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Drink Cultura: Chicanismo



Synopsis

This book is about the Chicano experience of living within, between and sometimes outside of two cultures--the damnation and salvation, and the celebration of it all. "In some ways a book Erma Bombeck might have written, that is, if she were from El Paso, dressed in Tony Lama boots, and full fledged member of raza."--Gary Soto "A passionately lyrical lección para todos about the history of the Western and Southwestern people. Burciaga is deeply rooted in the indigenous realities."--Carlos Santana

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

With *Drink Cultura*, Jose Antonio Burciaga joins the ranks of Tomas Rivera, Gloria Anzaldua, Ana Castillo and Denise Chavez, among others. Like them, Burciaga (w)rites about living within, between and sometimes outside of two cultures (5)--on the border of several marginal identities. This "limbo," as Burciaga calls it, of being "neither here nor there," however, does not come across as essentialist in his writing. Burciaga develops a multidimensional perspective that allows him to see things as funny, ironic, etc., rather than as a battle against hegemony. Like the many characters within the pages of Chicana/o fiction, in re(w)riting (his)tory, Burciaga transgresses boundaries and questions norms. In drawing from daily experience, Mesoamerican history, psychology, sociology, myths, tales, etc., Burciaga is able to construct a wittily engaging narrative that corresponds to his lived experience. By exploring the history of his culture(s) in this light, Burciaga is able to textualize the hybridity of the Chicano psyche--the Indianness, Hispanicity, Mexicanness, and Americanness;

"the damnation and salvation, the celebration of it all" (5)

Drink Cultura is a collection of mini-autobiographical essays (26 total) about life as a Chicano in El Paso, Texas. The author tells us about his personal life, and about his personal observations concerning Chicano culture. In "Pinatas" he writes a brief history about the Pinata, and how it has evolved since then. In "The Motherland" he writes about the term Chicano, and how the connotation attached has changed over time. "The Joy of Jalapenos" was a hysterical piece about the jalapeno, and the author's 'addiction' to the spicy chiles. He's poignant, insightful, and witty. The book is so funny I found myself laughing out loud on more than one occasion. Regardless of your own race, this book really hits your funny bone. If you're not Chicano/a, this is a good start towards learning about Chicano/a life, and if you are, you'll be able to relate to a lot of the stories. I highly recommend this book. c/s

Burciaga's very well written book brought many dormant memories to my husband and me. We, in many ways, lived the incidences he described in the book. It is an excellent book for many of us who also grew up during those times in "el chuko," and it is even a better history lesson to our children who never experienced the early chicano life. The vivid language and visions invoked in us the memory of the smells and the sights of that era which we will never see again.

This book is one of revelation as Burciaga goes through all the hardships and struggles along with the triumphs of being Mexican American. I suggest that all Mexican Americans, Chicanos and Latinos read this. This book should be read by all not just Chicanos but all Mexicanos from Mexico and all Americans from the US.

Burciaga's writing is moving and insightful and has cultivated, within me, a greater awareness about the complexity of Chicano culture. I'm still in awe and I plan to read more of his work in the near future.

I'm finding it really hard to review this book. Do I like it, or not? I don't know. To tell you the truth, I don't find Jos  Antonio Burciaga to be a very entertaining writer. He's pretty straight forward and lacks any real artistic flair, as far as I'm concerned, but what I do like is his content. He writes about a seldom covered subculture, very dear to my heart â the Chicano; a group I belong too and often cover in my own writing. I suppose what rubs me the wrong way, is his

approach. To an outsider, or an uninitiated member, the world he paints is a strange one; uninviting and alien. The â œgavachoâ • is never invited into the world, but treated as a spectator, or a visitor at the zoo. The inhabitants of his essays are one dimensional and possess very little humanity. Unfortunately for me, they become nothing more than lifeless flat caricatures and stereotypes. Burciaga never tries to show that people are essentially people (the cornerstone of all great writing in my opinion), no matter where we come from. Instead I felt like a viewer of a nature documentary, about my own people. I found this very disheartening, as I really wanted to enjoy this book. Sadly (unlike John Fante and his Italian heritage, or Maxim Gorky), Burciaga never transcends his culture to become a truly great artist. Instead he remains a slave to it and becomes just a â |â œMexicanâ • writer.

Mr. Burciaga is both funny and to the point. This book is a must read for all young Latinos. I gave a copy to all my children and grandchildren. I now give a copy to any young Latino who doesn't know what makes us special!

Chock full of tidbits from everyday Chicano life. A very cool book full of cool info. A must for every Chicano or those who are interested in the Chicano life.

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