



What One Was, What One Is (What One Imagines Oneself to Be, What One is Imagined to Be, and) What One Becomes

Part Four – Could Become an Agent's Job

By

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One must ask, how many times does a person need to sell him or herself to be a violator of personal principles and integrity while still expecting to be considered a consequential individual? More importantly, when it goes against fundamental communal interests, how many times must this infringement be allowed before there is a public exposure and condemnation?

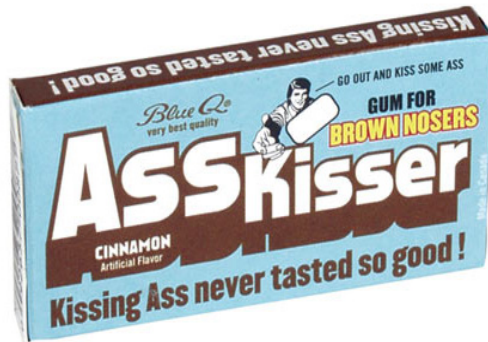
Is a life of publicly perceived progressive effort in one's past enough to cover up a violation of personal ethics or moral obligation in the present? For instance, to use some overarching perhaps exaggerated examples that we might associate with our own local reality, if one is in a position of *celebrity* due to past political activity and does not deny that status, say for instance, like larger than life Nelson Mandela, is it acceptable for his voice to be relatively

silent since the supposed end of the Apartheid system in his home country of South Africa?

Certainly, the system's label was eliminated and he was subsequently elected to the presidency of that country but the racist effects remain an unchanged condition for Black South Africans. Does it make sense, that now when this individual has more

persuasive power, that he should be lukewarm against his country's continuing racism? Should there not be a continuation and a more vocal condemnation of unchanged conditions?

Likewise, when it comes to cultural heroes and expression, we see that same pattern. To point out one recent news-making example, mentioned only because the Latin-American press was gushing with perhaps deserved grand praises, is Mercedes Sosa, who in death is now memorialized by many as one of





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Latinoamerica's foremost exponent of the revolution era-inspired Nueva Canción.

She will always be remembered for her beautiful rendition of Violetta Parra's *Gracias a La Vida*. Still, is it acceptable to hold her now to such high esteem when shortly before her death she was in Israel lending moral authority to the illegal land theft and genocide being perpetrated against Palestinians – and having the gall to be singing songs to occupiers like, *Cuando Tenga La Tierra*?¹

Must we accept the explanation in cases like these that one is to be exempt or exonerated from criticism and condemnation simply by stating that one is *only* performing? Is it correct to be perpetuating symbols like this that send such conflicting messages? Almost needless to mention the pop singer Juanes' crying and Miguel Bose's backstage challenging pomposity in Cuba before their *Concierto Por La Paz* this past September, and giving the

gusanos in Miami much to howl about with an ending shout out at the end of the concert of "*Cuba Libre!*"; a popular slogan of the *gusanada* in Florida.² A greater good was had from this last instance but still one cannot but have a bitter aftertaste.

At what point do individuals such as these turn from genuine cultural representatives to potentially being simply irrelevant circus performers? Certainly, everything is debatable nowadays and nothing is what it seems when seen through the prism of what one wants to see. In a sense, what we come to know as history is like this. Everyone will do with event interpretation after the fact, as they desire. Still, intents, motivations,

and ultimate effects should always be kept in mind when passing judgment.

For it is through the documentation or chronology of events, that we come to an understanding of the *tense* that links a living present with an imagined future. Sometimes what is attempted to be documented, that is, that which is past and still a *living memory* in those that have experienced it, can and should become a foundation from which to *guide* thoughts and actions in others.

¹ Partial lyrics of *Cuando Tenga La Tierra* (written by: D. Toro / A. Petrocelli)

"*Cuando tenga la tierra
sembraré las palabras
que mi padre Martín Fierro puso al viento,
cuando tenga la tierra
la tendrán los que luchan
los maestros, los hacheros, los obreros.*"

² http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNGsF_rsAJ0
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKc8MZxr4QQ>



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What makes it possible is only if that foundation has the *consistency* throughout the thread from past to present. Otherwise, this faulty thread will lead one to create *false assumptions* and carry forward into the future what will *mislead* those that would depend on this connection. This becomes critical when the thread is depended upon to define a consistency of individual ethics, beliefs, values, and principles.

Of course, what we really need is a clarification of what our community interests are, irrespective of individual wants and desires. What is clear is that we do not have the luxury of generalizing ourselves into all-inclusive blanket illusionary concepts of equality, as are all the borrowed European ideological models. There must be focus and there is no clearer way to get there than ensuring a *national identity* to clarify our demands.

Demands for change in whatever form, whether personal, cultural or political, such as in professional or occupational advancement, educational attainment, land or immigration reform, electoral representation, etc. should be defined along *native* historical needs and realities and not as *appendages* to the continuation of conquest and colonization regardless if they seem to show support (read, pity to exploit) with our condition. We should be prepared to defend these positions against those

that would want to take an *assimilationist's* line and not hesitate to expose it clearly as the *sellout* politic that it is.

At the local levels, we too suffer from this as we allow our liberalism to get in the way of preventing what certainly hurts our cause. Unfortunately, our Raza political reality has allowed so many threads to define our interests that it confuses the fundamental need for *sovereignty* from an existing occupation and we strangely have been led to find the positive even in the negative.

We find that the *foreign documentation* of our chronology and definition of events, are interpreted much like in the 1950 classic Akira Kurosawa film, *Roshoman*. Although describing the same event, truth is told in stories that mutually

contradict each other in the retelling of a rape, murder, and theft through the eyes of different witnesses. In the film, regardless of the fundamental crime, one is led at the film's end to find good in a subsequent crime of one of the protagonists only because one can conclude that to follow a judgment of *justice without prejudice* to its end would also cause negative effects onto innocents. The dichotomy caused by a resultant liberal emotionalism as in this film is what in our community also is what calls for us to overcome in order to be able to justifiably judge and condemn what truly acts against our interests.

