

## **EZLN: Them and Us VI. The Gaze Part 1**

February 8, 2013

**Them and Us.**

### **VI. – The Gaze**

1. One may gaze to impose or gaze to listen

*“For once I could say  
Without anyone contradicting me  
That he who desires something  
Is not the same as he who covets it  
Just like words said to be heard  
Are not the same  
As words said to be obeyed  
Just as he who speaks to me in order to tell me something  
Is not the same as  
He who speaks in order to make me be quiet.”*

**Tomás Segovia.**

“Fourth Search” in “Searches and Other Poems”  
from the press that has the good taste to call itself “Nameless.”  
Thanks and an embrace to María Luísa Capella, to Inés and Francisco  
(how good that dignified blood beats in their hearts)  
for the books and lyrics guide

To gaze is a form of asking, we say, we the Zapatistas.

Or to search...

When gazing into the calendar and into the geography, however far one may be from the other, one asks, one interrogates.

And it is in this gaze where the other (*el otro, la otra lo otro*) appears. And it is in this gaze where the other exists, where they draw their profile as strange, as foreign, as enigma, as victim, as judge and executioner, as enemy...or as *compañer@*.

The gaze is where fear dwells, but it is also where respect can be born.

If we don't learn to see with the other's eyes, what sense can our own gaze have? Our questions?

Who are you?

What is your story?

Where is your pain?

When are your hopes?

But it doesn't only matter at whom or at what you gaze. Also, and above all, it matters from where.

And choosing where to look is also choosing from where one is looking.

Or is it the same to see from above the pain of those who have lost those whom they love and need to senseless, inexplicable, and definitive death, as it is to see all this from below?

When someone from above looks at those below and asks, "how many?" what they are really asking is "how much are they worth?"

And if they aren't worth anything, what does it matter how many there are? To obscure this inconvenient number, we have the commercial media, the armies, the police, the judges, the prisons, the cemeteries.

And from our gaze, the answers are never simple.

To look at ourselves looking at what we look at gives us an identity that has to do with suffering and struggle, with our calendar and our geography.

Our strength, if we have one, is in this recognition: we are who we are, and there are others who are who they are, and others who we still don't have the words to name, and are nevertheless who they are. When we say "we" we are not absorbing and, in doing so, subordinating identities, but rather emphasizing the bridges that exist between different sufferings and different rebellions. We are equal because we are different.

In the Sixth, the Zapatistas, reiterate our rejection of any attempt at hegemony, that is, to say, any vanguardism, whether it places us at the forefront or alongside or, as over the course of these long centuries, at the rearguard.

If with the Sixth we search for our kin in sorrows and struggles, regardless of the calendars and geographies that distance us, it is because we know well that that the Ruler cannot be defeated with only one way of thinking, one force, one leadership (however revolutionary, consequential, radical,

clever, numerous, powerful, daring, etc. it may be).

We have learned from our dead that diversity and difference are not a weakness for those below, but rather a strength from which to birth, from the ashes of the old, the new world that we want, that we need, that we deserve.

We know well that we are not the only ones who imagine this world. But in our dream, this world is not one, but many different, diverse worlds. And in their diversity lies their strength.

It is the repeated attempts to impose unanimity that have caused the machine to go mad and move closer, by the minute, to the final moment of this civilization as we have known it.

In the current phase of neoliberal globalization, homogeneity is nothing other than mediocrity imposed as universal standard. And if it differs in any way from a Hitlerish madness, it is not in its objective but in the modernized means to achieve it.

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And yes, we are not the only ones who look for the how, the when, the where, the what.

You all, for example, are not *Them*. Well, although you don't seem to have any problem allying yourselves with *Them* in order to...deceive and defeat them from within? To be like *Them* but not as much as *Them*? To slow the speed of the machine, to file down the fangs of the beast, to humanize the savage?

Yes, we know. There are many arguments to sustain this line of thinking. In fact, you could even force a few examples.

But...

You tell us that we are equal, that we are trying to do the same thing, that we are in the same struggle, the same enemy... Hmm...no, actually you don't say "*enemy*," you say "*adversary*." Agreed, that also depends on the current context.

You say that we must all unite because there is no other path forward: it is either elections or arms. And you, who sustain your project through this false argument to invalidate anything that does not submit to the repeated spectacle of the politics of above, summon us: die or surrender. And you even offer us an pretext, arguing that, since this is about taking Power, there are only these two paths.

Ah! but we are so disobedient: we don't die, nor do we surrender. And, as was demonstrated on that day of the end of the world: neither electoral struggle nor armed struggle.

And what if it is not about taking Power? Or better: what if Power no longer resides in the Nation-State, that Zombie State populated by a parasitic political class that preys on the remains of the nations?

And if those voters that you are so obsessed with (and hence your fascination with the multitudes), do nothing other than vote for someone who others have already chosen, as has been demonstrated time and time again by *They* who amuse themselves with each new trick they invent?

Yes, of course, you hide behind your prejudices: those who don't vote? *"it is because they are apathetic, disinterested, uneducated, or because they're playing to the right"...* your ally if found in the many geographies, in more than a few calendars. Those who vote, but not for you? *"it is because they are rightwing, ignorant, sell-outs, traitors, lowlifes, because they are zombies!"*

**Note from Marquitos Spoiler:** *Yes, we sympathize with the zombies, not only because of our physical resemblance, (even without makeup we would take every spot in the casting of "the Walking Dead"). Also, and above all, because we think, like George A. Romero, that, in a zombie apocalypse, the craziest brutality would be the work of the surviving civilization, not of the walking dead. And if some vestige of humanity survives, it will glow within the pariahs of always, the walking dead for whom the apocalypse begins at birth and never ends. As now occurs in any corner of any of the existing worlds. And there is no film, nor comic, nor television series that acknowledges this.*

Your gaze is full of contempt when you look below (even if that is in the mirror), and full of envy when you look above.

You can't even imagine that someone would have no other interest in looking "above" except to figure out how to get them off our back.

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The gaze. Toward where and from where. That is what separates us.

You believe that you are the only ones, we know that we are just one of many.

You look above, we look below.

You look for ways to make yourselves comfortable; we look for ways to serve.

You look for ways to lead, we look for ways to accompany.

You look at how much you earn, we at how much is lost.

You look for what is, we, for what could be.

You see numbers, we see people.

You calculate statistics, we, histories.

You speak, we listen.

You look at how you look, we look at the gaze.

You look at us and demand to know where we were when your calendar marked *your* “historic” urgency. We look at you and don’t ask where you’ve been during these more than 500 years of history.

You look to see how you can take advantage of the current conjuncture, we look to see how we can create it.

You concern yourselves with the broken windows, we concern ourselves with the rage that broke it.

You look at the many, we at the few.

You see impassable walls, we see the cracks.

You look at possibilities, we look at what was impossible until the eve of its possibility.

You search for mirrors, we for windows.

You and us are not the same.

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You look at the calendar of above and subordinate to it the spring of mobilizations, the masses, the parties, the multitudinous rebellion, the streets overflowing with songs and colors, slogans, challenges, those who are now many more than one hundred and thirty- some, [\[i\]](#) the packed plazas, the ballot boxes anxious to be filled with votes, and you hurry because it-is-clear that – they lack a – leadership – revolutionary-party-a-politics-of-ample-flexible-alliances-because-the-electoral-is-their-natural-destiny-but-they-are-very-young-bourgeois-petit-bourgeois-spoiled kids- / -and then – lumpen – barrio – hood – prole – voting-numbers – potentials-ignorant-naïve – clumsy – stubborn, above all, stubborn. And in each mass action you see the culmination of the historic moment. And afterward,

when there are no masses clamoring for a leader, nor ballot boxes, nor parties, you decide that it's over, no more, that maybe on another occasion, that we have to wait six years, six centuries, that we have to look elsewhere, but always to the calendar of above: party registration, political alliances, official posts.

And we, always with our crooked gaze, go back to the calendar, look for winter, swim upstream, passing the creek, arriving at the source. There we see those who begin, the few, the least. We don't speak to them, we don't greet them, we don't tell them what to do, we don't tell them what not to do. Instead, we listen, we look at them with respect, with admiration. And they, perhaps never notice this little red flower, so similar to a star, so tiny that it is only a pebble, which our hand leaves below, near their left foot. Not because we want to say to them that that flower-stone belonged to us, the (*las/los*) Zapatistas. Not so that they can take this pebble and throw it against something or someone, although there is not lack of desire or motive for that. But rather because maybe it is our way of telling them and all of our *compas* of the Sixth, that houses and worlds are built with tiny pebbles, and later they grow and almost no one remembers that what are now boulders began so tiny, as such small things, so useless, so alone. Along comes a (*un/una*) Zapatista, and sees the pebble, and greets it, and sits by its side, but they don't talk, because the little stones, like the Zapatistas, don't speak...until they speak, and then, as the case may be, become quiet. And no, they are never quiet, what happens is that sometimes there is no one to listen. Or perhaps it is because we looked far ahead in the calendar and we knew, before, that this night was coming. Or perhaps because in this way we tell them, although they don't know it, but we know, that they are not alone. Because it is with the few that everything starts and restarts.

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You did not see us before...and you continue not seeing us.

And above all, you don't see us watching you.

You don't see us looking at you in your arrogance, stupidly destroying bridges, digging up the paths, allying yourselves with our persecutors, scorning us. Convincing yourselves that that which does not exist in the media, simply does not exist.

You didn't see us watching you tell others and yourselves that that was how to remain on firm ground, that the possible is solid ground, telling them that you cut the oars of that absurd boat full of those absurd and impossible people, those crazy people (\*us) who remained adrift, isolated, alone, without direction, paying with our lives for sticking to our principles.

You could have seen the resurgence as part of your victories, and now you consider it as another one of your defeats.

Go, follow your path.

Don't listen to us, don't look at us.

Because with the Sixth and with the Zapatistas, you can't look or listen with impunity.

And this is either our virtue or our curse, depending on where you look, and, above all, from where your look arises.

(to be continued...)

From whatever corner, in whichever world.

SupMarcos.

Planet Earth.  
February 2013.

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**Reincidentes. Rock Group, Sevilla, Spain. Manuel J. Pizarro Fernández: Drums. Fernando Madina Pepper: Base and vocals. Juan M. Rodríguez Barea: Guitar and vocals. Finito de Badajoz "Candy": Guitar and vocals. Carlos Domínguez Reinhardt: sound tech. Rock version of "I Name You Freedom" in video dedicated to the heroic struggle of the Mapuche People.**

**Eduardo Galeano narrates a story of Old Antonio: "*The History of the Gazes.*"**

**Joan Manuel Serrat singing "*El Sur También Existe,*" (The South Also Exists) by Mario Benedetti, at a concert in Argentina, Latin America. Upon finishing singing, Serrat goes backstage and brings out Mario Benedetti, so dear to us (from minute 3:01 forward).**

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[i] 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."