

# **EZLN: Them and Us VI. The Gaze 3**

February 11, 2013

**Them and Us.**

**VI.- The Gaze 3.**

## **3.- Some Other Gazes.**

### **one: A dream within that gaze**

Somewhere on a street, a cornfield, a factory, a tunnel, a forest, a school, a department store, an office, a plaza, a market, a city, a countryside, a country, a continent, a world...

The Boss is critically injured, the machine is broken, the beast is exhausted, the savage has been incarcerated.

The changes of names and flags did no good, nor did the blows, the prisons, the cemeteries, the money flowing through the arteries of corruption, the reality shows, the religious celebrations, the paid ads, the cybernetic exorcisms.

The Boss calls the only overseer he has left. He murmurs something in his ear. The overseer leaves, going out into the hordes.

He says, asks, demands, insists:

*“We want to talk to the man who...”*

He pauses in doubt. The majority of those in front of him are women.

He corrects himself:

*“We want to talk to the woman who...”*

He doubts himself again, as the number of Others in front of him is not few.

*“We want to talk to whoever is in charge.”*

In the silence that follows an elderly person and a child step forward, they stop in front of the overseer and in an innocent and wise voice say:

*“Here we are all in charge.”*

The overseer shakes, as does the voice of the Boss as he shouts his last.

The gaze awakens. *“Strange dream.”* And, without regard to the calendar or the geography, life, struggle, and resistance go on.

The gaze remembers only a few words of this strange dream:

*“Here we are all in charge.”*

**two: an other gaze, from an other calendar and an other geography**

(fragment of a letter received at the general headquarters of the eezeelen, undated)

*“Greetings Compas.*

*(...)*

*In my opinion, it was all a bunch of crap. But I don't deny that I say this with hindsight. It would be very easy to say that I understood the silence perfectly well, that it didn't surprise me at all. But, it would be untrue, I too was impatient with the silence (though in my case it had nothing to do with all that junk about 'before now the Zapatistas weren't talking at all.' I did in fact read all the denunciations).<sup>[1]</sup> The thing is that, having seen what has happened and what is happening, it turns out that the logical conclusion is this: we are in the midst of the Zapatistas' most daring initiative, at least since the insurrection. And in my opinion, it is related to everything, not only the national situation but also the international one.*

*Allow me to tell you what I understood to be the most significant aspect of the 21st [of December, 2012]. Naturally there were many significant things: the organization, the militant effort, the demonstration of strength, the presence of the young people and women, etc. But for me what was most impressive was that they marched carrying those wooden boards, and upon arriving at the plazas constructed stages. Much of the private media and some of the independent media were speculating about the arrival of some of the Zapatista leaders. They didn't realize that the Zapatista leaders were already there. That the leaders were the people who walked over the stage and said, without speaking, here we are, this is what we are, this is what we will be.*

*Those on stage were those who should have been on stage. No one has noticed this fact, I don't think, and yet, I think, there it is in a nutshell, the profound meaning of a new form of doing politics. A politics that breaks with the old, the only thing that is truly new, the only thing that deserves [illegible*

in the original] 21st century.”

*The plebian, libertarian soul of conjunctural moments throughout history has been recreated here without grand theoretical fanfare. That is, through subterranean practice. It has been going on for too many years now to be a mere occurrence. It is already a long, solid, social historical process on the terrain of self-organization.*

*Finally, they took down their stage, converting it back into wooden boards, and we should all be a little ashamed and a bit more modest, and recognize that we are faced with something new and unexpected, and that therefore we should watch, hush, listen, and learn.*

*An embrace for everyone. I hope that that, to the extent it may be possible, you are all well.*

*El Chueco.”*

### **three: “Instructions for what to do in case... they’re looking at you”**

If someone is looking at you, and you realize that:

They aren’t looking at you as if you were transparent.

They don’t want to convince you of something.

They don’t want to co-opt you.

They don’t want to recruit you.

They don’t want to lead you.

They don’t want to judge-condemn-absolve you.

They don’t want to use you.

They don’t want to tell you what you can or can’t do.

They don’t want to give you advice, recommendations, orders.

They don't want to reprimand you because you don't know, or because you do.

They aren't disrespecting you.

They don't want to tell you what you should or shouldn't do.

They don't want to buy your old car, your face, your body, your future, your dignity, your will.

They don't want to sell you something...

*(a time share, an LCD television in 4D, a super-ultra-hyper-modern machine with an instant crisis button (note: don't confuse this with an ejection button, the warrantee doesn't include amnesia caused by ridiculous media), a political party that changes ideologies as the wind blows, life insurance, an encyclopedia, VIP access to a show or to a revolution or to a fashion heaven, a piece of furniture on a payment plan, a cellular telephone plan, an exclusive membership, a future gifted to you from a generous leader, a pretext for surrender, for selling out, for giving up, a new ideological paradigm, etc.).*

In that case...

First. Make sure you can throw out the idea that this person isn't a degenerate. You can be as dirty, ugly, bad, and rude as you like, but to each their own, you have that sexy and arousing touch that those who work hard always have; and that "**that**" can awake anyone's passions. Hmm... well, true, a comb to that hair wouldn't be out of order. Anyway, if it isn't a degenerate person, don't be discouraged, the world is round and keeps turning, and continues on below (this list, that is).

Second, make sure that they are looking at you. Are you sure they are not looking at that ad for deodorant behind you? Or perhaps they are thinking (the person looking at you that is): "I think that's what I look like when I don't fix my hair." If you've discarded those possibilities, continue.

Third. Are you sure the person doesn't look like a cop trying to reach a quota to report to his supervisor? If it is a cop, go, run, there's still time to leave without losing your bus money. But if you're sure it's not a cop, continue on to the next point.

Fourth. Look back at them, with a severe frown. Use a look with a mix of anger, stomachache, annoyance, and murderous expression. No, that looks like a constipated teddy bear. Try again. Okay, passable, but keep practicing. Now, they didn't flee terrified? They didn't look away? They didn't come closer exclaiming, "*Uncle (aunt) Juan(a)! I didn't recognize you at first! But then you made that face...*" No? They didn't do any of those things? Okay, continue on.

Fifth. Repeat steps one, two, three, and four. There may be failures in our system (which, of course, was made in China). If you get back to this point again, go to the following:

Sixth. There is a good probability that you have run into someone who is part of the Sixth. We're not sure if we should congratulate you or send our condolences. In any case, what follows that gaze is your decision and your responsibility.

**fourth: A gaze toward a Zapatista outpost.  
(undetermined calendar and geography)**

SupMarcos: You all need to hurry because time is running out.

The *insurgenta* [female insurgent] from the health commission: *Listen Sup, time doesn't run out, people run out. Time comes from a long ways away and follows its path waaaaay out there, where we can't even see. We are like little bits of time. That is, time can't walk without us. What we do is make time go forward, and when we are gone someone else comes and pushes time along a little more until it gets to where it needs to go. But we aren't going to see where it goes, it will be others that see if arrives alright or if all of a sudden it doesn't have the strength to go on and somebody has to come give it a push again, until it gets there for real.*

(...)

The infantry captain [female]: *Why are you so late?*

The *insurgenta* from the health commission: *Well, I was giving the Sup a talk on politics, that is, I was helping him understand something so that he could better explain that we have to look far into the distance, further than either time or our gaze can reach.*

The infantry captain: *I see. And then?*

The *insurgenta* from the health commission: He reprimanded me for not working fast enough and he sent me to my post.

(...)

**five: Extract from "Notes for watching Winter."**

(...)

And yes, everyone marched over the stage with their fists in the air. But you didn't look hard enough. You didn't see the gaze of those men and women. You didn't see that, when they crossed up and over the stage, they looked down and saw their tens of thousands of *compañeros*. That is, they saw themselves. Those who gaze at us from above didn't see us seeing ourselves. Above, they didn't understand, nor will they understand, anything.

(...)

**six: Put your own gaze here (or your complaint, even if it's not so nice)**

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(To be continued...)

From whatever corner of whatever world.

SupMarcos.

Planet Earth.

Mexico, February of 2013.

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Watch and listen to the videos that accompany this text.

***Daniel Viglietti and Mario Benedetti perform “a la limón” the song “La Lllamarada” and the poem by Benedetti “Pregón” (Proclamation). Concert in Montevideo, Uruguay, Latin America, Planet Earth. At the beginning, Daniel acknowledges all those who aren’t on stage but who made it possible for Daniel and Mario to be there. Almost at the end, you can hear Mario Benedetti singing, singing to himself, singing to us, without regard for the calendar and the geography, or vice versa.***

***Amparanoia performs “Somos Viento.” At one point, Amparo Sánchez says “Ik’otik”, which in tzeltal means “we are wind.”***

***Amparo Ochoa, a voice that still echoes in our mountains, performing “Quién tiene la voz,” by Gabino Palomares.***

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**[i]** A reference to the many complaints that the Zapatistas were “silent” for so long. In “Postscript to a cartoon,” Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos points out that between May 7, 2011 and December 21, 2012 alone, the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* [the Good Government Councils] put out 27 denunciations. He counterposes the fact that people complain about his role as spokesperson to the fact that they barely read the frequent denunciations from the entirely indigenous and community-based Good Government Councils.