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SPRING 1977
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CHICANO COMMUNICATION: Rhetoric of Identity and Integration

by Nobleza C. Asuncion-Lande
The University of Kansas

Although the Mexican Americans are the second largest minority in the United States, they are among the least well known of minority groups. When the average American has occasion to think of the Mexican American, images of a mustachioed seraped "Frito Bandido", a big sombreroed "Taco Juan" sleeping under a cactus tree or a dark eyed senorita with a heavily fringed shawl over her shoulders are conjured. These images have contributed to their being comfortably regarded as "small children" by the members of the dominant society. And small children may be seen but not heard.

There are approximately seven million Americans of Mexican descent in the United States. Approximately sixty percent of them live in the five southwestern states: Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. The others are scattered over the length and breadth of the United States from the midwest to New England and upstate New York.

Until very recently, there has been no single designation for them. In California they are still called Mexicanos, in Texas, Latin Americans or Tejanos, in New Mexico, nuevo Mexicanos or Hispanos. The government in turn has successively referred to them as Spanish-speaking, Spanish Americans, Spanish surnamed Americans of Mexican descent or just plain Mexican Americans. This latter name has become common designation used by both the Mexican Americans themselves and by members of the dominant society. The term "Mexican American" refers to a composite of Spaniards and Mestizos of Mexican culture who were either absorbed during southwest expansionism of the United States following the cessation of hostilities between the two countries. "Chicano" is a value laden label with different connotations depending upon who uses it. It is not a universal self-designating term for all those of Mexican origin. The differing connotations of "Chicano" will be discussed in the later part of this paper.

Mexican Americans share some common characteristics with other racial minorities in the United States. While individual Mexican Americans may differ in the degrees to which they are separated from the mainstream of American society depending upon their degrees of acculturation and acceptance, they all think of themselves as a distinct group set off from that mainstream to some degree. This feeling of ethnic identity has both a communal and a personal dimension. The communal dimension is the peculiar bond that causes an individual to view himself as a member of a distinct group with its own standards of behavior and clusters of values and beliefs, which make him feel most comfortable and secure when among persons sharing them. The personal dimension is the feeling of belonging which enables an individual to place himself in society. As social relations become more complex and impersonal, ethnic identity becomes a reassuring anchor in an unsettling and chaotic world.

Like the Blacks and the Asian Americans, the Mexican Americans have been exploited as providers of cheap labor. Like the American Indians, the Blacks, and the Asian Americans they are physically distinguishable from Anglo Americans and are culturally marked by their distinctive patterns of speech. Like the American Indians, the Mexican Americans are concentrated in particular regions and have become a minority largely through conquest.

But the Mexican Americans also have a rich and unique tradition, native to America, with its own political driving force and its own specific potential for future development. The core of that tradition is found in their history, their distinctive culture which has survived both in spite of and because of discrimination, and in a pattern of objective and subjective deprivation that has imposed bitter hardship on a large and growing population. (Makielski, Jr.,).

In spite of this rich and unique tradition the Mexican Americans are not a homogeneous group. There are class differences and regional distinctions. While they may share a common language, a common religion and a strong tie to both their Spanish cultural heritage, their class and regional variations have been strong enough to contribute to the problems they have encountered as a consequence of the economic, social and legal losses associated with their being a "vanquished" people in the United States.

The Anglo American celebrate the founding of the United States by marking the anniversaries of Jamestown and Plymouth. Before that time, however, the southwestern segment of what is now the United States had already been explored and colonized by the Spaniards. When Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, a clearly defined set of societies has been established in what is now Texas, New Mexico and California. Each of these areas developed a distinctive history as the settlers had to cope with different geographical and environmental conditions. The birth of the Mexican state included a boundary settlement with the United States. But as more Anglo Americans moved into the areas which were already occupied by Mexicans, tensions between the original settlers and the newcomers grew. Their mutual hostility culminated in a war between the two countries which led to a military victory for the United States and its acquisition of a large part of what is now the American southwest, together with a large population of former Mexican citizens.

Following the annexation by the United States of its Southwestern states from Mexico, a steady stream of Anglos entered the region. The structure of society was altered and the centers of power became Anglicized. As the Anglos became the leading social, economic and political force of the area, the native born Mexican Americans were dispossessed of their properties and relegated to the lowest rung of the social ladder.

Early in the twentieth century following the outbreak of the Mexican revolution, Mexicans from across the border began immigrating to the United States. The chronic labor shortages in this country resulting from rapid industrialization attracted a great many Mexicans who were lured by hopes of economic improvement. Their arrival soon changed the composition of the Mexican American commu nity. Whereas the native born Mexican Americans were largely farmers or ranchers, the new arrivals took whatever jobs they could get. A large portion of them became agricultural laborers or urban workers in low-paying menial jobs. The Anglos however did not make a sharp distinction between native Mexican Americans and the newly arrived immigrants. Both were regarded as Mexicans. Most original settlers

did not wish to identify themselves with the impoverished Mexican immigrants and refused to provide assistance to the newcomers in order not to be publicly associated with them.

Regional and class distinctions within the Mexican community were further aggravated by the varying mixtures of Caucasian and Indian ancestry found among Mexican Americans as well as their varying degrees of acculturation and integration into the dominant society, i.e., by their differing degrees of access to the opportunities available in the American societal mainstream. These differences have contributed to the disunity among Mexican Americans which had been manifested in the lack of common action, the limited group cohesion and the existence of very few leaders who could articulate their common grievances against the Anglo dominated society.

THE RHETORIC OF IDENTITY

From the beginning of Anglo settlement in former Mexican territory, up to the present time, the original inhabitants who formerly owned the land have been treated as somewhat inferior by members of the dominant society. The feeling of superiority on the part of the Anglo-American group was reinforced by the arrival of lower class Mexican immigrants who have kept their traditional Mexican customs, language and style of life, and who have lived in substandard housing in ghetto areas. Because of their number and their visibility as a distinctive group, Americans of Mexican descent regardless of their class status have been stereotyped as inferior by the dominant Anglos.

In order for a Mexican American to free himself of the negative status imposed upon him he could either deny his ethnicity or reject the right of the dominant society to impose stereotyped roles and behavior upon his ethnic group. A Mexican American who identified with his ethnic group was liable to forfeit the social and economic rewards that were reserved for members of the dominant group. Yet, if he identified with the Anglo society and was successful at it, he was sure to face rejection and accompanying censure for being a "Malinche." Whatever alternative he chose, he suffered the concomitant consequences. Still, if opportunities and rewards depend on changing identifies, many persons have been prepared to do so.

The problem of identity appears not to have been as overwhelmingly important to the upper and middle class strata of Mexican American society, as it was to the lower class stratum. As Stoddard states:

> Since their elevated social position has always been taken for granted, they have never had to identify themselves in any manner other than as members of the social elite. The upper and middle class families of Mexico enjoy a priviledged position within their specific social structure. United States citizens of similar status who wish to enter Mexican politics or to inherit real estate in the Republic, or to own a communal enterprise there change their citizenship to that of Mexico. There appears to be little social adjustment in shifting from one elite to another, however, the change being one of expediency rather than of ethnic identity."

The Mexican-American elite enjoys prestige and wealth within their own social system. These appurtenances provide the security that enables them to maintain a positive self identity and to interact with ease intra-culturally and inter-culturally. They experience some socio-economic tensions within the context of a dominant-minority group relationship but these are not immediately translated into communal tensions for more importantly, the Mexican American elites have a stake in the preservation of the social order. The lower classes have been more keenly aware of the disparities between their own standards of living and those of their own elites and the society at large. It was mostly this stratum of the Mexican American society which has provided the impetus for a change in the status of this ethnic group.

The conditions and circumstances which have produced a rhetoric of identity for the Mexican American include perceived social injustices, economic deprivation, psychological intimidation and constant frustration as they seek to improve their situation in an Anglo dominated society. While a large number of Mexican Americans have accepted the values of mainstream U.S.A, more specifically the belief in the equality of opportunity and the work ethic, the reality of their experiences have reinforced latent feelings that their chances for achievement are severely restricted. They believe that some opportunities for achievement exist, but they also conclude that there are social barriers to achievement which are difficult if not impossible to overcome under the present set up. Unless the situation changes, it is futile even to try to overcome them.

The Mexican American's ambivalence as to the availability of individual opportunities in American society may be accompanied by uncertainties about his own capabilities for achievement. It is this incertitude which has helped to create the dilemma of "identity" for the Mexican American.

The concept of "identity" takes a different form when it is self-bestowed than when it is imposed by a non-member of an ethnic group. This is especially so when identity is imposed by the dominant group upon the minority group. The Mexican American's self image bears no resemblance whatsoever to the picture that the Anglos have normally held for them. Thus the extremely volatile label "Chicano" has different connotations for Mexican Americans and for Anglos.

"Chicano" was a term normally reserved for the poor lower class Mexican who struggled for economic survival in the crowded barrios of the southwest. It was a term rejected by the upper and middle class Mexican Americans who lived in more comfortable surroundings, because of its pejorative connotation. After the 1960's while "Chicano" has retained its basic meaning for the outsider, the Anglos' interpretation now also include young and sometimes, middle aged radical activists who will not hesitate to use violence to achieve their ends.

To the lower class Mexican American "Chicano" was a folk conception of his own national character. It emphasized the importance of his values and beliefs, his language, his customs and traditions, his food and his style of life. It was his rhetoric for survival. Being "Chicano" was his way of meeting his needs as long as it occurred in situations where he could obtain support from others who were like him. In the internal barrio dialogue, it was a source of self pride and ethnic unity against a world which was alien, impersonal and uncontrollable. Today, this designation cuts across all social lines, especially among the youth of the Mexican American community who have reinforced its meaning with their own perceptions of what it is to be a "Chicano."

The manifestation of what it is to be a Chicano is the Chicano movement. It had its beginnings in the 60's during the period of general instability and social upheaval. Like other minority groups which also began at approximately the same time to question basic notions about American society, the Chicano protest movement was a response to the pressures of the majority society. The dynamic force of the movement lies in its ideology - Chicanoismo, which is advanced as a challenge to the dominant Anglo beliefs concerning Mexican Americans as well as to the beliefs of Mexican Americans themselves, in relation to their role in the American mainstream. To the young, being Chicano means to be aggressively self assertive. It means a rejection of the traditional forms of activity to eliminate the problems facing Mexican Americans. To be a Chicano means to favor forms of confrontation as to most effective means of gaining access in opportunities that are available to others in the societal mainstream. Since Chicano was originally a pejorative term used by the Anglo to identify the Mexican American, its use by the latter is his way of showing defiance against the Anglo dominated society. It signifies a unique identity and feeling which only one who has experienced the consequences of being Mexican in a white dominated society will recognize.

Chicanoismo attempts to redefine the Mexican American's identity on the basis of a unique and shared experience in the United States through appeals to pride in a common history, language, culture and race. It emphasizes the Mexican contributions to American society thus giving the Chicano a new conception of his past history and his present condition.

Chicanismo is a challenge to the belief system of the majority society at the same time that it is a means of reconstructing for the Mexican American a new image of himself. It exhorts the Chicano not to feel inferior about his rich cultural heritage and tells him that it has elements which are superior to the culture of the dominant society. It points out that the Anglos often take over some aspects of Mexican culture while at the same time denying it to the Mexican himself. This is said to be the case in the arts, in music, in the use of some Spanish expressions and in cuisine.

Chicanismo insists that the advancement of individual Chicanos based on personal material achievement, while an important goal, should be made secondary to the goal of the collective advancement of "La Raza", for it is only through collective effort that they can confront the various problems that beset them. Nearly all Mexican Americans agree that they belong to "La Raza." Membership is through ascription only. It cannot be obtained by any other means. "La Raza" connotes ethnic solidarity and a sense of common destiny , and is evocative of participation in the national purpose. Membership in La Raza means that one supports "La Causa" which is the civil rights struggle of the Mexican Americans. "La Causa" is the rallying cry of "El Movimiento" which is dedicated to impressing on society at large the fact that the Chicanos are a power to reckon with. "El Movimiento" appeals to self conscious ethnic pride for the purpose of advancing "La Causa." Its more radical manifestations are seen in the militant acts of the Brown Berets and in the exhortations for "brown power."

The rhetoric of "El Movimiento" while designed to incite Chicano activism is also directed towards the Anglo power structure, telling the Anglos that Mexican Americans will no longer allow themselves to be "put in a bag which white America controlled." El Movimiento's strategy includes use of pressure group tactics aimed largely at the dominant society's institutions and designed to cause them to be more sensitive to Chicano needs; the employment of organizational activism within the Chicano community to build broad base support for and participation in "La Causa;" and a recourse to direct action and militant confrontation to hasten the fulfillment of its goals.

Chicanismo is the unifying rhetoric for Mexican American identity. Its ideology emphasizes the formation of a positive self-determined identity. It provides the substance for "La Causa" and the direction and vitality for "El Movimiento."

Chicanismo has led to increased participation by Mexican Americans in community affairs and has heightened an interest in the cultural life of the people. There are an increasing number of poets, playwrights, novelists and journalists who are now writing about Mexican American themes. Campesino and urbano theatre groups are being organized to carry the message of "La Causa," both inside and outside of the Chicano community. A tremendous upsurge in communication has also occurred among the Chicanos spurred by community grass roots newspapers, magazines, radio and television programs with their own super stars. Ethnic studies have been established in a number of colleges and universities to further Chicano consciousness. The popularity of Chicano studies lies in its potential as a reservoir for the development of an entire new generation of young professionals to carry the ideas of cultural pride back to the Mexican American community.

THE RHETORIC OF INTEGRATION

Historically, the Mexican Americans have less motivation toward assimilation into the dominant Anglo structure than do other ethnic groups. According to Barrera, Munoz and Ornelas their rejection of cultural assimilation is based upon

> "...their belief in the value of the Chicano culture and a desire to see it according to its own internal logic...their distaste for cultural homogenization and a regard for human

diversity...a feeling that assimilation for most would involve the trading of genuine human culture for a bland de-humanized, consumer-oriented made in America culture."

Unlike the other major ethnic minorities in the United States, namely Black and Asian Americans, the Mexican Americans have never been far removed from their cultural homeland. This proximity has strengthened them in their determination to obtain for their culture recognition as one type of American culture equal to that of the Anglos rather than as a poor imitation of the latter. Another source of strength lies in the cultural roots that had been planted long before the encroachment of the white Anglo culture into the former Mexican territory. Their cultural values have continued to survive in spite of coercive and non-coercive attempts by the institutions of the dominant society to obliterate them through assimilation.

The Chicano held the view that integration rather than assimilation into the American mainstream will offer them an opportunity for ethnic self determination. Thus a great deal of energy has been expended on tearing themselves loose from their past dependency on the dominant society and on designing a new role of interdependence with white Anglo society.

Perhaps as a result of their newly acquired identity, the rhetoric that has evolved has the attribute of self conscious confidence. The themes that pervade their rhetoric of integration are the freedom to define integration in the Mexican American way and the right to advance it in a manner that is congruent with their own beliefs and motivations. The Chicano's definition of integration is the right to be equal with members of the dominant society and the right to determine how he will participate in the mainstream of society.

The rhetorical themes are enunciated in the tactics and strategies designed to accomplish self determined ethnic goals. The tactics are best exemplified in such organizational activism of the Chicano community as Chavez's United Farm Workers Organization Committee's "La Causa" in central California, Tijerina's Alianza Federal de Mercedes' "El Movimiento" in New Mexico, Gonzalez's "Crusade for Justice" in Colorado and Gu tierrez's La Raza Unida's political victories in Texas. Each of these movements has distinctive constituencies, goals and rhetorical strategies. Collectively, they cut and embrace a broad spectrum of the Mexican American community.

MINORITY SPECIAL ADMISSIONS VS. REVERSE DISCRIMINATION

by Ron Taplin

Concerned members of the Third World Community in this country are cautiously awaiting the political outcome of a test case to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. The case of Bakke vs University of California regents is seen by many (if upheld) as a particularly significant legal and political attack upon the ethnic minority communities long standing struggle for equity and self determination. If left alone, the "Bakke" case will result in serious setbacks for the gains made by Blacks, Mexicanos, Chicanos and other oppressed groups during the struggles of the late sixties and early seventies.

In this case it all begins in 1974 when Alan Bakke, a white, 34 year old Aerospace engineer, filed suit in Yolo County Superior Court against the University of California at Davis (Medical School). Bakke's primary contention was that he was discriminated against on the basis of race. He was denied admission in 1973 and 1974 while having a higher G.P.A. and entrance test scores than some of the 16 minority students who were allowed in under a special admissions program reserving 16 of 100 first year student slots for them.

The Yolo County Superior Court ruled that Special Admission Programs were unconstitutional because they violated the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The Superior Court decision was appealed by the University to the California Supreme Court who also ruled against "Special Admissions." Many Blacks and Chicano groups in California felt throughout the hearings that the University officials, who filed for appeal, were, in fact, trying to get a ruling in Bakke's favor. Allegedly the University did not present any arguments or evidence necessary to prove the need for Special Admission programs and completely ignored the issue of prior discrimination against minorities. To have illuminated this point would have clearly demonstrated the need for Special Admissions.

Part of the problem could be that the University was never interested in Special Admissions in the first place. Many similar programs around the country exist because institutions yielded to the efforts by many members of the Minority community to establish such programs. Thus, what can be seen in "Bakke" (if upheld) is the continuation of minority denial and majority priviledge of educational opportunity for the masses of Third World and other oppressed groups in this society.

Historically it is true that for Mexicanos, Chicanos, Blacks, Asians, Native Americans and poor Whites, equality of opportunity has been a myth. Of these groups are the worst paid and highest unemployed sector of society. The institution of Special Admission programs was a potential victory for all oppressed people..... a fictory not without tremendous sacrifice, committment and determination to better the conditions of the past.

Since the "Bakke" case will be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court, the decision will not only affect Special Admission programs in California, but across the United States. Not only will undergraduate and graduate programs be affected, but eventually the impact will be felt in the labor market itself. Programs like "Affirmative Action" which supposedly were established to increase the numbers of minorities and women in the work force, are even now being challenged. An example of this is the January 12, 1977 ruling by

the San Francisco Superior Court that the State of California, in hiring minorities and women under Affirmative Action Programs constitutes "reverse racism."

I would maintain that the Special Admission programs, while not an end in themselves, represent concrete steps forward in democratizing the Universities and in saving the participation of Blacks, Mexicanos, Chicanos, Native Americans, women and others, visible but underrepresented, in Higher Education.

Education is a right of people, not a priviledge. To demand education and equality is not to demand special priviledges. What is demanded is the opportunity for access to the skills and tools necessary to insure equality of opportunity to the right to make a living and a contribution to the society, the world and to ourselves.

It is interesting to note, however, that so many people who cannot be labeled anything other than the beneficiaries of systematic institutional racism, and have never shown interest historically in the plight of the victims of racism, are now concerned that constitutional rights are being abridged. This is not the kind of thing that people are born with in their hearts. It is a creation. It seems so foreign to the concept of a humane being.

PERSPECTIVES ON CHICANO ISSUES

Interview With Dr. Rudolfo Acuña

Host: Victor Smith, Communications Coordinator Minority Student Programs

Dr. Rudolfo Acuña, Professor of Chicano Studies at California State University at Northridge, is the founding chairman and chief architect of the largest Ethnic Studies Program in the country.

Dr. Acuña has authored five books, Story of the Mexican American: The Men and the Land (1969); A Mexican American Chronicle (1970); Cultures in Conflict (1970); Occupied America (1972); and Sonoran Caudillo: The Times of Ignacio Pesqueira (1974).

V. Smith: You have a book out called "Occupied America: The Chicano Struggle for Liberation." What influenced you to write this book?

Dr. Acuña: First of all, there has not been any major History book written about the history of the Chicano written by a Chicano himself, therefore, I felt a tremendous need for it. Second, I felt if people want to change the condition that they found themselves they must reach certain awareness and that awareness comes through the study of history because through history you can see the development of the people, know why, for example, the majority of the Chicanos are at the lower force of the economical vertical scale. I could not accept the fact that Mexicans were at the bottom just because, as a racist would say, their biological make-up determines this, nor could I buy that there was something in the Mexican culture that did not allow us to progress. There is something in the American society that has kept Mexicans down in the United States; that's why I became a historian and I went further into the History of the Mexicans here in the United States.

I wrote Occupied America, which is a general survey of the history of the Chicanos here in the United States, as an attempt to show how American society has programmed the Mexican to be a loser, to show the Americans that certain things in their history were not right. I feel that the American public has a good case of historical amnesia; they like to forget about unpleasant things. For example, they like to forget when they took over the Southwest; that was a war of aggression, that was not something that occurred naturally, it was just as premeditated as when Hitler walked into Poland. Americans marched into Mexico taking over half of its territories and in this process they committed violence. I wanted to bring these things out.

Also, the coming of the Mexicans into the the United States was not because Mexicans wanted to find the land of opportunities, not because Mexicans wanted to find democratic justice. Mexicans came here because American interests were pushing them from Mexico into the U.S. They went down there and almost forced that migration which took massive levels after the 1910's. So, I wanted people to understand that historical process. I wanted, as a Mexican, to say "Look, American society, I am not telling you to get on a trip of guilt. I want you to recognize before we can solve any of the illnesses of this society, that there were some things that have not been right, that groups like the Mexicans were not treated properly."

V. Smith: Did you face any problems getting the book published?

Dr. Acuña: I found out that anything that is going to be popular, American publishers will publish. Some publishers are pretty liberal. They knew that the things I said were correct. Here, you have other segments of the American society that want the truth totally because they want to remediate the injustices in this society.

I was not the victim of any type of censureship, although my last chapter was censured. They did not want me to come

up with any type of solutions. It could offend people!

V. Smith: Could you tell us something about that last chapter?

Dr. Acuña: That chapter just showed how the system today did not allow any vertical mobility whether you be Mexican, Black, Asian or poor White.

The Mexican people were an obsolete part of that society, therefore, there were some people who did not want to do anything about it.

Now, coming back to why I could publish that book is just because I was a known scholar, a known author; I have published three other books prior to Occupied America.

V. Smith: Could you tell us something about the other 3 books?

Dr. Acuña: The other 3 books were a complete break from Occupied America in that they were for grade school children and high school children. Story of the Mexican American, which I wish I had never wrote, is about the Mexican contribution to the Southwest. It is a badly edited book! Cultures in Conflict, under the influence of Paulo Freire, a well known Latin American Brazilian educator, is an example of the inductive approach. This book was adopted in the State of California.

Also, at this time, my dissertation was accepted by the University of Arizona Press, History of Sonora Mexico that covers the period of 1856 to 1876.

V. Smith: In relationship to other minority groups, where would you put the Chicano?

Dr. Acuña: Right now the Chicano group is breaking away from much of the provincial nationalism that we had in 1960. At that time it was an isolationist movement. We believed we could do it alone; today, more and more enlightened Chicano leaders are working with coalitions with other minority groups. In relation to other minorities, we are probably the second largest group. However, if the population trends continue, we probably will be the largest minority group in about 40 years. This is because the birth rate among Blacks is pretty stabilized, while the birth rate among Chicanos is increasing at a rate of 3.5, the same as in Mexico. In the state of California, for example, our population in Los Angeles county has risen from 660,000 in 1960 to 1,250,000 in 1970 to 1,800,000 in 1975 and will be over 2,000,000 in 1980. The State of California has estimated that by the year 2000 we will be a majority in that state. This means that many things that are not happening will start happening because of the present numbers. I think if we can get together with Blacks, Asians and other progressive groups in the United States, we will have a very strong power.

V. Smith: Who would you say are some of the most outstanding Chicano leaders?

Dr. Acuña: During the 1960s you could clearly identify national leaders, however, since this time there has been a decentralization of the movement; there are many more small groups, many more collectives. The only leader who has sustained any type of national power has been Cesar Chavez.

Cesar Chavez still has a strong organization. In California, Cesar Chavez, within a month collected more than 700,000 signatures. The only reason that Cesar Chavez lost was because of the efforts of the American Farm Bureau and other reactionary organizations.

Cesar Chavez has the support of the farmworkers all over the United States and the farmworkers are going to be victorious.

V. Smith: Could you tell us about Chicano Studies at California State University, and what your main goals are within this program?

Dr. Acuña: In 1960 there were not many Chicanos at school. We had 1 million Mexicans in the country, with only 7 Chicanos enrolled at the University. In view of an Educational Opportunity Program, we increased the enrollment to 30 students in 1968.

One of the main reasons to establish this program was to give our students skills. Also, we wanted to give them an identification because at that time and now, many Mexicans have a negative self-image.

A study done by Parsons in Northern California schools showed that 8th graders when asked who do you think to be the smartest, 94% of the Anglos said that only the Anglos were smart and 80% of the Mexicans said that only the Anglos were smart. Furthermore, when asked who do you consider to be only "dummy", 80% of the Anglos said that only Mexicans were "dummy" and 70% of the Mexicans said that only Mexicans were "dummy."

For these reasons we wanted to show the heritage we have; heritage that is much richer, much older than the heritage of the United States. The establishment of the Chicano Studies Program came out of necessity; we were forced because the curriculum did not reflect our experiences

and the institutions were rejecting us. Since that time, we have been able to recruit and bring in 1,800 Chicano teachers. We have been very successful. In the last 7 years over a thousand students have graduated from this program. Of these, 95% would not have graduated if Chicano Studies did not exist.

THE SPANISH LANGUAGE

by Jaime Lacasa and Judith Lacasa

One of the most important linguistic groups, Indo-European, gave origin to many languages, among them Latin. The Latin language, through time and under the influence of the indigenous languages of the various parts of the Roman Empire, evolved into the so-called Romance languages, among them Spanish.

Spanish, with more than 200 million people speaking it, figures among the most spoken languages in the world. In numerical importance Spanish is preceded only by Chinese, English, and Russian. Of the Romance languages Spanish is by far the most spoken tongue. In number of speakers French and Italian are way behind Spanish.

There is a great difference between the nominal extension and the real extension of Spanish, that is to say between the number of inhabitants living in the parts of the world which have Spanish as the official language and the actual number of people who know and use Spanish as their only or principal language. This is due to the fact that in many regions where Spanish is spoken officially many people do not even know Spanish, are not fluent in the language or use it very infrequently. In America, for example, there are, among many others, the cases of Quiché in Central America, Quichua in the Andean countries (Ecuador, Perú and Bolivia), and Guarani in Paraguay. Even in Spain itself something similar is found. Not all Spaniards speak only Spanish or have it as their mother tongue. In fact many speak only a language other than Spanish (Basque or Catalan) or a regional dialect of Spanish (Leonés, Andaluz, Gallego or Bable).

The distribution of Spanish in the world is very irregular. In Europe more than 36 million speak it. In Asia, mainly in the Philippine Islands, some two and a half million speak it. In Africa in the old Spanish colonies and in the cities of Ceuta and Melilla approximately a million people speak Spanish. In America more than 160 million speak it. The greatest single concentration of Spanish speakers is in the metropolitan area of Mexico City which has a population of more than 10 and a half million. In order of importance follow Buenos Aires, Argentina, with almost 9 million, Madrid, Spain, with more than three million, Santiago, Chile, and Barcelona, Spain with something more than two million each.

The Spanish language seems to have a preference for heights. Of the ten cities situated at the highest altitudes in the entire world - Minasragra (Perú), Jiachan (Tibet), Cerro de Pasco (Perú), Gartok (Tibet), Potosi (Bolivia), Puno (Perú), La Paz (Bolivia), Oruro (Bolivia), Lhasa (Tibet), Cusco (Perú) - in seven of them Spanish is spoken.

Spanish is one of the few languages that has the fortunate feature of having preserved and used even today the language as it was spoken 500 years ago. This preservation of the language is found in the Hebrew dialects of the descendents of the Spanish Jews who left Spain in the period between 1492 and 1496, and who settled in the Balkan Peninsula and in the north of Africa.

The Greek word "logos" means "intelligence" and "language", "intelligence" as a creative and directive force, and "language" as an instrument of expression of that force. In this second sense we can say that the Spanish "logos" tends to be more ornamental rather than practical. Spanish words are generally so refined that they reflect the fact that they are the result of talent and reflection. Nevertheless, the southern imagination that serves as a foundation of the language makes verbal exaggeration one of its characteristic notes and thus in tunr makes it an ineffective medium for rapid and concise expression. The Spanish people inherited from the Goths a kind of repugnance toward commerce and mechanical arts, a fact that historically restrained the Spanish "logos" and consequently Hispanic literature, and made the Spanish language incapable to a certain degree of following a development oriented toward the practical spirit that mocern times demand.

According to Charles I of Spain (Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire) who lived in the 16th century, Spanish is the language with which mortals should address God. Without reaching such extremes of affection for the Spanish language, Richard Ford, in his book published a little over ten years ago, does say that of all the modern languages Spanish is the most suitable for lofty solemnity and for formal discussions of moral and theological character. Certain words that contain the consonants g,j, or x in combination with certain vowels give Spanish an Arabic or Germanic tint which, in turn, gives it a pleasant air of masculinity. This masculinity, combined with certain gravity and solemnity, distinguishes the sound of Spanish from that of the more feminine and voluptuous Italian. The Swedish scholar Wulff dared to say that Spanish is the most harmonious, most elegant and most expressive of all the Romance languages. Such praises should not surprise us since language is the best representative of the personality of a people, and the Spanish language is the reflection of a people that is considered to be noble, masculine and grandiloquent.

SELF-IMPROVEMENT

by Augustine Wright

Many students are finding themselves shopping around for an easier way to do better in school. Take a look in the mirror --- the answer may be there. Maybe the problem is not a lack of resources but knowing how to study. We learn what we want to know. The most important thing about studying is your attitude. Let's begin by thinking positively. Do you want to learn? Remember every time you learn something new, you grow.

Begin just by planning your study day. Reserve time each day. Plan ahead for deadlines and don't leave home work til the last minute. The right setting helps. Be comfortable, clear work space and keep regular study hours. Work out a schedule for each day. Complete assignments as soon after class as possible. Note taking can be an important key to success in studying and learning. Taking notes in class keeps you alert and your attention on the lecture. Notes are also an aid to recall when you want to review. Write key works, listen for clues and note any major conclusions. If the teacher gives a special emphasis and writes it on the blackboard, put it in your notes. Develop your own shorthand system for fast note taking. If you don't understand, ask questions.

Read and listen with a purpose and make sure you understand the words and "why" of the idea or fact. Summarize and explain it to someone else. If that is not possible, try explaining the subject to yourself. Don't be afraid of being called weird -- it takes one to know one.

Don't forget the resources of reference books -- encyclopedias, magazines, Eric file, yearbooks, dictionaries, catalogs and other references. It's easy to look up any subject in the "Readers Guide" index. If additional assistance is needed, ask the librarian for help or go back to the professor for additional information and assistance. Most of them will respond positively to you. If you've tried all the above and still feel bogged down, check your sleep habits. Are you getting plenty of exercise, having some fun? If you have studied hard, played hard and still have difficulties, there are other resources available. Call the Counseling Tutorial Office, the Counseling Center or the Latin Coordinator in the Office of Minority Programs.

If you need a break from routine chores and want to get involved in organizing and planning student programs, call one of the Program Advisors in the Office of Student Life. The primary purpose of the Office of Student Life is to assist students in their educational and personal development and to facilitate their formal academic progress. The staff serves as teachers, advisors, and consultants for students in a variety of activities. In your pursuit for better learning and personal development, remember the varied resources available to you but first, take another look in the mirror -- think positive -- and act on your positive thinking.

CROSS-CULTURAL EXPLORATIONS:

"Two Quarter Course Sequence on the Third World"

The first course, "Cross-Cultural Explorations: Introduction to Third World Cultures" (S&H 230X), is based on the premise that global awareness and mutual human understanding must grow both from knowledge of and shared experiences with other cultures. Since actual travel to the third World by a few of our undergraduates is rare and short-term, we must in the classroom try to present other cultures as vicarious experiences in film and fiction, in direct contact with foreign nationals, and in confrontation with media presentations from indigenous sources. Through this process our students are given the opportunity to grasp the texture and dynamic realities of these cultures.

A variety of procedures are used to create the learning environment in which this process occurs. Lecturers with area expertise in the Third World and a holistic concept of culture demonstrate ways of observing and analyzing Third World societies through their characteristic belief systems, languages, primary social institutions (e.g. the family), economic and political structures, class relationships, artistic modes of expression, and particular histories of national struggles to move beyond colonial servitude and economic domination to a more independent status in the global community. Current articles and representative literary works are assigned to supplement and expand the topics treated in these lectures. Students submit written reports and share in directed discussion in small groups with foreign national personnel. A visual dimension on the Third World is provided through the showing of a variety of films of the highest technical and pedagogical quality. (Since some of these are produced by indigenous film makers, they convey a cultural authenticity which may be absent in externally produced films).

Class members are encouraged to keep abreast of unfolding world events through their involvement in related out-of-class activities. For example, they are urged to attend university lectures on international topics, listen to taped lectures, available in the Library Media resource center, of previous speakers at major university conferences (e.g. World Food Conference: Annual World Affairs Institute), and participate in Third World meetings and festivals held on campus. Students share experiences with the others in the class through reaction papers, journals, and oral reports. Finally, each student selects one Third World country or culture for more intensive study, basing his report on the categories of cultural description and analysis suggested in the lecture topics.

In all of these activities the participation of a team of foreign national resource personnel is a key ingredient. Each formal topic presentation is always followed by a small-group discussion in which both faculty and foreign nationals explore the ramifications of the material with the students. In that context, the foreign national personnel contribute information

on related aspects of their particular cultures, and exchange different perceptions of issues with the American students. During the quarter, each of the foreign nationals participates on several panels dealing with course topics. They serve as oral information sources on their own countries as the students prepare Third World country reports, or recommend other foreign students in the campus community as sources. In brief, the structured contact of students in the class with representatives of the Third World serves to provide them with specific information and cultural insights which cannot be as efficiently obtained by any other means.

In the second course in this sequence, "Cross Cultural Explorations: Third World Cultures: Today's Issues" (S&H 231X) students are given the opportunity to explore crucial world problems such as population pressures, food supply, energy resources, and the political ramifications arising from cultural confrontation. Experts present to the class certain specific data and a world view. Foreign nationals react with a particularized position which a given individual of his country may take, and in the process show the impact of cultural attitudes on these problems. Thus students observe reactions (e.g. based on religious belief systems which affect population policies) which often create misunderstandings between the First and Third worlds, and highlight the diversity of value judgments among different cultures. The general procedures for 231X are like those for 230X, with diversified assignments, panel discussions, use of suitable films, reading of suggested articles and books, and topical lectures.

Students in the College of Sciences and Humanities may apply these courses to either Group I or IV on their degree programs. For further information on these courses, contact Charlotte Bruner in Foreign Languages or Wayne Osborn in History.

SYMPOSIUM ON THE AMERICAN INDIAN
Voices and Images: Understanding Through American Indian Art

AMES, IOWA - The fifth annual symposium on the American Indian at Iowa State University will be held April 15-17, 1977 at the Memorial Union in Ames. This year's program is titled "Voices and Images: Understanding Through American Indian Art."

The program will begin Friday, April 15, at 11:45 a.m. with a keynote luncheon address by William Bean, American Indian Education Consultant for the Iowa Department of Public Instruction. His presentation is titled "Education Then and Now" and will be given in the Campanile Room of the Memorial Union. Lunch may be purchased in the Cardinal Room prior to the lecture.

At 2:00 p.m., Ernie Ricehill, noted Winnebago artist from the Sioux City Art Center, will present a lecture and demonstration on new techniques in Native American art in the Pioneer Room of the Union. At 8:00 p.m. that evening, Pulitzer Prize-winning author N. Scott Momaday will present the Richard Thompson Memorial Lecture, speaking on the "The Man Made of Words" in the Sun Room. Momaday is the author of House Made of Dawn, The Way to Rainy Mountain and other recent works.

On Saturday, April 16, the program will begin at 10:00 a.m. with a film festival in the Pioneer Room. "Lakota," a film narrated by N. Scott Momaday will be featured along with "The Loon's Necklace," "Mesqakie" (a film produced by ISU students), "Discovering American Indian Music," and "Eskimo in Life and Legend - the Living Stone." A panel discussion will follow.

A program for children will also be held at 10:00 a.m. in Rooms 205-206 of the Memorial Union. Activities for elementary school-aged children are planned to introduced them to various aspects of Native American culture and arts. The program is jointly sponsored by the Black Cultural Center, the University Married Community, the YWCA and the Committee on American Indian Programs.

The latest fashions of Native American design will be featured in a fashion show by Sac and Fox Designs of Minnesota at 1:00 p.m. in the Pioneer Room of the Union. Mary Osborn, a Sac and Fox from Oklahoma, will narrate the program on "Contemporary E volvement of Traditional Sac and Fox Clothing."

Another form of American Indian art will be explored Saturday at 8:00 p.m. at the Octagon, 232½ Main, in a flute concert presented by Doc Tate Nevaquaya, a Comanche. Nevaquaya is one of only five traditional flutists in the United States and is also an award-winning artist. His traditional paintings will be on display at the Octagon during April along with traditional and contemporary Indian jewelry designed by his wife, Kathryn Mounds Nevaquaya.

This year's program will also feature a very special guest on the Iowa State campus. Speaking at 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 17, will be Vine Deloria, Jr., noted author and attorney and a graduate of Iowa State University. Deloria, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, has written such well-known books as Custer Died For Your Sins, We Talk, You Listen, and God Is Red. His presentation, "Dependent, Domestic Nations," will be given in the Sun Room.

During the symposium, art exhibits will be open to the public in three locations. A display by Ernie Ricehill of the Sioux City Art Center will be featured in the Pioneer Room of the Memorial Union. The Octagon, 232½ Main, will display the paintings of Doc Tate Nevaquaya, Comanche artist from Oklahoma and Indian jewelry designed by his wife, Kathryn Mounds Nevaquaya. On April 1-30, the Brunnier Gallery in the Scheman Continuing Education Building will exhibit the works of well-known artist Frank Howell. A native of Iowa, Howell's subjects are Native Americans. His display "Past Winds" has won national acclaim for its vision and sensitivity.

The symposium is sponsored by the United Native American Student Association and the Committee on American Indian Programs at Iowa State University. All programs and exhibits are free and open to the public. For more information, contact Ms. Gretchen Bataille, Symposium Director at 245 Ross Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011 or phone (515) 294-4502.

SPRING 1977
L.A.S.U. CALENDAR

April 3, 4, 5	LATIN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL Memorial Union
April 12	Visit - Dr. Jose Reyna Director of Ethnic Studies at Texas A & I University. TOPIC: "Chicano Music of Texas" (Place and time to be announced)
May	SPANISH-AMERICAN DANCE (Day, place and time to be announced)
PRECLASSIFICATION FOR SUMMER	APRIL 4 - 27
PRECLASSIFICATION FOR FALL	APRIL 4 - MAY 4

L.A.S.U. NEEDS YOU!

The LATIN AMERICAN STUDENT UNION is a student organization geared to assist the Spanish-American students. L.A.S.U. was formed as a result of the growing need to voice and solve the problems of American students who are bicultural and bilingual, coming from the Latin part of the world (e.g. Mexico, Puerto Rico, etc...)

The specific programs and events organized by L.A.S.U. are aimed towards the successful educational and so cial integration of the Spanish-American student on campus and the provision of at least a minimum number of programs propitious to the welfare of the incoming Spanish-American students recruited by the Minority Programs Office.

MEMBERSHIP into our organization is OPEN TO ANYONE interested in Latin American matters and we are seeking to locate staff, faculty and students with such interests.

THIS IS AN APPEAL FOR YOUR HELP.

WE NEED YOU PEOPLE!

Contact: David Cuevas 294-6173 or
Vivian Agosin 294-6338

LATIN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL

April 3, 4, 5 1977
Memorial Union, ISU

SUNDAY APRIL 3

MEMORIES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT 7:00 p.m. Pioneer Room

Directed by Tomás Gutierrez Alea. 1968. 97 minutes. Black & White. Spanish dialog with English subtitles.

MEMORIES is the diary of a bourgeois intellectual caught in the midst of the rapidly changing social reality of revolutionary Cuba. Sergio is a landlord and self-styled writer who decides to remain behind when his family and friends leave for Miami. But Sergio is not able to commit himself to the revolution, either, and so remains only a skeptical observer. His perceptions of Cuban society, both before and after the revolution, are skillfully interwoven with documentary footage of historical events (Bay of Pigs, Cuban Missile Crisis...) to yield a complex and fascinating portrait of an individual alienated from the social process around him.

"One of the 10 Best Films of 1973" Vincent Canby, NEW YORK TIMES

One of the year's "outstanding cinematic achievements" National Society of Film Critics

Following the film, Carlos Boker will facilitate a discussion in Cinema for Change in Latin America.

MONDAY APRIL 4

COMPAÑERO 12:10 - 1:10 p.m. Sun Room

Directed by Martin Smith. 1974. 60 minutes. Color.

A moving account of the Chilean folk singer, Victor Jara, as told by his widow. Jara was killed in the military coup in Chile in 1973.

Carlos Boker: Cinema for Change in Latin America. 7:00 p.m. Great Hall.

Following Boker and the film THE PROMISED LAND there will be an informal discussion and free refreshments in the Oak Room.

THE PROMISED LAND 7:00 Great Hall

Directed by Miguel Littin. 1973. 110 minutes. Color. Spanish dialog with English subtitles.

Directed by Miguel Littin, one of Latin America's most highly-acclaimed young filmmakers, THE PROMISED LAND is Chile's first wide-screen color epic, with stunning color photography and a vibrant musical score interpreted as a popular cantata. It is based on historical events during the '30s when the worldwide depression created social and economic upheaval through out Chile and eventually led to the establishment of the first, although shortlived, socialist republic in the Americas.

Although the film was completed months before the military coup of September 11, 1973, the film's contemporary historical parallels are nevertheless strikingly apparent. One of the tragic ironies of the production is that many of the peasants who appear in the film were actually killed during the events in Chile which saw the overthrow of the Allende government. The director is now in exile.

TUESDAY APRIL 5

BRIDE OF THE ANDES 12:10 - 1:50 p.m Sun Room

Directed by Susumu Hani. 1966. 102 minutes. Color. Japanese and Quechua dialog with English subtitles.

Filmed completely on location in Perú and Bolivia, BRIDE OF THE ANDES is the story of a Japanese scholar living in an Indian village in the Andes and his mail-order wife. Its theme is one of hatred overcome by understanding, of a newcomer to an alien culture who learns to accept her adopted land and its customs after learning to know and accept herself. A purposeful sociological drama with a background of beautifully captured scenes of the natural splendor of Perú, the Indians and their lives, the lives of the new Japanese settlers and the bustling urban centers.

LUCIA 7:00 p.m. Sun Room

Directed by Humberto Solas. 1969. 160 minutes (There will be a 20 minutes intermission). Black & white. Spanish dialog with English subtitles.

LUCIA is an epic, three part feature film dramatizing three separate periods in the Cuban struggle for liberation in order to show the participation of Cuban women in that fight.

In 1895, Lucia (Raquel Revuelta) is embroiled in a tale of love and betrayal during Cuba's war for independence from Spain; Lucia (Eslinda Nunez) leaves her middle-class family and becomes involved in the overthrow of the Cuban dictator Machado; and in 1960s, Lucia (Adela Legra) is taught how to read and write during Cuba's literacy campaign and, as a newlywed, confronts her husband's "macho" attitudes. Each episode is filmed in a distinctive visual style which translates the spirit of each historical era.

LUCIA is a unique view of Cuban history and Latin American culture as well as a dramatic examination of women's worldwide struggle for social equality.

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES:

The Intercultural Relations and Ethnic Studies Institute

Philosophy

The IRES Institute at Rutgers University Graduate School of Education offers a multi-faceted interdisciplinary program designated to promote cultural awareness and understanding for educators and others involved in the field of intercultural communication and human relations. The Institute is dedicated to the concept of cultural pluralism, within which exists a wealth of tradition and experience that should be shared. This concept underlies the Institute's activities which are focused on improving cross-cultural communication and enhancing human relations.

Initiated in 1971, the Institute is an outgrowth of the Language Education Section of the Science and Humanities Department in the Rutgers Graduate School of Education. Its major concern centers on problems of Human Relations in Cultural Context.

Goals:

1. To identify and alleviate problems of communication between members of different cultural or racial groups in academic, employment, and social situations.

2. Increase awareness that communication problems exist due to conflicts and interference in cross-cultural interaction.

3. To foster cultural pluralism through the acceptance and understanding of cultural differences among educators and community members, cooperative study, cross-cultural education and research. To train educators and community members in skills of intercultural communication.

4. To design, field test and demonstrate staff development models centered on the cultural context of instruction.

5. To collect, prepare and disseminate data on the cultural context of instruction.

6. To carry out research development activities in multilingual, multicultural and ethnic heritage studies.

Graduate Programs:

The Graduate School offers and Ed.D. and Ed.M. in Language Education with specialization in:

- Bilingual/Bicultural
- ESL
- Foreign Language Education
- Linguistics
- Intercultural Education

Institute Programs:

BILINGUAL-BICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
IMPACT AREA: SPANISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS

The success of a Bilingual-Bicultural Program depends primarily upon the quality of instruction provided by teachers who are bilingual and bicultural, who are trained in techniques of native and second language teaching and cross-cultural understanding, and who are able to select classroom materials relevant to the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of both the students and the dominant society.

The IRES Institute is currently providing training in bilingual-bicultural education for five New Jersey school districts (Elizabeth, Long Branch, Paterson, Union City, and New Brunswick) and these activities include technical assistance in the development of bilingual and cultural heritage materials geared to the preschool, elementary and secondary education levels.

CULTURAL AWARENESS MEDICAL PROGRAM

The Institute is presently collecting research data on cultural interference in the delivery of health care. The results of the research will be described in an orientation handbook for hospital personnel with the aim of facilitating cross-cultural communication between providers and consumers of health care, thereby improving the quality and availability of hospital services to culturally different community members.

The Institute is initiating a cross-cultural communication and intercultural relations training program for medical students. Participants in this program will assist in the collection of information of cultural problems encountered in a hospital setting.

THE BILINGUAL-BICULTURAL CDA PROGRAM
IMPACT AREA: SPANISH-SPEAKING CHILDREN

Headstart programs are intended to equalize educational opportunities for minority children by helping them develop the academic, social and physical skills needed to function adequately in the classroom. The IRES Institute is currently involved in the preparation of Bilingual-Bicultural teachers (certified teachers as trainees, and teacher aides as Child Development Associates) who are equally qualified in the areas of early childhood instruction, bilingual-bicultural education, community relations, and cross-cultural understanding. Training activities are individually prescribed and integrate theoretical instruction with on-site supervision, materials demonstration and community experiences. The aim of the program is to facilitate the adaptation of Spanish-speaking children to the language and culture of the school.

ETHNIC HERITAGE STUDIES

The Ethnic Heritage Studies component of the IRES Institute combined the resources of two agencies, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, N.J. Ethnic Communities Congress, and the Rutgers University Graduate School of Education. The program seeks to (1) prepare community leaders for action to participate in school policies and initiate ethnic heritage studies programs; (2) train school personnel in the background, strategies, and materials of Ethnic Heritage Studies; (3) develop an ethnologue and auxiliary materials which will depict significant factors of ethnic life in New Jersey; and (4) sponsor an Annual Multicultural Festival which illustrates the rich ethnic heritage of New Jersey communities.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:

Dr. Eliane C. Condon, Project Director
Intercultural Relations and Ethnic Studies Institute
Rutgers University Graduate School of Education
10 Seminary Place
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903

(201) 932-7588

BOOK REVIEW

by Margarita Mondrus

Manual Práctico de Correspondencia Comercial en Español e Inglés y Traducción by Hernán Poza Juncal, 1963. Editorial V. Suárez, Madrid, Spain

For those of us who were born or raised in the U.S.A, written Spanish is often much more difficult for us than conversational Spanish. Although many of us speak Spanish in our homes or with our friends, we may find writing a polite business letter in Spanish difficult or impossible. If we write Spanish the way we speak we don't sound businesslike, but if we translate directly from English we find that the resulting style is much too abrupt, often to the point of rudeness. The Manual Práctico is a complete guide to commercial correspondence --- examples of a great variety of business letters are given in both Spanish and English, ranging from such topics as applying for a job to declaring bankruptcy or complaining about receiving the wrong shipment. In addition, there are lists of ways to begin and end letters politely, vocabulary lists, grammatical rules, and metric equivalents. It is a very practical book which could prove as useful to foreign students writing in English as it is to Spanish-Americans writing in Spanish.

UNIVERSOS INTIMOS "UN AMIGO DE SIEMPRE"

by Angel Carrasco

Debieran ustedes conocerle. Es uno de esos raros personajes para los que la amistad es la suprema razón de la existencia. Muchos años de mutuo contacto, de convivencia diaria, de intercambiar impresiones personales y confidencias veladas, han hecho de él y de mí, casi un todo inseparable. No transcurre el dia sin que nos busquemos ávidamente, robando tiempo al tiempo, y establezcamos ese diálogo denso, reconfortante y portador de jugosas sugerencias y despertador de ideas y de emociones que hacen la vida mas grata, y mas soportables las constantes contradicciones a que uno se ve sometido en el cotidiano trato con la rutina y la vulgaridad.

Mi amigo, verdadero pozo de ciencia, portador en su interior de mil culturas que se van renovando a medida que el hombre descubre nuevas fuentes de la sabiduría, posee múltiples facetas, las cuales, como otras tantas formas de expresividad, el utiliza en su conversación para ofrecerme la riqueza de su saber, unas veces disfrazado de humor, otras adoptando el trascendente aire de la reflexión filosófica, después, jugando inteligentemente con el lenguaje, con el que sabe formar el bello arabesco del mas depurado estilo, y siempre aportando, de trecho en trecho, la frase cargada de hondo significado que yo trato de apresar en mi memoria como un regalo inolvidable.

Quizá lo más destacado de este amigo sea su ilimitada capacidad para abarcar, con la erudicción del más experimentado especialista, la problemática del mundo en torno. De reflejos rápidos y de sensibilidad a toda prueba, nada se le escapa de cuánto occurre en su derredor. Y es brillante y absorbente su modo de narrar un acontecimiento, intimista y evocador cuando repite los versos del poeta, científicamente cerebral llegado el momento de resolver cualquier cuestion en la que se halle implicada la economía o cualquier otra disciplina moderna.

Sensible como todos al momento crucial que estamos viviendo, últimamente ha dedicado gran parte de su atención a la política, y aunque en el la experiencia cuenta como factor esencial de primer orden, en muy poco tiempo se ha puesto al día, extrayendo del insondable depósito de sus conocimientos, fórmulas, doctrinas, tendencias y corrientes de acuciante actualidad, que yacían dormidas en el fondo de un universo experimental, hasta hace poco tiempo sumido en las brumas del pasado.

Mi amigo es variado, multiforme, elegante o sencillo en su atuendo. Muchas veces lo encuentro cubierto de polvo, un tanto ajado, sufriendo visiblemente en su físico y acusando en el semblante la enfermedad del olvido. Pero él, al que la generosidad le acucia, hace bien poco caso de estas formas externas. En su interior, con esa lozanía que identifica a la perpetua juventud, sigue conservando la riqueza desbordante de conocimientos y de ideas, de risas y de lágrimas, de emociones y paradojas, de bondad y de sarcasmo que me ofrece día a día, con esa prolífera abundancia con que la fuente mana agua sin descanso.

Gran pensador y conversador, mi amigo. Su voz es baja, queda, sinuosa, penetrante, estruendosa como el ruido del trueno o acariciadora como la de una mujer enamorada. Muchas veces posee una musicalidad íntima que invade el ánimo y le hace caer en la ensoñación y casi en el éxtasis. En esos momentos uno saborea intensamente las delicias de la amistad y se evade psicológicamente del mundo que lo envuelve, para, sin dejar el espacio real, trasladarse a otro tiempo y a otras regiones y universos desconocidos, en cuya descripción mi amigo es maestro, y que el ha recorrido millones de veces en viajes ilusionados, en los que la aventura, la fantasía y la realidad han sabido tejer el irreal entramado de las quimeras y de los sueños.

Perdón por mi olvido. Hasta aquí se me había pasado presentarles a este extraño y entrañable amigo. Su nombre, sin apellidos deformantes y clasistas, es el libro, y ahora, en estos días, cumple miles de años.

UN AMIGO DE SIEMPRE was published in the newspaper "Las Provincias" in Valencia, April 27, 1976.

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