

Presentation in Seven Voices

Seven: Politics and “*Bolsas*” (Theirs and Ours)



In the opening address at the First Intercontinental Encounter, Marcos presents a paper he found in a bottle. The paper is dedicated to the prisoners accused of being Zapatistas and to all the prisoners of the world. Later, Durito explains the relationship between neoliberalism, slippers, combs, toothbrushes and *bolsas*. In Spanish the word *bolsa* refers to money or goods such as stocks and bonds, but can also refer to flexible containers such as bags, backpacks, sacks, and purses. He claims that *bolsas* can be classified into two types, “theirs” and “ours.” Also included in this communiqué are the stories of Olivio and Old Antonio as well as musings on the writings of Julio Cortázar.

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Prologue

This presentation is to be delivered at Table 1 of the Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism. Everyone knows that the so-called Table 1 (“table” is a euphemism with which stubborn *Zapatudos* hope to amuse the conference guests at the Encounter and to make the tender quagmire of La Realidad seem more friendly) is named “Of Combs, Toothbrushes, Slippers and other concepts of a New Political Science” . . .¹

What? That’s not what it’s called?

What is it called then? “What politics do we have and what politics do we need?”

Really? Well, it’s obvious that this thing about *Zapatones* having a lot of imagination is another myth, I mean, another myth besides that nose which thinks it’s so great. Well, let’s leave that for later. This is a prologue and should do what all prologues do, that is, try to convince the reader or listener that what follows is worth the trouble (or to console him, in case he becomes disillusioned when he realizes that what follows the prologue isn’t worth it); its contributions to the political debate are indisputable and overflow with wisdom, conviction and other spices. The way in which this presentation comes to this Encounter and to this table is something that certainly merits another intergalactic encounter. But that will have to wait until we all recover from this intercontinental delirium that some dreamer calls “encounter.” While that happens, I will give you a brief account:

This writing was found inside an empty liquor bottle, discovered in the middle of one of those storms that lashes the embrace the *julio* of the mountain gives us. The other Julio who continues to give us embraces, Julio Cortázar, held his own interplanetary Encounter all in one day, and moreover, gave himself the luxury of teaching us to travel *Around the Day in Eighty Worlds*.²

In one of those worlds, Julio sent us his own presentation, which he called: “Personal Coda.”

For this, Madam, I told you that many would not comprehend this chameleon’s promenade over the multicolored carpet, and that my preferred color and orientation can only be perceived if you look closely: anyone would know that I live on the left, on the red. But I will never speak explicitly of these preferences—or then again, maybe I will. I don’t promise anything nor do I negate anything. I believe that I do

1 Throughout the communiqué, Marcos plays with the word *Zapatistas*. The Spanish suffixes *-udo* and *-on* are used to express an abundant or excessive quality of the root word. *Zapatero* refers literally to those who make and repair shoes.

2 Argentine expatriate Julio Cortázar’s experimental prose such as *Around the Day in Eighty Worlds* (*La vuelta al día en ochenta mundos*, Siglo XXI Editores: Mexico, 1967), juxtaposed fantasy and reality with a commitment to social activism. The proper name *Julio* is juxtaposed with the word *julio*, Spanish for July.

something which is better, and that many understand—even a few police chiefs—because nobody is irredeemably lost, and because many poets continue writing with chalk on the jail walls of the north and of the south, of the east and of the west, of this horrible, lovely earth.³

Things being the way they are, there's no harm in commemorating that Julio this July, and with two Julios, remembering all the prisoners in all the police stations all over the world. I know that a prologue is not the place to dedicate a piece of writing, but it seems that the two Julios have conspired to disrupt the pleasant routine of the mountains of the Mexican Southeast with a message in a bottle. If a bottle with a message can be found in the middle of a storm in the mountains, then surely a dedication can be found in the middle of a prologue. Therefore, and given the messages, bottles, Julios and police stations, this presentation is dedicated . . .

To those prisoners accused of being Zapatistas and,
through them,
To all the political prisoners of the world.

To all the disappeared Zapatistas and,
through them,
To all the politically disappeared of the world.

Fine, let's continue with the writing that we found in a bottle and that is presented today at Table 1 of the First International Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism. And since we're already talking about encounters, someone would be doing a lot for humanity if they were to tell the *Zapateros* not to use such long names to refer to their acts of madness. The name of this encounter is so long that when you get to the part that says, "against Neoliberalism" you are so tired that, believe me, it's enough to make you want to do anything except confront something.

Where was I?

Oh, yes! The presentation we found inside a bottle. Well then, although the text has no date, computerized scientific studies have determined that it could have been written on any day, in any part of the world, and by any of the human beings that are or have ever been in the world. Nevertheless, the most important thing has not yet been clarified. The greatest centers of repute and ill repute have been consulted, but all to no avail. It has not been possible to determine who emptied, to the last drop, the contents of that bottle or what strange dance provoked in this improbable being the joy that he was able to find in the liquid, and, everyone knows, actually, that human beings already carry joy where it should be, that is, in their feet . . .

3 The translation here is by irlandesa. See *Around the Day in Eighty Worlds*, trans. by Thomas Christensen (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1986), 189

Chapter I

Where Olivio explains why there's no need to fear airplanes, helicopters and other terrors with which Power intends to punish the rebel dignity of the indigenous Zapatista people

A few days ago, in one of the American corners of the world, a group of persons held a meeting. A friend of mine was there. I had received notice via email that a group of dignitaries would meet to toast and salute Zapatista rebelliousness. I didn't know whether to be thankful or regretful about the toasting, but either way I took advantage of it to return the greeting with a letter, and to ask for a cup of coffee from the kitchen. It wasn't because I went for a cup of coffee, I only wanted a friendly pretext to refuse the toast, in case they would offer me a drink. Yes, I know you can't drink a toast by email, but with the advances in technology you never know. They say that in Mexico there is a guerrilla movement that used a fax to declare war against the supreme government, and utilizes the Internet and satellite communication to make its declarations known. "*Cosas veredes* Sancho," Durito would say, who fortunately is not in this, but another chapter.⁴

Now through this mud, pardon me, I meant through this land, walks the friend in question. I'm not trying to impress you, but the friend has been a friend of mine for many years. Of course, he didn't know that he was my friend. He arrived a long time ago. He arrived like good friends do, that is, through letters. The friend, whom I will call "my friend," taking advantage of his being trapped now in the mud and unable to protest, says that in the world, words of resistance are numerous and sound like the dense rain now falling on the roofs of the Zapatista indigenous people, on the roofs now shared by thousands of dignified men and women from around the world. The friend is one of those who look for rain in the world. He walks along, like others walk, gathering little drops of the rain of resistance that falls in America. In Africa, in Asia, in Oceania, in Europe, there are other seekers of rain, of stories of resistance that find no place in the history full of omissions, written by the dry power of Arrogance. I believe that all the seekers of rain who have come here realize that we have all gathered to rain on ourselves, and that we realize that the rain can be friendly if the word that gets us wet is our sister. So we can say that this is an encounter of rainmakers, a wet way of saying that it is an encounter of brothers and sisters.

Once, I wrote to my friend, telling him about Olivio. I told him that:

Olivio is a Tojolabal child. He is not yet five years old, still threatened by the high infant mortality rate that annihilates thousands of indigenous children in these lands. The risk that Olivio will die from a curable disease before the age of five is the highest in this country called Mexico. But Olivio is still alive. Olivio presumes to be a friend of the "Zup" and to play soccer with Major Moisés. Well, to say he plays soccer is arrogant. Actually, the Major limits himself to kicking the ball just far enough to

⁴ See note in "Durito IX".

free himself from an Olivio who thinks, as any child would, that the most important job of a Zapatista officer is to play with children.

I observe from a distance. Olivio kicks the ball with a determination that chills you to the bone, especially if you imagine that your own ankle could be the target of that kick. But no, the target of Olivio's kick is a little plastic ball. Well, this is also a figure of speech. In reality, half of the kick and its force end up in the mud of Chiapas' reality, and only part of it sends the ball on its erratic and short trajectory. The Major then gives a powerful kick and the ball passes by me and goes a long way. Olivio runs after the sphere with resolve (this, and what follows, should be read with the voice of a sports announcer.) He nimbly dodges a tree-trunk and a not-so-hidden root, prancing and dribbling past two *chuchitos* ("puppies" for the people of Chiapas) who were fleeing in terror on their own before the implacable, determined and lightning advance of Olivio. The defense had stayed behind (well, "Yeniperr" and Jorge are sitting down and playing in the mud, but what I mean is there is no enemy in front of him) and the opposing goal post is unarmed before an Olivio who grits the few teeth he has and lines up the ball like a derailed locomotive. An expectant hush falls over the crowd in the stands . . . Olivio catches up—finally!—to the ball, and just when the whole galaxy is expecting a huge kick that will rip through the net (well, the truth is that behind the supposed enemy goal posts there is only a sunflower with branches, thorns and reeds, but they serve as a net), and just when the cry of "*goool!*" begins to rise from the gut up to the throat, and everything is ready for the world to demonstrate that it is worthy of itself, just then Olivio decides that he had run after the ball long enough and that a big black bird flapping around overhead can't do so with impunity, and suddenly Olivio changes direction and profession and heads for his slingshot to kill, he says, the black bird and bring something to the kitchen and to his belly. It was something, how can I describe it? . . . something anti-climatic ("very Zapatista," my brother would say), so very incomplete, so very unfinished, as if a kiss were left hanging on the lips without anyone doing us the favor of collecting it.

I am a discreet, serious and analytical fan, who goes over the percentages and records of teams and players, and who can explain perfectly the logic behind a tie, a triumph, or a defeat, no matter which it is. In effect, one of those fans who afterwards explains to himself that there's no need to be sad about the defeat of their favorite team, that it was to be expected, that they'll turn it around in the next game and other etceteras that deceive the heart with the useless work of the brain. But in that moment I lost my head, and like a fan who sees the supreme values of the human race betrayed (that is, those that have to do with soccer), I jumped from the stands (actually, I had been sitting on a log bench) and, furious, I headed straight for Olivio, to protest his lack of honor, professionalism and sportsmanship, and his ignorance of the sacred law that demands that soccer players owe everything to the fans. Olivio sees me coming and smiles. I stop myself dead in my tracks, frozen, petrified, immobile. But don't believe for a moment, my friend, that I stop out of tenderness.

It isn't Olivio's tender smile that paralyzes me.

It's the slingshot that he has in his hands . . .

Well yes, friend. I already know that it's quite evident that I'm trying to create a simile for you of the tender fury that makes us soldiers today so that, tomorrow, military uniforms will only be good for costume parties, and so that, if someone had to put on a uniform, it would be the kind used for playing, for example, soccer . . ."

That was the 8th of this wet *julio*, and as the other Julio says, nature imitates art. So it was that a few days later, today, I found Olivio using his shoes the way they should be used, that is, to kick a ball. Olivio was running after the ball just as a Special Forces military plane was passing over La Realidad. Olivio tripped over a rock and fell. Olivio fulfilled his duty with complete integrity, that is, he began to cry with a dedication worthy of admiration. That's where we were, that is, the plane searching for transgressors of La Realidad, Olivio crying, and me smoking under a tree, when the incredible took place: Olivio stopped crying and began to laugh.

Yes, it turns out that Olivio was taking a breath in order to renew his screaming when he lifted his head and he stayed watching the military plane. He then suspended his inhalation and stopped it short with a smile. I made a face that said: "I always told you I thought that kid would end up going crazy." But don't think that I have a heart of stone. Immediately, I ordered a red alert and sent an intermediary to the UN to request a child psychiatrist. I wasn't about to leave Olivio alone with his madness; I thought it would be good if he had company. But because the UN acts rapidly only when authorizing the deployment of multinational armed forces, I thought it best to carefully approach Olivio in order to discover the irrationality of his delirium. At a prudent distance I stopped and very tactfully asked him:

"How come you were crying a while ago but now you are laughing?"

Olivio smiled and got up, telling me:

"I looked at the soldier's plane. If I fall down, well, I cry and then I get back up. But that airplane, if it falls, it won't cry or get back up."

Olivio went after the ball. I ran back, canceled the red alert and the intermediary to the UN, and I sent a war report to the CCRI to inform them that we were going to win, and that they should prepare for the promotion of Olivio to, at least, Division General.

Olivio doesn't seem excited about his imminent promotion. On the contrary, later he is pestering me, trying to convince me that, as he says, we should make a big, big ladder so we can climb up to the night and play ball with the moon . . .

Chapter II

Where the rain, julio and Old Antonio announce the present, but 10 years before

It rained lying down. I mean that the rain almost laid down when the wind took her by the waist. Old Antonio and I had gone out hunting that night. Old Antonio wanted to kill a badger that was stealing the corn that had begun to appear in the *milpa*. We waited for the badger to come, but in his place came a wind and a rain that obliged us to take refuge in the almost empty barn. Old Antonio made himself comfortable in a corner further inside, and I sat down in the doorway. We were both smoking. He snoozed and I watched how the rain was leaning from one side to another, following the steps marked for it by the dance of a wind more capricious than usual. The dance ended, or it moved to another spot. Soon, nothing was left of the rain except the deafening competition between the crickets and frogs. I went out, trying not to make any noise so as not to wake Old Antonio. The air remained humid and hot, as it must remain when desire ends the dance of bodies.

“Look,” Old Antonio tells me, and stretches out his hand towards a star that barely peers out from behind the curtains made by the clouds in the west. I look at the star and feel I-don’t-know-what kind of sorrow in my chest. Something like a sad and bitter solitude. Nevertheless, I smile and before Old Antonio can ask me, I clarify:

“I was remembering a proverb that goes more or less like this: ‘When a finger points out the sun, the fool looks at the finger.’” Old Antonio laughs wholeheartedly and says:

“He would be even more foolish if he looked at the sun. He would end up blind.” The overwhelming logic of Old Antonio leaves me stuttering the explanation of what I suppose the proverb means. Old Antonio keeps on laughing, I don’t know if at me, at my explanation, or at the fool who looks at the sun when a finger points it out. Old Antonio sits down, lays his gun to one side and forms a cigarette with something like a roller that he took from the old barn. I understand that it is time to be quiet and listen. I sit at his side and light my pipe. Old Antonio takes a few puffs on his cigarette and begins to rain words with only the smoke to soften their fall.

“A while ago I wasn’t pointing out the star to you with my hand. I was thinking about how far I would have to walk so that my hand could touch that star up there. I was going to ask you to calculate the distance between my hand and the star, but you came out with that stuff about the finger and the sun. I wasn’t showing you my hand, nor the star. The fool that your proverb talks about doesn’t have an intelligent alternative: if he looks at the sun and doesn’t go blind then he will stumble a lot from looking up; and if he looks at the finger he won’t find his own path, he’ll either remain standing in one place or following the finger. In the end, both are fools: the one who looks at the sun and the one who looks at the finger. Walking, well, living, is not done with great truths that, if you measure them, turn out to be pretty small. The night will come when we will begin to walk through it to reach the day. If we

only look at what is near, then we will only end up walking a short distance. If we only look at what is very far off, then we will stumble a lot and lose our way.” Old Antonio rests his word. I ask:

“And how will we know to look far and near?”

Old Antonio relights his cigarette and his voice:

“Speaking and listening. Speaking and listening to those who are near. Speaking and listening to those who are far away.”

Old Antonio stretches out his hand again towards the star. He looks at his hand and says:

“When you dream you have to see the star up there, but when you fight you have to see the hand that points out the star. That is living. A continuous lifting and lowering of your sights.”

We returned to Old Antonio’s village. Dawn was just beginning to clothe herself with morning when we parted. Old Antonio came out and accompanied me as far as the gate to the pasture. When I was already on the other side of the barbed wire I turned to him and told him:

“Old Antonio. When you stretched out your hand towards the star I didn’t see your hand or the star . . .” Old Antonio interrupts me:

“Oh! Very good, then you saw the space between the one and the other.”

“No,” I told him. “I didn’t see the space between one and the other either.”

“What, then?”

I smiled and began to move away when I shouted:

“I was looking at a badger that was between your hand and the star . . .”

Old Antonio looked at the ground for something to throw at me. I don’t know if he couldn’t find something or if I was already too far away for him to hit me. Anyway, I was lucky he wasn’t still carrying his gun.

I went walking along, trying to look near and far. Above and below, the light brought night and day together, the rain linked July with August, and the mud and the stumbles hurt a little less. Ten years later we would begin to speak and listen to those whom we believed to be far away. All of you . . .

Chapter III

Where the illustrious and noble Don Durito de la Lacandona explains the strange relation between combs, slippers, toothbrushes, bolsas (theirs and ours) and the Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism

It is gray up here. As if the night and the day were lazy, one to leave and the other to arrive. A dawn gone on too long, so much time without night or day. There below, close to that young ceiba tree with the big canopy, weapons and dreams keep vigil. However, everything around here seems normal. There’s mud, wandering lights, and skillful shadows. Only around the ceiba tree can one make out some

movement. A powerful lens permits one to distinguish a seated man who is speaking and gesturing. It seems he's alone, and yes, a little crazy. But . . . just a moment! What's that at his side? A suit of armor from a museum of miniatures? A broken-down little war tank? An armored and mobile mini-bunker? A tiny warship run aground on reality? A . . . A . . . A beetle?

"Veery funny, veery funny," says Durito as he looks up defiantly. I lift my eyes upwards and see only the gray above the dark green of the ceiba's canopy.

"To whom are you speaking?" I ask, after listening to more complaints and challenges from Durito.

"It's that impertinent satellite that doesn't even know how to distinguish between a war tank and a brave and valiant knight-errant." Durito makes an obscene gesture towards the satellite and then turns to me and asks: "Where were we, my down-trodden squire?"

"You were about to tell me . . . how to get out of the problem I'm in."

"Oh! That . . . I understand that an impoverished heart like the one you carry in your battered chest is incapable of understanding the goodness that destiny confers upon you, placing you at the side of a knight-errant like myself. Thou must understand, miserable and foolish mortal, that the great gods have forged the destinies of humanity with threads of steel, and that evil sorcerers, besides speculating in the stock markets, have made terrible knots with those threads, so as to oppose the natural kindness of great do-gooders and to delight in the suffering of little people like thyself. Well, I mean little, not counting thy nose. But the powers of good have not abandoned their children to the perverse will of those wizards. No, to cut those terrible knots of pain and misfortune, to weave history with honesty, to right wrongs, to aid the destitute, to teach the ignorant, in sum, so that humanity does not shame itself, *that's* why knights-errant are here. If thou wouldst understand this thou wouldst doubt not the wonder of my arm, the wisdom of my word, the light in my eyes . . ."

" . . .and the big problems you get me into," I interrupt Durito. He hesitates and I take advantage of it to practice the old and dear sport of the reproach: "because it is my duty to remind thee, my illustrious knight-errant, that it was the wonder of thy arm, the wisdom of thy word, and the light in thine eyes, which set thy hand and seal to the letter of convocation and invitation to the Intercon-tinental Encounter in that absurd part about slippers, combs and toothbrushes. Besides, they all say that it is a cheap plagiarism of Cortázar's *cronopios* . . ." ⁵

Durito doesn't ignore the criticism and counter-attacks: "They lie! How can they say that, if it was I, the great Don Durito de la Lacandona, who showed Julio the richness that beetles embody?"

Now it is I who interrupts: "No, that would be the *cronopios* . . ."

5 Cortázar's *Historias de cronopios y famas* (Barcelona: Bolsillo, 1970) is a collection of surreal vignettes and drawings. See Cortázar, *Cronopios and famas*, Paul Blackburn, translator (New York: Pantheon Press, 1969).

“Cronopios or beetles! ‘Tis the same! Tell me quickly, who is the scoundrel that dares insinuate that my brilliant writing owes something to another,” Durito draws his sword.

I try to collect on some outstanding debts and tell him:

“He’s not a scoundrel. What’s more, it’s not a he; it’s a she. And she doesn’t insinuate that there was plagiarism. She declares it, and signs her name to it with no shame whatsoever.”

Durito remains pensive for a while:

“A she?” Well, maidens may say whatever they want without fearing the fury of my Excalibur. It must be the malevolence of some perverse sorcerer who has worked evil magic on her, and has put evil thoughts where, surely, only kind thoughts for my person had previously been cherished. Yes, that must be it, because everyone knows that womankind cannot but sigh with admiration and secret desire when they hear the name of the greatest knight, that is, me. So there’s nothing to do but wait for the effects of the dark brew that the sorcerer must have administered to wear off, or for me to find him and then, yes, the force and justice that empower my arm will cause him to withdraw the sorcery, and the problem will be solved. So why don’t we leave that *Julio* fellow in peace, maybe he’ll get this julio not to drown us with so much rain.”

Durito sheaths his twig, or his sword, depending on the imagination of the satellite that, he says, is spying on him. I don’t give up. I change my strategy:

“So be it, my lord and guide. May that wretch who has spoken ill against you be promptly freed of the sorcery, and once again surrender adoration to you. And if not, then may a terrible punishment fall upon her, may she obtain work as a spokesperson for one of the neoliberal governments that pummels the world, may they give her the post of psychiatrist for the powerful criminals who believe they govern the planet, may . . .”

“All right! All right! All right! That’s too much punishment for that beauty!” Durito becomes magnanimous. I continue:

“As for my problem, lord of wisdom, I beg you to save me because the Encounter is already a reality in La Realidad and everyone is waiting for a satisfactory explanation of the requirement for slippers, combs and toothbrushes . . .”

“An explanation?” Durito looks at me with (it’s worth being redundant) hardness.

“Yes. The invitation says that all the gullible ones, pardon me, all the guests at the Encounter, will find here the reason for that strangeness.” I say trying to calm him down.

“Fine. If it is written, written it is. And it is the rule that we comply with what is written. So write down what I am about to dictate. You should do it meticulously because it is a contribution that will revolutionize political science, and moreover, will serve to distract the attention somewhat from accusations of plagiarism and other sorceries.”

I immediately took out a ballpoint pen that, of course, had no ink. Durito

noticed at once, and took out from who-knows-where an elegant ostrich quill and an inkwell.

“And this?” I asked, looking alternately at the quill and the inkwell.

“Ah! A gift from an African beetle,” said Durito putting on airs.

“African?”

“Yes. You don’t think that you’re the only ones holding an Intercontinental Encounter? We beetles are meeting as well,” says Durito.

I didn’t try to find out more. I don’t even know if there are beetles in Africa. What worried me was resolving the enigma of the slippers, combs and toothbrushes, so without further delay, I wrote down what Durito dictated to me, which is entitled:

Durito The-Next-Number (Neoliberalism, Slippers, Combs, Toothbrushes and Bolsas)

“*Bolsas?*” I asked, “But the invitation didn’t say anything about *bolsas* . . .”

“No? Well, there’s the problem. I believe I forgot to put in *bolsas*. I’m sure that, with the *bolsas*, everyone would have understood that part perfectly. Fine, fine, don’t interrupt me again. Write, write!” Durito hurries me. I had doubts but I continued writing down what follows below:

a) Slippers are an alternative to boots. If you had paid attention to me, you wouldn’t have brought all those different types of big boots with which you try, in vain, to defend yourselves from the mud. Boots or slippers get full of mud just the same, and they slip with the same enthusiasm. Right? Boots are useless, and moreover, dangerous. So you should have brought some slippers and that way, at least, you would have had a good excuse for spending so much time on the ground and being so muddy.⁶

b) In addition, one should argue that slippers can be taken off with complete ease, comfort and speed. Lovers and children will agree that I’m right, among other things, because the only beings that can understand the profundity of this message are children and lovers. Besides, winter is approaching and we need to keep warm. With slippers, we will make an overcoat that will cause a furor in the world of fashion. Ergo, there should be an Intercontinental Encounter for Slippers and Against Boots. That name is just as long as the other and, believe me, more definitive.

c) Combs are very useful in events of this kind, where nostalgia is a contagious disease. Using a little piece of paper and blowing just right, you have a musical instrument. With music you can make the heart and feet happy. There’s nothing like slippers for this thing called dancing. With happy hearts and feet you can dance. And dancing is a happy type of encounter and, let’s not forget, this is an encounter.

d) Ergo, combs are indispensable for all Intercontinental Encounters for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism. Oh! They’re also good for combing hair. Toothbrushes are an invaluable aid in scratching your back. They come in many col-

⁶ It rained continually during the five days of the Encuentro.

ors, shapes and sizes. Although they're different, they all fulfill the function of a toothbrush, which, as everyone knows, is to scratch one's back. Everyone will agree, and I propose as an item of resolution for the final plenary session, that scratching is a pleasure. Ergo, toothbrushes are rather necessary for Intercontinental Encounters for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism. Slippers demonstrate that logic and boots are of no use when it comes to dreaming and dancing. Combs demonstrate that everything is a pretext for music and love. Toothbrushes demonstrate that one can be different and equal.

e) Dance, music, pleasure, and being conscious of the other: these are the banners for humanity and against neoliberalism. Anyone who doesn't understand this surely must have cardboard for a soul.

f) *Bolsas* can be classified into two types: their *bolsas* and our *bolsas*.

1) Their *bolsas* are known as "stock markets" and, paradoxically, distinguish themselves because they lack value. Usually they are full of holes, to speculators' advantage, and they have the sole virtue of provoking the insomnia and nightmares of our government officials.

2) Our *bolsas* are known as *bolsas* and as the word indicates, they're good for holding things. They usually have holes caused by neglect, but they are mended with hope and embarrassment. They have the enormous virtue of holding toothbrushes, combs and slippers.

g) *Finale fortísimo*: A *bolsa* that can't hold a toothbrush, a comb and slippers, is a *bolsa* that isn't worth having.

Here are the seven defining and definitive points for humanity and against neoliberalism. *Tan-tan*. It's finished.

Chapter IV

Where the famous knight-errant converses with his large-nosed squire, bags are packed and other marvelous or terrible things are announced

Durito has finished putting the saddle on Pegasus who, for a turtle, is quite restless. Durito has not stopped talking. At times it seems he's talking to Pegasus, at times it seems he's talking to me, and other times it seems like he is talking to himself. Is Durito convincing us that it's time to leave, or is he convincing himself?

"Not so fast, for now there are no more birds in last autumn's nest. I was mad and I continue to be . . ." Durito, as can be seen, adapts literary history as suits him best.⁷

7 This is a play on *Don Quijote's* dying words to Sancho Panza: "Not so fast, for now there are no more birds in last autumn's nest. I was mad and now I am sane. I was Don Quijote de la Mancha, and now, as I have said, I am Alonso Quijano the Good." The passage is from "Chapter LXXIV (74)—how Don Quijote fell sick, and the will he made, and his death." Cervantes, *Don Quijote*, 744.

Durito comes and goes with a bustle that, if it were not for his seriousness, would look like a complicated dance. I have become sad because at the hour of packing I've noticed that what I have is very little. However, I have some wheat, and that is enough. Durito, on the other hand, has made several trips for books, from his little leaf to *Pegasus'* back.

"Can it be known where we're going?" I ask Durito, taking advantage of his having stopped to rest. Durito hasn't caught his breath yet, so he makes an indefinite gesture, pointing in no particular direction.

"And is that very far?" I ask.

Durito is finally able to speak and says:

"The duty of a knight-errant is to travel the world until there no longer exists a corner with unpunished injustice. The duty remains in all parts and in none. It is always near and can never be reached. Knight-errantry rides on until it reaches tomorrow. Then it rests. But soon it resumes the march, because morning has continued on ahead and is already a good stretch ahead of it."

"And what must we bring with us?" I ask, now a little more serious.

"Hope . . ." Durito answers me and points to the *bolsa* that he carries in his chest. As he mounts *Pegasus* he adds:

"We don't need anything else. That's enough . . ."

Chapter V

Where the moon rehearses a dance that has a lot of copulation and joy

Full again, the moon tries to reveal her coquetry from behind the high bar of the eastern mountains. With care, she gathers up her large and full skirt, puts her little foot forward and climbs the back of the mountain like a staircase. When she reaches the top, she extends her white petticoat and spins around. Her own light bounces off the mountain's mirror and gives the gift of lilac and blue colors. Always spinning, a wind caresses her face and lifts her up high. With blind and useless eyes, the wind tries in vain to make out her belly that the rain has moistened. And the moon does not look at the wind, but not because she's blind. She only looks at herself, at the reflection that a little puddle of rain offers her from the reality below. Finally, the moon yields her hand and waist to the wind. Now they spin together. They spend the night together. Dancing. Wet and happy. But the nocturnal dance floor is now leaving and the moon tires after a few hours. Until he lays her on the eastern mountain, the wind carries her, always by the waist. Always blind, the wind tries to give her a goodbye kiss on the cheek, but he makes a mistake and it is her lips that he brushes against. He makes a mistake? The moon forgives him but she should hurry. Before letting herself slip to the west, the moon sees two figures, one small and round, the other tall and awkward. The moon doesn't know if the figures are coming or going, but she knows they're walking. That's why she gives them the touch that, just before she hides, makes one think for an instant that the two characters are going upwards, to the moon . . .

Chapter VI

Where the narrator digresses, rain and moon in the middle, on the sorrows, pains and the etceteras that weigh down the soul of the humans who walk there, himself included.

The moon barely appeared, perhaps to renew a promise disguised as a flower. But, jealous as she is, the rain brought her behind clouds and mist. That was a dawn for which solitude would ache. The narrator is alone, so he feels he has the right to stop narrating what is happening or what is dictated to him, and he decides to extract, with a sharp corkscrew of letters, a sorrow that clouds his vision and step. The narrator speaks. No, it's more like a whisper:

How I wish to have the air as my homeland and tomorrow as my flag! So many people and so many colors! So many words with which to speak of hope!

Would this be the moment to speak of death? Because there are those who have died a fighting death so that I could think of the many people, the many colors, the many hopes.

Is this the place to speak of our dead ones? No?

Who will tell them, then, that there was live blood that died dreaming, that one day some of the best men and women that this century has borne would arrive here? Who will ask a souvenir of all those people, a "forget-me-not" for those Zapatistas fallen in combat for humanity and against neoliberalism? Where are the chairs so that they, our dead, can sit down with us? The presentation of their blood in the streets and in the mountains—at which conference table is it registered? Who is the moderator in the silences of those deaths? How can you put a price on the blood of those dead who gave us a voice, a face, a name and a tomorrow?

Can I speak? Can I speak about our dead at this celebration? After all, they made it possible. It can be said that we are here because they are not. Can't it?

I have a dead brother. Is there anyone who doesn't have a dead brother? I have a dead brother. A bullet to the head killed him. It was at dawn on the 1st of January 1994. That bullet was up very early. The death that kissed the forehead of my brother was up at dawn. My brother used to laugh a lot but now he doesn't laugh any more. I couldn't keep my brother in my pocket, but I kept the bullet that killed him. On another day at dawn, I asked the bullet where it came from. It said: "From the rifle of a soldier of the government of a powerful person who serves another powerful person, who serves another powerful person, who serves another all around the world." The bullet that killed my brother has no homeland.

The fight that must be fought to keep our brothers, and not bullets, in our pockets has no homeland either. That's why the Zapatistas have many and big pockets in their uniforms. Not for keeping bullets. For keeping brothers.⁸ That's what all *bol-sas* should be for.

8 This passage was read by Mumia Abu Jamal in *Zapatista!*, a documentary by Big Noise Films (1996).

The mountain is also a *bolsa* for keeping brothers. Sometimes the mountain seems like the sea. Sometimes the night seems like the morning. *El mar. La mar. El mañana. La mañana.* The sea and the morning have no sex. Maybe that's why we fear them, or maybe that's why we desire them.

How painful it is to leave! What sorrow to stay!

I'm leaving now. I just wanted to tell you one thing:

The heart is a *bolsa* where the sea and the morning fit. And the problem is not in how to put the sea and the morning in your chest, but in understanding that the heart is just that, a *bolsa* for keeping the sea and the morning. . .

The narrator leaves. Together with the night he leaves. Together with the rain he leaves. Together with *Julio* he leaves. The other Julio remains to organize the mission to be carried out in *Around the Day in Eighty Worlds*. Julio prepares for a trip:

The trip to a country of cronopios:

Of course, the traveling Cronopio visits another country and one day, when he returns to his own, he will write the memories of his trip on little pieces of different-colored paper, and he will distribute them at the corner of his house so that everyone can read them. To the Famas he'll give little pieces of blue paper, because he knows that when the Famas read them they will turn green, and nobody can ignore that a Cronopio likes the combination of these two colors very much. As for the Esperanzas, those who blush a lot upon receiving a gift, the Cronopio will give them little pieces of white paper, and that way hopes will be able to shield their cheeks, and the Cronopio, from the corner of his house, will see diverse and pleasant colors that will disperse in all directions, taking with them the memories of his trip.

Epilogue

Where it is explained why the accounts don't add up and it is demonstrated that addition and subtraction only work if they're for adding hopes and subtracting cynicisms

Yes, I know that the title of this is "Presentation in Seven Voices Seven," and there are only six voices and it can't be that it's already over because the title is very clear, and it even repeats seven times that there are seven voices seven. But my master and lord, the knight-errant who is a wizard in love and a sorcerer in combat, Don Durito de la Lacandona, tells me that we're leaving, that we should leave, that the seventh voice is the one that's worth it and counts, and that one, the seventh word, belongs to each and every one of you.

So goodbye, and I hope that someone writes to tell us how all this turned out.

Vale. Salud, and know that if the thieves ask for us for our *bolsas* or our lives, they'll have to take our lives.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast,
El Sup Marcos
Planet Earth, July 1996

P.S. Durito has already left on his spirited Pegasus. Pegasus is a turtle that suffers vertigo at velocities greater than 50 centimeters per hour, which means that it will take some time to reach the exit. So I have time to tell you that you are welcome to the mountains of the Mexican Southeast, the place where the *bolsas* that are truly of value are ours, yours, and everyone who we are . . .

Salud, once again. *Salud*, and may you have much hope and the humility to repair your baggage, pockets and sleeping bags.

El Sup, disconcerted because he forgot which is the entrance and which is the exit.

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