

Reminiscences from an Expatriate Scientist

C. Montes

The Workshop “A WEEK OF SCIENCE” celebrating the 70th birthday (September 7th, real; 14th, legal; 2011) of Prof. Manuel G. Velarde, was an outstanding meeting. For me, Carlos Montes, Directeur de Recherche au CNRS (emeritus since 2006), was the best opportunity to embrace my friend Manuel. I know him from the early seventeens because we have a strong common history. We are both Spanish physicists emigrating from our country in order to carry out research in physics. At the end of the sixteens this was not possible in Spain. Both fulfilled research in nonlinear physics and we meet together many times in international conferences and workshops devoted to this area. However our careers deviated in the sense that he choosed to return to Spain in order to develop the research from the bottom, which represented an immense task, and to become the leader in hydrodynamics and nonlinear physics, and I take the chance of developing the research in France as a fellow of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, which remains for me the best research institution in the world. We only do work for the scientific community, like the artists, without thinking about material fallouts. This is a privilege and a singularity which compel us to an exemplary behaviour. Velarde’s work on dissipative solitons, hydrodynamic instabilities and convection remains a reference for me in my field of plasma physics and nonlinear optics. I will not enumerate here all the research work done by Manuel but my purpose is to testify his honesty. He was the first Spanish physicist who invited me to lecture on kinetic theory in plasmas in the University Autonoma of Madrid in the Spring of 1976. I remained grateful to him and I can assert that besides considering him as one of the best Spanish physicists he is “un autentico caballero”.

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