



The Rasquache Way

By Noche

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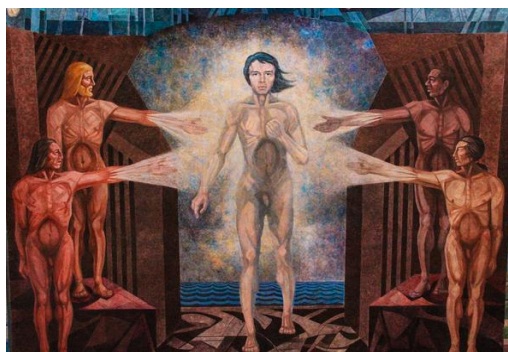
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Ni de aquí, ni de allá. Neither from here, nor there. An old Chicane saying that still rings true but tired, with a Chicano-Studies dullness...like Gloria Anzaldúa speaking to us from the other side telling us that the border is a wound, but paraphrasing Cesar Miguel we rather maintain that instead the border is the knife. We also have Corky Gonzales telling us of the great hope of José Vasconcelo's *raza cósmica* for Chicanes: a hope that is but an inversion of Social Darwinism, infused with anti-blackness & anti-Native erasure and sold as a sort of metaphysical eugenics. It seems we're in need of some rhetorical updating.

But this is not meant to be a reformulation of what it means to be Chicane, though I agree with Cheech Marín when he said: "a Chicano [is] a Mexican-American with a



defiant political attitude that centers on [their] right to self-definition. I'm a Chicano because I say I am." Rather I'd like to talk about a way out of our disappointment and our collective dispossession: a way out of capitalism and the world it has created; a way out of the racist-colonial state we live under; a way out of the Patriarchy learned from the West and which we also have homegrown. This modest proposal is the *rasquache* way.

First for the unfamiliar: *rasquache* is a word with origins in the Nahuatl language. In México it is usually a derisive term for things that are seen as low-class or just down-right cheap. Since Chicanes have learned to make do with what we have, this term has been transformed on this side of the U.S./MX border into a term to describe art or aesthetics that arise out of making do with little and with little regard for a singular visual cohesion. Neither of these definitions exactly suit my intended purpose. Let's create a new one. The *rasquache* way is a way for not-just-Chicanes to give up the charade of ideological purity in favor of an antagonistic fervor which bears many sharp edges like a hominy can cut into the shape of a flower for a potted plant. It is a way to *encabronar*¹ orthodox politics into a deep and generative anti-politics².



1 *Def.* to get riled (familiar)

2 "...the road of political ideology and programs is no more useful to the project of subversion. Because this project is the transformation of existence in a way that destroys all domination and exploitation, it is inherently anti-political." – *Against the Logic of Submission*.

If you got your radical politik-learning from the university then you are probably used to putting every variant/flavor/tendency/current of radical politics into neat little boxes that sit next to each other but rarely ever touch. This is hardly the way real life works or the way humans live out their lives (and those who live their lives according to abstract ideals are often boring, quarrelsome or both). Anywayz no revolution was ever led by a singular idea focused on a singular position. I am no idealist and neither is any proletarian revolution. The Leninist, Maoist and Platformist conception of ideological cohesion and rigidity as a precursor for revolutionary activity is an impasse that forever reaches out towards a future never to arrive. Though we should temper our actions against what we know and what can be known, we must realize that limit point of thought is thought itself.

Rasquache inserted into the realm of anti-politics allows us to take what we want and leave behind that which does not suit our needs. To build our own vision despite what the gatekeepers of good taste and orthodoxy may want us to align with. This is why I have chose to join the call of the return of joy and antagonism of the



Situationist International, but leave behind its fetishization of worker's councils; why I can talk about the material conditions which lead to the rise of the riot, yet also echo the insurrectionary fervor of Alfredo Bonanno; why I choose to still call myself a Chicano despite the fact that my (anti-) politics fall outside the realm of The Chicano Movement; why despite the fact the the Partido Liberal Mexicano called itself "liberal," I admire it as an openly-insurrectionary agent for anarchist revolution; why I can hope to one day loot a jacuzzi with friends, yet still have a critique of commodity fetishism. Anywayz, a revolution is not the collective action of angels.

Those who take very few steps to put their politics to the test of experimentation by engaging with the world find it easy to stay within their dull ivory tower. Being in a room with people you may not know and speaking your piece is how one learns to blend, to mix, to re-purpose, to discard and to re-imagine. Of course, this is already the history of those whom are forced to live between cultures & traditions. But we are also told that some things are not for mixing, not for blending, not for re-purposing, not for discarding, not for re-imagining.

The rasquache way is a liberation of our desires from the stifling world of orthodox radical politics. The youth are especially attuned to finding ways to make what was reserved to the staid Leftists and breathe new life into it by transforming its content and sharpening its edge. All over the internet I see the youth blending radical high (and low) theory at a scale and scope that did not exist 20 years ago. Memes are often derided for being overly-simplistic or niche-driven, but often distill truths hidden by hazy theory.

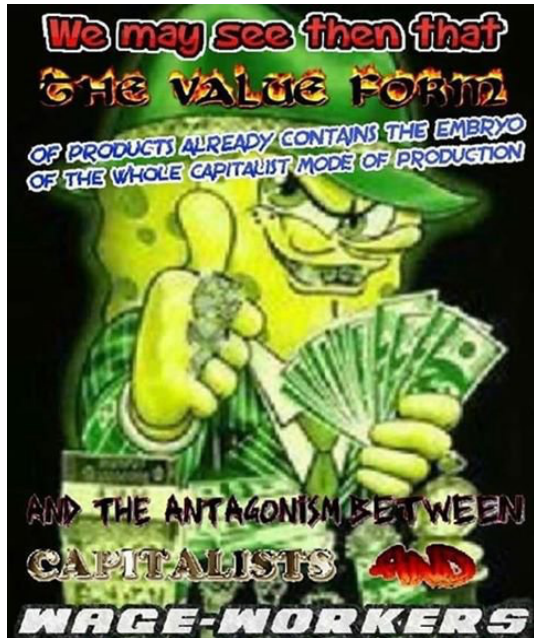
Rasquache-ness would help us be flexible in light of changing circumstances. We would not simply attempt to build mass organizations because that's what the Classical Worker's Movement have been trying to do for the the past 200+ years: we would

see that the impasse we face is not so much a lack of unified organization, but a lack of concerted action. That last few years have shown what a few determined desmadrosxs³ can do to set things off. See Ferguson, Baltimore, Oakland, Orange County and even Los Angeles.

Rasquache-ness would allow us to be elusive when cornered. It would allow us to slip into spaces and that things that would go unheeded if were to first proclaim, "I Am An Anarchist." Rasquache-ness would push us to defy categorization and become opaque to the State. Rasquache-ness would value creativity over regularity.

Chicanxs have not offered the world of radical politics much in the last 30 years. Usually we offer ourselves up as transmuters of Mexican culture into colorful commodities (see: the proliferation of Day of the Dead products). Perhaps the very rasquache we engage in because of our historical position could be that which we offer the world. This would stand as a counterpoint to the way some Chicanxs flock like moths-to-the-flame to the dusty & anachronistic ideologies of Maoism, Leninism and Cultural Nationalism.

Rasquache-ness would allow us to speak to those we need to build connections with by circumventing the old language, iconography and slogans of Leftism. No more calls to defend "The People." No more Che Guevara t-shirts. No more adoration of Subcommandate Marcos⁴. No more bad "conscious" rap. Sure those things may attract a certain demographic. The kind of person who thinks, "I need to join an organization" instead of "I need to do X, Y, Z action with my homies where I live." The type of person who needs a "mass organization" to feel like they are "doing something." The type of person who ignores revolt, riots, insurrection because they are not "organized forms of collective action."



Let's get real rasquache and get free!

3 Def. troublemakers

4 Whom technically has ceased to exist

MÁS ALLÁ DE LA POLÍTICA

**// EDICIONES INÉDITAS // LIVE FROM
LOS ÁNGELES // TONGVA-GABRIELINO
TERRITORY // FOR ANARCHY +
COMMUNISM**

This is a non-academic, non-professional, non-white,
anti-state communist / anarchist project.

Don't get it twisted.

**Para lxs desmadrosxs
For the trouble-makers**

We're out here.

Live from occupied Tongva-Gabrielino territory.

Los Angeles.

