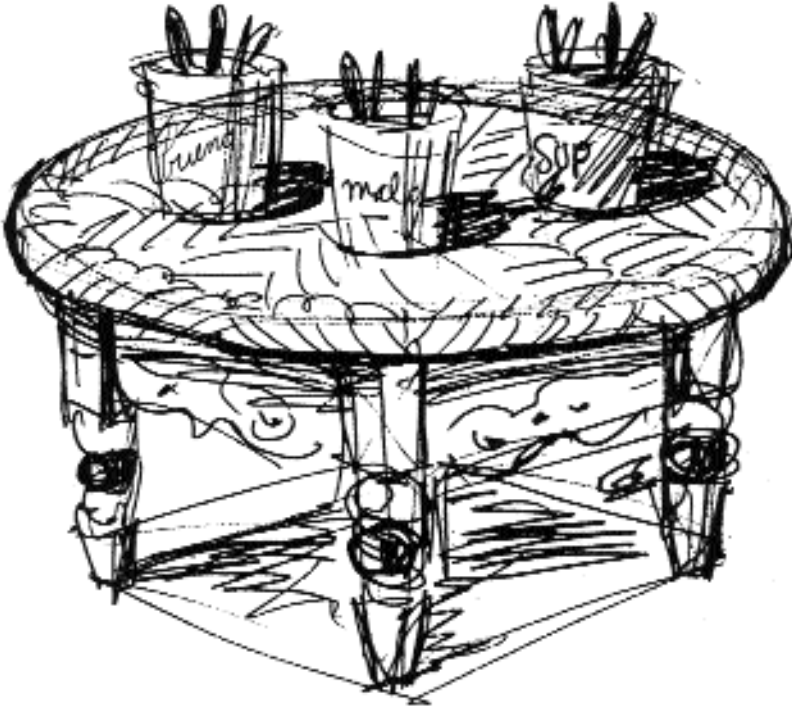


# The Story of the Magical Chocolate Bunnies



In homage to *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, Durito writes Marcos a fable alluding to the government's spin on the EPR and the EZLN. The government's attempt to dismiss both groups prompted Marcos to state that the Zapatistas would not play the "good" rebels to the EPR's "bad" rebels. The communiqué stresses the terror of the continued low-intensity warfare, and the contradictions of the government's expressed desires for peace while it continued to build up the military presence in the region and sent disingenuous representatives to the peace negotiations. Refusing to be boxed in, the EZLN announced that it would walk out on the peace talks. It also announced plans to send representatives to Mexico City to participate in the first National Indigenous Congress convened by the EZLN and other indigenous groups to discuss the San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture that had been signed on February 16th. The government reacted to the announcement by threatening to arrest any Zapatistas who left Chiapas.

---

First published in *La Jornada*, October 3, 1996. Originally translated by Cecilia Rodríguez.

To the National and International Press  
September 29, 1996

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We would greatly appreciate your attention to the attached communiqués.<sup>1</sup> Long live the unintentional humor of the Chiapas PRIista! The indigenous people of the PRI of the *ejido* San Caralampio in the Ravine of Río Perlas told the COCOPA very seriously, when they were visited, that, yes, they did receive help from the government: solar cells (which power four light bulbs and a tape recorder) and a sheep farm. In one of the poorest states of the country, with a large indigenous population and natural resources far beyond any country of Central America, the Mexican government renews its aspirations: for the producers of electricity, solar cells as alms; for those who rose up in arms for dignity, sheep as future promises. “Wish they were all like that,” sighs Mr. Ruiz Ferro, a thief among thieves, who today dispatches messages from the governor’s palace of Chiapas and dreams about providing for the indigenous people like animals.<sup>2</sup> “Wish they were all like that,” sigh the two policemen, Eraclio Zepeda and Uriel Jarquim.<sup>3</sup> “But, they’re not all like that,” counters Comandante Rolando, an indigenous Tzeltal rebel who sharpens his machete and is sure that what runs through his veins is not the blood of a sheep, but of a human being.

*Vale. Salud*, and as Benedetti says, “He/who/hugs/his/bosom/hugs/insanity.”<sup>4</sup>

From under one of the beds at Numancia<sup>5</sup> (hiding, of course)  
Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos  
Mexico, September 1996

---

1 Attached were two communiqués: a thirteen-point document announcing the reasons for a Zapatista walkout of the peace talks; and another very brief missive, where Marcos responds to arrest threats by stating that the government was continuing to try to annihilate the Zapatistas, and concludes, “This is our response. First and only: UUUUY!!!!” (Ouch!)

2 Ruiz Ferro was Governor of Chiapas at the time.

3 Chiapas state officials Eraclio Zepeda and Uriel Jarquim presided over numerous violent police actions in which over 100 people were killed and many others were wounded or displaced. Zepeda, who had been a well-known poet, left-wing activist and prominent opposition figure, was appointed to the position of Government Secretary in 1994 by then-Governor Eduardo Robledo Rincón.

4 Uruguayan author and journalist Mario Benedetti, a well-known intellectual involved in the resistance to his country’s right-wing dictatorship during the 1970s spent more than a decade in exile throughout South America and Europe. This poem, “*Intensidad*” (Intensity), is from *El Amor, Las Mujeres y La Vida* (Buenos Aires: Compañía Editora Espasa Calpe, 1995) The Spanish reads: “*quien/pecho/abarca/loco/aprieta*,” a play on the idiomatic expression “*quien/mucho/abarca/poco/aprieta*” (one should not bite off more than one can chew).

5 See note in “Love and the Calendar.”

P.S. that sneaks a glance at El Sup's log:

September 27, 1996. It is the 1000th dawn of the war. The moon barely started to be full. An eclipse tried, in vain, to hide it. It was stained a faint red. For a moment the moon appeared to be a sun, the sun of midnight. We have in these 1000 days opened spaces in the country, on the continent, and in the world. The challenge we launched was not a small one; now we cannot hold ourselves back.

September 28, 1996. The 1001st dawn of the war. From the top of the ceiba a great distance can be seen. There are lights in the west. A city? Apparently. It begins to rain. At first the rain hurts the face. Later of course it heals, but at first it hurts. I was smoking nostalgias and trying to remember a poem, when . . .

"What you're thinking of doing is not wise," says My Other Self.

"Really?" I answer him, as I finally recall my Pavese and say, "The streets are like women, when mature they are firm." I don't know if I had already said, "When the rain begins, it hurts the face. The same as the night."<sup>6</sup>

P.S. that gets dizzy.

I read that a marina is a port that cloaks and protects one from hurricanes. That is what I need now. A marina.

P.S. that jumps ahead of itself.

Headline of the major regional and national dailies: "Civil Society Demands that Bernal and Del Valle Declare Themselves Policemen or Negotiators."<sup>7</sup>

The Recurring Postscript

The ceiba is a mailbox.

Correct. Another cloud, another bottle, and another letter from Durito:

My beloved, persecuted and harassed Cyrano,

It is my duty to tell you that your time is coming to an end. That ceiba is an excellent target for mortars, grenade launchers, snipers, cannons and machine guns—not to mention satellites. At the end of this letter you will find an infallible recipe for climbing out of ceiba trees. Follow it to the letter and soon you will find yourself on the ground.

---

6 "*Le strade sono come le donne, maturano ferme*," is from the poem *Grappa a settembre*, published in the collection *Lavorare stanca* (Hard Labor, 1936). For more on Pavese see note in "Love and the Calendar."

7 Marco Antonio Bernal Gutiérrez and Jorge Del Valle were two of the primary negotiators representing the Zedillo administration at the San Andrés Peace Talks. During an interview on Televisa (Mexico's dominant television network) shortly before the appearance of this communiqué, Bernal threatened to arrest any Zapatistas who would leave Chiapas .

With the understanding that you will not last much longer and all that (let's just say you're not a very appealing client for life insurance agencies), I recommend that you speed up the contacts for the publication of my next book *Stories for a Sleepless Solitude*. Seeing as time is coming to an end, I send you now another story, which is part of a special section called "Stories for Getting Pregnant." It speaks for itself; one has only to read it. Here goes then:

## **The Story of the Magical Chocolate Bunnies Neoliberalism, Rabbit Libidos, and Children (Durito's homage to the Western: Remember "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly"?)<sup>8</sup>**

There were once three children: one was good, one was bad, and the other was El Sup. Walking from different directions, they all met up at a house and went in together. Inside the house there was only a table. On that table were three white plastic containers (like they use for ice cream or sorbet), one for each child. Inside each white plastic container (note: no trademark or logo) there were two chocolate bunnies and a piece of paper. The paper said,

Instructions for the use of the two chocolate bunnies:

After 24 hours, this pair of chocolate bunnies will reproduce themselves and will have a new pair of bunnies. Every 24 hours, the pairs of chocolate bunnies inside this white plastic container will multiply into another pair. That way the owner will always have chocolate bunnies to eat inside this magic plastic container (the kind used for ice cream or sorbet). The only condition is that there must be at all times a pair of chocolate bunnies inside this plastic container, like the ones used for ice cream or sorbet.

Each child took his white plastic container—you know, the kind used for ice cream or sorbet.

The bad child could not wait for 24 hours and ate his two chocolate bunnies. He enjoyed the moment, but he had no more chocolate bunnies. Now he has nothing to eat, but the memory and nostalgia of the chocolate bunnies remain.

The good child waited for 24 hours and was rewarded with four chocolate bunnies. After another 24 hours he had eight chocolate bunnies. As the months passed, the good child opened a chain of chocolate bunny stores. After a year, he had branches all over the country; he associated with foreign capital and went into the export business. He was eventually named "Man of the Year" and became immensely rich and powerful. He sold the chocolate bunny industry to foreign investors, and became an executive of the company. He never tasted the chocolate

---

8 Directed by Sergio Leone and starring Clint Eastwood, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966) is the third of Leone's famed trilogy of "Spaghetti Westerns."

bunnies, in order to not diminish his profits. He no longer owns the magic white plastic container. He doesn't know the flavor of chocolate bunnies.

The *Sup* child took out the chocolate bunnies and put some nut ice cream in the white plastic container, the kind used to hold ice cream or sorbet. Changing the premise of the story, he packed half a liter of nut ice cream in his backpack and ruined the moral of the story of the chocolate bunnies by deducing that all final options are a trap.

Neo-moral: The ice cream with nuts has dangerous potentialities against neoliberalism.

Questions for reading comprehension:

Which of these children will become president of the republic?

Which of these children will belong to an opposition party?

Which of these children should be killed for violating the law for dialogue, reconciliation, and a peace with dignity in Chiapas?

If you are a woman, which child would you prefer to give birth to if you were pregnant?

Send your answers to 'Huapac Hole #69' with copies to the Interior Ministry and the COCOPA. *Tan-tan*. The End.

Well? What do you think? Oh, come on now. Do not refrain from saying it is marvelous! I look forward to you getting me a good editor, one of those who organizes readings with Carlos Monsiváis and etcetera. Over and out.

Don Durito de la Lacandona

P.S. Oh! I almost forgot about the recipe for getting down from the ceiba. It's simple, just follow the "Instructions for Getting Down from the Top of a Ceiba." Are you sure you want to get down? Walk to the edge with your eyes closed. Do not fear (although a parachute certainly wouldn't be a bad idea right now). You will soon arrive at your destination (?).

End of Durito's letter. Nothing to add.

From the ceiba to the ground there is the same distance as that between despair and hope.

I fell down. I don't know why they accuse us of violating the law. It's clear that among others, the law of gravity is rigorously observed by our stubborn flight.

P.S. that worries.

I think that little gray man who barks so much about arresting us if we leave really has something to worry about now. Look at the postmark on Durito's let-

ter. It comes from Mexico City along with a postcard from the Templo Mayor.<sup>9</sup> It's postmarked September 16th and it wouldn't surprise me if, among so many war tanks, Durito went unnoticed.<sup>10</sup>

P.S. for political columns:

According to confidential reports, Mr. Bernal will soon leave his position with the government delegation in San Andrés. Upset because now it is impossible for him to become a PRI candidate for the governorship of Tamaulipas (given that the statutes changed), Bernal aspires to replace Chuayffét. (Bernal is the one who writes the communiqués of the Interior Ministry, thereby explaining their poor quality.) To his closest colleagues (Del Valle and Zenteno), Bernal has confessed that if he does not become the Secretary of the Interior Ministry, he will ask to be admitted to the FZLN.<sup>11</sup> What should we do?

P.S. that says goodbye:

Olivio just left saying, "*Adiós Compañero Subcomandante Sup.*" What? Why is this happening to me? I, who always dreamed of imitating a James Bond introduction, like in his first movie, and saying "My name is Marcos, Subcomandante Marcos . . ."

*Vale* with nuts.<sup>12</sup> *Salud*, and "What is that which shines in the highest halls?"<sup>13</sup>

Sup Marcos

The Sup hiding under a bed, not because he's afraid of being killed, but because, he says, the bed is much too wide, especially when one is alone . . .

\* \* \*

---

9 The ruins of the Templo Mayor, the main temple of Tenochtitlan, are today a museum. Mexico City's Zócalo and federal and local seats of government were built around it.

10 The September 16 celebration of Mexican Independence by hundreds of thousands in the Zócalo was marked by an exceptionally large show of military force.

11 During the PRI's XVII Assembly in Mexico City (September 20-22, 1996), party statutes were changed to favor candidates with over ten years of party militancy or having previously held electoral office, a move ostensibly designed to reduce favoritism.

12 Throughout these stories Marcos often signs off with *vale de nuev*, a play on *vale otra vez*, usually translated as "*vale* once again."

13 The first line in García Lorca's poem "*Muerto de Amor (a Magarita Mansa)*," from *Romance Gitano*.