and Montesinos. As the Fujimori regime (1990-2000) collapsed by the end of 2000 – paving the way for liberal democracy to finally become established in Peru – the author’s words were remarkably succinct in regards to his liberal convictions, underlining Vargas Llosa’s political world view for the next 20 years:

Vivimos un momento histórico en el que podemos empezar a materializar aquello que Jorge Basadre llamó ‘La promesa de la vida peruana’, esa vocación antigua y generosa, tantas veces frustrada pero nunca aniquilada del todo, de alcanzar una existencia digna, próspera, creativa y libre para el pueblo peruano. Repitamos, con Albert Camus, que, como en el dominio de la historia todo depende de nosotros – no de un dios caprichoso o de un determinismo fatídico, sino de nuestro querer y nuestro actuar – de lo que decidamos y obremos en estos días, dependerá que esta ocasión que tenemos entre manos no sea desperdiciada y sirva para liquidar definitivamente el pasado ominoso y, también, aquellos resabios, prejuicios, prácticas malsanas y deficiencias que estropearon nuestra democracia y la debilitaron, hasta dejarla sin defensas contra la peste autoritaria.³³

In *Travesuras de la niña mala* the prototype of a humanist and liberal relationship between the two main protagonists, Ricardo and Lily, is portrayed. The bourgeois relationship is defied by the bad girl’s continually leaving the protagonist, while – however, against the expectations of the reader – always and most surprisingly coming back to him. Moreover, both characters originate from the author’s native Lima, putting the emphasis on the similarities between the open-minded protagonist’s and the author’s cultured biographies:

Ricardo Somocurcio, el protagonista de *Travesuras de la niña mala*, no es un gran artista, pero es un intérprete y un traductor. Su vida constituye [...] una existencia paralela a la de Vargas Llosa. Los dos nacieron prácticamente en la misma fecha, vivieron prácticamente en los mismos países, en las mismas ciudades y en los mismos vecindarios – prácticamente – al mismo tiempo; y, lo hayan querido o no, sus vidas se enmarañan íntimamente con las vicisitudes de la historia del Perú. La novela incluye un comentario de los hechos políticos e históricos del Perú [...] justo hasta antes de la campaña presidencial de Vargas Llosa. La relación principal en la novela, entre Ricardo Somocurcio y una mujer misteriosa llamada la ‘niña mala’, es una alegoría sobre la relación de Vargas Llosa con el Perú.³⁴

³³ Vargas Llosa, M.: ‘La libertad recobrada’, cited in: Milla Batres, C. (ed.): *Cómo Fujimori jodió al Perú*, p. 25.

³⁴ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 432.

In short, *Travesuras de la niña mala* (in English: *The Bad Girl*) is an authentic reflection on the most defining aspects and locations (Peru, Paris, London, Madrid, and others) of the author's life, while being crafted from the standpoint of his, nowadays, increasingly liberal world view, acquired and defended since his political commitment as presidential candidate in the late 1980s in Peru. This, in turn, leads the reader to reflect on the most decisive historical and political scenes of *Travesuras* in the light of Vargas Llosa's newer liberal convictions – e.g. the critical portrayal of Cuba in the 1960s, its reflection on the Peruvian left-wing intellectuals in Paris, the London of the 1970s, and finally, the Madrid of the 1980s, the years of the famous *destape*, experienced by Vargas Llosa himself.

As part of the following literary and political analysis of three of Vargas Llosa's more recent novels, liberalism will be regarded as having economic, political, and moral sides, which can be affirmed in Vargas Llosa's newer fictional *oeuvre*.

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The latest academic research regarding the novels of the new millennium by Mario Vargas Llosa is still sparse and mainly includes general book reviews and the thoroughgoing analysis of Efraín Kristal in the more extended Spanish edition of his study on Vargas Llosa's writings, *Tentación de la palabra*, Lima 2018³⁵ (in English: *Temptation of the Word*, but without the newer literature of MVLL). Kristal's description of Julieta's role as *la heroína discreta* in comparison with the protagonist of *El héroe discreto* still fits perfectly well with the main thrust of scholarship on Vargas Llosa, which acknowledges the importance of the defence of the liberty of the individual and his or her pragmatic vision of society, while combatting any form of dogmatic ideology, authoritarianism or political despotism along the way – at least, since the ideological turn and stance of the author from the 1990s onwards. Once again, in Chiri's and Prado's *Las cartografías del poder en la obra de Mario Vargas Llosa*, Lima 2014³⁶, the article by Kristal, 'De la utopía a la reconciliación en las últimas novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa'³⁷, stands out for summarising the positive and liberal atmosphere in Vargas Llosa's

³⁵ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra. Arte literario y convicción política en las novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa*, Lima 2018.

³⁶ Chiri, S., and Prado, A. (eds.): *Las cartografías del poder en la obra de Mario Vargas Llosa. Ensayos literarios*, Lima 2014.

³⁷ Kristal, E.: 'De la utopía a la reconciliación en las últimas novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa', pp. 35-55, cited in: Chiri, S., and Prado, A. (eds.): *Las cartografías del poder*, Lima 2014.

newer novels. Some of the euphoric sentiments between Ricardo and *the bad girl*, comparable to the artistic reflection of hidden passions or traumas in real life, embodied by fictional characters in the author's writings (such as in *Travesuras*), hint at the artistic relationship of the author with reality, or: the Chekhovian 'painful realism of love in life'.³⁸ Köllmann's literary analysis of *Travesuras* in *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*³⁹ alludes to the fact that the novel plays with autobiographical material, brilliantly presenting political episodes during the author's lifetime in a fictionalised way, and, finally, that Lily's obsessions are juxtaposed with her imagined lives, turning fantasies of 'life's experiences into literature.'⁴⁰ González Montes' conference paper on '*Travesuras de la niña mala*: La constancia del objeto amoroso a través del espacio y del tiempo' in *La invención de la novela contemporánea* (Lima 2016)⁴¹ revolves around the different times and spaces of the loved object of the *bad girl* in Ricardo's, but also Lily's other lovers' eyes, in addition to always returning to the liberal centre of gravity in the novel – the City of Light (Paris). Roland Forgues' '*Travesuras de la niña mala*' in *Ética y creación* (Lima 2009)⁴² focuses on multiple concerns, such as structure and technique, the transgression of different fictionalised periods of time in the plot, as well as questions of sex, eroticism, and utopia, connected to the philosophical thought of A. Camus, J.-P. Sartre and A. Malraux. Another source for literary research on Vargas Llosa's newer literature is the *Cambridge Companion to Vargas Llosa*, which contains half a book chapter, by Efraín Kristal, on the *The Bad Girl* (Cambridge 2011).⁴³ Some of the justification for the author's work during his liberal 'phase' can be found as part of Vargas Llosa's own philosophical document regarding his liberal political legacy, *La llamada de la tribu* (Barcelona 2018)⁴⁴, as well as in his autobiography *El pez en el agua* (Barcelona 1993).⁴⁵ Furthermore, his essayistic and political writings in *Contra viento y marea* (1962-1982, and I-III: 1962-2015)⁴⁶, as well as the English

³⁸ Kristal, E.: 'De la utopía a la reconciliación en las últimas novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa', p. 53.

³⁹ Köllmann, S.: *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*, pp. 207-212.

⁴⁰ Köllmann, S.: *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*, p. 212.

⁴¹ González Montes, A.: '*Travesuras de la niña*. La constancia del objeto amoroso a través del espacio y del tiempo', pp. 321-338, cited in: Flores Heredia, G. (ed.): *La invención de la novela contemporánea. Tributo a Mario Vargas Llosa*, Lima 2016.

⁴² Forgues, R.: *Mario Vargas Llosa. Ética y creación*, Lima 2009, pp. 265-283.

⁴³ Kristal, E., and King, J. (eds.): *The Cambridge Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*, Cambridge 2011.

⁴⁴ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, Barcelona 2018.

⁴⁵ Vargas Llosa, M.: *El pez en el agua*, Barcelona 1993.

⁴⁶ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea I-II*, Barcelona 1983; *Contra viento y marea III*, Barcelona 1990; *Gegen Wind und Wetter*, Frankfurt am Main/Berlin 1988/2015.

editions of these essays and articles in *Making Waves* (1997)⁴⁷ and *Touchstones* (2007)⁴⁸, have been incorporated. Other research that is included in the analysis mainly studies the core and critical features of the political background in *Cinco esquinas*, principally of the Fujimori regime⁴⁹, as well as the politically liberal criticism of it, based on the writings on power and civil society by Michel Foucault.⁵⁰

4.3. Felícito as the embodiment of classic economic liberalism in the first plot line of *El héroe discreto*

In one of Mario Vargas Llosa's latest novels, *El héroe discreto*, economic and entrepreneurial liberalism are explored as one of the main societal themes embodied by both of the protagonists, Felícito from Piura and Ismael from Lima. With the embracing of economic liberalism by the Fujimori presidency from 1990-1992 and the further propagation of a liberal and economically independent spirit as part of Peru's newer democracy since 2001 – allowing free enterprise, the development of the individual as well as the protection of his or her rights before the law – Vargas Llosa has been confirmed in his world view as a presidential candidate and thus further encouraged to portray this new liberal political climate as part of his newer writings between 2000 and 2021. In this newer literature by the author, the right to defend the individual's material and professional position as entrepreneur in newer Peruvian society is portrayed, the right to defend private property, the fight against unlawful corruption as a side effect of economic growth as well as the right to bequeath – as in Ismael's or also Lily's

⁴⁷ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Making Waves. Essays. Edited and translated by John King*, New York and London 1996/1997.

⁴⁸ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Touchstones. Essays on Literature, Art and Politics. Selected, edited, and translated by John King*, London 2007.

⁴⁹ Conaghan, C. M.: *Fujimori's Peru*, Pittsburgh 2006; Carrión, J. F.: *The Fujimori Legacy*, Pennsylvania State University Press 2006; Cameron, M. A., and Mauceri, P. (eds.): *The Peruvian Labyrinth*, Pennsylvania State University Press 1997; Mauceri, P.: *State under Siege*, Boulder/Oxford 1998; Burt, J.-M.: *Political Violence and the Authoritarian State in Peru*, New York 2010.

⁵⁰ Foucault, M.: *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, New York 1995; Foucault, M.: *Power. The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 3*, London 2002; Foucault, M.: *Sécurité, territoire, population. Cours au Collège de France 1977-1978*, Paris 2004; Foucault, M.: *Naissance de la biopolitique. Cours au Collège de France 1978-1979*, Paris 2004; Foucault, M.: *Geschichte der Gouvernementalität I. Sicherheit, Territorium, Bevölkerung. Vorlesung am Collège de France 1977-1978*, Frankfurt am Main 2006; Foucault, M.: *Geschichte der Gouvernementalität II. Die Geburt der Biopolitik. Vorlesung am Collège de France 1978-1979*, Frankfurt am Main 2006; Foucault, M.: *Security, Territory, Population. Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*, New York 2007; Foucault, M.: *The Birth of Biopolitics. Lectures at the Collège de France 1978-1979*, New York 2008; Foucault, M.: *In Verteidigung der Gesellschaft. Vorlesung am Collège de France 1975-1976*, Frankfurt am Main 2009; Foucault, M.: *Kritik des Regierens. Schriften zur Politik*, Frankfurt am Main 2010.

case – one’s personal wealth to whomever is deemed worthy of it, e.g. if the natural offspring is regarded as morally unfit or the classic familial relationships have somehow become dysfunctional.

In *El héroe discreto* the main protagonist of the first plot line is Felícito Yanaqué, owner of a local bus and transport company from Piura. The novel starts off with the discovery of a letter by a secret mafia extorting money for the protection of Felícito’s company, pinned to the door of Felícito’s house.⁵¹ The protection money mafia demands a monthly payment of 500 dollars for their services, which Felícito isn’t disposed to pay.⁵² This social and material conflict from the start of the novel – between Felícito, the honest-working business owner and role model versus the new-found mafias bribing everyone in up-coming Piura – will increasingly serve as the appraisal of honest work, since Felícito’s struggle will be victorious, based on a liberal work ethic together with an entrepreneurial spirit, which helps to increase the wealth and prosperity of the community.

Right at the beginning, Felícito is presented in all his human and entrepreneurial dignity, evoking the memory of his father to protect his business as well as standing firm against any kind of local corruption or blackmail:

Había una docena de cuerdas entre su casa de la calle Arequipa y su oficina, en la avenida Sánchez Cerro. No las recorrió esta vez preparando la agenda de trabajo del día, como hacía siempre, sino dando vueltas en su cabeza a la carta de la arañita. ¿Debía tomarla en serio? ¿Ir a la policía a denunciarla? Los chantajistas le anunciaban que se pondrían en contacto con él para las ‘modalidades de pago’. ¿Mejor esperar que lo hicieran antes de dirigirse a la comisaría? [...] Desde hacía algún tiempo la delincuencia había aumentado en Piura, cierto: atracos a casas, asaltos callejeros, hasta secuestros que, se decía, arreglaban por lo bajo las familias de los blanquitos de El Chipe y Los Ejidos. Se sentía desconcertado e indeciso, pero seguro al menos de una cosa: por ninguna razón y en ningún caso daría un centavo a esos bandidos. Y, una vez más, como tantas en su vida, Felícito recordó las palabras de su padre antes de morir: ‘Nunca te dejes pisotear por nadie, hijo. Este consejo es la única herencia que vas a tener.’ Le había hecho caso, nunca se había dejado pisotear.⁵³

Resisting blackmail and acts of corruption as part of local business is one of the central and recurrent themes of the novel, in which defending one’s own enterprise, while continuing to

⁵¹ *El héroe discreto*, pp. 11-12.

⁵² *El héroe discreto*, pp. 12-13, p. 25.

⁵³ *El héroe discreto*, pp. 12-13.

present oneself as a role model (in human and economic terms), becomes the central paradigm for the developing plot in chapters 1 to 19. In order to act with courage, but also righteously – under the political and legal standpoint of liberalism – Felícito goes on to condemn both the acts of corruption and immoral wrongdoing in his immediate surroundings. As he is talking to his long-time friend Vignolo, who owns a similar business, Felícito sees himself confronted with a social reality he didn't really know existed, but, nevertheless, one that he must face in order to confront the demons of both his father's heritage and his own company's reputation.⁵⁴

Put more succinctly, Felícito sees himself faced with a two-sided problem. On the one hand, he has to protect the legal credibility of his company; on the other hand, he has to defend and rescue the values that are attached to it regarding his own person – a free individual who is free to invest and to do business in an independent and liberal manner. As a consequence, if he wants to defend his freedom as a liberal person and businessman, going to the police isn't Felícito's only problem, since he also has to face the negative repercussions connected with that action. He also, much more than that, has to stand up to possibly face a worsening entrepreneurial climate, the loss of customers or of his business's reputation. The whole problematic of doing business, while confronting the local mafia in Piura, is brought before him by his friend Vignolo:

–Y, aunque no me consta, le aseguro que todas, o casi todas, las compañías de transportes de Piura también pagan esos cupos. Es lo que usted debería haber hecho y no la temeridad de enfrentárseles. Todos creíamos que usted los pagaba también, Felícito. Qué disparate ha hecho, ni yo ni ninguno de nuestros colegas lo entiende.– [...] –La mafia es muy poderosa, está infiltrada en todas partes, empezando por el Gobierno y por los jueces. Es un gran ingenuo fiándose de la policía. No me extrañaría que también los cachacos estén en el ajo. ¿No sabe en qué país vivimos, compadre?–⁵⁵

However, even though Felícito stands up in all his integrity against the immoral laws of bribery and blackmail in Piura, he can't prevent these anarchist forces from ruling over or even destroying the business of a life-time that Felícito himself has built up⁵⁶ – a business that has become the cornerstone of Felícito's liberal world view. These immoral and anti-liberal forces of destruction have, in fact – after Felícito has received their letter twice, having reported the

⁵⁴ *El héroe discreto*, pp. 76-78.

⁵⁵ *El héroe discreto*, p. 77.

⁵⁶ *El héroe discreto*, pp. 148-150.

blackmailing at the police station⁵⁷ –, set fire to the premises of his company⁵⁸, by the time Felícito speaks with his friend and business partner Vignolo. Now, as a consequence, Felícito publishes a notice in the local newspaper *El Tiempo* where he defies the regional machinations of the mafia, refusing to comply with their demands.⁵⁹ Furthermore, as can be observed from this notice as well as Felícito's explanations to the police, the transport business owner continues to see himself as the righteous defender of law and private property – complaining about the missing coverage of the insurance for his office and transport installations:

[Felícito:] –No sé qué estarán haciendo ustedes, pero, en lo que me concierne, nadie me va a devolver el local que me quemaron.–

[Comisario Silva:] –¿No se encarga el seguro de los daños y perjuicios?–

[Felícito:] –Debería, pero se la están dando de vivos. Alegan que sólo los vehículos estaban asegurados, no las instalaciones. El doctor Castro Pozo, mi abogado, dice que tal vez tengamos que ir a un juicio.– [...]

[Vignolo] vino a buscarlo una mañana a Transportes Narihualá, donde Felícito se había instalado en un escritorio improvisado – un tablón sobre dos barriles de aceite – en una esquina del garaje. Desde allí podía verse el amasijo de calaminas, paredes y muebles chamuscados en que el incendio había convertido su antigua oficina. Hasta parte del techo habían destruido las llamas. Por el agujero abierto se divisaba un pedazo de cielo alto y azul.⁶⁰

This exemplary scene by the author, displaying the heavy material losses of Felícito's company, illustrates the importance and defence, centering on the indispensable protection of the liberal paradigm, of private property, no matter what business or family are affected by it. In Vargas Llosa's own words, private property guarantees individual liberty – the cornerstone of liberalism –, while also ensuring economic progress and a civic attitude towards society:

La propiedad privada, que es la encarnación de la libertad individual [...] había pasado a ser casi una mala palabra en el Perú por obra de la demagogia extremista. Los encuentros cívicos permitieron recordar que ella es el pilar de toda democracia, que la propiedad privada – si ha sido bien habida y se usa dentro de la ley – es el motor del progreso y del

⁵⁷ *El héroe discreto*, Ch. 1: pp. 14-18; Ch. 3: pp. 49-53.

⁵⁸ *El héroe discreto*, p. 58.

⁵⁹ *El héroe discreto*, p. 73, pp. 94-95.

⁶⁰ *El héroe discreto*, pp. 75-76.

poder civil, que el Estado no debe arrebatársela a nadie sino ayudar a los pobres a acceder a ella.⁶¹

This can be also regarded as the reason why Miguel – who, as the head of the protection money mafia, even though he is Felícito’s son – has to end up in prison⁶², since his immoral behaviour, in particular setting fire to established business property or invoking somebody else’s girl-friend to commit public acts of incitement to harass or harm other people, needs to be legally prosecuted and punished.

Finally, Felícito is portrayed as someone who not only displays a liberal and entrepreneurial spirit in his building up of one of the most important businesses in Piura, but who, in the end, also exhibits a strong public character as a role model for the other inhabitants who aspire to become just like him. The gratitude and public support from his fellow *piuranos* is necessary for Felícito to weather the storm of dark clouds and corrupt mischiefs he is facing, transforming him eventually into a better and, as the title of the novel says, more *discreet* man. Thanks to all of his civil courage Felícito is awarded the most honourable title of *Ciudadano Ejemplar* of Piura, the prize of *Piuran of the Year* and membership of the distinguished *Piuran Club Grau*.⁶³

Last but not least, Felícito emerges as a strong and uncorrupted societal figure from Piura – one of the many places where the author lived in Peru – who displays the main characteristics of a liberal personality: individual and moral integrity, the defence of and respect for the stipulations of the law, as well as the appraisal of entrepreneurial work and the protection of private property. Hereby, *El héroe’s* main protagonist wants to ensure that the cherishing of self-made prosperity and property can be achieved by everyone, so that the community Felícito belongs to will profit from this attitude as a whole – individually, but also collectively.

4.4. Ismael as the embodiment of classic economic liberalism in the second plot line of *El héroe discreto*

⁶¹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea III*, p. 438.

⁶² *El héroe discreto*, pp. 348-351, pp. 351-352, p. 352.

⁶³ *El héroe discreto*, p. 73, pp. 84-85.

In the second plot line of *El héroe discreto* Ismael – a wealthy insurance business owner from Lima – is presented as the second protagonist (and *héroe discreto*) of the alternating plot in Peru's capital, encompassing the even chapters from 2 to 20. Ismael has a problem that can easily be compared to Felícito's familial struggles: Just like Felícito, who has a disobedient and immoral son, both of Ismael's sons are morally unfit and as direct descendants not worthy enough to receive Ismael's inheritance. Ismael's elegant and liberal solution for this centuries-old conflict consists in marrying his former house keeper Armida, a dark-skinned *mestizo* woman, who receives, by the very end of the novel, Ismael's wealth and inheritance wholeheartedly. What's decisive is Ismael's ability to build on his self-acquired prosperity – similar to Felícito's – in order to maximise the profits of his international insurance business, which, eventually, will be sold to his Italian partner firm to transfer to Armida, Ismael's main heir, Ismael's private estates in Italy where Armida will live after Ismael's death, having secured a fortune worth several millions.

For the majority of the plot line development Ismael is portrayed as the perfect businessman who complements his overall entrepreneurial wealth as a CEO with being good friends with his employees and general manager, Don Rigoberto, as well as giving in to his second marriage. From a liberal perspective Don Ismael Carrera is doing everything right: He has acquired and advanced with, through family connections, one of the biggest insurance companies in the country, defending Hayek's principles through ensuring that the most successful bidder on the market takes over his firm after selling the majority of shares at the end of his career, and thus granting himself the liberty to choose another spouse after his first wife's death. Moreover, similar to Don Felícito's indebtedness to his father, the reader is able to appreciate Ismael's indebtedness to his father's foundational work in the firm, a business that now safely rests in family hands, as depicted by a grateful Rigoberto:

Se conocieron el primer día que Rigoberto entró a trabajar a la compañía de seguros, al departamento legal. ¡Treinta largos años! Caracho, toda una vida. Recordó al padre de Ismael, don Alejandro Carrera, el fundador de la empresa. Recio, incansable, un hombre difícil pero íntegro cuya sola presencia ponía orden y contagiaba seguridad. Ismael le tenía respeto, aunque nunca lo quiso. Porque don Alejandro hizo trabajar a su hijo único, recién regresado de Inglaterra, donde se había graduado en la Universidad de Londres en Economía y hecho un año de práctica en la Lloyd's, en todas las reparticiones de la compañía, que ya comenzaba a ser importante. [...] Don Alejandro podía ser algo despótico, pero Rigoberto lo recordaba con admiración: un capitán de empresa. Había

hecho esta compañía de la nada, comenzando con un capital ínfimo y préstamos que pagó al centavo. Pero, la verdad, Ismael había sido un continuador aventajado de la obra de su padre. Era también incansable y sabía ejercer su don de mando cuando hacía falta.⁶⁴

Two more important aspects of Don Ismael's liberal and materially affluent lifestyle refer to his behaviour towards Don Rigoberto as well as his inviting Rigoberto to one of the most expensive restaurants in Lima, proposing to him his becoming a witness to Ismael's second marriage.⁶⁵ First, the fact that Ismael is willing to grant the retirement of Rigoberto three years ahead of time contributes to the impression that Ismael's company is making a surplus profit, portraying Ismael – in spite of his age – as a successful businessman who is still pulling all the strings as the ultimate boss.⁶⁶ Second, Ismael's invitation of Rigoberto to *La Rosa Náutica* in Miraflores not only symbolises the importance of the event, but also attests to the purchasing power and affluent dignity that emanates from Don Ismael's personality.⁶⁷

Now, essentially, there are two or three decisive talks between Ismael and Rigoberto, displaying the confidence of Ismael regarding the credibility of his own business.⁶⁸ In particular, Ismael's trust in free market regulation and the ability to sell quality-made business assets to other insurance companies with an outstanding rate of profitability has proven to be Ismael's boldest move yet, defending the core principles of economic liberalism, while reaping surplus profits and bonuses to finance Ismael's and Armida's retirement in Italy:

–He vendido todas mis acciones de la compañía a Assicurazioni Generali, la mejor y la más grande aseguradora de Italia, Rigoberto [...] Desde hace unos seis meses, apenas [...] Ha sido una negociación rápida, sin complicaciones. Y muy buena, te repito. He hecho un buen negocio.– [...] Los encuentros de los negociadores habían tenido lugar en Lima, Trieste, New York y Milán [...] La venta se había hecho guardando todas las formalidades nacionales y extranjeras. Los organismos administrativos de Italia, Perú y Estados Unidos habían dado el visto bueno a la transacción. Se habían sufragado al centavo los impuestos correspondientes. Todo estaba oleado y sacramentado.⁶⁹

This confidence in market mechanisms, the freedom to do business and the consequences of seeing this liberty translated into concrete benefits belongs to one of the founding creeds

⁶⁴ *El héroe discreto*, pp. 28-29.

⁶⁵ *El héroe discreto*, Ch. II: pp. 26-40.

⁶⁶ *El héroe discreto*, pp. 26-27, pp. 28-29.

⁶⁷ *El héroe discreto*, pp. 26-40, p. 27, pp. 28-29, pp. 30-33, pp. 39-40.

⁶⁸ *El héroe discreto*, pp. 198-200, pp. 238-239, pp. 241-244, p. 246.

⁶⁹ *El héroe discreto*, pp. 241-243.

of a free market society⁷⁰ – convinced of an inherent harmony between the ambition of the individual and market forces, transforming these ambitions into individual development as well as economic progress for society as a whole. As Vargas Llosa writes in *La llamada de la tribu*:

En estos libros [de Friedrich Hayek] está explicado [...] lo que es el mercado, sistema casi infinito de relación entre los seres que conforman una sociedad, y de las sociedades entre sí, para comunicarse recíprocamente sus necesidades y aspiraciones, satisfacerlas y organizar la producción y los recursos en función de aquellas necesidades. Nadie, ni siquiera Von Mises, ha reseñado mejor que Hayek los beneficios en todos los órdenes que trajo al ser humano aquel sistema de intercambios que nadie inventó, que fue naciendo y perfeccionándose a resultas del azar y, sobre todo, de la irrupción de ese accidente en la historia humana que es la libertad [...] El individualismo es un factor central de la filosofía liberal y, por supuesto, del pensamiento de Hayek [...] El individuo goza de soberanía y, aunque parte de lo que es se explica por el medio en que nace y se forma, hay en él una conciencia y un poder de iniciativa que lo emancipan de esa placenta gregaria y le permiten actuar libremente, de acuerdo a su vocación y talento, y, a menudo, imprimir una huella en el entorno en el que vive. La ambición en el individuo es la fuerza que dinamiza la economía de mercado, lo que hace posible el progreso.⁷¹

In the end, blending his profession with his individual talents for social progress, Ismael is the embodiment of the successful businessman, of entrepreneurship and of a liberal and materially successful attitude towards life. In this, adding maybe a morally more conservative side, he seems to resemble the character of Felícito. Unlike Felícito, however, Ismael achieves his goal of spending his honeymoon with his second wife in Italy and raises the quality of service and profitability of his former company to an international level.

Last but not least it's important to point out the culturally and regionally more abundant sides of *El héroe discreto*, being one of only three of Vargas Llosa's novels – together with *La casa verde* (1966) and *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* (1986) – that is set against the background of one of the places where the author lived in his early adulthood (1952-1953), namely, Piura. In addition to that, the *limeñan* portrayal of local social customs compared to cultural habits from the *sierra* or *selva* is equally impressive, depicted in the relationship between Ismael and Armida, the second plot line of *El héroe discreto*. However, it is in Piura,

⁷⁰ Hayek, F. A.: *The Constitution of Liberty*, London and New York 2006; Hayek, F. A.: *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, London and New York 2012.

⁷¹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, pp. 108-111.

once again, where – similar to the author’s more exotic literary figures like *La Selvática* o Fushía in *La casa verde* – an extremely various and colourful set of characters is displayed, being part of Piura’s lifestyles and social eccentricities in this *homage* to local forms of love and ruthless forms of corruption or betrayal. Adelaida, for example, is not only a personal friend to Felícito, but also – as fortuneteller – a crucial help in order to safeguard the achievements of Felícito’s business. Mabel does not only, as it might seem from a first impression, play the role of sensual girl-friend and unconditional lover for Felícito, but does, suddenly, also transform herself into a rogue social agent and female accomplice of a network of blackmail, owned by her partner and son of Felícito, Miguel. Miguel, in turn, does not only perform as the perfect son together with Tiburcio – in the eyes of Felícito, at least until the later chapters of the novel –, but, due to his different origins and heightened longings for emancipation, as the perpetrator of blackmail and local corruption in order to advance his own business and sense of individual pride. Finally, Armida not only functions as the dutiful house maid who romantically falls in love with the owner of the house, but also as a self-conscious and attractive young lady who is still able – in the wake of Ismael’s sudden death – to go her own way, after all.

4.5. Julieta as the embodiment of classic political liberalism in *Cinco esquinas*

Having presented the literary and societal portrayal of classic *economic* liberalism in *El héroe discreto*, with Vargas Llosa’s next liberally imbued story of fiction, *Cinco esquinas*, the main protagonist, Julieta, will be presented as embodying the, in Efraín Kristal’s words, ‘discreet heroine’⁷² of *political* liberalism. The political part of this analysis of *Cinco esquinas* – building on the strong character presentation of journalist Julieta Leguizamón – will be summarised as the liberal duties of resistance against unjust government, or, more precisely, the resistance of civil society against the corrupt abuses of the state and its powers over society (referring, in this particular case, to the authoritarian Fujimori regime of the 1990s in Peru).

⁷² Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 460.

Foucault contrasts his own concept of *democracy* and *confrontation with government* by civil society (in other words, of state and society) with the analysis of Carl Schmitt. Schmitt claims that everything is political that is derived from Christian natural law and its society. In other words, there emerges the concept of two philosophical approaches by two communities, those that belong intrinsically to the post-medieval construction of the state and its jurisdiction – being *political* by being part of its *polity* –, while those outside of this political community are its enemies or opponents.⁷³ In contrast to Schmitt, Foucault says the following with regards to a much more dialectical and progressive construction of society:

Rien n'est politique, tout est politisable, tout peut devenir politique. La politique n'est rien de plus rien de moins que ce qui naît avec la résistance à la gouvernementalité, le premier soulèvement, le premier affrontement.⁷⁴

Ulrich Bröckling aptly summarises how Foucault's 'singular universality'⁷⁵ of governmentality conceives politics as comprising the different forms of resistance against power and against government:

Here appears a political practice, which is directed against the constraints of conformity in society, an idea which, however, doesn't want to occupy strategic positions of power, but to take a fresh and critical view on the space of the political itself. Not universal consensus, constant antagonism or the omnipresence of the state characterise Foucault's practical approach, but rather resistance as a process of creation as well as permanent transformation of the political situation.⁷⁶

Julieta Leguizamón emerges as the key protagonist of political liberalism in *Cinco esquinas*, since she leads the crucial fight of resistance against or confrontation with the main governing clique of the corrupt *fujimorista* regime. It will be summarised what the main role and function of the literary figure Julieta Leguizamón in *Cinco esquinas* consists of:

Cinco esquinas se pudo haber titulado 'La heroína discreta', porque el personaje de Julieta Leguizamón [...] es una periodista de la prensa amarilla que se rehúsa a formar parte del aparato represivo del hombre fuerte detrás de una dictadura, y contribuye a que el régimen se venga abajo.⁷⁷

⁷³ Foucault, M.: *Geschichte der Gouvernementalität I*, p. 568.

⁷⁴ Foucault, M.: *Sécurité, territoire, population*, p. 409.

⁷⁵ Foucault, M.: *Geschichte der Gouvernementalität I*, p. 568.

⁷⁶ Bröckling, U.: 'Nachwort', in: Foucault, M.: *Kritik des Regierens*, p. 439 [The translation is mine].

⁷⁷ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 460.

Moreover, it can be affirmed that the character of Julieta is constructed upon a previous literary figure, who resists political authoritarianism and despotism – by the name of Ángela Maro, taken from *Grandes miradas*, a novel by Alonso Cueto –, and who fights against political corruption, striving for a more inclusive, civil, and democratic political culture just like Julieta:

En su reseña de *Grandes miradas* aparece también otra idea seminal de *Cinco esquinas* cuando Vargas Llosa describe el ambiente del periodismo en el Perú durante la época de Fujimori y señala la importancia de Ángela Maro, un personaje de Cueto que es el antecedente literario de *la Retaquita* de *Cinco esquinas*, es decir, una periodista que trabaja en medios venidos a menos, pero que actúa con valentía cuando las circunstancias de su vida la ponen en contacto con uno de los hombres más corruptos de su país.⁷⁸

Finally, Vargas Llosa himself confirms that under the Fujimori regime journalism and the press were most violently subjugated and suppressed, presumably because the regime already feared that opposition to its style of government would most likely materialise in the form of investigations by journalists:

La dictadura de Fujimori no tuvo necesidad de apoderarse de los diarios, de las radios y los canales (lo hizo solo con uno): le bastó corromper a sus dueños y a un puñado de periodistas, asustándolos o comprándolos, y de este modo, salvo unas publicaciones para las que sobaban los dedos de una mano, tuvo a una prensa dócil, ciega y sorda, o abyectamente servil.⁷⁹

In chapters 5-8⁸⁰ and 19-21⁸¹ of the novel – dealing with Garro's and, later on, Ms. Leguizamón's newspaper *Exposed* – it is also portrayed how the authoritarian relationship between the regime and journalism works, in particular the dependence of commercial tabloids from the patronage of the government.

In Sally Bowen's and Jane Holligan's meticulous and in-depth biography of Vladimiro Montesinos, Fujimori's right-hand man is described as having limitless power and influence, not only over a series of television channels, but in particular the majority of tabloid newspapers in Lima:

La televisión no era la única manera de llegar al hombre de la calle. Montesinos también vio un gran potencial en los baratos tabloides sensacionalistas, de titulares en jerga y fotos de vedettes con las nalgas al aire [...] La avalancha de nuevas publicaciones no era

⁷⁸ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 462.

⁷⁹ Vargas Llosa, M.: 'Contra la amnesia', in: Munné, A. (ed.): *Mario Vargas Llosa. Obras completas XI. Piedra de Toque III (2000-2012)*, Barcelona 2012, p. 536, cited in: Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 462.

⁸⁰ *Cinco esquinas*, Ch. 5-8: pp. 51-61, pp. 63-73, pp. 75-85, pp. 87-94.

⁸¹ *Cinco esquinas*, Ch. 19-21: pp. 225-244, pp. 245-281, pp. 283-299.

coincidencia. Montesinos alentaba deliberadamente tanto a los periódicos ya existentes, como a los nuevos, que tenían nombres como *El Chino*, *El Mañanero*, *La Chuchi*, *El Tío* y *El Chato*. Montesinos le dijo al congresista Víctor Joy Way que esos periódicos eran ‘nuestros’. [...] A Montesinos sólo le interesaba la portada, así que desarrolló un sistema para alquilarla. Pagaría unos 3000 dólares por cada titular de portada, y algo más si incluía una caricatura. Todos los días, los titulares lanzaban ataques contra sus opositores y contra los candidatos presidenciales rivales de Fujimori. Los kioscos de periódicos en Lima se convirtieron en un panel de mentiras sensacionalistas.⁸²

The final chapters of the novel’s progressive ending – in which Julieta’s resistance comes to embody the confrontation of civil society with governmentality⁸³ – can be divided into two antagonistic, but in the end complementary parts in order to explain the paradigm of civil and democratic resistance against the atrocities of an unjust and illiberal regime throughout Peru’s more recent history of the 1990s.

This essential reading of the last four chapters opens up the following structure for a much broader political analysis: First, a more defensive stance against the government, listening and reporting to, but also secretly recording of, the main chief of intelligence as well as de facto ruler over Peruvian politics.⁸⁴ Secondly, the change towards an active and strongly hostile attitude towards the government by Julieta, due to the newest publications of *Exposed* under Julieta’s leadership.⁸⁵ In other words, in this second part, Julieta and others refuse to become simple propagandistic tools for the government’s dirty work against its enemies, demanding a free and liberal climate for their journalistic work as well as a civil and full investigation into the murder of their former boss, nationally famous journalist as well as radio and TV host Rolando Garro.

The direct relationship between Julieta and Vladimiro Montesinos starts with the beginning of chapter 19, in the wake of the reporting by Julieta of the offence of the murder of R. Garro. The scene seems to be significant, because as Julieta is picked up and driven in secret (having to cover her face with something that is given to her by her escorts sent by the *Doctor*) to the summer house location of Montesinos, for the first time the courageous journalist comes into contact with the most powerful person in the country. After Julieta is presented to the *Doctor*,

⁸² Bowen, S., and Holligan, J.: *El espía imperfecto*, pp. 365-366.

⁸³ Foucault, M.: *Geschichte der Gouvernementalität I*, p. 568.

⁸⁴ *Cinco esquinas*, Ch. 19 – middle of Ch. 20: pp. 225-266.

⁸⁵ *Cinco esquinas*, Middle of Ch. 20 – Ch. 22: pp. 266-299, pp. 307-309.

she vividly remembers his infamous life in the army as well as his spectacular rise to a position of power:

¿Qué sabía ella de él? No mucho más que el resto de los peruanos, por lo demás. Que había sido un cadete y un oficial oscuro del Ejército, hasta el golpe militar del 3 de octubre del año 1968 del general Velasco Alvarado, cuando pasó a ser ayudante del general Mercado Jarrín, encargado de las Relaciones Exteriores en el gobierno de facto. En ese cargo estaba cuando el Ejército descubrió que espiaba y pasaba secretos militares a la CIA. [...] El entonces capitán de artillería fue detenido, enjuiciado, condenado, expulsado del Ejército y encerrado en una cárcel militar. Mientras cumplía condena, estudió Derecho y se graduó de abogado. De esa época le venía el apodo de El Doctor. Al salir de la cárcel, con una amnistía, alcanzó cierta notoriedad como abogado de narcotraficantes [...]. Se decía que había sido el hombre en el Perú de Pablo Escobar, el rey de la droga en Colombia. Al parecer, llegó a conocer el submundo judicial como la palma de su mano y a aprovechar en beneficio propio [...] todo lo que había en los tribunales de desbarajuste y corrupción [...] Pero su verdadera fortuna, según la leyenda que circundaba su figura, había ocurrido en las elecciones de 1990 que ganó el ingeniero Alberto Fujimori [...] Desde entonces, el Doctor había sido el brazo derecho de Fujimori, y, como jefe del Servicio de Inteligencia, el presunto autor de las peores fechorías, tráfico, robos y crímenes políticos que se venían cometiendo en el Perú desde hacía casi diez años. Se decía que la fortuna que él y Fujimori tenían en el extranjero era vertiginosa. ¿Qué podía querer este demonio con una pobre periodista de la farándula, redactora en un periodiquito minoritario que, para colmo, acababa de perder trágicamente a su director?⁸⁶

In the following conversation between Julieta and Montesinos, the *Doctor* interrogates Julieta about the history of the photographs from the sex orgy in Chosica, which were used in order to blackmail the entrepreneur Enrique Cárdenas. At the end of this important discussion the head of national intelligence makes Julieta an offer she can't refuse. Montesinos proposes to Julieta that Garro's newspaper *Exposed* will be resurrected after Garro's death, promising her rising circulation for the new format with Julieta herself as the new chief editor – but only under one central condition: namely, that the government and its right-hand ministry – the intelligence services – both check the contents of the newspaper and give the final permission for it to be published: ‘–Nosotros nos veremos poco. Yo quiero aprobar el número armado

⁸⁶ *Cinco esquinas*, pp. 229-231.

antes de que vaya a la imprenta y yo pondré a veces los titulares. Soy un buen cabecero, aunque no te lo creas.—⁸⁷

In the end, this is the point where Julieta realises that the regime had planned and foreseen these dependencies between the press and its own policies all along. In other words, Garro's death simply had to occur sooner or later, and that, most disturbingly, Montesinos himself has been responsible for Garro's death, as he could be also for Julieta's.

In this highly politicised context of bitter truths and shadowy betrayal Julieta decides not only to take personal revenge following her former boss's assassination by a covert military operation, but out of a larger feeling of moral duty to rid the country of one of the most corrupt and dictatorial governing cliques in Peru's modern history since the return of democracy in 1980.

After Julieta Leguizamón has been officially confirmed as the new chief editor of *Exposed*, she decides, in an unexpected turn of events, to get her revenge by making the covert crimes of the intelligence services and the government public. Ms. Leguizamón explains to her colleague, photographer Ceferino Argüello, the reasons why her former boss, Rolando Garro, wanted to be better as a newspaper editor than many others in his business, fuelled by pride, but also by experience and political ambition, and why, nevertheless, he was eventually murdered by Montesinos:

—Rolando cometió la locura de desobedecer al Doctor. Y fue a chantajear a Cárdenas para que metiera plata en *Destapes*. Soñaba con que la revista mejorara, creciera, fuera la primera del Perú. Y, también, tal vez, quería independizarse del Doctor. Tendría su dignidad, no querría seguir siendo el desaguadero del régimen de Fujimori, el excusado por el que pasaba toda la caca del gobierno.—⁸⁸

There have been, according to Julieta, at least two reasons for Garro's murder on the orders of Montesinos. First, the *Doctor* had most likely been afraid of negative repercussions, since reporting an offence against Garro's newspaper by Cardenas' company, would have certainly resulted in a large-scale scandal for the government. Secondly, Montesinos might have been afraid that Garro would go public with certain arrangements regarding his newspaper's supportive attitude towards the government, degraded into one of its political instruments:

—Lo mandó matar—, murmuró la Retaquita. [...] —Por miedo al millonario. Por arrogancia, porque a él nadie le desobedecía sin pagarlo caro. O por miedo a que Rolando, en una de

⁸⁷ *Cinco esquinas*, p. 243.

⁸⁸ *Cinco esquinas*, p. 276.

sus rabetas, denunciara a la opinión pública que *Destapes*, en vez de ser independiente, era nada más que un instrumento del gobierno para tapar la jeta de sus críticos o chantajear a los que quería robar y estafar.—⁸⁹

Now, in a final twist of the novel, Julieta reveals to Ceferino that she will confront the regime head-on with her findings, in particular the *Doctor* as its right-hand man, by publishing all the necessary information: based on truly investigative facts and a liberally courageous attitude against governmental intimidation.

In the penultimate chapter of the novel – entitled ‘Edición extraordinaria de *Destapes*’⁹⁰ – a true account of the political crimes of the government is given as part of four different sections. In the first paragraph it is already mentioned that the government might not appreciate what they are about to publish, but that, nevertheless, this criticism is aimed at the entire political system, in particular the corrupt manoeuvrings of governance in Peru after ten years of the *fujimorista* clique in power:

Sabemos que éste puede ser el último número de nuestra querida revista. Sabemos el riesgo que corremos publicando esta edición extraordinaria de *Destapes* que denuncia como asesino y corruptor de la prensa peruana al hombre que, tal vez, haya acumulado más poder, multiplicado más la corrupción y causado más estragos en la historia de nuestra querida Patria, el Perú: el jefe del Servicio de Inteligencia, conocido por tiros y troyanos con su consabido seudónimo: el Doctor.⁹¹

Then Julieta explains in further detail how much the government has overstepped its bounds by murdering one of the most talented journalists in the country, and how this could be used for further revenge against the journalistic community or the suppression of freedom of opinion – values which should be defended by any self-declared journalist or political activist:

Lo sabemos y, sin embargo, sin vacilaciones, lo hacemos: sacamos este número incendiario de *Destapes* demostrando [...] que con el asesinato de Rolando Garro [...] el gobierno de turno cometió uno de los más atroces liberticidios de la historia del Perú [...] y una de las violaciones más crueles de la libertad de expresión contra un periodista [...] ¿Por qué lo hacemos, jugándonos el todo por el todo? Antes que nada y sobre todo, por nuestro amor a la libertad. Porque sin la libertad de expresión y de crítica, el poder puede cometer todos los desafueros, crímenes y robos, como los que han ensombrecido nuestra

⁸⁹ *Cinco esquinas*, pp. 276-277.

⁹⁰ *Cinco esquinas*, Ch. 21: pp. 283-299.

⁹¹ *Cinco esquinas*, pp. 283-284.

historia reciente. Y por nuestro amor a la verdad y a la justicia, valores por los que un periodista debe estar dispuesto a sacrificarlo todo, incluso la vida.⁹²

On the last two pages of her newspaper Ms. Leguizamón summarises the current political situation in the country adequately, by emphasising the fact that many people on the street are rejecting Fujimori's third bid for the next presidential election, and also by underlining that her principled journalistic protest will hopefully contribute to the growth of the mediatic and political opposition to the presidency, leading, eventually, to the downfall of the government and the establishment of a new and democratic regime:

En estos momentos el régimen de Fujimori y el Doctor ya no tiene al Perú entero de rodillas. La oposición a la dictadura ha cobrado fuerzas, todos los días hay mítines contra el empeño de Fujimori de hacerse elegir por tercera vez [...]. Los defensores de derechos humanos van a lavar a diario la bandera peruana a las puertas del Palacio de Gobierno. Los medios de comunicación en general [...] son menos serviles y sometidos, y algunos se atreven a hacer críticas abiertas al régimen. A Fujimori y sobre todo al jefe de las represiones, censuras y asesinatos. Esperemos que ese contexto de oposición aumente y lleve al banquillo y luego a la cárcel al Doctor.⁹³

Now, in the very final chapter of the novel (a sort of epilogue), it is mentioned how – as part of a renewed portrayal of normality in the country under the Toledo years (2001-2006) – terrorism has disappeared and Montesinos and Fujimori have ended up in prison.⁹⁴ Consequently, what has been started by the courageous act of governmental defiance by Julieta in her newspaper seems, some years later, to finally have borne fruit at the end of a long fight for democracy, human rights, and freedom of expression in society – the essential ingredients of *political* liberalism.

Most surprisingly, this new societal environment under a new political regime and culture has not only helped Julieta with the survival of her weekly magazine, but also with the accomplishment of receiving her own TV programme, in which she interviews and talks about the most interesting celebrities in Peruvian society, contributing to a climate of journalistic open-mindedness as well as intellectual plurality – something that was unthinkable in the years of the Fujimori regime.⁹⁵

⁹² *Cinco esquinas*, p. 284.

⁹³ *Cinco esquinas*, pp. 297-298.

⁹⁴ *Cinco esquinas*, Ch. 22: pp. 301-314.

⁹⁵ *Cinco esquinas*, pp. 307-309.

Furthermore, Julieta convincingly demonstrates, as part of Peruvian modernity, that she not only appreciates the mere cherishing of journalistic values of liberalism and a pluralist culture of expression. Much more than that, Julieta clearly embodies the general defence of a democratic political culture in Peru since 2001, carrying over these liberal values into a new post-Fujimori regime of tolerance and civil peace-building. These journalistic as well as human merits of Ms. Leguizamón, which have helped her to become a nationally known celebrity, are summarised in the reflections of Enrique Cárdenas vis-à-vis his wife Marisa, both now being able to lead a satisfactory life – as individual and political justice has been achieved by the end of the novel:

–Me acusó porque creía que yo hice matar a Rolando Garro por el escándalo en que me metió, como lo creyó medio mundo. Pero, después, cuando supo que el verdadero asesino fue el brazo derecho de Fujimori, lo denunció también, jugándose la vida. Y esa denuncia, no te olvides, fue clave para la caída de la dictadura. Fujimori, el Doctor y compañía se pudrirán en la cárcel vaya usted a saber cuántos años por culpa de esa mujer. No la hicieron matar, como muchos pensamos. Y ahí sigue. No era nadie y ahora es todo un personaje de la televisión peruana. Debe estar ganando fortunas, pese a ser, como tú dices, enanita y feúcha. ¿No te parece una historia fascinante?– [...] Se quedó pensando. Sí, claro, era rara la fascinación que Julieta Leguizamón ejercía sobre él y lo llevaba a ver *La hora de la Retaquita* todas las noches que podía. Esa mujercita había hecho historia, sin proponérselo, sin sospecharlo. Con su audacia provocó acontecimientos que cambiaron la vida del Perú. ¿No era extraordinario que una muchacha del montón, que no era nadie, a base de puro coraje, hubiera provocado semejante terremoto como la caída del todopoderoso Doctor?⁹⁶

In Vargas Llosa's grand presentation of his philosophical world view on liberalism – *La llamada de la tribu*, applied to both the political fictionalisation of the author's main protagonist in *Cinco esquinas* (Julieta), but also to those characters in *El héroe discreto* who defend freedom (Félicito and Ismael) – liberally informed behaviour by civil society is aptly summarised as a global and integral phenomenon of manifold sides, enjoying one's own pride and diversity in relation to other people or resisting the wrong-headed mechanisms of tyrannical governments. Much more than that, this joint understanding of economic as well as political freedoms for liberalism as an ideology to triumph also includes the responsibility to admit that everlasting progress for the individual, including the self's personal endeavours,

⁹⁶ *Cinco esquinas*, pp. 308-309.

means establishing a legal system that guarantees towards all citizens their respective equality before the law, its institutions, and organs of expression:

El liberalismo es una doctrina que no tiene respuestas para todo, como pretende el marxismo, y admite en su seno la divergencia y la crítica, a partir de un cuerpo pequeño pero inequívoco de convicciones. Por ejemplo, que la libertad es el valor supremo y que ella no es divisible y fragmentaria, que es una sola y debe manifestarse en todos los dominios – el económico, el político, el social, el cultural – en una sociedad genuinamente democrática [...] Una libertad que es, al mismo tiempo, motor del progreso material, de la ciencia, las artes y las letras, y de esa civilización que ha hecho posible al individuo soberano, con su independencia, sus derechos y sus deberes en permanente equilibrio con los de los demás, defendidos por un sistema legal que garantiza la convivencia en la diversidad.⁹⁷

To conclude, in *Cinco esquinas* – adding a historical dimension to the political liberalism conceived by the author in the 1990s, in agreement with Foucault's concepts of *power* and *politics* – Julieta Leguizamón, complementing the entrepreneurs Felícito and Ismael, becomes the main protagonist of politically liberal behaviour, representing the re-awakening of a critical and democratically conscious civil society. In the end, it's almost Julieta by herself who causes the downfall of the illiberal government clique, through interviewing as well as secretly tape-recording the main man responsible for governmental crimes by the intelligence services and the military, Fujimori's all-knowing adviser, Vladimiro Montesinos. This civil confrontation with the authoritarian rule by the government is resolved by the liberal and Foucaultian concept of *resistance* – a type of resistance, from which, through questioning and criticising immoral government practices, democratic policy making with the large support of civil society, guided by enlightened journalism, results. Furthermore, this novelistic ending introduced by a courageous stance from civil society has, through laying an emphasis on collecting political evidence, its historical antecedents in the public airing of the videotapes produced by Montesinos himself during the bribing of various opposition congressmen in the aftermath of the 2000 elections. As Burt has summarised this triggering of the historical demise of the Fujimori regime, she has convincingly exposed the parallels between history and the ending of Vargas Llosa's novel, in which a new democratic regime and era is ignited,

⁹⁷ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, p. 24, p. 97.

after the central figure of political abuse and corruption, as well as the civil president connected to him, has been removed.⁹⁸

4.6. Lily and Ricardo as different embodiments of political and moral liberalism in *Travesuras de la niña mala*

As part of the latest political and cultural trends in Vargas Llosa's fictional work, – starting with *El héroe discreto* and then, advancing towards *Cinco esquinas* –, *Travesuras de la niña mala* is Vargas Llosa's third novel that analyses the achievements of a liberal culture for Peru and the Western Hemisphere since the 1990s. Hereby, the reader's newly acquired knowledge of Vargas Llosa's liberal school of thought helps to sense the vibrant impregnation of liberal values and politically progressive behaviour for both of the protagonists, but in particular *la niña mala* – the main embodiment of *political* and *moral* liberalism in one of the author's most ingenious novels. In addition to being one of Vargas Llosa's great portrayals of the pursuit of a liberal culture, *Travesuras* is both a reflection on the author's life as well as the affirmation of his liberal world view.

In the two preceding sections, involving the economic and political aspects of liberalism in the newer fiction of Vargas Llosa, a liberal political culture – in Peru, but also beyond – has been defined as consisting of 1. The free development of entrepreneur and enterprise and the defence of private property, creating a self-assertive personality with liberal convictions (*economic* aspects of liberalism) and 2. Civil political rights regarding the respect towards the individual, such as freedom of speech, and the individual's equality before the law (*political* aspects of liberalism).

In order to explain the development of Lily – the main character of *Travesuras de la niña mala* – towards a position of political liberalism, it's necessary to summarise Isaiah Berlin's *Two Concepts of Liberty*.⁹⁹ They were first presented as part of Berlin's inaugural lecture delivered at the University of Oxford in 1958, then published as a book in 1969 under the title *Four Essays on Liberty*.¹⁰⁰ It is, in particular, this body of work which Vargas Llosa gives a prominent place to in his extended meditation on liberalism, *La llamada de la tribu*.

⁹⁸ Burt, J.-M.: *Political Violence and the Authoritarian State in Peru*, p. 240.

⁹⁹ Berlin, I.: *Two Concepts of Liberty*, Oxford 1961; Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea*, pp. 413-417; Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, pp. 255-259.

¹⁰⁰ Berlin, I.: *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford 1969.

First of all, the more common and traditionally more appreciated concept of liberty is ‘negative’ liberty, since it is based on common social norms without ‘legal coercion’, protecting the individual differences (physical, intellectual, ethnic, religious, sexual, etc.) of the citizens in society:

La libertad está estrechamente ligada a la coerción, es decir a aquello que la niega o limita. Se es más libre en la medida en que uno encuentra menos obstáculos para decidir su vida como le plazca. Mientras menor sea la autoridad que se ejerza sobre mi conducta, mientras ésta pueda ser determinada de manera más autónoma por mis propias motivaciones [...] sin interferencia de voluntades ajenas, más libre soy. Éste es el concepto ‘negativo’ de la libertad [...] Es un concepto más individual que social y absolutamente moderno [...].¹⁰¹

In another paragraph Vargas Llosa applies Berlin’s main idea of ‘negative’ liberty to real life, through mentioning not just intellectual, but also physical and sexual liberties in modern liberal culture, which, for example, are pursued in one way or another by the main character Lily in *Travesuras de la niña mala*:

Es este concepto ‘negativo’ de libertad el que está detrás, por ejemplo, de todas las teorías democráticas, para las cuales la coexistencia de puntos de vista o de credos diferentes es indispensable así como el respeto de las minorías, y el que alienta la convicción de que las libertades de prensa, de trabajo, de religión, de movimiento – o, en nuestros días, de comportamiento sexual – deben ser salvaguardadas pues sin ellas la vida se empobrece y degrada.¹⁰²

The abhorrence of Lily of both Peruvian social injustices, resulting from the negligence of oligarchic governments in the 1950s and 1960s, and Cuban socialist ideology, which clings to outdated state measures and doctrines for society, reflects the author’s critical stance, ingrained in his liberal beliefs, towards authoritarianism and state-led socialism.

This critical liberal political vision by Vargas Llosa applied to the literary figure of Lily in *Travesuras* entails the following, affirming the liberal political development of the novel’s main character: 1. Lily’s participation in the MIR guerrilla scholarship programme in Cuba was intended as a stepping stone to leave the impoverished country of her childhood, not necessarily to become a revolutionary. 2. During Lily’s stay in Paris she gets together with her childhood love, Ricardo, with whom she falls in love once again. 3. Many modern and cultured

¹⁰¹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, p. 255.

¹⁰² Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, p. 256.

sides of the French capital leave a lasting impression on Lily, making her want to embrace liberal French culture after her return from Cuba.

Now, regarding the political aspirations in life based on liberalism, connecting progress with individual growth, Lily affirms this liberal cosmovision – portraying her romantic, but also emancipatory sides as a woman – in a dialogue with Ricardo, making her not want to leave Paris, the city of both of the protagonists’ dreams, resisting the danger of becoming an anti-liberal and fanatic revolutionary of a foreign cause:

[Lily:] ‘¿De veras estás enamorado de mí?’

Asentí varias veces [...]

[Lily:] ‘¿Quieres que me quede a vivir contigo, aquí en París?’

Volví a asentir [...] ¿Significaba eso que la chilena también se había enamorado de mí?

[Lily:] ‘No es por amor, para qué te voy a mentir [...] Pero, no quiero ir a Cuba, y menos volver al Perú. Quisiera quedarme en París. Tú puedes ayudarme a que me libere del compromiso con el MIR. Háblale al camarada Jean y, si me libera, me vendré a vivir contigo [...] Capaz termino enamorándome de ti.’¹⁰³

Both Lily and Ricardo either abhor – in Lily’s case – or are disenchanted with – in Ricardo’s case – contemporary Communist state ideologies or revolutionary doctrines, yearning for a materially secure and politically liberal way of life (respectful of Berlin’s ‘negative’ concept of liberty).

First, however, Lily is sent to Cuba – against her will. This visit will represent a severely depressing experience for Lily, since she is an opponent of the revolutionary model on the island, whose training and ideological drills instil in her the desire to escape back to Paris, awakening Lily’s truly liberal and freedom-loving spirit. In the course of Lily’s long-anticipated return, she confronts Ricardo – after both meet in Paris again – with the fact that she has fortunately (albeit just temporarily) married a French diplomatic envoy from the embassy to be able to leave Cuba for good.¹⁰⁴ Thereby, while confessing to Ricardo, Lily criticises the Cuban revolutionary model.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, pp. 42-43.

¹⁰⁴ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, p. 63, pp. 64-65, pp. 65-66, p. 66.

¹⁰⁵ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, p. 65: ‘Conversamos cerca de dos horas. Naturalmente, me aseguró que aquella historia de amor con el comandante Chacón eran puras habladurías de los peruanos de La Habana; en realidad, con el tal comandante sólo habían tenido una buena amistad. No me quiso contar nada sobre su entrenamiento militar y, como siempre, evadió todo comentario político y darme detalles sobre su vida en la isla. Su único amor cubano había sido el encargado de negocios de la embajada francesa, ahora promovido a ministro consejero, Robert Arnoux, su esposo. Muerta de risa y de cólera retrospectiva, me relató los obstáculos burocráticos que debieron vencer para casarse, porque era casi impensable en Cuba que una becada abandonara el

What Lily is insinuating in this talk with Ricardo – referring to state-led models of society like Cuban socialism – is her critique and abhorrence of what Isaiah Berlin has termed, regarding fascist or communist ideologies, the ‘positive’ concept of liberty, or simply, ‘positive’ liberty.¹⁰⁶ Contrary to ‘negative’ liberty – which seeks to put a limit on political and legal authority so that the individual can develop more freely – ‘positive’ liberty prescribes a certain social or political set of rules in order to erase or minimise the economic, social and cultural imbalances of society, leading to the desire that a ‘greater type of liberty’ is achieved the more homogenous a social community becomes. However, this positive tendency of liberty can evolve into authoritarian regimes or dictatorships, like those established under Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union under Stalin or, in more recent times, the Cuba under the Castro regime.

The following are the main characteristics of this ‘positive’ concept of liberty, conceived by Berlin and refined through the philosophical studies of Vargas Llosa:

En tanto que la libertad ‘negativa’ quiere sobre todo limitar la autoridad, la ‘positiva’ quiere adueñarse de ella, ejercerla. Esta noción es más social que individual pues se funda en la idea (muy justa) de que la posibilidad que tiene cada individuo de decidir su destino está supeditada en buena medida a causas sociales, ajenas a su voluntad [...] En tanto que la libertad ‘negativa’ tiene en cuenta principalmente el hecho de que los individuos son diferentes, la ‘positiva’ considera ante todo lo que tienen de semejante. A diferencia de aquélla, para la cual la libertad está mejor preservada cuando más se respetan las variantes y casos particulares, ella estima que hay más libertad en términos sociales cuanto menos diferencias se manifiestan en el cuerpo social, cuanto más homogénea es una comunidad [...] [Así] Hitler, Stalin y los hermanos Castro podían, sin exagerar demasiado, decir que sus respectivos regímenes estaban estableciendo la verdadera libertad (la ‘positiva’) en sus dominios. Todas las utopías sociales de derecha o de izquierda, religiosas o laicas, se fundan en la noción ‘positiva’ de la libertad.¹⁰⁷

Since Lily’s departure from Peru and Cuba – including the leaving behind of their oligarchic or communist models of society – Lily has understood this transformative experience as a basic and life-long lesson, similar to the author, to avoid or to criticise unjust authority and to seek individual and political liberalism with all possible means: no matter whether in Paris, London, or Tokyo. After Lily has spent some of her happiest and most enjoyable years in

entrenamiento. Pero, en esto sí, el comandante Chacón había sido ‘amoroso’ y la había ayudado a derrotar a la maldita burocracia.’

¹⁰⁶ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, pp. 257-259, p. 257, p. 258.

¹⁰⁷ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, pp. 257-258.

France, Ricardo – in the wake of Lily’s mysterious escape from Paris – finds her again in London and Newmarket, now that she has become the wife of a rich businessman in the horse racing industry in England.¹⁰⁸ Through abandoning her old life as a spouse of a diplomatic envoy, Lily comments positively upon her new social and material position in life, from which there will be – while hinting at a break in the relationship with Ricardo – no return for her, saying to Ricardo:

‘Todavía no te has dado cuenta que ahora yo estoy *at the top*.’¹⁰⁹

After this surprising revelation about Lily’s relentless struggle with all the other men and ‘pasts’ in her life, Ricardo recognises that Lily, alias Mrs. Arnoux, or alias Mrs. Richardson – names that have developed since their early acquaintance in Lima and arranged get-togethers in Paris – has eventually become a strong woman of an admirable personal and social stature:

Ya no era aquella muchachita vulnerable que, pasando mil pellejerías, había salido adelante gracias a una audacia y una determinación poco comunes; ahora era una mujer hecha y derecha, convencida de que la vida era una jungla donde sólo triunfaban los peores, dispuesta a todo para no ser vencida y seguir escalando posiciones.¹¹⁰

In the last chapter before the final encounter between Lily and Ricardo in Madrid, Lily decides to formally marry Ricardo, even though she warns him that this might not be forever – however, her will to love Ricardo wholeheartedly and to adapt herself to French culture is greater, eventually.¹¹¹ In this same chapter, close to the final and liberating end for both of the main protagonists, Ricardo makes a two-week visit to Lima, driving to his old *barrio* in Miraflores – where he and Lily grew up together.¹¹² The street of La Esperanza still looks familiar to Ricardo, as does the house of Lily that he still recognises, starting to reminisce about their joint adolescence coming from different families, but in particular the hardships for Lily, and her struggle to achieve a more decent way of life in comparison to the poverty of her parents’ social background.¹¹³ This is also the moment – crucial for the understanding of the politically liberal development that forms part of Lily’s biography – in which Ricardo realises that Lily’s own social and biographical plight does essentially explain her personal journey from *rags to riches*, from a poor shantytown childhood to a rich and respected life in Paris and

¹⁰⁸ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, pp. 124-125, p. 130, pp. 131-132, p. 133, p. 134.

¹⁰⁹ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, p. 138.

¹¹⁰ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, p. 145.

¹¹¹ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, p. 317, pp. 329-330.

¹¹² *Travesuras de la niña mala*, pp. 358-361.

¹¹³ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, pp. 359-360.

London. Even more than that, Ricardo has not only met and fallen in love with Lily during the last 30 years, but has accompanied her in decisive ways throughout the vital achievements of her development as a liberal – a liberal *woman*, who has been able to conquer different types of men, but without ever ceasing to portray a female personality with independent and truly mature aspirations.

Finally, Ricardo is standing in front of Lily's old house – the place she lived in Lima before she left Peru, after she had fled the poor shantytowns along the other side of the city. That's when Ricardo is convinced that it's right here that Lily's journey started, contributing to her own conviction that – in order to advance in life with a conscious mind and a freedom-loving set of values – one must break free to leave misery and backwardness, poverty and ignorance behind, no matter what the cost; to find both individual and social progress (reflecting Vargas Llosa's own truly liberal world view):

Y, acaso, aquí mismo, cuando era todavía una mocosita impúber, tomó ya la temeraria decisión de salir adelante, haciendo lo que fuera, de dejar de ser Otilita la hija de la cocinera y el constructor de rompeolas, de huir para siempre de esa trampa, cárcel y maldición que era para ella el Perú, y partir lejos, y ser rica – sobre todo eso: rica, riquísima –, aunque para ello tuviera que hacer las peores travesuras, correr los riesgos más terribles, cualquier cosa [...] Claro que tenías razón, niña mala, de no querer volver al Perú, de odiar al país que te recordaba todo lo que habías aceptado, padecido y hecho para escapar de él. Hiciste muy bien en no acompañarme en este viaje, amor mío.¹¹⁴

So much for this vision regarding the relationship between liberal politics and material life in Vargas Llosa's novels. However, up until the end of the 18th century, with the apogee of political liberalism being the French Revolution, most theories of classic economic and political liberalism neglected the moral and human aspects of liberalism – not only as an ideology, but also as a social movement. As one of the first philosophers to correct this neglect, Adam Smith (1723-1790) addresses, as part of an ethical theory based on liberal beliefs, the rules of societal conduct of individuals who, nevertheless, still form part of a community of moral discipline and social virtues.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, p. 360.

¹¹⁵ Smith, A.: *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, New Rochelle (N.Y.) 1969; Smith, A.: *La teoría de los sentimientos morales*, Madrid 2013³; Smith, A.: *Theorie der ethischen Gefühle*, Hamburg 2010; Smith, A.: *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, Oxford 1978; Raphael, D. D.: *Adam Smith*, Oxford 1985; Raphael, D. D.: *The Impartial Spectator*, Oxford 2007; Hume, D.: *A Treatise of Human Nature*, London 1969; Hume, D.: *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Cambridge 1983; Blackburn, S.: *How to read Hume*, London 2008; Hutcheson, F.: *Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, Cambridge (MA) 1971; Hutcheson, F.: *Erläuterungen zum moralischen Sinn*, Stuttgart 1984,

Vargas Llosa's liberal ethical foundations are based on the theories of Adam Smith, in particular *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. In accordance with Vargas Llosa's newer narratives, the author's portrayal of the moral conflicts of liberal modernity leads to his contrasting juxtaposition of Lily, the physically free but emotionally unstable female main figure versus the much more temperate and warm-hearted – adhering to mutual Christian values of benevolence and understanding – male protagonist Ricardo. Ricardo functions, symbolically, as the Christian guardian towards Lily – based on Adam Smith's ethical beliefs involving a Christian faith in morally superior behaviour towards other people, showing sympathy and virtue –, transforming Lily's immoral vices and character traits into an example of social excellence, material stability and conjugal success. Hereby, the core tenet of Smith's moral theory – human sympathy, adhered to by Ricardo – is something that Lily learns very late in life, which is why many of her liberal endeavours end in human or social conflicts. In the chapter on Smith's moral theory in *La llamada de la tribu*, Vargas Llosa praises Smith for having invented, as the first liberal philosopher, the attitude of natural sympathy between human beings, resolving all deeper moral conflicts in a conciliatory way:

Los seres humanos se conocen a través de la imaginación y una actitud natural de simpatía hacia el prójimo que acerca un individuo al otro, algo que nunca llegaría a ocurrir si las acciones humanas estuvieran guiadas exclusivamente por la razón. Ese sentimiento de simpatía y la imaginación atraen a los extraños y establecen entre ellos un vínculo que rompe la desconfianza y crea solidaridades recíprocas. La visión del hombre y de la sociedad que transpira este libro es positiva y optimista, pues Adam Smith cree que, pese a todos los horrores que se cometen, la bondad prevalece sobre la maldad, es decir, los sentimientos morales. Un buen ejemplo de esa decencia innata que caracteriza a la mayoría de los seres humanos aparece en las últimas páginas del libro: 'Decirle a una persona que es embustera constituye la más mortal de las afrentas [...]. El hombre que padeciera la desgracia de pensar que nadie iba a creer ni una sola palabra que dijera, se sentiría el paria de la sociedad humana, se espantaría ante la sola idea de integrarse en ella o de presentarse ante ella, y pienso que casi con certeza moriría de desesperación.' [...]. Quien escribió aquello estaba lejos de pecar de ingenuo: sus análisis de la conducta

pp. 65-73, p. 65, pp. 66-67, pp. 89-90; Locke, J.: *Second Treatise of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, Oxford 2016; Norman, R.: *The Moral Philosophers*, Oxford 1998; Haakonssen, K. (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Adam Smith*, Cambridge 2006; Phillipson, N.: *Adam Smith*, London 2010; Broadie, A., and Smith, C. (eds.): *The Cambridge Companion to The Scottish Enlightenment*, Cambridge 2019, pp. 131-150, pp. 135-138, pp. 138-139, p. 139; Broadie, A.: *The Scottish Enlightenment*, Edinburgh 2001/2007; Herman, A.: *The Scottish Enlightenment*, London 2001/2006; Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, Barcelona 2018.

moral son de gran sutileza y complejidad, sustentados siempre en la convicción de que, aun en las peores circunstancias, la decencia prevalece sobre la indecencia: 'La naturaleza, cuando formó al ser humano para la sociedad, lo dotó de un deseo original de complacer a sus semejantes y una aversión original a ofenderlos. Le enseñó a sentir placer ante su consideración favorable y dolor ante su consideración desfavorable.'¹¹⁶

In the aforementioned synopsis of the main plot line of *Travesuras de la niña mala*, the two main tenets of Smith's moral philosophy are revealed: the Christian social ethics of sympathy and benevolence towards others (embodied by Ricardo) as well as the increasing moral self-command of the knowledgeable and virtuous individual (embodied by Lily at the end of the novel).

Regarding the first tenet Adam Smith himself explains in his *Theory*:

As to love our neighbour as we love ourselves is the great law of Christianity so it is the great precept of nature to love ourselves only as we love our neighbour, or, what comes to the same thing, as our neighbour is capable of loving us.¹¹⁷

Regarding the second tenet Adam Smith further affirms:

The man [or woman] who acts according to the rules of perfect prudence, of strict justice, and of proper benevolence, may be said to be perfectly virtuous. But the most perfect knowledge of those rules will not alone enable him to act in this manner; his own passions are very apt to mislead him – sometimes to drive him, and sometimes to seduce him, to violate all the rules which he himself, in all his sober and cool hours, approves of. The most perfect knowledge, if it is not supported by the most perfect self-command, will not always enable him to do his [moral] duty.¹¹⁸

After having expounded upon Smith's principles of human sympathy and moral self-command it's necessary to show – by employing the main literary figure of *Travesuras* – how the neglect of Lily's moral duties (or: human sympathy towards others and command towards oneself) is brought about by her exaggerated desires to become rich and famous by changing in and out of different relationships. The abandonment of her first diplomatic husband in France, against the desires of Ricardo, is connected to her material aspirations in life – replacing a socially deprived adolescence with economic greed. The abandonment of her second husband in England – in order to live in Japan, while participating in businesses coming

¹¹⁶ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, pp. 37-38.

¹¹⁷ Smith, A.: *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, pp. 27-28.

¹¹⁸ Smith, A.: *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p. 349.

from Africa – attests to Lily’s further desires to become rich and renowned on an international scale.

In other words, Lily’s treatment of her consecutive lovers (in Paris, London, etc.) as simple means towards Lily’s own ends, compromises the basic paradigms of Smith’s moral dialectical system based on human sympathy and self-command, treating everyone else as universal ends. This is then a basic moral lesson for Lily’s individual development as a woman and human being; one, that – through the helping hand of her long-time friend Ricardo – she increasingly learns and adopts.

Therefore, it will be demonstrated, first, how the lack of temperance in Lily’s life brings extreme grief and unhappiness to herself, as well as hurting the people in her immediate surroundings. Second, Smith’s conception of sympathy and self-command will serve as a guiding vision for Lily’s period of illness and convalescence in the middle of the novel, after which she aspires to a more orderly and disciplined life with her soon-to-be husband Ricardo in France, to whom she will be forever grateful until the very end of chapters 6 and 7. Third, in a last step it will be shown how Lily brings reconciliation and forgiveness to those closest to her, binding them to the appeal of her re-gained sympathy and positive humanity. This in turn will lead to a renewed vision of Lily as a self-confident individual who aspires to a liberal and cosmopolitan life in harmony with other people.

The first scene, in which Lily’s lack of temperance – compromising her path towards a righteous and satisfied (in other words, happy) life – is emblematically portrayed in the novel, is at the end of chapter 4.¹¹⁹ This scene is important for the understanding of Lily’s neglect of moral behaviour, since it not only shows how she degrades one or the other of her former husbands by physically leaving them, but how the intricate sexual relationship she has so far enjoyed with her last Japanese lover now threatens to negatively affect, if not destroy the relationship with her best Peruvian friend, Ricardo. In this scene it becomes clear that Lily’s pronounced inclinations to greed and lust are responsible for employing Ricardo in participating in perfidious sex games only to satisfy the wishes of her rich and macho-type partner Fukuda, pouring scorn on Ricardo for being too provincial and too poor in sentimental convictions in order to satisfy other people’s desires:

–¡Qué te pasa, idiota! ¡Por qué haces ese escándalo!–, me golpeaba en la cara, en el pecho, donde podía, con las dos manos. –No seas ridículo, no seas provinciano. Siempre

¹¹⁹ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, Ch. 4: pp. 163-222, pp. 216-217, pp. 217-218.

has sido y serás un pobre diablo, qué otra cosa se podía esperar de ti, pichiruchi– [...] –
¿Te creías que iba a hacer esto por ti, muerto de hambre, fracasado, imbécil? Pero, quién
eres tú, quién te has creído tú. Ah, te morirías si supieras cuánto te desprecio, cuánto te
odio, cobarde.–¹²⁰

In a later scene the *bad girl* admits to Ricardo that, before being sent to clinical treatment
in order to cure her emotional and obsessive diseases, her dream of becoming rich and
powerful in life has failed miserably, insulting her best friend against all better judgement:

–No eres rico, sino un pobre pichiruchi–, dijo, furiosa. –Si lo fueras, no me hubiera ido ni
a Cuba, ni a Londres ni a Japón. Me hubiera quedado contigo desde aquella vez, cuando
me hiciste conocer París y me llevabas a esos restaurantes horribles, para mendigos.
Siempre te he estado dejando por unos ricos que resultaron unas basuras. Y así he
terminado, hecha un desastre.–¹²¹

After having introduced and analysed the initial failure of the cultivation of moderation and
temperance in Lily’s behaviour, now what’s being proposed is how, and this will be shown as
part of the text of the novel, Lily’s psyche and physique are affected by her negative
sentiments or obsessions, the only solution for which lies in the Smithian practice of self-
command.

Having recourse to the Smithian doctrine of the balance of the ethical virtues and their
contribution towards liberal integrity, a similar comparison will be drawn between Lily’s
finding of her inner self and her re-integration into public life, based on the Aristotelian notion
of *eudaimonia* (happiness). Derived from a liberal point of view regarding the ethics of virtue
and a moral life full of happiness, Jonathan Barnes advocates that ‘[Aristotle] wants to instruct
us in how to make a success of our lives.’¹²² Since Lily, after various treatments and the helping
hand of her long-time friend from Peru, is forced to get back on her feet, once again, happiness
becomes the guiding principle for her advancement as a woman and human being.¹²³ As part
of Lily’s new middle-class life – dedicated to liberal economic and moral principles – what

¹²⁰ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, pp. 217-218.

¹²¹ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, p. 267.

¹²² Barnes, J.: *Aristotle*, p. 124.

¹²³ Barnes, J.: *Aristotle*, pp. 124-125: ‘*Eudaimonia*, [Aristotle] argues, is ‘an activity of the soul in accordance with excellence’...To say that *eudaimonia* concerns the soul or the animator is to say that human flourishing requires the exercise of certain of the faculties by which life is defined; in particular, a person cannot be said to flourish as a human being unless he is exercising distinctively human faculties. Finally, *eudaimonia* is an activity ‘in accordance with excellence’. To flourish is to do certain things excellently or well. A man [or a woman] who exercises his [or her] faculties but does so inefficiently or badly cannot be said to be making a success of his [or her] life.’

mostly leads to stability and happiness for her is the successful obtainment of a steady and rewarding job with which she can contribute towards the household and redefine her own personality, something that's vital for a modern lifestyle since the beginning of the 20th century:

Encontrar ese trabajo había sido el mejor remedio para su estado de ánimo. También la ayudó, me parece, que, después de superar las mil complicaciones, nos casáramos [...]. Yo pensé que siendo la personita inquieta y libérrima que siempre había sido, trabajar en una compañía que organizaba 'eventos sociales' la aburriría muy pronto, y que sería una empleada tan poco competente que la despedirían. No fue así. Al contrario, al poco tiempo se ganó la confianza de su jefa [...] En las tardes y en las noches, yo la oía, pegada al teléfono, discutiendo detalles de esos contratos con infinita paciencia o dando cuenta a Martine, su jefa, de las gestiones del día. A veces, debía viajar a provincias – generalmente a Provenza, la Costa Azul o Biarritz – acompañando a Martine, o enviada por ésta [...] Le había hecho bien tener su tiempo ocupado, adquirir responsabilidades y ganar dinero.¹²⁴

Put more succinctly and in a modern context of liberalism, Lily's coming to terms with her unbalanced emotional past helps her, eventually, to find her place in a position-oriented and materially shaped society, together with a stable partnership of a lower-middle to middle-class origin.

However, Ricardo's behaviour towards Lily as the moral embodiment of Christian benevolence as part of a society consisting of individuals who are free to take decisions (central to Vargas Llosa's approach), pertaining to a liberal political culture, can be considered as the last and most virtuous consequence in the actions of all the characters in *Travesuras* – including Lily herself. The second principle on which self-command as well as the enlightened person of human sympathy depends, regarded as one of the most important virtues, is *benevolence*.¹²⁵ Being benevolent – which could be attributed in large quantities to Ricardo, who, even though the *bad girl* puts him through many tests and plays all kinds of dirty tricks on him, falls for her female charms repeatedly – can be, thus, considered as one of the main character traits between Ricardo and Lily, with Lily, of course, acquiring this socially virtuous trait only in the last chapter of the novel. In order to be familiar with this second most

¹²⁴ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, pp. 327-328.

¹²⁵ Hume, D.: *A Treatise of Human Nature*, pp. 414-417, pp. 429-437; Hume, D.: *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, pp. 16-18, pp. 18-20, p. 66, p. 93.

important principle of liberal moral theory, benevolence will be presented as pertaining to the moral behaviour of Ricardo, in chapters 5 (after Tokyo and in Paris)¹²⁶ and 7 (in Madrid and in Sète)¹²⁷, but also for Lily – as the novel finishes –, resolving all conflicts between her and Ricardo, transforming the final narrative sequence into a harmonious and reconciliatory ending for all the characters.¹²⁸

In the first scene Ricardo exhibits Christian values of human compassion and benevolence, portraying himself as someone who – like a quasi-religious or fatherly figure – has finally appeared in the life of Lily in order to rescue her from her earthly troubles to bring her lasting peace, making strong allusions to the Christian afterlife, for which good deeds and perfect manners are obviously necessary:

[The Bad Girl:] –¿Haces todo esto para demostrarme lo superior que eres a todos ellos, lo que me perdí contigo? ¿Por qué lo haces, se puede saber?–

[Ricardo:] –Por qué va a ser, niña mala. Tal vez quiero ganar indulgencias e irme al cielo. También pudiera ser que esté enamorado de ti, todavía. Y, ahora, basta de adivinanzas. A dormir. El profesor Bourrichon dice que, hasta que estés repuesta del todo, debes tratar de dormir ocho horas diarias por lo menos.–¹²⁹

In the second scene Ricardo presents another benevolent character trait in his manners vis-à-vis Lily. Here, a few more pages on, Ricardo – embodying the Christian guardian and protector for Lily in chapters 5 and 6, until both of them marry – promises Lily that she can always return and freely have Ricardo's apartment at her disposal, if the hospital treatment should appear too long or inconvenient for her:

–La clínica te va a hacer bien–, [...] –Te van a cuidar, te van a engordar, te van a quitar estos ataques de miedo. Te van a poner bonita y podrás convertirte otra vez en el diablito que has sido siempre. Y, si la clínica no te gusta, te vienes aquí, al instante. En el momento que tú digas. No es una cárcel, sino un lugar de reposo.–¹³⁰

Consequently, after these two scenes it becomes clear that Ricardo is not only the spiritual guardian of Lily – whenever she is in need of her 'good boy' –, but that Ricardo, by now, also functions as Lily's material guardian and physical protector, transforming benevolence as well

¹²⁶ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, Ch. 5: pp. 223-317, pp. 245-246, p. 267, p. 268, p. 298.

¹²⁷ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, Ch. 7: pp. 369-418, p. 415, pp. 417-418.

¹²⁸ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, Ch. 7: pp. 402-418, pp. 416-418, pp. 417-418.

¹²⁹ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, p. 268.

¹³⁰ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, p. 279.

as a kind-hearted nature of Ricardo's personality into the key social virtue between Ricardo and Lily as a couple.

In a third scene between Ricardo and Lily (in which Lily, however, only functions as the passive recipient of one of Ricardo's letters he sends her from Egypt), Ricardo invites Lily – in an euphoric gesture of generosity and benevolence – to spend their honeymoon in Southern Spain, provided that Lily is able to leave the hospital in a physically and psychologically improved condition to reach, undoubtedly, either Smithian liberal virtue or a cosmopolitan, but intellectually and philosophically serene lifestyle à la Vargas Llosa. Moreover, this last and very insightful scene is another example of a cultured world view pertaining to a Christian or humanist education, illustrating a tolerant, social-ethical as well as liberal vision for society as a whole:

Al día siguiente, que tenía libre, di una vuelta por la antigua ciudad fundada por Alejandro [...] y di un largo paseo por la bellísima avenida costera, salpicada de cafés, restaurantes, hoteles y tiendas para turistas, donde hormigueaba una multitud rumorosa y cosmopolita. Sentado en una de esas terrazas que me hacían pensar en el poeta Kavafis [...] escribí una larga carta a la enferma, diciéndole cuánto me alegraba saber que estaba contenta en la clínica de Petit Clamart y ofreciéndole, si se portaba bien y salía totalmente restablecida de la clínica, llevarla una semana a alguna playa del sur de España para que se tostara al sol. ¿Le gustaría tener una luna de miel con este pichiruchi?¹³¹

4.7. Economic, political, moral, and cosmopolitan – The different concepts of Vargas-Llosan liberalism since the fall of the Berlin Wall

All things considered, *Travesuras de la niña mala*, *El héroe discreto*, and *Cinco esquinas* are – in portraying the different sides of Vargas Llosa's plural notion of liberal freedom – part of the author's lasting legacy in his literary and cultural efforts to battle authoritarianism in Peruvian and Latin American culture, as well as – even after his failed electoral bid for the presidency of Peru in 1990 – to continue to believe in the necessity and success of a liberal political culture to reach the path towards modernity for all Peruvians. Altogether then, in his last three modern Peruvian novels the Nobel Prize winner arrives, in an optimistic way, at the end of his cycle of artistic portrayal of the advancement of liberalism in Peru, finishing with

¹³¹ *Travesuras de la niña mala*, pp. 284-285.

the freedom of his literary characters and their individual commitment to life, not barbarity or human enslavement. Due to the fact that these characters want to consciously take their destiny into their own hands – just like the author with his philosophical, intellectual and political commitment –, their struggle will always be one of liberty and individual freedom.

During the *lost* Latin American decade of the 1980s – joining the new adherents to the tenets of liberal democracy in the 1990s –, Mario Vargas Llosa proposes a new and refreshing view on liberalism, taking as its point of departure the failed South American military *juntas* and dictatorships in Chile and Argentina.¹³² Hereby, Vargas Llosa argues – in his famous last part of *La alternativa de la libertad* as part of his study on *La revolución silenciosa* (1986) – that the introduction of liberal economic policies should not result in the establishment of dictatorial or totalitarian structures, but rather be accompanied by the genuine efforts to forge a democratic balance between the elected representatives and the populace. It is in these writings that Vargas Llosa's multifaceted paradigm of liberal freedom has become established for the very first time:

La libertad es una sola y ella es obviamente incompatible con regímenes autoritarios y totalitarios. Las medidas de liberalismo económico que ellos puedan tomar serán siempre relativas y estarán – como ocurrió en Chile y Argentina – lastradas por la falta de la complementaria libertad política y sólo cuando ellas se funden en una unidad, como el anverso y el reverso de una moneda, son operativas y genuinas. Ninguna dictadura puede ser realmente 'liberal' en materia económica, porque el principio básico de esta filosofía es que no es al poder político sino a los ciudadanos independientes y soberanos a quienes corresponde tomar las iniciativas – los esfuerzos y los sacrificios – encaminadas a decidir el tipo de sociedad en la que van a vivir. La función del poder político es garantizar unas reglas de juego tales que aquellas iniciativas puedan ser tomadas de manera equitativa y libre. Y ello requiere un consenso mayoritario sobre estos principios, anterior a su materialización, que sólo el sistema democrático puede dar.¹³³

In Vargas Llosa's grand final novels of *El héroe discreto*, *Cinco esquinas*, and *Travesuras de la niña mala* economic, political and moral liberalism are portrayed as being vitally important for the material, but also individual progress of the main protagonists and liberal human beings.

¹³² Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea III*, pp. 335-348, pp. 346-348.

¹³³ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea III*, pp. 346-347.

For both Felícito and Ismael in *El héroe discreto* there exists a set of classic and economically liberal principles to which they strictly adhere in order to achieve success and gain a reputation in life. These include personal integrity, respect of the law, the defence of private property, the appraisal of entrepreneurial work, and a firm stance against morally unfit behaviour as well as corruption or blackmail. On the other hand – regarding the social and political ideas of liberalism (including the advancement of the individual), the adherence to and successful implementation of these economic principles in real life has transformed Felícito and Ismael from simple servants of their respective regions or hometown’s businesses – Piura for Felícito, Lima for Ismael – into socially and politically admired citizens of their communities. A number of positive consequences can be derived from Felícito’s and Ismael’s materially rewarding professions as well as from both protagonists’ entrepreneurial standing. First, what’s important to point out is the importance of self-respect as well as respect towards others for both Felícito and Ismael, without which none of their businesses would be successful. Second, the evasion of personal ineptitude and the struggle against forms of immoral corruption – in particular blackmailing involving one’s own business, as in Felícito’s case – explains the professional righteousness and individual triumph of liberal values for both characters, which is also why Ismael sees no choice for himself other than disinheriting the *hyaenas* and why Felícito must also bring Miguel to justice in the end. To put it succinctly and in accordance with the contemporary world view of Vargas Llosa, the fight for economic liberties is intrinsically connected with the struggle for political liberties.

In *Cinco esquinas* the little more than 10 years lasting Fujimori presidency, which lasted from mid-1990 until the end of 2000, and which forms the main political theme in the novel, comprises the twin structural characteristics of being authoritarian as well as neo-liberal. However, one of the most clearly visible political features of the Fujimori regime has consisted of – connecting the major plot lines of the novel from the beginning until the end – the abuses regarding human rights as well as wide-spread corruption, on an institutional, but also highly personal scale.¹³⁴ This type of corruption did not only pertain to the main political representatives in office, but also to the main media representatives of television and newspaper, such as Rolando Garro, who in the end, by exceeding the limits of the political

¹³⁴ Conaghan, C. M.: *Fujimori’s Peru*, Pittsburgh 2006; Carrión, J. F.: *The Fujimori Legacy*, Pennsylvania State University Press 2006; Cameron, M. A., and Mauceri, P. (eds.): *The Peruvian Labyrinth*, Pennsylvania State University Press 1997; Mauceri, P.: *State under Siege*, Boulder/Oxford 1998; Burt, J.-M.: *Political Violence and the Authoritarian State in Peru*, New York 2010.

game, not only loses out on the profits of the political 'system', but becomes annihilated by the same rules that he personally has helped to create. Another key literary and political figure, the *Doctor*, who is based on the real Vladimiro Montesinos as part of the historically existing regime¹³⁵, is portrayed as the person who is pulling all the strings from his headquarters of national intelligence, making sure that everything would run according to the desires of the governmental palace. Governmental corruption, being known from the historical fictionalisation of the Odría regime in Vargas Llosa's writings, is what leads to the assumption that all forms of government, in particular in its authoritarian variants, involve political and cultural forms of power – but also, resistance against their abuse. Hereby, Julieta's Leguizamón's uprising – the likeable main character of the novel – symbolises the political fight of civil society for an inclusive and transparent democracy, in which social and cultural rights are respected in their diversity and political rights admired for their liberty. *Resistance* in relation to power – in the terms of Michel Foucault – transforms itself, consequently, into a civic movement, on the shoulders of which a new liberal and pluralist political culture can be built.

Finally, in *Travesuras de la niña mala*, the main protagonist originates, in all of her variety and political outlook, from the typically colourful kaleidoscope of liberal Vargas-Llosan fiction – in addition to living along many of Vargas Llosa's biographical locations, contributing to a global cosmopolitanism, similar to the author's, in Lily's thoughts and actions. Following on from that, Lily's life-long commitment to individual progress contributes to her development of defending political freedoms – involving the political and moral aspects of liberalism –, and thus more precisely, her evolution towards a liberally democratic and individual being with both human strengths and weaknesses. Lily's physical and psychological evolution – as *guerrillera*, but also as spouse or tortured partner of intimate relationships – can only be understood against the background of Isaiah Berlin's 'negative' concept of liberty and Adam Smith's liberal moral theory, both meditated upon in Vargas Llosa's *La llamada de la tribu*. Clearly, the vivacious nature of the main figure, Lily, conceals the deeper reasons for her leaving Peru and Cuba, longing for different places to live, hiding her social anxieties when it comes to formal or patriarchal relationships connected to her troubled past. Patriarchal relationships from Peruvian culture in the 1950s and 1960s – complementing social injustices

¹³⁵ Similar to another literary figure in Vargas Llosa's *oeuvre*: Don Cayo Bermúdez in *Conversación en La Catedral* alias Alejandro Esparza Zañartu, the first minister of government under the Odría regime (1948-1956).

– as well as strict Peruvian or Cuban socialist ideologies (MIR, PCC, CPSU, etc.) teach Lily alias Otilia vital lessons regarding the ‘positive’ concept of liberty. Thereby, the freeing from the ‘positive’ liberties – intellectually conceived by Isaiah Berlin as one of the liberal masters of the author – in Lima or Havana, result in Lily’s continuous pursuit of the ‘negative’ and individual liberties in those places in the world where they can be found: in the diplomatic *entourage* of Paris, as part of the horse racing industry in England, during business trips to South Korea and Japan, and in the excessive sex culture of Tokyo. However, what’s problematic about Lily’s striving for her individual liberties – in spite of leaving her poor and backward origins behind – is her falling prey to the material greed vis-à-vis the money of her different lovers, in addition to her fears of bonding. Ultimately, then, it is thanks to the recovering of Smithian human sympathy and moral self-command after hospital treatment, the taking-on of a stable job, and, most importantly, the support, compassion and benevolence of Ricardo, her long-time partner and last husband, that Lily turns into the woman she has longed for – by the very end of the novel’s plot.

5. Conclusion

Vargas Llosa and his political and historical fiction – From socialist freedoms to the liberal affirmation of man

The politico-historical fiction by Mario Vargas Llosa, together with his other political and essayistic writings, can be subdivided into three distinct philosophico-literary periods of creation: 1. The left-wing rebellious or 'revolutionary' period from 1959 to 1971 or: 'Freedom and Socialism' 2. The moderately pragmatic and rationalist period from 1975 to 1986, with a heightened scepticism towards and abandonment of the author's past beliefs from 1971 to 1975 or: 'The Failure and Abandonment of Totalitarian Ideology' 3. The philosophically and politically liberal period of the author since 1986 or: 'Political Reformism and Liberal Democracy'.

In the wake of the analysis of the most important politico-intellectual essays and novels by the author during his first and progressive period of philosophico-literary creation (1959-1971), the following conclusions can be drawn. Vargas Llosa's residence in Paris, his getting to know many Latin American *boom writers* in exile (such as Julio Cortázar), and his vibrant exchange with Sartre, Camus and Merleau-Ponty influenced him in his beliefs that modern and *bourgeois* society is inherently unjust, which is why the writer needs to transform his rebellious frustrations from reality into the weapons of intellectual art, serving as an inspiration for the many socialist and revolutionary movements on the Latin American continent.¹ In serving Vargas Llosa as both intellectual pioneer for the progressive arts and political role model regarding the conflicts in the Third World, Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy – together with the progressive social and intellectual achievements revealed by the Cuban Revolution – had a lasting impact on the author's early world view. Nevertheless, despite adhering to Marxism the author managed successfully to steer clear of a dogmatic attitude regarding left-wing ideologies, opting for an independent position as a writer and public figure. The main literary products from this early phase of creation of Vargas Llosa, apart from *La casa verde*, has been the Sartrean-influenced political novel *La ciudad y los perros* and the Marxist-inspired political and historical fiction *Conversación en La Catedral* – both testimonies of a belief in freedom *and* socialism.

¹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea I*, pp. 88-90, pp. 91-92, pp. 182-183.

However, with the failure of the movements of national liberation in Peru in the mid-60s (ELN, MIR, FIR), the imprisonment of Soviet dissident writers, and the Soviet invasion of Prague, Vargas Llosa's ideological convictions in regards to socialism – in particular: the universalistic forms of a socialist society with a 'human face', compatible with Latin America – diminish. What's more, contributing to the author's critical attitude related to the one-sided propositions of socialist leaders (by the end of the 1960s and early 1970s) is Vargas Llosa's unwavering support for intellectual and artistic liberty that should have free reign in a society of economic and political equality, promulgated in an article from Barcelona in the summer of 1972: 'Hay que repetir por eso, a voz en cuello, que la liberación social, política y económica de nuestros países [...] nunca sería completa sin una vida intelectual verdaderamente libre, donde todas las ideas sin excepción puedan rivalizar, y donde no sólo los ángeles sean admitidos y respetados, sino también los demonios, para contrapeso saludable de aquéllos, pues hasta los ángeles, cuando nada los controla, sucumben a lo que Octavio Paz ha llamado la peste de nuestro tiempo: la peste autoritaria.'²

Unequivocally, it is from Vargas Llosa's experience with the Cuban government in the aftermath of the 'intellectual' self-censorship of Heberto Padilla (early 1971) that the author's own philosophico-literary stance towards socialism changes. Even though the author affirms his socialist-leaning attitude, for the last time, in an article from late 1974, the disillusionment resulting from Cuba and other authoritarian left-wing political systems becomes plainly obvious in the phrase: 'Por eso, a pesar del horror biológico que me inspiran las sociedades policiales y el dogmatismo, los sistemas de verdad única, si debo elegir entre uno y otro, aprieto los dientes y sigo diciendo: *con el socialismo*.'³ Cuba and the *Padilla affair* is one of the best examples of why the author became convinced of the political decadence and ideological delusion of authoritarian left-wing or communist regimes (ruled by one-party systems, such as the PCC in Cuba, the CPSU of the Soviet Union, and the Communist Party of China under Mao Zedong). Hereby, the author's lived experiences helped him to understand some of the deficiencies of these systems, regarding the author's growth and development in his intellectual work. Related to the emergence of state and cosmovision under their rule, different cycles of truth, terror, reward, 'human' purging and re-affirmation of revolutionary action – oftentimes, justifying 'official doctrine' – lead in the end, when having originated from

² Vargas Llosa, M.: 'Resurrección de Belcebú o la disidencia creadora', cited in: *Contra viento y marea I*, p. 282.

³ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea*, p. 212.

guerrillas or larger social movements, to more state-wide terror than previously thought: something that must have affected the author's increasingly hostile attitude in relation to some of those ideological systems, once they become established. In addition to Cuba, two more negative political experiences, contributed to Vargas Llosa's rejection of political authoritarianism under a left-wing guise. First, the Velasco regime in Peru from 1968-1975 led to his rejection of all ideological or state-led socialist movements. Secondly, the case of *Sendero Luminoso* from 1980 until 1992 crystallised Vargas Llosa's objection to a worldview that counterposed the destiny of the individual with the utopian belief in a politico-ideological or socio-fascist form of society, to which everyone must necessarily belong.

In the second period of Vargas Llosa's philosophico-literary creation – the pragmatic and rationalist period from 1971 to 1986 ('The Failure and Abandonment of Totalitarian Ideology') – the author leaves behind, apart from his *existentialist* and independently Marxist mentor Jean-Paul Sartre, what Jürgen Habermas, referring to Vargas Llosa's early, socialist and ideologically historicist world view, becoming manifest through the labour and student movements of the 1950s and 1960s, describes in the following way: 'A societal subject that, in the strict sense, reaches consciousness on its own when, in its production and its work, it becomes aware of this act of self-creation of the human species, and thus comprehends that it has become the product 'of the work of the entire world history conceived so far.'"⁴ In this regard, it is important to point out that one of Vargas Llosa's best writer friends until 1976, Gabriel García Márquez, remained faithful to the Cuban cause as well as towards more orthodox forms of socialism, whereas Vargas Llosa slowly moved in the direction of the political Right in Latin America. Thereby, what's interesting is that the author and intellectual Vargas Llosa – guided by his new philosophical beliefs as well as by the dramatic neo-liberal changes in the Western Hemisphere itself (beginning with Chile in 1973) – tries to pursue, in a coherent and traceable way, since the mid-1970s and in particular since living and teaching in the United States from 1980 onwards, what the liberal Francis Fukuyama, by 1990, has termed *the end of history and the last man*.⁵ This rigorous abandonment by Vargas Llosa of a pre-ordained, dogmatic or totalitarian vision of history – forced upon many intellectuals by the Cold War ideologies and international relations – leads to his personal belief in the individual achievements of man and the liberal freedoms of his social conscience. The new

⁴ Habermas, J.: *Erkenntnis und Interesse*, p. 56 [The translation is mine].

⁵ Fukuyama, F.: *The End of History and The Last Man*, London and New York 1992.

philosophical and, arguably, anti-ideological attitude of Vargas Llosa, enhanced by the pragmatic considerations at the time, can be most clearly appreciated in an article from summer 1976, near the first anniversary of the demise of the socialist Velasco regime (1968-1975), and the establishment of an economically more orthodox regime with Morales Bermúdez – which, however, still clings to militarily authoritarian and illiberal principles of government:

Es hora, por eso, que las fuerzas armadas regresen a sus funciones específicas y confíen la dirección del Estado a aquellas personas que los peruanos designen mediante su voto. El restablecimiento de la democracia y de la libertad no va a resolver, desde luego, por arte de magia, la crisis económica ni va a producir las reformas que el Perú requiere para superar la miseria y la injusticia. Pero, al menos, va a crear la verdadera participación, hacer que la mayoría de la población, de mera víctima de la historia, pase a ser protagonista. Ése es el paso primero, indispensable, urgente, para empezar a salir del túnel.⁶

However, before we come to the entirely liberal world view of Vargas Llosa, regarding both his personality and his works, starting in the mid-1980s, a philosophico-literary synopsis seems warranted regarding the development of ideas from the author's middle period of intellect and creation (1971-1986), imbuing the pragmatically political forms and anti-ideological themes of his writing in the 1970s and 1980s, in particular in *La guerra del fin del mundo* and *Historia de Mayta*. We will therefore, one more time, look at the rationalist and ideological-critical schools, consulted by Vargas Llosa, and supported essentially by the thought of Albert Camus, Karl R. Popper, as well as Immanuel Kant and Jürgen Habermas – representing the French tradition (A. Camus), the Anglo-American tradition (K. R. Popper), and the Protestant Scottish and German tradition (A. Smith, I. Kant, and J. Habermas), respectively, related to a pragmatic and critical system of thought. This also includes the denunciation of ideological totalitarianism, such as fascism or Stalinist communism, the abhorrence of authoritarian right- or left-wing regimes, and, ultimately, the conviction that a belief in rationalist analysis and the deliberative debate between individuals will lead to the core elements of a healthy and balanced culture of democracy.

⁶ Vargas Llosa, M.: 'La revolución de los sables', cited in: *Contra viento y marea I*, pp. 347-348.

In Albert Camus' *The Rebel*, but also in the *Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Stranger*⁷, the contradictions and, in the end, pragmatic solutions of a person coming from different cultural and geographic backgrounds – similar to the Peruvian Vargas Llosa after having moved to Paris, Spain, England and the US – is something that has influenced the author's convictions concerning a 'neutral' position regarding destructive ideological or dogmatic belief systems, having recourse to one's own experiences in life, serving as an enlightened and virtuous example to others. Thereby, the ancient Mediterranean 'race' of men can be regarded as something fresh, dynamic and inspiring in comparison to the old continent of traditional monarchist or militarist beliefs, the destruction of one nation by the other, and the failures of the continent-wide establishment of a faith independent of religion or ideology.⁸ Consequently, man, by rebelling against the false providence of history – in Vargas Llosa's words: the belief in the false directions of progress or statehood –, can 'revolutionise' society by adhering to the centuries-old beliefs in his own strength, purity, his relationship with nature and forgiveness among others.⁹ This is to say, by complying with his personal convictions in connection with nature, reflected in his thoughts and actions, he can free himself from blind dogmatism and a fanatical adherence to the will of the powerful but detrimental elites or political parties, which, in the end, oppress rather than liberate their own people.

For Karl Popper – another mentor for Vargas Llosa on his path to liberal modernity – rationalist beliefs start with the falsifiability of every rational argument, which is why a dogmatic or fanatical belief cannot stand the test of time, since it isn't based on universal conventions of science or intellect. With *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, *The Poverty of Historicism*, and *Conjectures and Refutations*¹⁰ Popper has convincingly shown, like Camus, that history is an open process, for which neither utopian social engineering nor fanatical beliefs in the superiority of one's own race warrant a supposedly 'just' interference into the natural course of events. Furthermore, the ethno-centric transgressions of a racially defined concept of '*Lebensraum*' as well as the scientific fallacies of the dogmas of Marxism-Leninism

⁷ Camus, A.: *The Rebel*, London 1953; Camus, A.: *The Myth of Sisyphus*, London 2005; Camus, A.: *The Stranger*, London and New York 1989/1990.

⁸ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea*, pp. 231-252; *Contra viento y marea I*, pp. 321-342; *Making Waves*, pp. 107-116.

⁹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea*, pp. 231-252; *Contra viento y marea I*, pp. 321-342; *Making Waves*, pp. 107-116.

¹⁰ Popper, K. R.: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, London/Princeton 1950; Popper, K. R.: *The Poverty of Historicism*, London 1960²; Popper, K. R.: *Conjectures and Refutations*, London 1963.

are national-socialist and ideologically socialist aberrations of a modern and pluralist political culture of socio-ethnic inclusion and intellectual decency.

In *The Open Society and Its Enemies* Popper contrasts, in a way similar to the popular 'self-democratising' concept of the people and their spirit for liberal growth championed by Vargas Llosa, the ancient notions of individualistic egoism and collectivistic altruism with the intellectual 'aristocratism' of modern history (at least over the last 2000 years). Most people, essentially, above all after the demise of the Christian Middle Ages, have learned to follow their newly formed ethnic group, nation, monarch, emperor, or the values and principles on which their rule is based.¹¹ That is why Popper suggests that most history textbooks display the strength and qualities of the 'leader' in order for the populace to imitate his philosophy and aspire to his beliefs. However, it is this one-sided understanding of 'monarchic' history and its classless mass of followers – already criticised by Georg Lukács, from a left-wing perspective¹² – that can undermine the democratic and community-based understanding of evolutionary development on which rests any theory of 'liberated' humanity. Juxtaposing this Popperian belief in a 'democratic sense' of emancipation of the common people with authoritarian forms of culture or leadership this progressive philosopher of liberal modernity says: '[This] cannot possibly be the morality of those who favour justice and equalitarianism; for historical fame cannot be just, and it can be attained only by a very few. The countless number of men who are just as worthy, or worthier, will always be forgotten.'¹³

In Vargas Llosa's last volume of essayistic and philosophical writings, referring to Popper's *La sociedad abierta y sus enemigos*, the author presents the concept of democracy by the 'common people' (adhered to by the early to mid-1980s) – a directly democratic intervention by the attitude and learned education of the culturally and cosmopolitically sensible people, protecting the liberal freedoms since the fall of the Berlin Wall:

Y, sin embargo, pese a todo ello, soy menos pesimista sobre el futuro de la 'sociedad abierta' [...] Mi optimismo se cimenta en esta convicción [...]: no es la *intelligentsia* la que hace la historia. Por lo general, los pueblos – esas mujeres y hombres sin cara y sin nombre, las 'gentes del común', como los llamaba Montaigne – son mejores que sus intelectuales. Mejores: más sensatos, más democráticos, más libres, a la hora de decidir

¹¹ Popper, K. R.: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, p. 460.

¹² Lukács, G.: 'Towards a Methodology of the Problem of Organisation', pp. 295-339, cited in: *History and Class Consciousness*, London 1971.

¹³ Popper, K. R.: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, p. 460.

sobre asuntos sociales y políticos. Los reflejos del hombre sin cualidades, a la hora de optar por el tipo de sociedad en que quiere vivir, suelen ser racionales y decentes. Si no fuera así, no habría en América Latina la cantidad de gobiernos civiles que hay ahora ni habrían caído tantas dictaduras en las últimas dos décadas. Y en mi país, por ejemplo, no sobreviviría la democracia a pesar de la crisis económica y los crímenes de la violencia política. La ventaja de la democracia es que en ella el sentir de esas ‘gentes del común’ prevalece tarde o temprano sobre el de las élites. Y su ejemplo, poco a poco, puede contagiar y mejorar el entorno.¹⁴

Alluding to the ‘death’ of history, the inevitability of the individual, and the secular chances for human development since the 1980s in the Western Hemisphere, and the 1990s in the Eastern Hemisphere of the globe, Mayta as the singular protagonist of *Historia de Mayta* – even though his ideology has been flawed –, does not appear, in every aspect, as a loser or only the scapegoat of a ‘materialistic’ version of history. Informed by this positive and liberally individualistic vision for history (referring to the death of History with a capital ‘H’, but not to the spreading of the history of liberalism around the world), the real Mayta, by the end of the novel, affirms the inevitable arbitrariness of the decisions of individuals in liberal modernity, adding a sense of human beauty and authenticity in the wake of ideological destruction and the rigid political formalism of human designs in the 1980s:

–Esas cosas parecen imposibles cuando fracasan–, reflexiona. –Si tienen éxito, a todo el mundo le parecen perfectas y bien planeadas. Por ejemplo, la Revolución Cubana. ¿Cuántos desembarcaron con Fidel en el Granma? Un puñadito. Tal vez menos de los que éramos nosotros ese día en Jauja. A ellos les salió y a nosotros no.–¹⁵

In *La guerra del fin del mundo* Jurema and the short-sighted journalist represent a culture of rational comprehension and human decency, supporting the deeply-held values of republicanism, a core element of modern democracy. Exemplifying Vargas Llosa’s belief in liberal and humanist understanding (contrasting with war and mutual destruction) and the conviction regarding the progress of the human race, the deeper compassion between Jurema and the journalist – against the background of apocalyptic religious-civil genocide¹⁶ – is the only rational human act left in a world full of religion- or ideology-based fanaticism.

¹⁴ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea III*, p. 499.

¹⁵ *Historia de Mayta*, p. 392.

¹⁶ Comparable only to the worst human atrocities from the end of the 19th until the end of the 20th century: e.g. the genocide of the Herero in German South-West Africa (1884-1915), the Armenian genocide in 1915/16, the holocaust during World War II, and the Ruanda genocide in 1994.

Finally – arriving at the author’s unalterable position of liberalism as part of a globally envisioned cosmopolitanism from the second half of the 1980s onwards – Vargas Llosa’s third period of philosophico-literary creation comprises the years from 1986 to now. In it, questions of political economy and political culture on the macro-level of society, but also questions of artistic plurality, gender, and freedom of expression in his articles and fiction (the exposure of democratic forms of ‘truth’ and the pursuit of liberty) become essential elements of his newer writings. In order to come to a well-rounded conclusion on the philosophical position of Vargas Llosa in relation to his newer literature since 1990 a final explanatory résumé regarding the liberally democratic creation of man shall be given, represented by the artistic freedoms as part of the author’s work, to be concluded by a philosophico-literary outlook in the end.

Arguably, the first liberal philosophical mentor of Vargas Llosa is Adam Smith.¹⁷ A. Smith, with his concepts of the *invisible hand* and material prosperity through the freedoms of economic market mechanisms¹⁸, has become the intellectual role model for many modern advocates of neo-liberalism – philosophically, ranging from Milton Friedman to Francis Fukuyama, and politically, from R. Reagan or M. Thatcher to the two-time presidency of Sebastián Piñera in Chile. Moreover, Smith has also been one of the first philosophers, who attached the liberal belief in material wealth to a moral core of judgements, enforced by an *impartial spectator*, a quasi-religious deity, in his renowned *Theory of Moral Sentiments*:¹⁹

Upon whatever we suppose that our moral faculties are founded, whether upon a certain modification of reason, upon an original instinct, called a moral sense, or upon some other principle of our nature, it cannot be doubted, that they were given us for the direction of our conduct in this life. They carry along with them the most evident badges of this authority [...] Since these, therefore, were plainly intended to be the governing principles of human nature, the rules which they prescribe are to be regarded as the commands and laws of the Deity, promulgated by those vicegerents which he has thus set up within us.²⁰

It is this non-dogmatic plea for liberty in men and the global belief in cosmopolitanism on a democratically ‘liberated’ planet that Vargas Llosa defends. Both inherently interrelated concepts for a global form of democracy – liberalism and moral cosmopolitanism – have to

¹⁷ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, pp. 31-68.

¹⁸ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La llamada de la tribu*, pp. 48-49, pp. 49-50, p. 50, pp. 50-51, p. 52, p. 57, p. 60.

¹⁹ Smith, A.: *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, New Rochelle (N.Y.) 1969; Smith, A.: *La teoría de los sentimientos morales*, Madrid 2013³.

²⁰ Smith, A.: *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, III. 5. 5-6, cited in: Raphael, D. D.: *The Impartial Spectator*, Oxford 2007, p. 49.

exist in unison, opening up spaces for commerce and business, while, at the same time, being grounded in the universal moral principles of mutual respect (A. Smith, I. Kant) and democratic discourse based on ideas of social inclusion (J. Habermas).

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In his writings and public appearances Vargas Llosa serves as the symbol of the modern fight against authoritarian regimes of an oligarchic or socially unjust past as well as the propagation of the newly developing liberties – since the 1980s – in society and culture. Analogous to Jean-Paul Sartre or Jürgen Habermas, who either looked for politically enlightened or plural forms of communication in order to improve democracy, Vargas Llosa points to the incomprehension and misunderstandings between the Peruvian people during one of the most difficult periods in their history: the time of socio-economic and political polarisation from 1980 to 1990, resulting in an armed conflict which prolonged itself until 1992. Leaving the experiences of the political struggles of the 1950s to 1960s behind, for which armed guerrillas fighting for national liberation could be justified – together with the ‘right turn’ in Latin American politics since the early to mid-1970s –, the author’s rejection of left-wing ideological radicalism for achieving social justice in Latin America has taken hold ever since. Since the frustration with the failed ‘socialist utopia’ in Cuba the author reflects on many of his essayistic and literary themes, against the background of politics in Peru, due to which the reader can truly appreciate many of the themes in his evermore evolving political fiction: from his early progressive period towards his pragmatically social democratic and, finally, liberal literature from both his middle to late period of creation.

The most important theme concerns the confrontation with social and political violence, out of which, in a Popperian fashion, a reconciliatory or democratic attitude, if rightly posed and justly exercised, can result. In an article quoted earlier from early 1984²¹ ‘incomprehension’ figures as the main disruptive element for societal harmony and freedom. Furthermore, incomprehension and political self-conceit (in short: the loss of communication in society) not only results in cultural and economic oppression, but, in the author’s native country, in political violence and bloodshed: ‘La violencia es el lenguaje de la incomunicación, la forma como se comunican los miembros de una sociedad en la que el diálogo ha

²¹ Vargas Llosa, M.: ‘Las metas y los métodos’, cited in: *Contra viento y marea II*, pp. 401-407.

desaparecido o no existido nunca. [...] La violencia social manifiesta la profunda incomunicación que caracteriza a una sociedad.’²²

Regarding the formation of a consensus of how to live together in society – being a core aspect of many theories of democracy –, Vargas Llosa educates the modern reader on classic liberal prerequisites for a democracy to function: ‘Uno de estos momentos extraordinarios de consenso lo experimentamos hace cuatro años, al final de la dictadura, con el retorno de la democracia. [...] Cuando desaparece el consenso, individuos, grupos, clases, vuelven a encerrarse en su particularismo y a monologar, sin oír ni dirigirse a los otros. Surge entonces el clima propicio para la violencia.’²³ Finally, Vargas Llosa concludes his remarks on the democratic system with the following statement: ‘Nada es más urgente que combatir el monólogo de sordos que nuevamente nos amenaza y sustituirlo por el diálogo. Cuando hablan, los hombres dejan de entremetarse.’²⁴

In the following, the systems of communication underlining a democratic discourse derived from the concept of plural democracy shall be differentiated for the final synopsis of paradigmatic democratic behaviour of the protagonists in those political and historical novels of Vargas Llosa, where democracy is threatened and/or societal or individual freedom aspired to:

- I. **Early paradigm of left-wing democratisation** (*Early left-wing period of philosophico-literary creation of the author*) of communication and behaviour in settings of authoritarian or militaristic institutions – Depiction and technique: Sartrean *rebelliousness* and independently Marxist forms of *revolt* → e.g. *La ciudad y los perros*, *Conversación en La Catedral*.²⁵
- II. **Middle paradigm of pragmatic and social democratisation** (*Middle pragmatic period of philosophico-literary creation of the author*) of communication and behaviour in settings of religious or political fanaticism, humanising the environment and democratising the attitude towards other people – Depiction and technique: Abandonment of political radicalism and portrayal of pragmatic forms of human reason → e.g. *La guerra del fin del mundo*, *Historia de Mayta*.²⁶

²² Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea II*, p. 401.

²³ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea II*, p. 402.

²⁴ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea II*, p. 406.

²⁵ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La ciudad y los perros*, Barcelona 1966/Madrid 2003⁹; *Conversación en La Catedral*, Barcelona 1972/2015.

²⁶ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La guerra del fin del mundo*, Barcelona 2015; *Historia de Mayta*, Lima 2018.

- III. **Late paradigm of liberal and economic-political democratisation** (*Late liberal period of philosophico-literary creation of the author*) of behaviour in settings of dictatorship, authoritarian regimes or fragile democracies; furthermore: in settings of liberal human development in an international context, displaying different cultural or ethnic backgrounds; the right to work and entrepreneurship; the struggle for women's rights; the right to plural cohabitation – Depiction and technique: Economic, political, and moral sides of a globally defended liberalism or liberal democracy → e.g. *Cinco esquinas*, *La Fiesta del Chivo*, *Tiempos recios*, *El héroe discreto*, *Travesuras de la niña mala*, *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*.²⁷

These three *paradigms* for Vargas Llosa's political and historical fiction correspond with the author's early period of creation (1959-1971) – **First** period of *freedom and socialism* presented in Part A: Chapter 1 and 2 –, the author's middle period of creation (1971-1986) – **Second** period of *failure of totalitarian ideology* presented in Part B: Chapter 3 –, and the author's late period of creation (since 1986) – **Third** period of *political reformism and liberal democracy* presented in Part C: Chapter 4.

I. Regarding the first paradigm – placed against the background of the Odría regime –, both *La ciudad y los perros* and *Conversación en La Catedral* lend themselves to evoking the contrast between the authoritarian power structures the author's biography has been shaped by, and the humanity and democratic resistance – from a Sartrean and independently Marxist perspective – against those structures.

In *La ciudad y los perros* Alberto – a biographical incarnation of the author in his youth – critically engages with the prevalent systems of militarist education and 'decadent' forms of schooling in the *Leoncio Prado* academy, a remnant of oligarchic instruction in higher learning from the early 1940s. After the 'accidental' shooting of Ricardo Araña, Alberto tries to free his conscience, in a Sartrean way based on the 'self-enlightened' individual, by confronting the highest authorities in school, *the officers*, in order to claim justice for the sudden death of one of his comrades. In doing so, Alberto awakens the sympathy of Lt. Gamboa, who, in his function as teacher as well as officer, tries to wage a hopeless battle, together with Alberto, to convince the other, higher-standing officers to righteously investigate and solve the

²⁷ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Cinco esquinas*, Lima 2016; *La Fiesta del Chivo*, Madrid 2000; *Tiempos recios*, Barcelona 2019; *El héroe discreto*, Barcelona 2015; *Travesuras de la niña mala*, Barcelona 2015; *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, Barcelona 2015.

murder. In addition to understanding the conflicts within the institution, Alberto wants to get to the heart of the truth, even in an *existentialist* and socially 'rebellious' way, if that means (supported by Sartre and Vargas Llosa during the 1950s-1960s) having to establish a behaviour of democratic principles and human aspirations for each of its members.

In *Conversación en La Catedral*, returning to the author's descriptions of his native Lima during adolescence and university years, human corruption and the failure of democratic practices is not only portrayed in the educational context, but also for politics and society. The Odría regime was not only the class enemy of a youthful *intelligentsia*, but corruptor of a democratic development in Peru, preventing the fusion of industry and civic enlightenment as revealed in many post-WWII countries, such as the UK, France, Italy, etc. This tragic circumstance, expounded in Vargas Llosa's autobiography, explains – together with the author's criticism of authoritarianism and his left-wing progressiveness at the time – the political accusation in *Conversación's* literary portrayal, resulting in the emergence of a forged masterpiece and point of culmination in the author's early period of creation. Put more succinctly, this brilliant politico-historical novel not only provides insight into the author's Marxist elements as part of his early formation (Sartre, Lukács, Gramsci), but enshrines his socially progressive world view against the most patriarchal and militaristic regime in modern Peruvian history.

II. For the second paradigm of pragmatic and social democratisation, comprising the middle period of creation in Vargas Llosa's work, a key scene from *La guerra del fin del mundo* is instructive, one that affirms the author's belief in human reason and compassion against a background of fanatical violence and destruction. That being said, it can be added that a pragmatic attitude to life and a belief in human understanding have become core features of Vargas Llosa's world view – manifesting themselves, most visibly, in both *La guerra* and *Historia de Mayta*.

In the second half of *La guerra*, the short-sighted journalist is presented as one of the characters who defends republicanism and progress in the new Brazil, participating in the campaigns along the many fronts against the jagunços, who, in turn, defend the religious world view of Canudos. As, with each chapter, the hail of bullets, the explosions of bombs, and the various forms of fanatical bloodshed increase, the journalist, caught in the arms of Jurema, acquires a new conviction of human passion and universal love: freed from religious-utopian commitments or self-annihilating destruction.

When, after *Canudos* has ended, the baron of Cañabrava, in the final conversation with the short-sighted journalist, has the impression that ‘su antigua doméstica de Calumbí era la única mujer del sertón, una fatalidad femenina bajo cuyo inconsciente dominio caían tarde o temprano todos los hombres vinculados a *Canudos*’²⁸, then this critical allusion, by the author, to love and pleasure (‘amor’ and ‘placer’) is proposed as a powerful corrective to war and mutual hatred – in times in which fundamental human principles have disappeared or deep-seated humanism has been vanquished. In the journalist’s – and, implicitly, the author’s – words, *amor* and *placer* are, in agreement with a Camusian world view, ‘lo más grande que hay en el mundo, barón, lo único a través de lo cual puede encontrar el hombre cierta felicidad, saber qué es lo que llaman felicidad’.²⁹ This vision, finally, is confirmed, when the baron approaches, in a physically intimate sense, his and his wife’s housekeeper Sebastiana, to be able to distance himself from the past, while reawakening the spirit of trust and humanity in his and his wife’s circle of friends:

Las cosas que había estado temiendo mientras se acercaba [...] desaparecieron al instante y [...] el rostro de Galileo Gall compareció en su mente y recordó el voto de castidad que, para concentrar energías en órdenes que creía más elevados – la acción, la ciencia – había hecho el revolucionario. ‘He sido tan estúpido como él’, pensó. Sin haberlo hecho, había cumplido un voto semejante por muchísimo tiempo, renunciando al placer, a la felicidad, por ese quehacer vil que había traído desgracia al ser que más quería en el mundo.³⁰

With this scene Vargas Llosa alludes to universal forms of love between human beings, banishing all negative visions of divisiveness, based on utopian concepts or norms, and referring, here, in an eloquent style, to man’s greatness without being confined to borders, races, or mentalities. And eventually, in the wake of the baron’s making love to Sebastiana, his still-traumatized wife (from *Canudos*), Estela, appears, who then, after having witnessed these singular acts of love, changes her entire outlook regarding reality, transforming herself, once again, into the peace-loving and serene personality from *before Canudos*: ‘No tenía el ceño fruncido, aunque su boca estaba, sí, levemente entreabierta, subrayando el interés, la curiosidad, la tranquila sorpresa de sus ojos. Pero ya era nuevo en ella, por ínfimo que pareciera, ese volcarse hacia afuera, ese interesarse en algo ajeno, pues el barón no había vuelto a ver en los ojos de la baronesa, desde aquella noche de Calumbí, otra expresión que

²⁸ *La guerra del fin del mundo*, p. 823.

²⁹ *La guerra del fin del mundo*, pp. 868-869.

³⁰ *La guerra del fin del mundo*, pp. 870-871.

la de la indiferencia, el retraimiento, el encierro espiritual.³¹ Finally, this core scene of the novel, making the main paradigms of war and utopian self-annihilation, but also humanism and concrete approaches for the democratisation of post-Canudian society understandable, is resolved when the baron ends up, after having found his inner peace through love, looking outside his mansion to where the bay of Salvador de Bahía lies. There, in a ceremony of both human tragedy and religious incarnation of evil, the last remains of the utopian leader of Canudos, *El Conselheiro*, have just been buried.³²

For *Historia de Mayta*, the author's last decisive novel from this period, understanding and tolerance, even in settings of political terror and incomprehension, can be regarded as the only options out of human misery and societal despair. The writer-protagonist in *Mayta*, similar to the short-sighted journalist in *La guerra*, is the only figure who represents hope despite all the violence and desperation around him, and who by himself, despite the efforts of peace-building in the country since the 1980s, solves the mystery surrounding the human and social aspirations – such as the main protagonist's drive for societal equality, including his homosexuality – of the 'tragic revolutionary' Mayta. In a way then, with the positive attitude shown by the writer-protagonist in finishing with narrating on the failures of Peruvian progressiveness, the author Vargas Llosa – alter ego of the writer-protagonist – completes an entire epoch of portrayal of the political frustration in the country, finally discarding a radical philosophy that his developed pragmatic and humanist world view no longer permits.

III. For the third and last paradigm – the economic-political democratisation of society during the author's liberal period – the main protagonist Julieta Leguizamón from *Cinco esquinas* functions not only as the defender of freedom of speech as part of a corrupt and illiberal society, but, more globally, as the symbol of the political resistance of civil society against an authoritarian government fraught with abuse and the press co-opted by president Fujimori and the *Doctor* (a fictionalisation of intelligence chief V. Montesinos).

In *Political Violence and the Authoritarian State in Peru*³³ Jo-Marie Burt comes to the following conclusion regarding the Fujimori regime and civil society, fictionalised in Vargas Llosa's *Cinco esquinas*, and decisively confronted by heroine Julieta in her battle against the corrupt police and intelligence under Fujimori: 'In the case of Fujimori's Peru, repression, the

³¹ *La guerra del fin del mundo*, p. 875.

³² *La guerra del fin del mundo*, p. 879.

³³ Burt, J.-M.: *Political Violence and the Authoritarian State in Peru*, New York 2010.

instrumentalisation of fear, control over the media, and the manipulation of terrorism worked for nearly a decade to undercut opposition movements and keep civil society demobilised.³⁴ In *Between Facts and Norms*³⁵ Habermas explains, citing Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato (1992)³⁶, how civil disobedience in relation to a non-functioning government of authoritarian or illiberal machinations, complementing a Foucaultian criticism of power (or *governmentality*) from below, is actively constructed. This confrontation with the regime, if no other normatively legal or publicly meaningful measure is democratically accepted, can then only be led by the protest of the opposition, embodied by the civil resistance of ‘still independent’ news media or, even more drastically, the demands made by the people on the streets.³⁷

In two other novels by Vargas Llosa – whose historically or politically fictionalised plots are not located in Peru, but in the Dominican Republic and Guatemala – democratic concerns to overthrow a totalitarian regime under Trujillo by the violent action of a determined, but civically enlightened core of the populace, as well as the critical analysis of the toppling of a democratically elected regime under Jacobo Árbenz by right-wing military forces supported by the United States, are portrayed.³⁸ In both cases civil society has either been demobilised and must be resurrected violently from within, or the democratic movement for national liberation and social reform is oppressed due to international ideologies and military violence from without – juxtaposing national and regional or hemispheric conflicts regarding political and societal democratisation.

However, in *El héroe discreto* the revival of civil society against the oligarchic forces of traditionalism is portrayed in a much more modern and positive context of Peruvian entrepreneurship. Felícito and Ismael are both confident entrepreneurs and local heroes who represent their Peruvian home towns, Piura and Lima, respectively. Against all odds and machinations of an illiberal or anti-social kind, constituting an impediment to their economic success or material inheritance, they make their way, embodying strong and successful role models for a liberal political culture in the country. Felícito’s victory over the forces of crime and corruption in his native region emerges in parallel to the development towards a liberal

³⁴ Burt, J.-M.: *Political Violence*, p. 241.

³⁵ Habermas, J.: *Between Facts and Norms*, Cambridge 1997.

³⁶ Cohen, J. L., and Arato, A.: *Civil Society and Political Theory*, Cambridge (MA-USA) 1992.

³⁷ Cohen, J. L., and Arato, A.: *Civil Society and Political Theory*, p. 587f, cited in: Habermas, J.: *Between Facts and Norms*, p. 383; or: Habermas, J.: *Faktizität und Geltung*, p. 463.

³⁸ Vargas Llosa, M.: *La Fiesta del Chivo*, Madrid 2000; *Tiempos recios*, Barcelona 2019.

democracy in Peru. Something similar happens to Ismael and Armida: Both manage to escape from the familial ineptitude of traditional society, fulfilling their individual happiness with friends from Piura, business partners from Italy, and an inheritance outside of their old home, worth a fortune.

Contemplated from a more global perspective, Felícito cannot only be regarded as a role model with genuine liberal convictions, but also as an advocate of morals in the public sphere of Piuran society. In comparison, Julieta Leguizamón from *Cinco esquinas* – similar to her fictional alter ego from Piura: combatting, however, the public lack of morals not just within a regional setting of corruption, but on a national scale – can thus be considered as, first the *discreet* promoter of liberal values, but then, by the second half of the plot, as the champion, just like Felícito, of a liberal and morally sustainable political culture in Peru as a whole – freed from the traditionally oligarchic as well as politically authoritarian shackles of the past.

With the final paradigm in Vargas Llosa's politically, economically, and morally liberal fiction, forcefully represented by *Travesuras de la niña mala*, a point of culmination in the analysis of Vargas Llosa's most persuasive period of philosophico-literary creation, regarding the emergence of liberal themes, is reached. In both *Travesuras de la niña mala* and *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* Lily and her alter ego in search of new worlds, cosmopolitan adventures, and multi-cultural desires – Paul Gauguin or Koké – are struggling, even though they want to find their place in life, with the individual freedoms proposed by liberal modernity. Lily, even though she travels from place to place in different European countries, can't, in accordance with Smithian human sympathy and moral self-command, decide to settle in one place to raise a family and take on a stable job, due to her emotional ups and downs, involving passion and material greed, related to her many lovers around the globe – including her long-time friend from Peru, Ricardo. However, due to Vargas Llosa's formation as a liberal in France, England and the United States, Isaiah Berlin's 'negative' concept of freedom is forcefully defended during all of the main character's travels and travails in Paris, London, etc., contributing to the helpfulness of the other characters, and their either *sympathetic* or *benevolent* forgiveness at the end of the novel.

By portraying human and individual liberty, but also failure, at every step of her evolution as the main protagonist of *Travesuras*, Lily embodies, as E. Kristal has argued, something similar to a main role or *theme* in a musical or opera, in which these characteristic tunes in the liberal life of the hero or heroine are interspersed with the biographical moments of

adolescence, maturity, creation, passion, guilt, repentance, resurrection or decay and death – only in a recurrent pattern of varying periods of time:

Pero el tiempo parece detenerse como si se estuviera repitiendo una misma historia, como si se tratara de una variación sobre el mismo tema, de la repetición de una obsesión: en cada capítulo la niña mala aparece en la vida de Ricardo, en cada capítulo ella es el objeto de sus deseos eróticos, en cada capítulo lo erótico se contrasta con la muerte o la agonía de un personaje. Como en una composición musical en la que un tema ligero se contrasta con otro más hondo, el tema ligero no resiste la repetición; en la novela, la repetición de lo risueño se debilita ante el realismo de la mortalidad.³⁹

Ultimately, Lily's plural and exuberant thirst for life – even though she has to overcome many obstacles before she understands what it means to be happy – is, once again, reflected in one of *El Paraíso's* main protagonists, the painter Paul Gauguin. In contrast to Lily's and Ricardo's pronounced cosmopolitan desires, Gauguin's thirst for the culturally liberal creation of the arts in far-away Tahiti – projecting a combination of Oceanic motifs and French techniques of painting onto one single canvas – replaces global 'bourgeois' relationships and freedom with multi-cultural forms of sex and creativity.

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In the end, the assertion that Vargas Llosa's intellectual and artistic creation, subdivided into three parts, has developed from its portrayal of socialist freedoms to the liberal affirmation of man has been corroborated as part of this conclusion on the work of the author's most relevant Latin American – in particular: Peruvian – political and historical fiction.

In the foreword to the English translation of the essay collection by the author from 1962-1993 – *Making Waves*⁴⁰ – John King, the editor and translator, summarises succinctly the early progressive and societal attitude of the author during the 1960s, the eminently 'political and ideological' phase of creation as part of the author's overall work (with Cuba constituting the central impetus and endpoint of this period):

Several extracts in this volume – 'Chronicle of the Cuban Revolution', 'Socialism and the Tanks', 'Letter to Haydée Santamaría', 'The Death of Che' – mark [the author's] growing distance from the Cuban process. It was a position that he made explicit in 1971 when,

³⁹ Kristal, E.: *Tentación de la palabra*, p. 435.

⁴⁰ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Making Waves*, New York 1997.

together with many other intellectuals throughout the world, including Sartre, he signed two open letters protesting against the crude handling by the Cubans of a dissident poet, Heberto Padilla. But for much of the sixties, Cuba was an example that he felt should be emulated throughout the continent. He was a friend of the Peruvian poet turned guerrilla, Javier Heraud, who was killed in 1963, and he wrote in support of guerrilla activity in Peru, although he did not see this as an option open to himself as a writer [...] He called Frantz Fanon a 'great Third World ideologue' and the campaign diaries of Che Guevara 'one of the fascinating books of our time'. The strength of his feeling in the sixties is in direct proportion to his later vigorous condemnation of what he would see as his mistaken and utopian views.⁴¹

In the first essay from this volume – 'The Country of a Thousand Faces' (referring to Peru) – Vargas Llosa looks back at his left-wing revolutionary student period, which imbued his writing and political activities with a heightened sense of social justice, education, and a progress that measures itself by believing in the humanism and equality of all its members:

Soon after entering San Marcos, I became an activist in Cahuide, the name behind which the Communist Party, which had been badly damaged by the dictatorship, was attempting to revive its fortunes. Our activism was quite inoffensive. We met in secret, in small cells, to study Marxism; we printed leaflets against the government; we fought with the Apristas; we conspired to make the university support working class struggles – our greatest achievement was to call a strike in San Marcos in solidarity with the tram workers – and we attempted to place our people in university bodies.⁴²

However, what the author distanced himself from the revolutionary process in Cuba – not only politically, but also culturally and personally – was the fanatical questioning, the Kafkaesque condemnation to self-justice – more precisely: the Stalin-like 'party procedures' and reversal of the progressive developments that were made in Cuba in other fields of 'revolutionary' society. In particular the self-censorship by one of the island's most creative artists, Heberto Padilla, in relation to what was deemed the official line of reverence regarding the artistic doctrine, adapted from the ideologues of the Soviet Union, has been, not only for Vargas Llosa, but for other progressive intellectuals, catastrophic: not only for their self-image as artists who wanted to assist in the transformation of society, but also regarding the

⁴¹ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Making Waves*, pp. xiv-xv.

⁴² Vargas Llosa, M.: *Making Waves*, p. 10; Vargas Llosa, M.: *Gegen Wind und Wetter*, p. 19.

protection of the intellectual plurality of the arts in different parts of the American hemisphere.

Octavio Paz – one of the best writer friends of Vargas Llosa and early champion of liberalism in Mexico –, much more detached from the revolutionary process in Cuba than many of his literary colleagues, published a critical analysis of the *Padilla affair*, in line with the changing world view of Vargas Llosa. Not only do these political statements expose the critical attitude towards Cuba by the rest of the *intelligentsia* on the continent, including Mario Vargas Llosa, they also warn against the political characteristics of authoritarianism and dictatorial arbitrariness – inhibiting the development of the liberal or plural freedoms, in the arts and society:

Las ‘confesiones’ de Bujarin, Rádek y los otros bolcheviques, hace treinta años, produjeron un horror indescriptible. Los *Procesos de Moscú* combinaron a Iván el Terrible con Calígula y a ambos con el Gran Inquisidor: los crímenes de que se acusó a los antiguos compañeros de Lenin eran a un tiempo inmensos, abominables e increíbles. Tránsito de la historia como pesadilla universal a la historia como chisme literario: las autoacusaciones de Heberto Padilla. [...] Stalin obligaba a sus enemigos a declararse culpables de insensatas conspiraciones internacionales, dizque para defender la supervivencia de la URSS; el régimen cubano, para limpiar la reputación de su equipo dirigente, dizque manchada por unos cuantos libros y artículos que ponen en duda su eficacia, obliga a uno de sus críticos a declararse cómplice de abyectos y, al final de cuentas, insignificantes enredos político-literarios [...] No obstante, advierto dos notas en común: una, esa obsesión que consiste en ver la mano del extranjero en el menor gesto de crítica, una obsesión que nosotros los mexicanos conocemos muy bien [...]; otra, el perturbador e inquietante tono religioso de las confesiones. Por lo visto, la autodivinización de los jefes exige, como contrapartida, la autohumillación de los incrédulos [...] Todo esto sería únicamente grotesco si no fuese un síntoma más de que en Cuba ya está en marcha el fatal proceso que convierte al partido revolucionario en casta burocrática y al dirigente en César. Un proceso universal y que nos hace ver con otros ojos la historia del siglo XX. Nuestro tiempo es el de la peste autoritaria: si Marx hizo la crítica del capitalismo, a nosotros nos falta hacer la del Estado y las grandes burocracias contemporáneas, lo mismo las del Este que las del Oeste. Una crítica que los latinoamericanos deberíamos completar con otra de orden histórico y político: la crítica

del gobierno de excepción por el hombre excepcional, es decir, la crítica del caudillo, esa herencia hispanoárabe.⁴³

From this text – first written in May 1971, one month after Vargas Llosa’s resignation letter regarding his committee post at *Casa de las Américas*, then reprinted, with a commentary from the 1990s, in Octavio Paz’s *Political Writings* published in 2001 – the phrase ‘Nuestro tiempo es el de la peste autoritaria’ reappears in Vargas Llosa’s writings.⁴⁴ This occurs when both mentioning the prerequisites for the democratic and intellectual opening up of the authoritarian structures of post-oligarchic regimes as well as the failures of the Fujimori regime in the wake of the author’s full-fledged conversion to liberalism. What’s more, the parallels between Vargas Llosa’s and Paz’s thinking regarding the political defence of a liberal character for modernity since the 1970s – relating to both governments and civil society, with less corruption and authoritarian experiments – becomes plainly obvious in the phrase: ‘Actitudes como la [de Heberto Padilla] nos muestran que lo verdaderamente excepcional, sobre todo en nuestros países, consiste en defender al individuo común frente al ‘hombre excepcional’⁴⁵. Uni-doctrinal history is clearly assigned a backbench in the competing race for the ideologies of imperial superpowers, while freedom – as a universal aspect in human development – becomes a central value in Octavio Paz’s thinking, on a par with Vargas Llosa’s beliefs. Echoing the liberal political exclamations from the Mexican Nobel Prize winner, in a late article from 1978 Vargas Llosa demonstrates his renewed convictions in political liberalism and a ‘liberated’ form of democracy based on the Swedish model – including freedom of expression and the plurality of opinions –, paving the way for his reputation as a ‘liberal’ presidential candidate in the 1980s:

Justamente, un factor que fue decisivo en mi cambio de opinión sobre el marxismo es la comprobación de que los métodos y la política inspirados en él para corregir las injusticias son mucho menos eficaces para conseguirlo que aquellas doctrinas y filosofías liberales y democráticas – es decir, aquellas que no sacrifican la libertad en nombre de la justicia – de los sistemas que han hecho lo que son hoy a los países de justicia social más avanzados – es decir de hombres más iguales, más cultos y más libres – del mundo, como Suecia o como Israel.⁴⁶

⁴³ Paz, O.: *Sueño en libertad*, pp. 354-355.

⁴⁴ Vargas Llosa, M.: ‘Resurrección de Belcebú o la disidencia creadora’, cited in: *Contra viento y marea I*, p. 282; Vargas Llosa, M.: ‘La libertad recobrada’, cited in: Milla Batres, C. (ed.): *Cómo Fujimori jodió al Perú*, p. 25.

⁴⁵ Paz, O.: *Sueño en libertad*, pp. 353-354.

⁴⁶ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Contra viento y marea*, p. 288; *Contra viento y marea II*, p. 71.

Beginning in the early to mid-1980s – in the midst of Cold War polarisation, waging the final battle for either liberal freedom or a socialist-imbued nationalism from 1990 onwards –, the once progressive intellectual Vargas Llosa is increasingly defamed for having become ‘a conservative’, even though, from a modern and cosmopolitan perspective, the author’s intellectual attitude has simply transformed from socially progressive into classic liberal positions, with a heightened focus on culture, the arts, and the freedom of opinion. In addition to these classic positions on liberalism, adopted from the societal context of the United Kingdom and the United States, Vargas Llosa has criticised the inefficient governmental bureaucracies of Latin American states since the 1970s (Cuba, Peru, Mexico, etc.):

I am for liberal solutions, and in Latin America being liberal means being revolutionary. The State is a corrupt monstrosity, and it is a revolutionary act to make it more efficient and more ethical, to restore the sovereignty of the citizen. I know that it is hard to understand from a European perspective, and this is why some have decried me as conservative and reactionary. I don’t approve of this false judgement of my political thought.⁴⁷

Following the author’s defeat in the elections of 1990 in Peru as the candidate for the Liberty Movement, being part of the Democratic Front (FREDEMO), Vargas Llosa has, since then, made efforts to travel to many countries and continents in order to propagate his new beliefs in freedom, democracy, cosmopolitanism, and a liberal attitude for the self’s individual endeavours. In regards to nationalism as the last nemesis of liberalism after 1990 – more persistent than Marxism and more difficult to combat than race or culture –, Vargas Llosa has consistently come to the defence of liberalism and its democratically ‘liberated’ incarnations across the world and throughout different societies, defeating narrow-mindedness, regionalism, and – in Octavio Paz’s words – an ‘exceptional’ or irrational imagination of a supreme being claiming an unalterable territory or cultural habitat. Vargas Llosa writes:

Nationalism is a form of lack of culture that pervades all cultures and coexists with all ideologies, a chameleon resource at the service of politicians of every persuasion. In the nineteenth century it seemed that socialism would put an end to it, that the theory of class struggle, revolution and the proletarian international would lead to the disappearance of frontiers and the establishment of universal society. The reverse occurred. Mao strengthened the idea of the nation to a chauvinistic degree and now, with the bankruptcy of communism, it is in the name of nationalism that regimes like North

⁴⁷ Vargas Llosa, M., cited in: Scheerer, T. M.: *Mario Vargas Llosa*, p. 185 [The translation is mine].

Korea, Vietnam and Cuba justify their existence. They allege that their rigid systems of censorship and isolation are there to defend national culture threatened by ‘them’. [...] Beneath these pretexts there lies a truth. All nations – poor or rich, backward or modern – are today less stable than they once were. There is a process of internationalization of life which, in some cases more rapidly, in other cases more slowly, is eroding them, gnawing at those boundaries that had been established and preserved at the price of so much blood. It is not socialism that is perpetrating this outrage in the world. It is capitalism. A practical system – not an ideology – for producing and distributing wealth, which, at a certain moment in its development, found frontiers to be obstacles to the growth of markets, companies and capital. And then, without proclaiming it [...] without hiding its intention – to gain profits – behind big words, the capitalist system, through the internationalization of production, trade and property, has imposed on nations other coordinates and demarcations which create links and interests between individuals and societies which in practice increasingly denaturalize the idea of the nation. Creating world markets, transnational companies, disseminating shares and property in societies throughout the globe, this system has been depriving nations, in the economic sphere, of many of the prerogatives on which their sovereignty was based. This has had already an extraordinary effect in the cultural field, and is also beginning to have an effect in the political sphere, where the steps that are beginning to be taken, here and there, towards the formation of vast supranational organizations like the European Community or the Free Trade Treaty in America, would have been inconceivable in any other way. [...] This process must be welcome. The weakening and dissolution of nations within broad and flexible economic and political communities, under the sign of freedom, will not only contribute to the development and well-being of the planet, lessening the risk of warlike conflicts and opening new opportunities for trade and industry; it will also allow the diversification and development of genuine cultures, which arise and grow out of a need for expression of a homogeneous group, even though they do not serve the will of political power.⁴⁸

Overall, the Vargas-Llosan world view of global, well-balanced, and tolerant liberalism – combining economic, political, moral, and cultural sides as part of this plural vision of freedom – lends itself to drawing a connection between this manifold vision by Vargas Llosa and its practice in daily life, as well as regarding its application in the author’s liberal arts. Thereby, the *economics* or political economy of liberalism shall be unrestrained but rationalist in its

⁴⁸ Vargas Llosa, M.: *Making Waves*, pp. 302-303.

methods, based on free-market rules. The *politics* or political culture shall be democratic and pragmatic in its results, based on communicative deliberation and social inclusion. Finally, the *culture* for the arts and intellect shall be liberal and free, affirming man's place in history, and not history oppressing man's rightful place among enlightened and creative equals.

Camus has observed the freedom of human existence in harmony with nature. Habermas observes the modern freedoms of human existence in the harmonisation of deliberation towards and communication with other people, defending a 'public sphere' of progressive and emancipatory civil society. Vargas Llosa, finally, considers the liberal freedoms of existence as human freedoms, which guarantee liberties even in spaces of artistic suppression or authoritarian oppression. In particular, the cultural freedoms of public intellect, deliberative discussion, arts and humanities – or rather, the enrichment of society by the intellectual's and artist's visions or creations – are products of man's origination in the world heritage of labour and liberal human culture, fulfilling the utmost needs of being 'in society', while attesting to man's undying nature for diversity in his craft or spirit.

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