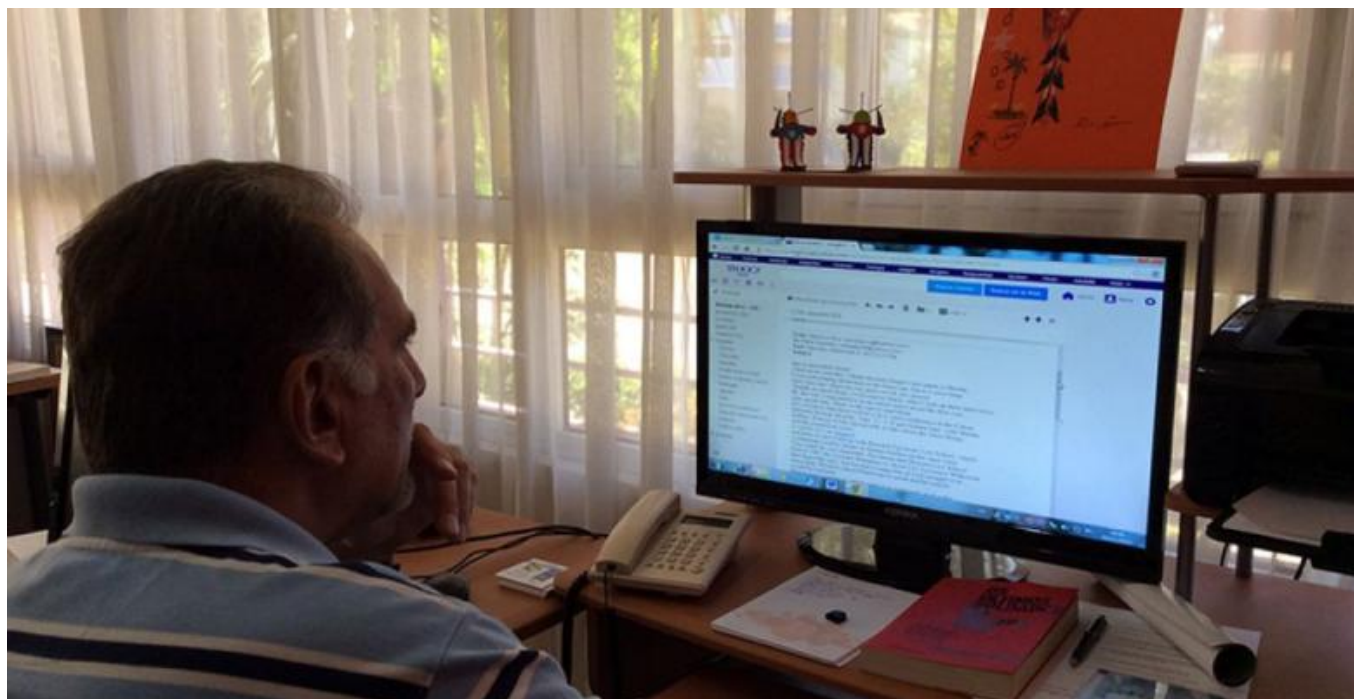

Why do I entangle on the web

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This post constitutes my presentation to the world of the blogosphere. To write it I've counted on the politeness of people who have preceded me on this field. Not all of them share the same views, but they all wish for a better Cuba and share an intellectual honesty which I respect. They are also together on the support for the Five. In this regard they represent millions of people both in Cuba and around the world.



I've wanted this questionnaire to answer to some of the questions from those millions of people. It is my aspiration that with the development of the blog some other answers are found, even for so many that don't know about the case or that knowing it, for diverse reasons, are not

today with the cause of the Five.

I sincerely believe in truth as a value. I believe that accessing it benefits everybody, even those who refuse to hear it. I trust that truth will find its way through this blog.

By Acerca de Cuba and Blogs Cubanos: Josephcalvet

When a blog is opened there is a sense of why, what is it that one wants to share. In your case, Rene: Which are your expectations with the blog? I wish you much luck and I'm sure it will be well received.

Obviously, everything that motivates me is related to the cause of my brothers still in prison. I hope for the blog to be a contribution to the rupture of the wall of silence which has been imposed on the case. We are dealing with a long and complex trial, vitiated by vengeance and fragmentarily recounted. In my contacts with people I realize that such fragmentation is reflected on the knowledge about its particulars.

The blog offers an opportunity for the story to be dealt with directly by us, the Five, using a format which allows for a personal, fluent and permanent dialog with those who wish to hear about it. I aspire to a respectful opposition of the diverse approaches to the case and throughout it to clarify the blurry points of it. I hope that such format will serve to extend the knowledge of the subject to audiences which, while not from the left, because of an elemental sense of justice could reject the vulgar revenge which motivated the prosecutors. That rejection from out of the left has already happened, and if it hasn't been replicated enough it is precisely because of the poor exposition of the people to the process.

In that regard, the blog will also be a repository of original documentation about the process and its aftermath, so that whoever wishes can use it as a reference and –in the words of a friend– “draw his own conclusions”.

By La Joven Cuba: Harold, Osmany y Roberto.

The Cuban blogosphere is an active participant in the process of changes the country is going through. According to your opinion: Is it legitimate that alternative media such as the blogs fill up for the silences left by the national press? Is there a limit for the critique on a revolutionary blogger?

I believe that what legitimates a blog is being a manifestation of a natural right: That of expression. It is normal and legitimate that the silences left by the press will be filled up by another manifestations of expression, and blogs are some of them; but even if the press without silences was invented –and this blog seeks precisely to fill up one of the most deafening silences which can be conceived, erected around the case of the Five– people will continue to exercise their legitimate right to expression being through blogs or through any other means. Of course, later we will have the opinion of the reader as to whether or not what is expressed is legitimate, but that is another story.

I believe that the limit to criticism on a revolutionary blogger should be self-imposed by his sense of responsibility; which demands from that blogger a higher standard than the challenge which will be faced by another blogger not committed to social causes. Assertions have an impact on the real world; and that impact should be measured as much as possible by whoever is going to issue them from his compromise with the fate of humankind. Truth, objectivity and rigor are intrinsically revolutionary values and limit enough for the exercising of criticism by whoever considers himself as one.

By La Pupila Insomne: Iroel Sánchez.

Ever since I read the fragments of the trial journal that you wrote I was impressed by how easy you redacted in such an attractive way, with great capacity for synthesis, sharp observation and clever use of recourses such as irony. But about a year ago, on a meeting with Cuban bloggers where you evidenced deep knowledge of the phenomena of blogs in Cuba, you said “being a blogger is a vocation, I don’t have that vocation” What has changed in you, or in the circumstances, so that you have decided to take this step and open up a blog?

Thanks for the compliment, which I hope to deserve. In actuality the only thing that changed is that I met with you guys. Everything else continues to be the same.

Of course, I shared with you the concept that we have to be giving the battle also on the web, and that it is a field as any other which there is no reason to give up to the adversary. Only that you convinced me that I should participate personally in it and that’s what I’m doing.

I can’t tell whether someday I’ll develop the vocation for the blogosphere. Among my vocations there is that of being a revolutionary, and as such the exercise of debate. So far I’m motivated by loyalty to my three brothers unjustly imprisoned and the urgency to do something to put an end to such injustice. In the meantime, I’m happy that so many talented Cubans have such disposition. They are the precursors of a blogosphere which I hope someday, under better conditions, will supply a rich and profound content to a web that very well is in need of it.

4- By Paquito el de Cuba: Francisco Rodríguez Cruz.

Still held in the US after having left prison, we were surprised by your support to those who in Cuba are committed to activism on behalf of the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans, and your presence on the Cuban Journey Against Homophobia was one of your first public activities after returning to your homeland for good. How did the blogosphere allowed you to be aware of the new revolutionary struggles in our country and in what measure do you think this new blog of yours could contribute to combine the just cause of freedom for the Five with many others aspirations of our youth and our people?

Still in prison we were able to have certain contact with the blogosphere through the comrades in the Cuban Interest Section in Washington, who provided us systematically with the diverse contents generated there. That’s how we stood in contact with a plurality of opinions which we had not experienced on the years we lived in the island. Later on I took advantage of the supervised release to connect and to feel “on line” that plurality; a natural reflex of a reality which demands more profound changes than the ones we demanded before.

The cause of the Five and the aspirations of our youth and of our people are linked together by their innate justice, beyond the existence of this blog. Our people and their youth manifest an affection towards the Five which can only be matched by the adhesion with which we decided someday to risk everything for them, and for the commitment toward them which their love inspires in us forever. It is as fair to fight for the freedom for the Five as it is to build that society with all and for the good of all we aspire to leave to our children. None of the two causes can be separated from the other.

I believe that communion will manifest spontaneously on the exchanges that will come about on the blog; and although I shouldn’t commit the sin of presumptuousness it would be good if in some measure those exchanges contribute to the open and plural debate we need on the road

to the realization of those aspirations you are referring to.

5- By Yadira Escobar: Yadira Escobar:

Rene Gonzalez, you were born in the United States, but for some particular reasons were forced to renounce to your citizenship. You also related to and made friends in the Cuban-American community. It is a community where many reject terrorism, and although they don't share the values of the Cuban Revolution, they hold sentimental ties with their country of birth. Do you believe that in spite of the ideological differences it is worth to promote the cultural approach towards reconciliation between Cubans on the political arena?

As you well say I left good friends in the Cuban-American community. I also left a family that was very good to me, who set aside their political preferences to give me their support when I most needed it. Each one has respected the political views of the other without the mediation of a reconciliation process, given that there was never a conflict among us.

That's why I ask myself whether the quid of the solution to our separations really resides on reconciliation, or whether it resides on the end of the policy of aggressions against Cuba from the US government. What will happen when all of us on both shores of the Florida Strait are no more hostages to that policy? Perhaps instead of reconciliation what we'll see, in the majority of cases, is a reunion. At least that's what practice has shown. So far, that policy still conditions attitudes and behaviors on both sides which I'd dare say are imposed on us by that circumstance, but they wouldn't resist a normalization of relations between the two countries. Those conducts will vanish because we have been forced to sustain them by a deliberate policy.

Because of their anomaly, the current circumstances have to disappear. Those who resist that inevitable see a danger on the cultural exchange, and fight against it with the means at their disposal. Those of us who want those conditions to disappear believe that the exchange is valid, and see it as a good step on the realization of the normalizing of relations. Once that hurdle is lifted there will come that process which –again- in my opinion for the overwhelming majority of Cubans on both sides will be not reconciliation but a reunion. Of course there will be particular instances of rancor –justified or not- and also those who with more or less reason feel victims to events that occurred on those years, but we are talking about the impact for the average Cuban on both sides of a change in the situation.

Needless to say that the tricks by the US government to conquer us by other means under the new circumstances will become more refined. We cannot be naïve about that, and those of us who defend the revolutionary project have to manage for that project to define the conditions of such reunion. But this doesn't mean that we have to run away from the challenge. I am for normalization, and I believe that the cultural exchange has a positive impact to play. As a matter of fact it is already playing it, to judge by the reactions of those opposing it.

6- By El Adversario Cubano: Raul Capote.

How do you think your blog will insert itself on the Cuban blogosphere in the middle of the debate of ideas being generated by the changes on the Cuban economic model?

Although the primary focus of this blog is not to become involved on the debate of ideas of a more wide nature than that which animates it, by logic it is to be expected that the participation of the readers will derive on certain exchanges toward the issue of changes. Perhaps every once in a while a post will venture on the approach to the changes on the economic model, given the implications they have for everyone and the logic interest it raises in any revolutionary.

We cannot forget that around those changes some projects of capitalist restoration are also conceived. The range of positions either from the Revolution as well as from the counterrevolution is very wide. It is impossible that a blog born from the compromise with the construction of socialism could subtract itself from the discussions of those issues.

Taking that for granted, what is left is to try for the blog to play a constructive role regarding the reality in which my three brothers in prison will insert themselves once we have been able to bring them back home.

7- By Cartas desde Cuba: Fernando Ravsberg.

Distance is sometimes deceitful and we tend to idealize that which we love. Upon arriving in Cuba you would have found corruption, inefficiency, lack of productivity, a fabulous bureaucracy and a rigid internal blockade. How was your clash with reality?

Well, from Miami distance has another connotation. There the press deceives to make us believe that which we love no longer exists. In fact, a considerable effort is required to find that reality imprisoned between that idealization inside you and the perverse propaganda by the media.

Both our families on the prison visits, as well as the comrades from the Cuban Interest Section in Washington; unveiled for us not only the Cuban reality but also the diversity of interpretations derived from it. So I wouldn't use the word "clash". Probably I'd rather say it was an approach. I haven't found many things that surprise me, which I'm glad of.

Applying a dialectical prospective and resorting to Lenin, history takes two steps forward and one step backward. We cannot ignore what the humiliating, unconditional surrender of the Soviets meant for Cuba. We can almost say that the world took two steps backwards. It is still to be seen whether we'll take three forward. As of now, we returned to a universe where corruption reigns –starting on that of the most elemental values-, where the productivity and efficiency of one pole is built on the misery of another pole, where bureaucracy had already set up shop and the external blockade went to extremes. To aspire that the world would undergo such reversion and this little island would still be the same was an illusion. Socialism can't be built into a bubble.

I believe that in the end this is an interesting time to be in Cuba and to participate on its political process. In jail one learns that it is possible to grow on the shadow of the worst circumstances, and that also applies to a society that wakes up to a new and more aggressive environment, even though that change has induced some regression. It has also brought about some gains as the surmounting of dogmas, a healthy plurality of opinions and a debate which would be worth to encourage.

Now it comes to -paraphrasing that aphorism that some attribute to mother Africa-finding the courage to change whatever can be changed, the serenity to accept that which cannot be changed, and the wisdom to tell between the two of them.

With that spirit I assume this approach to the Cuban reality.

7- By La isla Desconocida: Enrique Ubieta.

René, American superheroes (be it of the type of Superman or Rambo), are impossible to match and express a superior power. Elpidio Valdes, on the other hand, resorts to courage, intelligence and astuteness. Are those constructions becoming to a concept and a paradigm of the hero which corresponds, respectively, to each of the two project of

a nation? How would you describe the Cuban paradigm of a hero?

Obviously it is not the same to build an empire than nurturing a project of a sovereign state from a neocolonial, peripheral nation. The fictitious heroes –and the examples you give from both projects are so- in the end represent whatever each of those projects has taken from its real history to represent the hero; which in the case of the American establishment comes with the addition of historical misleading as a tool of alienation and social numbness. It would be too much to ask that they assume as heroes men like Nat Turner or John Brown. For them it is much useful to glorify Custer or Roosevelt, whose heroism in real life has as much as fiction as the humanity of their paradigms you are referring to. In the end heroes are built –or selected- to the image and semblance of those who rule on the community that they represent. It is hard to imagine a society where the president could make the ridicule made by Bush when landing on an air carrier to proclaim a phony victory on a conflict, without having to pay political consequences. There is something of a collective alienation there which requires a multi-generational “desk work”; which includes the narrative giving origin to caricatures like Superman or Rambo.

Elpidio represents that humble Cuban insurgent who until demanded by the war was probably oblivious to his own courage. He was that Cuban, be it a soldier or a general, who after the war would go back to his piece of land and would again till the soil. It is the same peasant who later on would achieve on the mountains an astonishing feat; but also that Cuban who in peace time went to alphabetize or was mobilized for a good part of the year to the sugar cane harvest. Contrary to the common citizen who observes with his mouth open how Spiderman deals with the “bad guys” our hero is that same common citizen, making history himself as a center of a process of not only collective, but also individual emancipation for each of the members of that collective.

That’s my paradigm of a hero: the common citizen, aware of his own mortality and of the vulnerability of his human condition, for whom the deeds that elevate him imply a sacrifice, but without more pretensions accepts that sacrifice as the price to do the right thing.
