

A Great Writer We Should Know

J.M. Coetzee

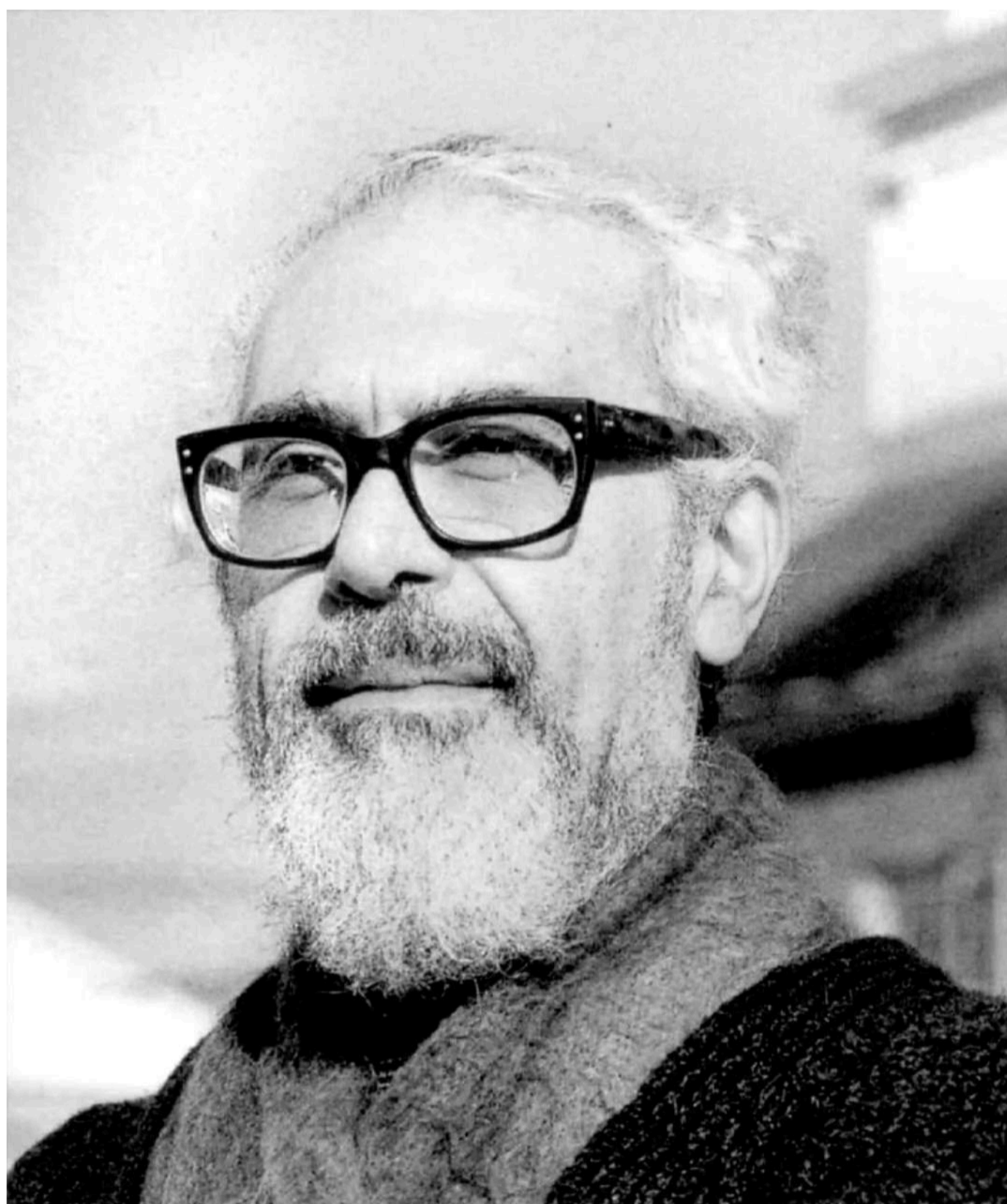
Antonio Di Benedetto's 'Zama'

January 19, 2017 issue

Reviewed:

Zama

by Antonio Di Benedetto, translated from the Spanish by Esther Allen
New York Review Books, 201 pp., \$15.95 (paper)



Antonio Di Benedetto

The year is 1790, the place an unnamed outpost on the Paraguay River ruled from faraway Buenos Aires. Don Diego de Zama has been here for fourteen months, serving in the Spanish administration, separated from his wife and sons. Nostalgically Zama looks back to the days when he was a *corregidor* (chief administrator) with a district of his own to run:

Doctor Don Diego de Zama!... The forceful executive, the pacifier of Indians, the warrior who rendered justice without recourse to the sword..., who put down the native rebellion without wasting a drop of Spanish blood.

Now, under a new, centralized system of government meant to tighten Spain's control over its colonies, chief administrators have to be Spanish-born. Zama serves as second-in-command to a Spanish *gobernador*: as a Creole, an *americano* born in the New World, he can aspire no higher. He is in his mid-thirties; his career is stagnating. He has applied for a transfer; he dreams of the letter from the viceroy that will whisk him away to Buenos Aires, but it does not come.

Strolling around the docks, he notices a corpse floating in the water, the corpse of a monkey that had dared to quit the jungle and dive into the flux. Yet even in death the monkey is trapped amid the piles of the wharf, unable to escape downriver. Is it an omen?

Besides his dream of being returned to civilization, Zama dreams of a woman, not his wife, much as he loves her, but someone young and beautiful and of European birth, who will save him not only from his present state of sexual deprivation and social isolation but also from a harder-to-pin-down existential condition of yearning for he knows not what. He tries to project this dream upon various young women glimpsed in the streets, with negligible success.

In his erotic fantasies his mistress will have a delicate way of making love such as he has never tasted before, a uniquely European way. How so? Because in Europe, where it is not so fiendishly hot, women are clean and never sweat. Alas, here he is, womanless, "in a country whose name a whole infinity of French and Russian ladies—an infinity of people across the world—[have] never heard." To such people, Europeans, *real* people, America is not real. Even to him America lacks reality. It is a flatland without feature in whose vastness he is lost.

Male colleagues invite him to join them in a visit to a brothel. He declines. He has intercourse with women only if they are white and Spanish, he primly explains.

From the small pool of white and Spanish women at hand he selects as a potential mistress the wife of a prominent landowner. Luciana is no beauty—her face puts him in mind of a horse—but she has an attractive figure (he has spied on her, bathing naked). He calls upon her in a spirit of "foreboding, pleasure, and tremendous irresolution," unsure how one goes about seducing a married lady. And indeed, Luciana proves to be no pushover. In his campaign to wear her down, she is always a move ahead of him.

As an alternative to Luciana there is Rita, the Spanish-born daughter of his landlord. But before he can get anywhere with her, her current lover, a vicious bully, humiliates her grossly in public. She pleads with Zama to avenge her. Although the role of avenger attracts him, he finds reasons not to confront his formidable rival. (Zama's author, Antonio Di Benedetto, provides him with a neatly Freudian dream to explain his fear of potent males.)

Unsuccessful with Spanish women, Zama has to resort to women of the town. Generally he steers clear of mulattas "so as not to dream of them and render myself susceptible and bring about my downfall." The downfall to which he refers is certainly masturbation, but more significantly involves a step down the social ladder, confirming the metropolitan cliché that Creoles and mixed breeds belong together.

A mulatta gives him an inviting look. He follows her into the dingier quarter of the town, where he is attacked by a pack of dogs. He dispatches the dogs with his rapier, then, "swaggering and dominant" (his language), takes the woman. Once they are finished, she offers in a businesslike way to become his kept mistress. He is offended. "The episode was an affront to my right to lose myself in love. In any love born of passion, some element of idyllic charm is required." Later, reflecting on the fact that dogs are as yet the only creatures whose blood his sword has spilled, he dubs himself "dogslayer."

Zama is a prickly character. He holds a degree in letters and does not like it when the locals are not properly respectful. He suspects that people mock him behind his back, that plots are being cooked up to humiliate him. His relations with women—which occupy most of the novel—are characterized by crudity on the one hand and timidity on the other. He is vain, maladroit, narcissistic, and morbidly suspicious; he is prone to accesses of lust and fits of violence, and endowed with an endless capacity for self-deception.

He is also the author of himself, in a double sense. First, everything we hear about him comes from his own mouth, including such derogatory epithets as "swaggering" and "dogslayer," which suggest a certain ironic self-awareness. Second, his day-to-day actions are dictated by the promptings of his unconscious, or at least his inner self, over which he makes no effort to assert conscious control. His narcissistic pleasure in himself includes the pleasure of never knowing what he will get up to next, and thus of being free to invent himself as he goes along.

On the other hand—as he intermittently recognizes—his indifference to his deeper motives may be generating his many failures: "Something greater, I knew not what, a kind of potent negation, invisible to the eye,...superior to any strength I might muster or rebellion I might wage," may be dictating his destiny. It is his self-

cultivated lack of inhibition that leads him to launch an unprovoked knife attack on the only colleague who is well disposed toward him, then to sit back while the young man takes the blame and loses his job.

Zama's incurious and indeed amoral attitude toward his own violent impulses led some of his first readers to compare him with the Meursault of Albert Camus's novel *L'Étranger* (existentialism was in vogue in the Argentina of the 1950s, when *Zama* first appeared). But the comparison is not helpful. Though he carries a rapier, Zama's weapon of choice is the knife. The knife betrays him as an *americano*, as does his lack of polish as a seducer and (Di Benedetto will later imply) his moral immaturity. Zama is a child of the Americas. He is also a child of his times, the heady 1790s, justifying his promiscuity by invoking the rights of man—specifically the right to have sex (or, as he prefers to put it, to “lose myself in love”). The configuration, cultural and historical, is Latin American, not French (or Algerian).

More important than Camus as an influence was Jorge Luis Borges, Di Benedetto's elder contemporary and the dominant figure in the Argentine intellectual landscape of his day. In 1951 Borges had given an influential speech, “The Argentine Writer and Tradition,” in which, responding to the question of whether Argentina should be developing a literary tradition of its own, he poured scorn on literary nationalism: “What is our Argentine tradition?... Our tradition is all of Western culture.... Our patrimony is the universe.”

Friction between Buenos Aires and the provinces has been a constant of Argentine history, dating back to colonial times, with Buenos Aires, gateway to the wider world, standing for cosmopolitanism, while the provinces adhered to older, nativist values. Borges was quintessentially a man of Buenos Aires, whereas Di Benedetto's sympathies lay with the provinces: he chose to live and work in Mendoza, the city of his birth in the far west of the country.

Though his regional sympathies ran deep, Di Benedetto as a young man was impatient with the stuffiness of those in charge of the cultural institutions of the provinces, the so-called generation of 1925. He immersed himself in the modern masters—Freud, Joyce, Faulkner, the French existentialists—and involved himself professionally in cinema, as a critic and writer of screenplays (Mendoza of the postwar years was a considerable center of film culture). His first two books, *Mundo animal* (1953) and *El pentágono* (1955), are resolutely modernist, with no regional coloring. His debt to Kafka is particularly clear in *Mundo animal*, where he blurs the distinction between human and animal along the lines of Kafka's “Report to an Academy” or “Investigations of a Dog.”

Zama takes up directly the matter of Argentine tradition and the Argentine character: what they are, what they should be. It takes as a theme the cleavage between coast and interior, between European

and American values. Naively and somewhat pathetically, its heroes hankers after an unattainable Europe. Yet Di Benedetto does not use his hero's comical hispanophilism to push the case for regional values and the literary vehicle associated with regionalism, the old-fashioned realist novel. The river port where *Zama* is set is barely described; we have little idea how its people dress or occupy themselves; the language of the book sometimes evokes, to the point of parody, the eighteenth-century novel of sentiment, but it more often calls up the twentieth-century theater of the absurd (Di Benedetto was an admirer of Eugène Ionesco and of Luigi Pirandello before him). To the extent that *Zama* satirizes cosmopolitan aspirations, it does so in a thoroughly cosmopolitan, modernist way.

But Di Benedetto's engagement with Borges was more far-reaching and complex than mere critique of his universalism and suspicion of his patrician politics (Borges called himself a Spencerian anarchist, meaning that he disdained the state in all its manifestations, while Di Benedetto thought of himself as a socialist). For his part, Borges clearly recognized Di Benedetto's talent and indeed, after the publication of *Zama*, invited him to the capital to give a lecture at the National Library, of which he was director.

In 1940, along with two writer colleagues associated with the magazine *Sur*, Borges had edited an *Antología de la literatura fantástica*, a work that had a far-reaching effect on Latin American literature. In their preface the editors argued that, far from being a debased subgenre, fantasy embodied an ancient, preliterate way of seeing the world. Not only was fantasy intellectually respectable, it also had a precursor tradition among Latin American writers that was itself a branch of a greater world tradition. Borges's own fiction would appear under the sign of the fantastic; the fantastic, deployed upon the characteristic themes of regional literature, with the narrative innovations of William Faulkner added to it, would give birth to the magic realism of Gabriel García Márquez.

The revaluation of the fantastic advocated by Borges and the writers around *Sur* was indispensable to Di Benedetto's growth. As he testified in an interview shortly before his death, fantasy, coupled with the tools provided by psychoanalysis, opened the way for him as a writer to explore new realities. In the second part of *Zama*, the fantastic comes to the fore.

The story resumes in 1794. The colony has a new governor. Zama has acquired a woman, a penniless Spanish widow, to satisfy his physical needs, though he does not live with her. She has borne him a son, a sickly child who spends his days playing in the dirt. Her relations with Zama are entirely without tenderness. She "allows him in" only when he brings money.

A clerk in the administration named Manuel Fernández is discovered to be writing a book during office hours. The governor takes a dislike to Fernández and demands that Zama find a pretext for dismissing him. Zama reacts with irritation, directed not at the governor but at this hapless young idealist, “this book-writing homunculus” lost in the outer reaches of Empire.

To Zama, Fernández innocently confides that he writes because it gives him a sense of freedom. Since the censor is unlikely to permit publication, he will bury his manuscript in a box for his grandchildren’s grandchildren to dig up. “Things will be different then.”

Zama has run up debts that he cannot settle. Out of kindness, Fernández offers to support Zama’s irregular family—indeed, to marry the unloved widow and give the child his name. Zama responds with characteristic suspiciousness: What if it is all a scheme to make him feel indebted?

Short of money, Zama becomes a boarder in the home of a man named Soledo. Included in Soledo’s household is a woman, seen only fleetingly, who is at one point claimed (by the servants) to be Soledo’s daughter and at another to be his wife. There is another mystery woman too, a neighbor who sits at her window staring pointedly at Zama whenever he passes. Most of Part 2 is concerned with Zama’s attempts to solve the riddle of the women: Are there two women in the household or just one, who performs rapid changes of costume? Who is the woman at the window? Is the whole charade being orchestrated by Soledo to make fun of him? How can he get sexual access to the women?

At first, Zama takes on the riddle as a challenge to his ingenuity. There are pages where, with a nudge from his translator, he sounds like one of Samuel Beckett’s heroes of pure intellect, spinning one far-fetched hypothesis after another to explain why the world is as it is. By degrees, however, Zama’s quest grows more urgent and indeed fevered. The woman at the window reveals herself: she is physically unattractive and no longer young. Half drunk, Zama feels free to throw her to the ground and “[take] her with vehemence,” that is, rape her, then, when he is finished, demand money. He is back on familiar psychic terrain: on the one hand he has a woman whom he can despise but who is sexually available, on the other a woman (or perhaps two women) who, in all her/their “fearsome charm,” can continue to be the unattainable (and perhaps inexistent) object of his desire.

Z*ama* took a long time to gestate but was written in a hurry. The haste of its composition shows most clearly in Part 2, where the dreamlike topography of Soledo’s residence will be as confusing to the reader as it is to Zama, drifting from room to darkened room trying to

grasp what it is that he is after. Confusing yet fascinating: Di Benedetto lets go of the reins of narrative logic and allows the spirit to take his hero where it will.

There is a rap at the door. It is a ragged, barefoot boy, a mysterious messenger who has appeared in Zama's life before and will appear again. Behind the boy, as if in tableau, a trio of runaway horses are engaged in trampling a small girl to death.

I returned to my quarters as if harvesting the darkness, and with a new faculty—or so it seemed—of perceiving myself from without. I could see myself gradually transformed into a figure of mourning, the shadows, soft as bat's down, adhering to me as I passed.... I was going to confront something, someone, and I understood that I was to choose it or choose for it to die.

A feminine presence wafts past. Zama raises a candle to the being's face. It is *she!* But who is she? His senses reel. A fog seems to invade the room. He staggers into bed, wakes up to find the woman from the window watching over him, "compassionate affection, an amorous and self-abnegating pity in her eyes...[a woman] without mystery." Bitterly she observes how in thrall he is to the enchantments of "that other glimpsed figure," and delivers a homily on the perils of fantasy.

Rising at last from his sickbed, Zama decides that the entire episode of "harvesting the darkness" is to be explained—and explained away—as the product of a fever. He backtracks from the obscurer regions into which hallucination has been leading him, falters in his hesitant self-exploration, reinstates the dichotomy of fantasy (fever) and reality that he was in the process of breaking down.

To grasp what is at stake at this moment, we need to hark back to Kafka, the writer who did the most to shape Di Benedetto's art, both directly and through the mediation of Borges. As part of his project of rehabilitating the fantastic as a literary genre, Borges had in the mid-1930s published a series of articles on Kafka in which, crucially, he distinguished between dreams, which characteristically lay themselves open to interpretation, and the nightmares of Kafka (the long nightmare of Josef K. in *The Trial* is the best example), which come to us as if in an indecipherable language. The unique horror of the Kafkaan nightmare, says Borges, is that we know (in some sense of the word "know") that what we are undergoing is not real, but, in the grip of the hallucinatory *proceso* (process, trial), we are unable to escape.



Franz Kafka; drawing by David Levine
[Buy Print](#)

At the end of Part 2, Zama, a character in what amounts to a historical fantasy, dismisses as insignificant because unreal the hallucinatory fantasy he has just undergone. His prejudice in favor of the real continues to hold him back from self-knowledge.

After a gap of five years, the story resumes. Zama's efforts to secure a transfer have failed; his amours seem to be a thing of the past.

A contingent of soldiers is being sent out to scour the wilds for Vicuña Porto, a bandit of mythical status—no one is even sure what he looks like—on whom all the colony's woes are blamed.

From the time he spent as *corregidor*, Zama recalls a Vicuña Porto who fomented rebellion among the Indians. Though the troops are to be led by the incompetent, pigheaded Capitán Parrilla, Zama joins them, hoping that a spectacular success will advance his cause.

One dark night on the trail a nondescript soldier takes Zama aside. It is Vicuña Porto himself, masquerading as one of Parrilla's men and thus in effect hunting himself. He confides that he wishes to quit banditry and rejoin society.

Should Zama betray Porto's confidence? The code of honor says no; but the freedom to obey no code, to follow impulse, to be perverse, says yes. So Zama denounces Porto to Parrilla and at once feels "clean in every fiber of [his] being."

Without compunction Parrilla arrests both Zama and Porto. Hands bound, face swollen with fly-bites, Zama contemplates being paraded back in the town: "Vicuña Porto, the bandit, would be no more defeated, repugnant, and wretched than Zama, his accessory."

But the bandit turns the tables. Murdering Parrilla in cold blood, he invites Zama to join his band. Zama refuses, whereupon Porto hacks off his fingers and abandons him, mutilated, in the wilds.

At this desperate juncture salvation appears in the form of the barefoot boy who has haunted Zama for the past decade. "He was me, myself from before.... Smiling like a father, I said, 'You haven't grown....' With irreducible sadness he replied, 'Neither have you.'"

Thus ends the third and last part of *Zama*. In the somewhat too facile lesson that its hero-narrator invites us to draw, searching for oneself, as Vicuña Porto has been pretending to do, is much like the search for freedom, "which is not *out there* but within *each one*." What we most truly seek lies within: our self as we were before we lost our natural innocence.

Having seen in Parts 1 and 2 a bad Zama, a Zama misled by vain dreams and confused by lust, we find in Part 3 that a good Zama is still recoverable. Zama's last act before losing his fingers is to write a letter to his infinitely patient wife, seal it in a bottle, and consign it to the river: "Marta, I haven't gone under." "The message was not destined for Marta or anyone out there," he confides. "I had written it for myself."

The dream of recovering Eden, of making a new start, animated European conquest of the New World from the time of Columbus. Into the independent nation of Argentina, born in 1816, poured wave after wave of immigrants in quest of a utopia that turned out not to exist. It is not surprising that frustrated hope is one of the great subterranean themes of Argentine literature. Like Zama in his river-port in the wilds, the immigrant finds himself dumped in an anything but Edenic site from which there is no obvious escape. *Zama* the book is dedicated to "the victims of expectation."

Zama's adventures in wild Indian territory are related in the rapid, clipped style Di Benedetto learned by writing for the cinema. Part 3 of the novel has been given great weight by some of his critics. In the light of Part 3, *Zama* is read as the story of how an *americano* comes to cast off the myths of the Old World and commit himself not to an imaginary Eden but to the New World in all its amazing reality. This reading is supported by the rich textual embedding that Di Benedetto supplies: exotic flora and fauna, fabulous mineral deposits, strange foodstuffs, savage tribes and their customs. It is as though for the first time in his life Zama is opening his eyes to the plenitude of the continent. That all this lore came to Di Benedetto not from personal experience—he had not set foot in Paraguay—but from old books, among them a biography of one Miguel Gregorio de Zamalloa, born 1753, *corregidor* during the rebellion of Túpac Amaru, last of the Inca monarchs, is an irony that need not trouble us.

Antonio Di Benedetto was born in 1922 into a middle-class family. In 1945 he abandoned his legal studies to join *Los Andes*, the most prestigious newspaper in Mendoza. In due course he would become, in all but name, editor in chief. The owners of the newspaper dictated a conservative line, which he felt as a constraint. Until his arrest in 1976—for violating that constraint—he thought of himself as a professional journalist who wrote fiction in his spare time.

Zama (1956) was his first full-length novel. It received appropriate critical attention. Not unnaturally in a country that saw itself as a cultural outlier of Europe, attempts were made to supply it with a European parentage. Its author was identified first as a Latin American existentialist, then a Latin American *nouveau romancier*. During the 1960s the novel was translated into a number of European languages, English not included. In Argentina *Zama* has remained a cult classic.

Di Benedetto's own contribution to this debate on paternity was to point out that if his fiction, particularly his short fiction, might sometimes seem blank, lacking in commentary, as if recorded by a camera eye, that might be not because he was imitating the practice of Alain Robbe-Grillet but because both of them were actively involved in cinema.

Zama was followed by two further novels and several collections of short fiction. The most interesting of these works is *El silenciero* (The Silencer), the story of a man (never named) who is trying to write a book but cannot hear himself think in the noise of the city. His obsession with noise consumes him, eventually driving him mad.

First published in 1964, the novel was substantially revised in 1975 so as to give its reflections on noise greater philosophical depth (Schopenhauer comes to figure prominently) and to forestall any simple, sociological reading of it. In the revised edition noise acquires a metaphysical dimension: the protagonist is caught up in a hopeless quest for the primordial silence preceding the divine *logos* that brought the world into being.

El silenciero goes further than *Zama* in its use of the associative logic of dream and fantasy to propel its narrative. As a novel of ideas that includes ideas about how a novel can be put together, as well as in its mystical streak, *El silenciero* very likely pointed the direction Di Benedetto would have followed as a writer, had history not intervened.

On March 24, 1976, the military seized power in Argentina, with the collusion of the civilian government and to the relief of a large segment of the population, sick and tired of political violence and social chaos. The generals at once put into effect their master plan or "Process for National Reorganization." General Ibérico Saint-Jean, installed as governor of Buenos Aires, spelled out what *El Proceso* would entail: "First we will kill all the subversives, then we will kill their collaborators, then their sympathizers, then those who remained indifferent, and finally we will kill the timid."

Among the many so-called subversives detained on the first day of the coup was Di Benedetto. Later he would (like Josef K.) claim not to know why he was arrested, but it is plain that it was in retaliation for his activities as editor of *Los Andes*, where he had authorized the publication of reports on the activities of right-wing death squads. (After his arrest, the proprietors of the newspaper wasted no time in washing their hands of him.)

Detention routinely began with a bout of "tactical interrogation," the euphemism for torture, intended to extract information but also to make it plain to the detainee that he or she had entered a new world with new rules. In many cases, writes Eduardo Duhalde, the trauma of the first torture, reinforced by having to watch or listen to the torture

of other prisoners, marked the prisoner for the rest of his/her life. The favored instrument of torture was the electric prod, which induced acute convulsions. Aftereffects of the prod ranged from intense muscular pain and paralysis to neurological damage manifested in disrhythmia, chronic headaches, and memory loss.*

Di Benedetto spent eighteen months in prison, mostly in the notorious Unit 9 of the Penitentiary Services of La Plata. His release came after appeals to the regime by Heinrich Böll, Ernesto Sabato, and Jorge Luis Borges, backed by PEN International. Soon afterward he went into exile.

A friend who saw him after his release was distressed by how he had aged: his hair had turned white, his hands trembled, his voice faltered, he walked with a shuffle. Although Di Benedetto never wrote directly about his prison experience—he preferred to practice what he called the therapy of forgetting—press interviews allude to vicious blows to the head (“Since that day my capacity to think has been affected”); to a session with the cattle prod (the shock was so intense that it felt as if his inner organs were collapsing); and to a mock execution before a firing squad when the one thought in his mind was: What if they shoot me in the face? Fellow inmates, most of them younger than he, recalled that he seemed bewildered by the brutal prison regime, trying to make sense of the random assaults he suffered from guards when the essence of these assaults was that they should be unpredictable and—like a Kafkaesque nightmare—make no sense.

Exile took Di Benedetto to France, to Germany, and eventually to Spain, where he joined tens of thousands of other refugees from Latin America. Though he had a contract for a weekly column in a Buenos Aires newspaper and enjoyed a residency at the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire, he recalled his exile as a time when he lived like a beggar, stricken with shame whenever he saw himself in the mirror.

In 1984, after civilian rule had been reinstalled, Di Benedetto returned to an Argentina ready to see in him an embodiment of the nation’s desire to purge itself of its recent past and make a fresh start. But it was a role he was too aged, too beaten down, too bitter to fulfill. The creative energy that prison and exile had taken away from him was irrecoverable. “He began dying...on the day of his arrest,” remarked a Spanish friend. “He continued to die here in Spain...and when he decided to return to his own country it was only in search of a more or less decent ending.” His last years were marred by recriminations. Having first been welcomed back, he said, he had then been abandoned to even greater poverty than in Spain. He died in 1986 at the age of sixty-three.

During his exile in Spain Di Benedetto published two collections of short fiction, *Absurdos* (1978) and *Cuentos de exilio* (1983). Some of the pieces in *Absurdos* had been written in prison and smuggled out. The recurring theme of these late stories is guilt and punishment, usually self-punishment, often for a transgression one cannot remember. The best-known, a masterpiece in its own right, is “Aballay,” made into a film in 2011, about a *gaucho* who decides to pay for his sins in the manner of the Christian saint Simeon Stylites. Since the pampas have no marble columns, Aballay is reduced to doing penitence on horseback, never dismounting.

These sad, often heartbreaking late stories, some no more than a page in length—images, broken memories—make it clear that Di Benedetto experienced exile not just as an enforced absence from his homeland but as a profoundly internalized sentence that had somehow been pronounced upon him, an expulsion from the real world into a shadowy afterlife.

Sombras, nada mas... (1985), his last work, can most charitably be looked on as the trace of an experiment not carried all the way through. Finding one’s way through *Sombras* is no easy task. Narrators and characters merge one into another, as do dream and represented reality; the work as a whole tries doggedly but fails to locate its own *raison d’être*. A mark of its failure is that Di Benedetto felt compelled to provide a key explaining how the book was put together and offering guidance on how to read it.

Zama ends with its hero mutilated, unable to write, waiting in effect for the coming of the man who a century and a half later will tell his story. Like Miguel Fernández burying his manuscript, Di Benedetto—in a brief testament penned shortly before his death—affirmed that his books were written for future generations. How prophetic this modest boast will be, only time will tell.

Zama remains the most attractive of Di Benedetto’s books, if only because of the crazy energy of Zama himself, which is vividly conveyed in Esther Allen’s excellent translation. A selection of Di Benedetto’s short fiction (his *Cuentos completos* runs to seven hundred pages), in translations by Adrian West and Martina Broner, has been announced for 2017 by Archipelago Books. It is to be hoped that some enterprising publisher will soon pick up *El silenciero*.

Copyright © 2016 by J.M. Coetzee

J.M. Coetzee

J.M. Coetzee is Professorial Research Fellow at the University of Adelaide. He is the author of seventeen works of fiction, as well as numerous works of criticism and translation. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2003. (September 2019)