

EZLN: Them and Us Part VI: The Gaze Part 2

February 9, 2013

THEM AND US.

VI.- The Gaze 2.

2.- To look and to listen from/toward below.

Can we still choose toward where and from where we look?

We could, for example, look at those who work in supermarket chains, scolding them for their complicity in the electoral fraud^[i] and ridiculing them for the orange uniforms they must wear, or, we could look at the employee who, after cashing out...

The cashier takes off her orange apron, grumbling her rage at being accused of complicity in the fraud that brought ignorance and frivolity into Power. A woman, young or old, single or divorced, a widower, a mother, a single mother, an expecting mother, a woman without children, or whatever the case may be. She starts work at 7 in the morning and is let out at 4 in the afternoon, if there are no overtime hours, that is. That's without counting the time it takes for her to get from home to work and back, and the time she spends afterward on school work or housework, that "women's-labor-that-one-can-do-with-a-bit-of-flair." She read this accusation of complicity in one of the magazines beside the cash register. They blame her, who supposedly they are going to save, it's just a question of a vote and ta-da, happiness. "What, do they think the owners wear the orange apron?" she murmurs, irritated. She fixes herself up a bit from the purposeful disheveledness with which she arrives to work so that the manager doesn't hit on her. She leaves. Her partner is waiting for her outside. They hug, kiss, touch each other with a gaze, walk together. They enter an internet café or cybercafé or whatever you call it. 10 pesos per hour, 5 for a half hour...

"Half hour," they say, mentally calculating their budget-transit-time-metro-bus-walk.

"Cover me Roco, don't be a jerk," he says.

"Okay, but come mid-month you'd better come by and pay up or the owner will be all over me and it will be you covering me."

"Fine, I'll cover you, but it will be when you have a car, man, because I'm working at the car wash."

"Well wash it then man," Roco says.

The three of them laugh.

“Number 7,” Roco says.

“Go ahead, look for it,” she says.

He starts to put in a number.

“No,” she says, “look for when this all started.”

They search. They get to where there were just a few more than 131.[\[ii\]](#) They play the video.

“They’re bourgeois” he says.

“Calm yourself, revolutionary vanguard. You’re wrong in the head if you judge people on their appearance, look at how they call me white girl and bourgeois for having light skin, and don’t see that I live paycheck to paycheck. You have to look at what each person does and where they come from, dummy,” she says, giving him a smack upside the head.

They keep watching.

They watch, fall silent, listening.

“Well the fact that they went at him right to his face, to that Peña Nieto... they’re brave, that’s for sure, you can see they’ve got balls.”

“Or ovaries, idiot,” she gives him another smack.

“Keep that up princess, and I’m going to accuse you of interfamilial violence.”

“It would be gender violence, idiot,” and another smack.

They finish watching the video.

Him: “So that’s where things started, with a handful of people who weren’t scared.”

Her: *“Or they were scared, but they controlled it.”*

“Half hour!” Roco yells.

“Yeah, let’s go.”

She walks out smiling.

“Now what are you laughing at?” he asks.

“Nothing, I was just remembering,” she walks closer to him, *“that thing you said about ‘interfamilial.’ Does that mean you want us to be, like they say, a family?”*

He doesn’t even skip a beat.

“That’s right my princess, I mean we’re already headed there, that’s what we’re already doing, but without so many smacks on the head, make them kisses instead, lower and to the left.”

“Hey don’t mess with me man!” Another smack. *“And enough of this “princess” stuff, aren’t we against the fucking monarchy?”*

Expecting an even bigger smack, he says: “Okay then, my... plebian.”

She laughs, and he does too. After a few more steps, she says:

“So you think the Zapatistas will invite us?”

“Definitely, my buddy Vins said he’s buddies with the sockface [\[iii\]](#) because he let him win at Mortal Combat, at the arcades, so we’ll just say we’re Vins’ people and we’re in,” he explains enthusiastically.

“You think I’d be able to take my mother? She’s getting pretty old...”

“Of course, with any luck my future mother-in-law will get stuck in the mud,” he ducks the smack he expects but that doesn’t come.

She’s angry now:

“And what the hell are the Zapatistas going to give us if they’re so far away? What, they’re going to give me a better salary? Make people respect me? Make those fucking men stop looking at my ass in the street? Make the fucking boss stop using any pretext to touch me? Are they going to help me pay my rent? Buy my daughter or my son clothes? Are they going to bring the price down for sugar, beans, rice, oil? Are they going to make sure I have enough to eat? Are they going to confront the police that come every day to the barrio to harass and extort the vendors that sell pirated DVDs telling them that it’s so they don’t have to denounce them to Mr. or Mrs. Sony...?”

“It’s not called ‘piracy,’ it’s ‘alternative production’ my princ... plebian. Don’t get all bent out of shape with me, we’re on the same side.”

But she’s on a roll now and there’s no stopping her:

“And for you, are they going to give your job back at the factory, where you were already certified as whatever-the-hell-it-was? Are they going to make your studies, all your training courses, worth something so that in the end that jackass of a boss takes the business who the hell knows where, along with the union and the strike and everything you did, so that you end up washing cars?” Or what about your buddy El Chompis, they took his job away and disappeared the official employment records so he can’t even defend himself? And the government with its same story about how it’s going to improve service and be world class and all that nonsense, and what about that stuff about lowering rates, now they’re more expensive! And the electricity goes out all the time^[iv] and fucking Calderón is going to go give classes on shamelessness to the gringos,^[v] who are the real mothers of this mess. And my father, god bless his soul, who went to work on the other side [in the US], not as a tourist but in order to get some bread, some dough, some pay to maintain us when we were still real little, and when he was just crossing the border la migra [immigration agents] grabbed him like he was a terrorist rather than an honest worker and they never even gave us his body back and that fucking Obama whose heart appears to be the color of the dollar.

“Whoa, cool your jets, my plebian,” he says.

“It’s just that every time I even think about it I get angry, so much work and effort so that in the end those above end up with everything, the only thing left is for them to privatize laughter, although that’s not probable because there is so little of it, but maybe they’ll privatize tears, those are abundant, and they’ll get rich... richer. And then you come with this stuff about the Zapatistas this and the Zapatistas that and that below and to the left and that the eighth...”

“The Sixth, not the eighth,” he interrupts her.

“Whatever, if those guys are so far away and speak worse Spanish than you.”

“Hey now, don’t be mean.”

She wipes away her tears and mutters: “Damned rain, it’s ruined my Este Lauder and I had fixed myself up to please you.”

“Ahhh but you please me without anything... especially clothes.”

They laugh.

She says, very serious: “Well, then, tell me, are these Zapatistas going to save us?”

“No my plebian, they’re not going to save us. That, among other things, we’re going to have to do ourselves.”

“So what then?”

“Well, they’re going to teach us.”

“And what are they going to teach us?”

“That’s we’re not alone [solos].”[\[vi\]](#)

She is quiet a moment. Then suddenly:

“Nor alone [solas],[\[vii\]](#) dummy,” another smack.

The minibus is packed. They wait to see if the next one has room.

It is cold, rainy. They hug each other tighter, not to keep from getting wet, but rather to get wet together.

Far away someone waits, there is always someone waiting. And that someone waits, with an old pen and an old tattered notebook, keeping count of the gazes below that see themselves in a window.

(To be continued...)

From whatever corner, of whichever world.

SupMarcos.
Planet Earth.
January of 2013.

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“Los Nadies,” [the Nobody’s] based on the text by the same name by Eduardo Galeano. Performed by La Gran Orquesta Republicana, ska-fusión band, Mallorca, Spain. Band members include: Javier Vegas, Nacho Vegas: saxophone. Nestor Casas: trumpet. Didac Buscató: trombone. Juan Antonio Molina: electric guitar. Xema Bestard: bass. José Luis García: drums.

Liliana Daunes narrates a very other story called “Always and Never Against Sometimes.” Greetings to the Network of Solidarity with Chiapas that struggles and resists here just a little ways away, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Latin America, Planet Earth.

“Salario Mínimo” (Minimum Wage) Oscar Chávez and Los Morales.

[i] The PRI was accused of buying votes during the presidential campaigns in 2012 with gift cards to the popular chain store Soriana. Many on the institutional left blamed the working class people who used the gift cards for “complicity” with the PRI’s electoral fraud.

[ii] During a speech at the Universidad Iberoamericana during the presidential campaigns, then presidential candidate Enrique Peña Nieto (PRI) was confronted by students protesting events that occurred during his tenure as governor of Mexico State. Peña Nieto hid and eventually fled the University, but party affiliates later dismissed the protesters in the media as a handful of non-student opposition supporters that were sent to disturb the event. Iberoamericana students then made a youtube video in which 131 of them held up their university ID’s and testified to their participation in the protest, sparking the name for a wider student movement “Yosoy#132,” “Iam#132.”

[iii] Sockface is a reference to the ski-mask worn by Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.

[iv] This is a reference to Calderón shutting down the public electric company Luz y Fuerza del Centro and union-busting the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME). The official reason for the shut-down was inefficiency, but people complain that under the private company that took over the service area rates are higher and service worse. The implication is that *El Chompis* was an electrical worker with Luz y Fuerza.

[v] Ex-president of Mexico Felipe Calderón is slated for a teaching position at Harvard University in the United States.

[vi] The masculine form of “alone.”

[vii] The feminine form of “alone.”