

2019 Research Week Abstract

Title – The Birth of *Costumbrismo*: The Causes and Effects of Spain’s Changing Social Culture

Program of Study – Spanish

Presentation Type – Choose one of the following: Oral Presentation

Subtype – Investigative

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Abstract: Mariano José de Larra included his social commentary entitled “Vuelva usted mañana” in his well-known newspaper column during the reign of Fernando VII. Larra penned this critique of Spanish cultural norms during a time in which Spain was facing the growing problem of Latin-American independence, which would effectively end in loss of its established colonies across the Atlantic in the New World. Additionally, after failed attempts at peace with the French and the efforts of Napoleon to create division within the Spanish court, the empire found itself in the hands of another Bonaparte. Returning from life abroad, former Spanish patriots, now deemed “liberals,” brought home a new package of ideas concerning the future of their country. Using his celebrity-like influence, Larra promoted these new ideas by portraying them in a manner that borrowed from both romanticism and realism. This unique style of writing became known as *costumbrismo*. Quickly, this became the popular form of writing in Spain and spread to other parts of the world. Within this, Larra’s “Vuelva usted mañana” brings the reader along on the frustrating journey of a Frenchman visiting Spain, who, after several encounters with a useless form of bureaucracy, and various natives who are all illustrated as equally lazy and off-putting, the man is irate with their tendencies as each time he seeks goods or services and is told to “come back tomorrow,” rather than receiving the assistance he needs. “Vuelva usted mañana” illuminates the growing problems with Spain’s social culture as a direct result of the political and foreign influences it had recently become victim to.

Christian worldview integration: My worldview, which finds its foundation within the text of the Bible, aided in the dictation and presentation choices of my research. The value of truth is a predominant theme throughout the scriptures. For example, Romans 1:18 provides a rather harsh statement, declaring that, “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness.” God equivocates the suppression of the truth with evil and being apart for holiness. With this in mind, the principle of accuracy was employed over the duration of the research communication process so that the Lord and His Word may be honored. Secondly, a strong sense of cultural awareness was used to design the research. The importance of such knowledge was modeled by key biblical figures such as Paul. Missionaries, prophets, and apostles consistently used the information and understanding they had of the cultures in which they spread the gospel to do so more effectively. Jesus employed cultural knowledge as a teaching technique. He was consistently aware of the types of people He was preaching to and would design His lessons with their social structures in mind. When he told the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus referenced people groups with stereotypes well known to the persons within the timeframe and area in which He spoke. This concept is just as important today as it was then. It is essential to portray historic events in a manner that is understandable to a modern reader. One must also be sensitive to the ethnicity, nationality, and other contributing characteristics of an audience. Through this, an author can demonstrate his or her points to readers effectively and honorably.

Bibliography:

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Merino, Olga, et al. “Mariano De Larra y Los Columnistas.” *El Ciervo*, vol. 61, no. 731, 2012, pp. 30–31. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/23232842

Vega, Jesusa. "Fernando VII: Resistencia y Deseo." *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, vol. 14, no. 4, 2013, pp. 348–399., doi:10.1080/14636204.2013.916025.

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