

# Preparing Students to Encounter the Other: Mario Vargas Llosa's *Lituma en los Andes*

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## **Abstract**

*Mario Vargas Llosa's Lituma en los Andes (published in English as Death in the Andes) allows students to share an engaging literary character's surprisingly successful efforts to learn to respect and appreciate the Other while, in turn, finding respect and his own place in another culture. Since Lituma's journey to acceptance is one that many language learners dream of sharing, but may be poorly equipped to experience, in addition to its evident literary value, Lituma en los Andes is an excellent text for use in the foreign language classroom. Although not written from a Christian perspective, Christian students who seek to move beyond national and cultural boundaries and to find their places as citizens of God's kingdom will find ample opportunity to learn from Lituma's example as they scrutinize the acculturation process in progress and consider how it impacts those involved.*

¿Se burlaban de él? A ratos le parecía que detrás de esas caras inexpresivas, de esos monosílabos pronunciados con desgano, como haciéndole un favor, de esos ojitos opacos, desconfiados, los serruchos se reían de su condición de costeño... (37)

Were they laughing at him? At times it seemed that behind those expressionless faces, those monosyllables pronounced with scorn, as if doing him a favor, those little tiny

opaque, mistrusting eyes, the *serruchos*<sup>1</sup> were laughing at him because he was from the coast . . .

Corporal Lituma, a recurring character in several of Mario Vargas Llosa's pre-1994 novels,<sup>2</sup> is accustomed to finding social acceptance, even popularity, wherever he goes. But no matter how hard he tries to be friendly, the people in his new posting at Naccos, a small village set high in the Andes, seem completely unresponsive. He is sure they don't like him because he is from the coast and the fact that the *andinos* are fellow Peruvians makes their rejection even more painful.

Many language learners have a similar response upon discovering that they are not automatically made to feel at home when they travel to another country. They may have assumed, for example, that since they have studied a language for several years, they are ready to function in its culture without significant difficulty, but for many an initial (and sometimes continued) sense of dislocation is a bitter disappointment that is not easily overcome. For this reason, in addition to its evident literary value, *Lituma en los Andes* is an excellent text for use in the foreign language classroom,<sup>3</sup> first because it gives the reader an opportunity to scrutinize the acculturation process in progress and to consider how it affects those involved. And second, within the framework of the Christian college classroom, Lituma's rejection by fellow Peruvians to some extent parallels Christ's experience: "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not" John 1:11 (RSV). Although Lituma is in no way to be considered a Christ-figure, his acculturation experiences combined with his sense of rejection offers Christian students both the comparison and the contrast between Lituma's behavior and the model Christ offers in his incarnation and, in doing so, a means of considering how being Christians should affect their own behavior in another culture.

The need for such preparation is also important for the Christian because, in addition to any language student's desire to make practical use of the language and to become more adept at negotiating its culture, Christian students want to represent Christ well, to reach out to and bless others wherever they go (Smith and Carvill 58), recognizing, as Quentin J. Schultze puts it: "God's gift of communication equips us to represent the Creator on earth" (25). But this is only true when the nature of communication in its many facets, not just as sounds and written symbols, is understood and if, as David I. Smith and Barbara Carvill remind us in *The Gift of the Stranger*, students know how to apply the spiritual and ethical lessons of Christianity to their study of lan-

guage as well:

Foreign language education, too, is called to play a role in this cosmic story. But it will only do so if it is grounded in and grows out of a biblical vision for reconciliation, for justice and peace among nations. It must be shaped by respect for the other as an image bearer of God; it must be eager to hear the other; and it must be driven by love for God and for one's neighbor. (Smith and Carvill 57)

Without this perspective Christians will not be ready to form the relationships that make living in another culture most satisfying.

Since Smith and Carvill extensively discuss the special benefits Christians both receive and bestow as they learn to fellowship with the "stranger"/Other, this paper will instead follow Lituma through the acculturation process and focus on Christ's incarnational example for overcoming rejection and for entering a "foreign" setting, as described in Philippians 2:7-8a: "...but emptied himself,/taking the form of a slave,/being born in human likeness./And being found in human form,/he humbled himself..." Thomas R. Thompson suggests these and the surrounding verses provide a "model of multicultural encounter by application, one whose *leitmotif* is that of *kenosis*—'self emptying'..." (17). For our purposes, Lituma's journey from outsider to insider status<sup>4</sup> will be of particular interest, requiring consideration of his personality and behavior, as well as his discoveries concerning the highlanders and their needs. Furthermore, examples from this "journey," along with Christ's example, will highlight those attitudes and experiences that students, especially Christian students, will also need as they "travel" into a new language, culture and country.

The plot follows the experiences of two "outsiders," Civil Guards Corporal Lituma and Private Tomás, who have been stationed in Naccos to provide protection for a new road. The three most marginalized villagers have mysteriously disappeared and Corporal Lituma must find out what has happened to them.

Ironically, although Lituma never leaves Peru, from the outset of the novel, Vargas Llosa goes to some lengths to show that he experiences typical outsider frustrations, fears and misapprehensions. He does not even understand the *andinos'* language, Quechua, a fact that affects him both intellectually and emotionally. He only hears "sonidos indiferenciables" [undifferentiated sounds] and "una música bárbara" [a barbaric music] that make him feel "muy nervioso" [very nervous] (11)<sup>5</sup>. And as a result, the people of the village

seem equally incomprehensible. When he thinks about them, he has an almost visceral reaction, imagining “las caras inexpresivas, los ojitos glaciales” [the inexpressive faces, the glacial little eyes]; he feels “desconsuelo” [disconsolation], “impotencia” [impotence] and a “presentimiento de amenazas” [premonition of threats] (12). As the only *costeño*, coastal resident, in this mountain village, he’s never sure when people are making fun of him and, normally a gregarious man, after several months in the area, it troubles him that “No había podido hacer un solo amigo entre los peones” [he hadn’t been able to make even a single friend among the workmen] (37). Despite his desire for and efforts to be accepted, as far as Lituma is concerned, the villagers still treat him as if “viniera de Marte” [he came from Mars] (37).

Corollary to the lack of social acceptance, the environment also seems hostile. The mountains and skyline overwhelm him: “Como otras veces, sintió la presencia aplastante y opresiva de las montañas macizas, del cielo profundo de la sierra” [As at other times, he felt the overwhelming and oppressive presence of the towering mountains, of the mysterious mountain sky] (103). The climate confuses him: “Hacía un calor norteño. Pero dentro de cuatro o cinco horas comenzaría a enfriar y a eso de las diez de la noche estarían crujéndolo los huesos de frío. Quién podía entender este clima tan enrevesado como los serruchos” [It was a northern heat. But within four or five hours it would start to cool off and around ten tonight his bones would be creaking with the cold. Who could possibly understand this climate as difficult as the *serruchos*] (42). The mountain storms frighten him: “Esas tormentas andinas, con rayos y truenos, no lo hacían feliz; nunca se había acostumbrado a ellas. Siempre le parecía que iban a aumentar, aumentar hasta el cataclismo” [Those Andes storms, with lightening and thunder, did not make him happy; he had never gotten accustomed to them. It always seemed to him that they were going to get bigger until they reached cataclysmic proportions] (135). He feels alienated from every part of his surroundings.

Similarly, his job, which has accustomed him to being part of a chain of command, to working with others, and to ready acceptance from the locals who count on his protection, is a liability in Naccos. Tomás, an *andino* himself, counsels: “No crea que la gente del campamento es fría con usted porque es costeño. Sino porque es un policía” [Don’t think that the people in the camp are cold with you because you are from the coast. It’s only because you are a policeman] (72). Furthermore, the isolation makes it difficult for Lituma to consult with his superiors: “Tendría que consultar a la comandancia, en Huancayo. Tardarán en contestar, si es que me contestan” [I would have to consult with

headquarters, in Huancaya. They would be slow in answering, if they answered me at all] (99-100). To add to the problem, the camp radio is unreliable, “funcionaba tarde, mal y nunca” [it only worked late, badly and never] (147). And, even if he could reach them, he knows his superiors, who like him have no experience with the *andino* culture, would think him crazy if he were to report: “<<Sacrificado de manera aún no identificada para aplacar malignos de los Andes, punto>>” [“Sacrificed in a yet unidentified manner to placate the evil spirits of the Andes, stop”] (46). Finally, because this is a partially terrorist-controlled “liberated” zone, the job actually endangers the Guardias because terrorists normally kill government ‘collaborators’ such as themselves.

Like Lituma, who feels dislocated because of the geography, the people, their language, their religion and a host of other unfamiliar elements of the new culture, students may develop a similar sense of total Otherness early in their time in another country, often immediately following the first few days of what Paige et. al. term “cultural euphoria.”<sup>6</sup> At whatever point it occurs, their desire to belong immediately in the new culture must be replaced by a willingness to take the steps necessary for acceptance to occur. Moreover, Christian students who have prepared in advance for possible disappointment will more readily draw on Christ’s model by putting aside their desire for convenience and ease and by drawing on Christ’s example of humility. In *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, Lingenfelter and Mayers observe:

The challenge is to become what Malcolm McFee (1968) calls 150 percent persons. McFee uses this concept to describe Blackfoot Indians who are acculturated into white American society. He argues that they are still 75 percent traditional Blackfoot, but they have also learned to adapt to the larger American culture to the point where some are 75 percent white as well. These people he terms 150 percent persons. Like these Indians we will never become 100 percent insiders in another culture or subculture. . . . However, it is possible to follow his [Jesus’] example, to be “imitators of God,” as Paul commands in Ephesians 5:1, and “live a life of love” (v.2) in the culture in which we hope to minister. Our goal should be to become more than we are. . . (24)

Christ was really a 200% person in the sense that in some mysterious way he was 100% human and 100% divine.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, he could only bring salvation and reconciliation with God to the human race by leaving behind his

exalted, heavenly position and by learning to live in our imperfect, sinful world. Students who seek to function well in another culture must, in a greatly limited fashion, be willing to step out of the ease of living in their own culture and to lay aside the expectations of power and privilege that their social milieu has trained them to take for granted.<sup>8</sup>

If we in the Christian church are ungraceful about affirming others because we stumble over the distinctions of race, ethnicity, or culture, then it is quite possible that we have too tight of a grip on our own lives, a false (i.e., insecure) image of ourselves, which we may have to learn to ungrasp. (Thompson 23)

As students do so, the experiences of humility and weakness that this transition inevitably entails may help them better understand the sacrifices Christ made in coming to earth. At the same time, they are greatly increasing the possibility of communicating his love to those with whom they come in contact.

Since change in the “outsider’s” attitude does not take place immediately, neither should quick acceptance be expected. It is only over time that Lituma realizes he is much more an insider, accepted, in Naccos than he understood. First, he learns that, as Tomás asserts, the villagers’ mistrust is not personal. In fact, the villagers don’t trust Tomás either, and he is one of them. Then he discovers that as they have come to know him, the villagers have recognized that Lituma is honest and that he does not use his authority indiscriminately (100). The local barkeep, Dionisio, even tells him that he and Tomás owe their lives to the respect they command: “—La prueba de que lo consideran es que usted y su adjunto están vivos” [The proof that they respect you is that you and your deputy are still alive] (100). Since three men have already disappeared because “nadie los tenía en buen concepto” [no one respected them] (100), this is an eye-opening declaration!

The student/Outsider also needs to make the effort to build personal relationships with members of the target culture. Christ developed friendships wherever he went, some very intimate and within his own early cultural context, as with his disciples and with families, such as Martha, Mary and Lazarus. But he also spent time with and offered acceptance to those outside his social milieu, such as Zacheus, and to Romans and Samaritans, such as Jairus and the woman at the well, who were hated and scorned by the Jews. In Lituma’s case, the relationship with Tomás allows him to see an *andino* for the first time as a real person, a fellow human being, as someone with whom he has much in

common. He tells Tomás: “—Bueno, tú eres serrucho y a ti no te detesto. Me caes de lo más bien” [Look, you’re from the mountains and I don’t hate you. I really like you] (72). A pervasive sadness in Tomás also awakens in Lituma a willingness to reach out to him. One evening he confesses: “Me da no sé qué que sufras de este modo” [It really bothers me that you are suffering this way] (74). This confession gives Tomás confidence to recount the story of his lost love, confiding things to Lituma he has never told anyone else. Although at first Lituma regards these evening sessions as only a way to pass the time, they come to form the basis for true friendship between the two men. In much the same way, Christian students need to realize that in order to build mutual trust, understanding and acceptance, they must spend time listening to members of the target culture talk about experiences, share hopes and dreams or comment on their society. Students will maximize the value of these opportunities by making special effort to comprehend what is said, as much as possible from the perspective of the member of the other culture, and by seeking to direct conversation toward topics that promote mutual understanding and respect. It may also take extra grace to accept criticism, even unwarranted criticism, of their own country without taking offense. Because such interchanges acknowledge the worth of the Other as a whole being, students should recognize them as Christ-like in themselves, even if they never have an opportunity to speak overtly about Christianity.

The empathy Lituma develops for Tomás also helps him see that Tomás (and the people of Naccos) have the same needs, hopes and dreams as he and the rest of the world. This realization is fundamental for mutual understanding and respect to be achieved and, as such, holds special implications for Christians:

Identification equips us to learn to speak others’ languages, to interpret their gestures and to understand their images. ...People often have the opportunity to identify with another culture by learning about and enacting its literature and folktales and performing its music.... Every time we identify with someone else we practice what God perfected in Jesus Christ. God took the form of a human being in order to identify fully with humankind. (Schultze 35-36)

Christian students who are thus prepared will not necessarily find the transition to another culture easy, but they are learning to be obedient to Christ’s example.

Although Lituma's interest in the *andinos* is shaped by his sense of obligation to fellow Peruvians, his capacity as an outsider to respect and be respected by those he perceives as Other, to listen to them and to form meaningful relationships has much in common with the Christian's respect for fellow human beings as bearers of God's image. It also serves as the base on which rests another important aspect of the move from outsider to insider status: his willingness to continue to learn. What he discovers in the course of his investigation will further change the way Lituma views the mountain people. Like Lituma, Christian students come to a language and its culture as outsiders, albeit as outsiders who have (hopefully) been taught to see that the *imago dei* makes others worthy of whatever effort it may require to learn to respect and love them. But, as in Lituma's case, their *willingness* to learn will also be crucial to acceptance. Until Lituma, for example, learns the lessons of the region's history, of the people's religious beliefs, and of the many reasons for their mistrust of outsiders, he wanders around like the proverbial "bull in the china shop" within the new culture.

As is typical of even an informed outsider, the lessons Lituma learns are many. First, he learns a great deal about Naccos and the violent history of the region. He is told that even before the Spaniards conquered the Incas, the Incas had largely exterminated earlier groups, the Huancas and the Chancas. These villagers then are partially acculturated descendants of the Huancas, Chancas and the Incas that a series of cruel conquests has reduced to a tattered remnant.

Lituma also learns that the indigenous population is increasingly threatened by economic difficulties. Although the village has existed for generations, long before the coming of the Spaniards, and even within memory was a thriving, lively place, it is now about to die. If, as seems likely, the nearby road project is discontinued, the workers will leave and the village will neither be able to count on their income nor on the economic progress a new road would have made possible. Lituma's realization that outsiders have thoroughly disrupted the indigenous way of life without providing adequate resources to allow the *andinos* to integrate fully with the rest of Peru gives him further insight into the reasons they do not willingly accept outsiders such as himself.<sup>9</sup>

This general realization is sharpened by specific examples of other outsiders' lack of respect for the *andinos* and their culture. The villagers are afraid of local terrorists purporting to defend their political rights, who may descend on the camp at any moment, and of the military purporting to defend them from the terrorists, which equally indiscriminately tortures and kills. Con-

cerning the villagers' plight Tomás remarks: "Su vida es triste, ¿no? Tiran pala como mulas, y apenas si ganan para comer. Que se diviertan un poco, si pueden, antes de que los terrucos les corten los huevos o venga un teniente Pancorvo y les dé el tratamiento" [Their life is sad, isn't it? They shovel like mules, and hardly earn enough to eat. Let them have a little fun, if they can, before the terrorists cut off their balls or Lieutenant Pancorvo tortures them] (73). Despite both military and terrorist assertions that they serve the people, these groups are not at all interested in the villagers' needs for jobs and security, let alone their dreams for the future.

Other outsiders are less violent and some even claim altruistic motives, but the *andinos* know they have little reason to trust them either. These include foreign 'do-gooders' and scientists such as la señora d'Harcourt, who has spent years working to protect the area's natural resources. Without ever being aware of doing so, however, she too threatens the indigenous way of life: one effect of her efforts to bring in electricity and running water will be that the *andinos* will have to abandon their ancestral homes. Furthermore, it never occurs to her to question whether the changes are anything the people want or whether they are in their best interests. Thus, in the name of progress and her zeal to protect the environment, she objectifies the people and their culture. For another outsider, Danish scientist Paul Stirmson, the people are phenomena, not human beings: "Era un metete, nos estudiaba como si fuéramos plantas o animales... No le interesábamos por nosotros, sino para meternos a sus libros" [He was a busybody, he studied us as if we were plants or animals... We weren't interesting to him as ourselves, he just wanted to put us in his books] (257). Although these outsiders justify their actions as helping the local population, in reality all have their own agenda, the local good is at best peripheral. Unlike them, Christ never objectified those he met, not even to achieve purposes established before the beginning of time. In like manner, it is important that Christian students realize that even worthy goals never justify treating other people as anything less than bearers of God's image.

Alongside these examples of notable failure to accept another culture, Lituma's willingness to respect the mountain peoples is exemplary, but not achieved without great effort. For example, his own religious beliefs stand as a barrier to his ability to acknowledge that their beliefs are very different. At first, their religion is so incomprehensible that he thinks they are making fun of him when they talk about witches and spirits. He simply cannot imagine that anyone could take such ideas seriously. But as his investigation progresses, he discovers they really do believe that everything in Nature is hostile: benign

spirits do less harm, the malign more, but all do harm (67). Even so, he puzzles over the fact that people who have had more or less the same life experiences as he, hold to such different/"strange" beliefs (204). A key experience occurs when he survives a *huayno*, one of the region's cataclysmic landslides, without being harmed. In that moment he understands, at least momentarily, why the Indians believe spirits exist: "Antes de proseguir su camino, aplastó su boca contra la roca que lo había cobijado y como hubiera hecho un serrucho, susurró: <<Gracias por salvarme la vida, mamay, apu, pachamamo o quien chucha seas>>" [Before going on, he plastered his mouth against the boulder that had sheltered him and as just a *serrucho* would have, he murmured: 'Thank you for saving my life, *mamay*, *apu*, *pachamamo* or whoever the heck you are'] (208-9).<sup>10</sup> While this "prayer" in no way implies conversion, his sudden insight in regard to another set of beliefs enables Lituma to understand the *andinos* more fully and to treat them more respectfully.

Such an understanding also makes it possible for Lituma to solve the case of the disappearances. Although Dionesio's wife, Adriana, had indicated early on that they were linked with the spirits, but it is only after his experience with *huayno* and a chance conversation with Professor Stirmon about the area's ancient religious customs that Lituma pays any attention to the idea.<sup>11</sup> When he learns that the *andinos* traditionally appeased the *apus* [spirits] with human sacrifices before they changed the course of a river or built a new road or a new temple he immediately understands that the new road project is the reason for the disappearances. He reflects with surprise: "Ahí estaba para qué servía la historia, pues" [That was what history was for, then!] (203). Thus, Lituma discovers that the lessons of history have practical significance for the present. Like Lituma, Christian students will do well to learn the lessons of history, politics or sociology that are most important to the culture they wish to enter. Otherwise the, too, will be unable to "hear"/interpret what they see or are told because they lack the requisite knowledge. Students will be less prone ignore the another culture's history or make foolish assumptions about other important aspects of the country's political or social life if they know something about it in advance.

Such knowledge is particularly important in regard to religion because Christian students often have a sense of the rightness of their beliefs that easily leads to a lack of respect for those of other people, even other Christians. In contrast, despite the fact that Christ came to establish a better law than the Torah, he showed respect for his people's religious beliefs and history. Students who want to be a part of another culture even briefly must be

willing to learn its lessons and to act accordingly.

Deeper understanding of the Other also has implications for students' personal lives. Christ's admonition to love our neighbor as ourselves seems to imply that an encounter with the Other is also a self-encounter. In a less far reaching but similar way, Lituma's growing knowledge about the area and its inhabitants is paralleled by increasing self-understanding. He realizes, for example, that the disappearances are not just the responsibility of the people of the village, that he also carries some of the blame, that because he failed listen to what people told him, he did not act appropriately. This realization, along with all the other information that Lituma has garnered, enables him to understand that the *andinos* are not really against him. In turn, he makes a gesture of friendship: one night he invites everyone in the cantina to join him in a round. After almost a year of holding himself aloof, this acknowledgement that they are worthy of friendship prompts Dionisio and others to talk more openly about the disappearances.<sup>12</sup> Just as Christ treated each individual as worthy of his attention, Christian students who take the initiative in offering acceptable gestures of friendship often find themselves accepted more quickly.

Along with these gradually opening lines of communication Lituma's ability to learn is augmented and shaped by yet another aspect of his character: his capacity to imagine and thus to empathize. As he listens to others, he visualizes what he hears. Toward the end of the novel, for example, after Lituma finally puts together the pieces of the puzzle concerning the disappearances, he mentally "watches" the villagers prepare a victim for death: "<<Sí, sí>>, repitieron varios, y Lituma se imaginó que muchas docenas de cabezas asentían, confiándole mudamente al albino su reconocimiento, su afecto" ["Yes, yes," several people repeated, and Lituma imagined to himself that several dozen heads nodded, silently entrusting the albino with their understanding, their affection] (239). "Seeing" what has happened helps Lituma understand, at least in part, why these terrible events have taken place.

Lituma is successful in crossing boundaries of culture, geography and creed because he respects others and is empathetic enough to imagine himself in the Other's place. He discovers that the villagers are fearful, lonely and isolated, much as he is. He learns that although people are different they need not be threatening. He learns the value of history, and that he, along with the villagers, shares responsibility for the death of fellow human beings. He also finds understanding for their religious beliefs, even though he does not share them. Christian students who are willing to learn will be much better equipped to find a place to bless and be blessed within the chosen culture.

Although Lituma has not become a complete insider in Naccos by the end of the novel, he has found a meaningful meeting point with the villagers within their social ambiance. Christian students may be disappointed to discover that it may not be possible to become a complete insider, but coming to terms with that reality will free them to be the person they were created to be and may even open doors of ministry not otherwise possible.

By the end of the novel, Lituma has developed a much more complex view of the world. In learning about the *andino*'s history, culture, traditions, way of life, problems, he more clearly recognizes the realities of their lives and analyzes those of his own more critically. Although, for example, surviving a *huayno* helps him understand the *andino*'s terror at the unpredictability of the mountains and their belief in evil spirits, these new insights do not prevent him from feeling revolted by a confession that the men were killed to appease the *apus* nor from recognizing that their "sacrifice" is truly iniquitous: "Qué cosa más horrible que matar a ese albino, a ese capataz y a ese mudito por unos apus que nunca nadie vio ni se sabe si existen" [How horrible to kill the albino, the foreman and the little mute for some *apus* that nobody ever saw and no one knows if they even exist](308). As a result of his experiences in Naccos, Lituma has changed forever: he has learned to function within another culture.

Although *Lituma en los Andes* is not a Christian novel, its protagonist's success in moving from outsider toward insider status offers Christian foreign language students the opportunity to think through issues they will confront in their own travels, and to consider how the ethical and moral demands of Christ and the Gospel will play out in the attitudes and behaviors they will need to develop as they seek to move beyond national and cultural boundaries to find their place as citizens of God's world and builders of His kingdom.

## NOTES

1 I have chosen to retain the term *serrucho* because no English expression, certainly not "mountain person," reflects the pejorative sense the word implies.

2 In 1993, Vargas Llosa chose to leave Peru permanently. Since then, Peru has not been a theme in his novels. He currently resides in Spain and writes for *El País*. Lituma appears in *La casa verde*, *La ciudad y los perros* and *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?*

3 Since the novel is available in translation (*Death in the Andes*, Penguin reprint, 1997), it could be used in translation as well. Despite the availability of the English edition, however, I have used my own translations for this paper because transla-

tions often alter wording slightly to fit the overall context with the result that ideas in the original language that I want to highlight are occasionally lost.

4 Mark Millington notes that Vargas Llosa uses certain characters to explore the question of “how much does the outsider ever infiltrate to become an insider” (169)? James W. Brown’s explains that these characters, displaced from their usual social milieu, suffer an identity crisis similar to that of someone traveling in another country where, although they may try, they never manage to form meaningful social bonds. Brown notes that Vargas Llosa uses this technique in *Los cachorros*, *Pantaleón y las visitadoras*, as well as in three more important novels, *La ciudad y los perros*, *La casa verde*, and *Conversación en La Catedral* (19-21). *El hablador* and *La guerra del fin del mundo* also include characters of this type. It should be noted that Brown’s article (1981) was written before this novel was published and Millington’s (1995) before it was widely available so neither article deals directly with *Lituma en los Andes*. Their explanations do, however, apply very well to *Lituma*, except that he is more successful in making the transition than other Vargas Llosa characters manage.

Although Millington and Brown’s articles contributed most to the ideas in this paper, for general background about Vargas Llosa and the novel, the reader may want to consult the following: Mary G. Berg. “Narrative Multiplicity in Vargas Llosa’s *Lituma en los Andes*.” *La Chispa ’95: Selected Proceedings; Louisiana Conference on Hispanic Languages and Literatures*. Ed. Claire J. Paolini. New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1995. 25-38; M. Keith Booker. *Vargas Llosa among the Postmodernists*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994; Sara Castro-Klarén. *Understanding Mario Vargas Llosa*. Columbia, S.C.: U. of South Carolina Press, 1990; Armando Figueroa. “El regreso del cabo Lituma: Dos mundos andinos vistos por Mario Vargas Llosa.” *Quimera: Revista de Literatura* 122 (1994): 40-44; José Miguel Oviedo. *Mario Vargas Llosa*. Madrid: Taurus, 1981; Arnold M Penuel. “Intertextuality and the Theme of Violence in Vargas’s *Lituma en los Andes*.” *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 29 (1995): 441-460; David Sobrevilla. “La nueva teoría de la novela de Mario Vargas Llosa.” *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos: Revista Mensual de Cultura Hispánica* 496 (1991): 59-71; Emil Volek. “Literatura hispanoamericana entre la modernidad y la postmodernidad.” *Cuadernos de Trabajo* 9 (1994): 36-45; Raymond L. Williams. “Los niveles de la realidad, la función de lo racional y los demonios: *El hablador* y *Lituma en los Andes*.” *Explicación de Textos Literarios* 25 (1996-1997): 141-54.

5 Since the translations are my own, the page numbers refer to the Spanish edition cited, not an English edition.

6 The authors describe the phase following “cultural euphoria” as “cultural confrontation,” This is when “the process of cultural adjustment begins. This stage is typically characterized by confusion and frustration and, as such, is the most difficult stage... This is because everything that you used to do with relative ease in

your home country appears much more difficult due to the culture and/or the language”(86).

7 Thanks to my colleague, Alan Savage, for this observation.

8 Thanks to David Smith for his help in framing this and several other ideas expressed in this paper.

9 Although this paper primarily explores lessons that Christian students who want to travel abroad can learn from Christ in his incarnation and from Lituma as he works to become at least a partial “insider.” It is, however, also worthwhile to remember that analogies are by necessity incomplete. Lituma is often less than the perfect model. Quite unlike Lituma, Christ was not rejected by “his own” for any valid reason, such as acting unjustly or ignoring a need or failing to listen. His rejection stemmed from the fact that those he came to minister to were sinful. In contrast, Lituma is not accepted because of his own mistakes and those of the many other outsiders who have “sinned” against the villagers.

10 Lituma’s survival of the landslide is of great religious significance for the *andinos*. Because of it, they regard Lituma as someone especially favored by the spirits.

11"Recordó el curso que dictaba en el Colegio San Miguel de Piura el profesor Néstor Martos. El se entretenía en sus clases, porque el profesor Martos ... lo explicaba todo como en tecnicolor. Pero nunca se le pasó por la cabeza que estudiar las costumbres de los antiguos peruanos pudiera ser útil para entender lo que ocurría ahora en Naccos” [He remembered the course that Professor Nestor Martos taught in the Colegio San Miguel of Piura. He enjoyed those classes, because Professor Martos ... explained everything as if in technicolor. But it had never occurred to him that studying the customs of ancient Peruvians could help him understand what was going on in Naccos today] (203).

12 As one drunk tells him: “Hablando se entiende la gente” [People understand each other when they talk] (303).

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