



LA ARAUCANA

ALONSO ERCILLA Y DE ZÚÑIGA

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Alonso de Ercilla

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La Araucana Details

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Sam says

As has been the case with many books read this year, my reading of *Ercilla* is a re-read. I sped through 10 cantos (from various parts of this extremely long poem) for my MA exams and absolutely hated it. This second reading has allowed me to see the poem with new eyes and I am very happy with what I have seen.

So I read the poem's first part (15 cantos), which was first published in 1569. My edition is from *Clasicos Castalia*, with an intro by Marcos Morinigo and a text edited by Isias Lerner. Most of it is devoted to the Araucano uprising and initial string of victories. Towards the end, there are several stretches devoted to *Ercilla's* life, and telling how he ended up in Peru. Also, the final canto describes the Spanish defeating their indigenous enemies.

I feel like the intro deserves an aside. It is awesome and incredibly well-researched. I came in with some basic knowledge of dates and content. I knew *Ercilla* had been a page for the king before he was king, and I knew that the poem had been well-received immediately upon publication. Morinigo provides a thorough biography, goes through the poem's reception in different circles, points us to different influences (such as the *Orlando Furioso* and the popularity of the pastoral mode), and in general helps us to understand where the poem came from and what kind of a world led to its inception. What a home run.

This is an epic, although it doesn't have a clear protagonist like *Odysseus*. So, the named characters (and there are loads) are all larger than life. Storms are world-shaking and the land is utopian. Spaniards and natives alike hack and destroy in battle like characters out of *Warhammer 40k*. But *Ercilla's* writing is so good that it never got old. There are loads of cantos devoted to battles, which the poet himself grew tired of (according to the incredible introduction) and eventually replaced with amorous pastoral sequences, but all the clanging swords and giant-slaying remains awesome all the way through.

Kind of surprising for a war poem (at least in my Philistine understanding) is how difficult the language of this poem can be. There are loads of learned words and interesting phrasing, but Lerner's notes are more than up to the task of helping readers. While reading only a selection of cantos does not adequately convey *Ercilla's* skill or the weight of the story, you probably don't need/want to read the entire thing unless you're a scholar. But, should you decide to tackle the whole of this big monster, you won't leave disappointed.

Soledad Solovera says

La Araucana constituye un "must" para todo latinoamericano que se precie de gozar con la poesía.

Es uno de los primeros textos poéticos que se abanderó con la idea "moderna" de nación.

Además muy llamativo por el ingenio con el que fue concebido.

Es un desafío a la denominada leyenda rosa de la colonización y una hermosa apología a un pueblo que fue digno desde sus inicios.

Un gran aporte a la literatura poética de aquel periodo.

Sandra says

Hace años que quería leer este libro y sabía que no sería fácil, pero a veces es interesante leer algo a diferente periodo en tu vida. La araucana la leí en el colegio cuando tenía como 14 años. Ahora, varias décadas después puedo apreciar su contenido literario y la enseñanza histórica encontrada en sus páginas.

William says

Muy buen libro escrito por uno de los historiadores españoles de la época de la conquista española, en un relato épico al estilo de la Iliada o la Eneida nos muestra a personajes tan increíbles como Lautaro, Colocolo, Tucapel, etc etc

Debería ser un libro de lectura obligatoria en el colegio.

Barby says

Me gustó más de lo que esperaba. Las estrategias de Lautaro se llevan todos mis aplausos. Pensé que estaba leyendo la versión completa, pero resultó ser la primera parte. Bueno, me voy a leer la segunda, adiós.

Alfonso J. says

Un libro de referencia para aquellos que quieran acercarse a la épica renacentista. Yo me lo he leído porque tenía que hacerlo. Le doy tres estrellas por las deliciosas descripciones del pueblo araucano, donde se muestra la admiración de Ercilla, y la maestría de algunas escenas bélicas. Se nota el paso del tiempo.

Herni says

No pongo los libros del colegio, pero este es tan malo que merece que le den 1 estrella (aproximada, porque era 0.5) y ponerlo acá

Nameh dah says

Lo leí en mi juventud con odio porque estaba en un momento en que yo y cualquier tipo de manifestación poética no nos llevábamos. No comprendí nada y lo dejé a un lado. Retomado, nuevamente por obligación, la descubro con otra mirada, y ahg... Ahora solo me causa mucha rabia.

Mucha.
Pero no deja de ser LA ARAUCANA.

E igual me entretuve leyéndolo.

Más rabia.

David K. Lemons says

I wanted to maintain all the Spanish I had taken--2 years in high school, 1 year in college, plus what I had learned on my own growing up in Texas, and the delightful 2 months I had spent in Puebla, Mexico, with my classmates from Sam Houston State University in 1963-64.

I loved Spanish, having first heard it consciously as a 4th grader in the "Chinese" grocery on Allendale in South Houston, Texas, where I would shop for milk and bread for my mother and carry it back to our home there in South Houston on my bike. The first time I knew what they were talking about was when I heard "bomba atomica". That's about all I understood along with "Truman" but it was enough to make me a fan of not only Spanish, but also foreign languages in general.

In the Army, I was assigned not Spanish as I had wanted but French. So, Spanish was put on hold a few years. When I got to Sam Houston, I had the chance to translate and use parts of the "Araucana" in one of the editions by Ercilla y Zuniga, which was surprisingly available in the tiny college library. I read the whole thing as presented in that book in Spanish and English over several weeks and presented my paper.

It was a fulfilling experience and I became more familiar with the conquistadores of Chile and the Araucana Indians at the very tip of South America. Later I read that probably it took a mere 1,000 years for the first proto-Indians--aborigines, of the Western Hemisphere entering from Kamchatka/Siberia 30,000 to 50,000 years ago to migrate to Tierra del Fuego. This put the Araucana in a new perspective for me.

The Araucana is an important book from a historical viewpoint but also from a literary one, if you enjoy Spanish and the Hispanic culture in general.

Felipe Quezada says

Este poema me gusto muchisimo y se me hizo muy interesante porque es lo que vivio Alonso de ercilla cuando llego a chile en el periodo de la conquista.

Marlen Leiva says

Una lectura indispensable para todo el que este estudiando Literatura Hispanoamérica. Es un poema épico de corte manierista, a veces es complejo entender algunos términos ya que el autor hace gala de un amplio y complejo vocabulario. Sin embargo es muy interesante cuando describe a los araucanos, sus costumbres y su valentía para defender sus tierras del dominio español.

