

The strong Man

In sentence of Kissinger, the mission of a leader or driver is to "take to his people of where it is to where it should be." And he makes it thanks to special qualities of vision and energetic will. For Francisco Herrera Luque, leader is "the enzyme dedicated to ferment the mass and to take it to his growth." And Mandela, mentioning to memories of his pastoral childhood affirms: "When you want to take a flock toward certain address, you put on behind with a cane. Then some few of the most energetic in the flock move forward and the rest of the flock follows them. You are really guiding the whole flock from behind." It is necessary to recognize that Chávez has an alive conscience of such a mission regarding his country and the Third World. And he has put to his service a great stamina and the best of his qualities.

Threshold

With impartiality and realism, we should recognize that Hugo Chávez Frías has been transformed into the dominant figure of Latin America (Tomás Eloy Martínez, 28 August 2005):

"He has to be able to solve the energy crisis of the region. His exports are essential for United States. He has been able to neutralize the internal opposition almost completely. The Revenues of his country grow to the same rhythm in that goes up the price of the barrel of petroleum, now more expensive six times that when he arrived to the government, in 1999. The character, of simple, extroverted appearance, mighty in words and in expressions, it is however an enigma. Be maybe it for him same, because the origins,

the formation, the early likings for the painting and the baseball seemed to prepare him for another destination.

The magazine *Time* in special issue (december 2005) includes the leaders of United States and of Venezuela among the leaders who have "the weight and the power of changing to the world." And the very professional and serious weekly publication *Semana* (Week, Bogotá) chose Hugo Chávez like the most important character in the year, dedicating him the cover and an extensive dossier, where it affirms:

"In the last 12 months, Hugo Chávez altered the political map of the subcontinent, he distributed his oil wealth for the four cardinal points, he challenged the United States, and of being perceived as a tropical clown has passed to be positioned as the Latin American leader of global bigger influence".

His proposal of a continental alliance against the hunger and his so much main character in the Third Summit of the Towns in Mar de la Plata (November 2005) -like in the popular anti-summit that took place in a stadium and in the streets-, he stole the show to Bush. The comment of *El Tiempo* of Bogotá (8 November 05), introduces to Chávez "blowing with the look to the wind to move to the clouds and that he stopped the rain; and the rain stopped." A biblical figure that gives step to the information about his regional leadership, his power secured in the oil peacefulness, his confrontation with the United States and the echo that make him the means from the CNN, BBC, The Guardian and The Independent, without speaking of *Le Monde Diplomatique*. "And he gained ground there where he is a magician: in the street, in the multitudes and the left sectors that begin to see him as the selfsame Messiah." The survey of Latinobarometer (12 November 2005) in 18 countries of Latin America gave very good average to the presidents from Colombia (69/100 points) and Venezuela (65/100 points).

The journalist and Mexican writer Alma Guillermoprieto, after traveling Venezuela, published two extensive chronic in New York Review of Books on the political current process and its leader (January 2005). She affirms:

"Ten years ago when he was an unsuccessful and military retired after the failed military coup, Chávez depended on his friends to cover his daily necessities and of transport. Today, 51 years of age, he is to the head of a State with one of the biggest flows in box of the world, he enjoys indexes of popularity of 80%, he faces to a vehement but demoralized opposition and maybe terminally disorganized, and, as it seems he is an imam for the women".

We won't make the character's biography here. They already exist several, of different value and from opposed optic, according to the interests and their authors' partisan or personal focuses.

Only we want to point out the character's significant dates, before his public management as leader of the Venezuelans.

1954. He is born in Sabaneta, State Barinas, June 28.

1975. He was graduate of the Military Academy (June 5) with the grade of Lieutenant and Graduate's title in Sciences and Military Arts, branch Engineering, Terrestrial mention.

1982. He founds December 17, under the shade del Samán of Güere, the symbolic tree of his movement. Revolutionary Movement 200 (MBR-200).

1991. Major of the Battalion of Parachutists Cnel. Antonio Nicolás Briceño. Barracks Páez, Maracay.

1992. He leads the military rebellion of February 4 against the president Carlos Andrés Pérez.

1992-1994. Military prisoner for balky.

1998. Postulate before the National Electoral Council, July 27, as presidential candidate for the Patriotic Pole.

Personal profile

"¿Who is Hugo Chávez Frías?, he wonders everybody"

(Manuel Caballero, *Hugo Chávez gestation*, Caracas 2000).

Is Chávez a popular leader adored by the masses? Is a democrat? Is a Fascist? Is a populist demagogue? Is a commander of those that they have plagued the history of Latin America? Is a ruler with authority, or an authoritarian ruler? Is an illuminated or messianic one? Is a typical military? Is a Venezuelan of the heap, in who the country is recognized?

A lot it has been written and it will be continued writing on Chávez's personal profile and the brave characteristics of his government style. They would give so that Gabriel García Márquez enriche Caribbean and Latin American dictator's prototype that delineated in the "*Patriarch's Autumn*", novelly picking up there, the features of singular rulers of many of our republics.

One of Chávez's better portraits is the one elaborated by who was political strong opponent (Jorge Olavarría, 21 January 2002):

"It is necessary to recognize that he is a man of a cunning and an exceptional recklessness, of a personal great charisma. He is a charmer of snakes. I believe that he is the most powerful demagogue, more convincing of Venezuela of the XX century. For that reason it is not necessary to underestimate him. Those that think that Chávez is fallen are mistaken, because it would be behind a jump."

The author of the book "*Venezuela uncertain destination*" (J. Mendoza Angulo, 2006), also he originating of Barinas, recognizes the character 'llanero' that exists in Chávez: "The 'llanero' likes to be always fighting, is vain, macho and very audacious."

Of Chávez -as of every important character in scene- there are humorist cartoons and there are them bitchy. That of the artist that painted the cover of one of the editions of the magazine Time (2006) depicts him with such an inflated face that it seems Botero's , with the small eyes and the bent lips that denote a superb character. The bad intention was the features of a man that he only believes in the force to highlight.

There is a letter that, in feeling of some of his critics, it would undress Chávez and that we don't make our. It is about the one that the university professor Alexis Márquez Rodríguez wrote to his friend Roberto Fernández Retamar, his colleague and leader of the Marxist Cuban orthodoxy. Márquez reviews in the letter the wrongs of the 'puntofixism' (Fourth Republic), but he also recognizes many of the good things that happened in those 40 years. And he opened up Chávez's figure like the man that he could conduct the republic for the path of the reconstruction. But, "the illusion lasted very little." It proclaimed a bolivarian revolution when what was required was a "plan of reformatations." He alienated managerial sectors, middle class, media, key characters. He didn't stimulate in Venezuela the fight of classes but a "hate of classes." He opened the floodgates for a gigantic corruption in all the spheres of the public power, of which doesn't escape the military corps. "Once in the power he has come suffering a grotesque transformation, he is an arrogant being, ostentatious in dressing and in the customs, lover of the luxuries, with a maniac obsession for the trips, all very expensive ones and most unnecessary." Not only his message but his acting evidences immaturity, "a behavior the more far from a true leader of a revolution" (complete text in *Quinto Día*, , Caracas, January 2003)

Given his style that breaks the traditional molds of the statesmen, they are voices who point out Chávez's brave features. One adduces a persecution mania that takes him to frequently denounce plans to overthrow him or to murder. Phases of paranoia are insinuated. He repeats that the power goes mad and the absolute power goes mad absolutely. But serious psychiatrists, as Delgado Senior, they remark that what prevails in Chávez

is a histrionics that can be not well interpreted, but "in Chávez there is not madness but an alteration of his structure of personality." Serious studies, some from the foreigner (R. Luyken), are in agreement in this respect and they classify rather the brave features of the president like a case of histrionics narcissist. In his friend's opinion, the psychiatrist Edmundo Chirinos, "the first leader, although he is a normal man, he spreads to be conceited and he has features of narcissism that are accompanied by strong impulsiveness dose and authoritarianism."

Critical imaginative some people insinuate kind of an unfolding of personality, of two Chávez in oneself fellow that reminds the virtual denominated character "Gollum" - that interacts with the real characters in the Episode III of "The Lord.of the Rings" - and others suggest Hamlet who was debating tragically between the "being or no-being" of the democracy (to be or not to be, that's the question). "We have today a Hamlet that walks through Miraflores (Tulio Hernández)."

"There in the exterior, it is the conciliatory one, the pacifier, the paladin of the concord and the harmony. Here inside of, in Venezuela, he is the implacable warrior, the poker of conflicts, the threatening accuser. Where is the truth? To where do we go? Is it about a drama or of a comedy? How is the character 'real' or what does he intend beyond the changing masks? The show brings to the memory the admirable verse of Pessoa: 'I have more souls than one / there is more egos than myself / nevertheless, I exist / Indifferent to all / I make Them remain silent: I speak' " (Aníbal Romero, 13 October 1999).

Others prefer to assimilate the case from Chávez to that happened in "The stranger case of the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", of the English writer Robert Louis Stevenson. Direct allusion that made the former general secretary of 'Homeland For All' (Pablo Medina, 16 April 2002), soon after the events of April 11.

There are three *defects* that they underline repetitive some sectors of the public opinion:

1) One, his character of hoodlum prone to fight and to resentful, vengeful command, vile and insulting style, hunting fights with almost all the influential sectors of the country (unions, managers, media, Church, intellectuals), as well as with celebrated characters of other friends States to who he addresses strong epithets (Bush, Fox, Toledo, Alan García, Calderón, Uribe).

2) Two, the adoption of the lie, the hypocrisy, the cynicism like relationship system in the government's things and even of the international relationships.

3) Three, the abandonment of his friends because he "finishes destroying all that loves (Manuel Caballero)." It is very significant the general comment that makes on Chávez an authorized militant of the Venezuelan left, somebody who was his friend and who accompanied him in a long initial tract of his revolutionary process (Luis Miquilena, 9 October 2002):

"Good, I tell you with all sincerity that Chávez who today exercises the power I don't know him. I believed him a man humble But Chávez of now, that Chávez full with arrogance, that Chávez full with vanity, that Chávez full with prepotency, I don't know him. That intolerant Chávez that humiliates his collaborators, to the sigüises court that surrounds him, that laughs him until the bad jokes, laughs them and he makes them grace."

As *significant qualities* they usually stand out, with real foundation:

1) that of accomplished strategist (with enough flexibility in thinking and working),

2) and that of political undeniable communicator.

"Chávez is the political best communicator whom I have known" (Ítalo Pizzolante Negrón). Chávez has turned out to be a mediatic and effective president. Very early he assumed the terrestrial communication like the fight space, as the privileged place for the political fight. He transformed into a leader half-clerk. He has not only been payee of news, but rather he is permanently the news. The government has transformed into a voice, in a perpetual speech, his. The use and abuse of his frequent radio "chains" and television and an abundant "space" in the written press, they have helped to the high concentration of power and his high popularity. In feeling of a North American journalist, he has transformed into a showman "that rebukes his opponents, he sings (with pleasure, but bad), he recites poetry, he counts jokes and in general he plays fond actor's part." He has the perfect profile of the entertainer".

Chávez's *language* has been object of several analysis. Alexis Márquez underlines his loquacity and tax style (characteristic of the 'llaneros'); the tendency to the emphatic thing, to the affirmative thing said with force and repetition, with frequent insistence; the resource to the demarcations that without having humorous purposes properly, they are solved more or less in exits comics; and something obsessive for all, its limitless extension, also continuing in this to his model Fidel Castro.

The resource to the astral letters has been good to underline certain previous features. Combining Leo of the Zodiac with the Horse of the Chinese horoscope. The person of this sign always has necessity of a great 'protagonism', he fascinates to be the center of the attention. He exercises his position with certain monarchic vanity. In his nearer environment he only accepts citizens, never critical or characters that make him shade. It is the class of "yes man" that returns to all an encouraging reflection of his own ego (Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza). But from this point of view, a lucid and critical and indefatigable fighter, he has put the finger on the flaw that implies the style of 'manager' that orders, but that he is not conciliatory, like today it is required in everybody who he presides over a good team work" (Teodoro Petkoff, 7 August 2005, *El Nacional*):

"Chávez doesn't have ministers, he has servants that obey him because they fear him. Chávez is not the first one among his equals. He doesn't discuss of who to who with their collaborators, and he would never accept to lose a discussion or a voting with them. Believe a way of being related with their people that doesn't allow to create a team spirit. To say it in the jargon that he likes it: a manager that has an overbearing style and 'carajea' to his subordinate ones he cannot create a team work."

Among the international observers there are consecrated writers' comments that they pick up the interviewed character's interesting aspects, without hiding their enthusiasm for him, but at the same time sowing a methodical certain doubt on his current acting and his future.

Mexican Carlos Fuentes has some pages on "the disturbing colonel Chávez." The prize literature Nobel, Gabriel García Márquez, personal great friend of Castro, interviewed Chávez while they traveled together from Havana to Caracas (30 January 1999). He concludes saying:

"While he went away among his military escorts it shook me the inspiration that I had traveled and conversed to pleasure with two opposed men. One to who the confirmed luck offered him the opportunity to save to his country. And the other one, an illusionist that could pass the history like a tyrant more."

Mexican Jorge Castañeda, who was minister of external relationships of Fox, has interesting observations on "Chávez like phenomenon" (*El Nacional*, September 1999)." Argentinean Mempo Gardinelli, although it differentiates him very well of the military gorillas of his country, it finishes qualifying him of "fascinating and under suspicion" "I like many of the things that Chávez sustains and he makes, but I don't like anything the providential aura that surrounds him". His countryman, the writer Tomás Eloy Martínez, is more radical in his appreciations (Interview *El Nacional*, 26 September 1999). His first impression of the character: "A frank, seductive boy obsessed to

take his political project ahead without measuring too much its consequences." But after having heard him in the recordings, he says to have realized that it is "a fanatic, an obsessive one or an idealist, willing to take the bolivarian project ahead what ever is the price." And he wonders "if he will be the last of a stock or the first of a new, unknown species and such a more terrible one that the previous ones".

It is interesting the *comparison* that some Venezuelan historians have made of Commanding Hugo Chávez figure with those of others of similar stock. To the interviewer's question of H. Lugo Galicia on if Chávez emulates some hero of the past and of being this way, who he resembles, the historian Ramón J. Velásquez responds (*El Nacional* 27 December 1998):

"In the democratic history Chávez doesn't have antecedents, but his presence is surprising, like it was that of Cipriano Castro who enters in the political life with the Restoring Revolution. Chávez didn't figure in the presidential accounting, even after the events of February 4. The use of a bolivarian language on the part of Chávez brings near him to Castro's initial image, mainly in the days of the economic blockade, in 1902, when he made one anti-imperialist proclaims and he exalted the patriotism and the nationalism to face to the powers that demanded the payment of the debt. His performance, that of Chávez, it cannot be measured in the political traditional molds, because it constitutes an expression of other realities. That explains why in their oratorical one it mixes patriotic and biblical messages that, perhaps, to the intellectual sectors they seem, in certain form, inappropriate, but that they go directed to the masses that they understand them. Their historical presence is natural, but surprising".

Also for Sánchez García, Chávez is second edition of "Gabito" (Castro). Simón Alberto Consalvi opposes Hugo Chávez style with that of Raúl Leoni, with three characteristics that make him its Nemesis (*El Nacional* 1º

May 2005) and he finds many similarities between Chávez's government and that of José Tadeo Monagas (*El Nacional* 17 November 2002):

"It is unavoidable to find certain analogies between Venezuela 1858 and that of these confused times, in a review: the country of a general that runs off with against all, reforms the Constitution to his measure, it increases the presidential period to six years, he adds a power to the three traditional powers of the State, he is made reelect with ambitions of making it again once conquered his period, he imposes the most unimaginable authoritarianism, he governs against wind and he gets dizzy, he installs the nepotism, he unties the violence until the end of gathering against him to everybody, and finally, he falls rejected until for who had been abroad his vice-president, his minister of the Interior, his plenipotentiary one, the unlikely character of the 'I dismay' (Antonio Leocadio Guzmán)."