

NOTA AL EDITOR / LETTER TO THE EDITOR / NOTA AO EDITOR

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In volume 4, number 1 of the journal *SAPIENTIAE: Ciências sociais, Humanas e Engenharias*, Roy Alfaro Vargas (2018: 5-23), who defines himself as an independent researcher, published an article in which he states the following:

“For example, in the Costa Rican literature, a tale of very low literary quality titled ‘Un joven demonio entre las sombras’ (A young demon among shadows) written by Iván Molina Jiménez shows an unnatural world, in which two hired assassins, who work for a transnational company, have the mission of killing a union member that is communist and that is opposed to the project of such a company. The hired assassins are Europeans, Adèle is French and Kruger, German, who were hired to eliminate an obstacle for the interests of the company that wants to exploit a metal mine in Tanzania (Africa). Both assassins have some kind of weapon that shoots bullets directed by a satellite (this is the unique unnatural element present in this tale), with which they kill the union member. This tale affirms the right to assassinate people that interfere with the objectives of a transnational company, the tale sees as something ethically good to protect capital at any cost, even sacrificing a human life: Molina Jiménez’s tale is an example of the manifestation of fascism into unnatural narratives. Thus, here the chronotope of this unnatural tale is an anthropological synthesis that defines human being as a mere object of capital, that is, human being is understood as a thing, as something completely alienated” (Alfaro Vargas, 2018: 14-15).

The interpretation of Alfaro Vargas diverges from evidence, since nowhere in the discussed short story the author affirms or defends “the right to assassinate people that interfere with the objectives of a transnational company”. Neither that short story shows “as something ethically good to protect capital at any cost, even sacrificing a human life”. Therefore, because the short story does not support Alfaro Vargas interpretation, he can’t offer any direct evidence to sustain it. Consequently, the conclusion reached by Alfaro Vargas (2018: 15) lacks of any foundation:

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anthropological synthesis that defines a human being as a mere object of capital, that is, a human being understood as a thing, as something completely alienated”.

With the purpose of distorting my short story and presenting it as the manifestation of a fascist narrative, Alfaro Vargas deliberately concealed that there is another interpretation of that text, which is far from his. I refer to the analysis carried out by Yolanda Molina-Gavilán, renowned specialist in Latin American science fiction and professor at Eckerd College (Florida). Molina-Gavilán (2015: xii-xiii) interpreted my short story in the framework of the unequal power relationship that exists between developed and developing countries, without indicating that my short story takes a position in favor of the developed countries (rather she suggests the opposite):

“Iván Molina Jiménez, with his much more political ‘A Young Demon Among the Shadows’, transports the reader to Europe and Africa. The two main characters of his story, who are respectively from militarized Germany and France of the future, turn out to be hired assassins at the service of a security company that has as its target a leader of a workers’ strike in Tanzania. The shadows of the title could well be understood as those that hover over developing countries, economically exploited by a first world in need of natural resources and that coldly applies its military superiority” (translated by Iván Molina Jiménez).

Furthermore, with the aim of providing an academic appearance to his interpretation of my short story, Alfaro Vargas, (2018: 14), in footnote number 10, cited himself:

“The literature of Iván Molina Jiménez has been analyzed by Alfaro-Vargas (2013 and 2014b). In reality, the literary production of Molina Jiménez chime in with a penny-dreadful literature. The quality of Molina-Jiménez’s literature is so low; his literature, sold as science fiction, lacks scientific knowledge and an appropriate diegetic development”.

By self-referencing on that footnote, Alfaro Vargas, again deliberately conceals that his publications on Costa Rican science fiction have been deeply questioned by David Díaz Arias (2015), director of the Center for Historical Research of Central America at the University of Costa Rica. According to Díaz Arias, Alfaro Vargas

“...reproduces the Europeanizing and American stereotypes that Latin American science fiction scholars have struggled to overthrow. Thus, perhaps

without knowing it, Alfaro [Vargas] echoes a historical imperial cultural prejudice: to despise what is produced in the peripheries of capitalism and to regard it as not science fiction, just as in the past, that same cultural prejudice has served other imperial purposes” (translated by Iván Molina Jiménez).

Finally, in order not to raise doubts about the objectivity with which he interpreted my short story, Alfaro Vargas also decided to conceal that we have argued in the Costa Rican press, both in the *Semanario Universidad* and in the newspaper *La Nación*. Precisely, in an article published by *La Nación*, I pointed out that Alfaro Vargas is given to criticize institutions and persons, in a disproportionate, unfounded and infamous way: he accused the whole area of Philology of the University of Costa Rica of being corrupt and implied that the renowned Costa Rican novelist, Anacristina Rossi, is a reactionary at the service of the World Bank (Molina Jiménez, 2015). These debates shows that Alfaro Vargas distort data and conceal information, without any respect of the most elementary rules of scientific work.

I deeply thank the editor for giving me the right of reply in order to fulfill the duty to promote academic discussion of the writings published by his journal. I also acknowledge his effort to publish it soon enough.

Bibliographical references

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