

Here are some lecture notes/class discussion activities/comparative essay assignment instructions and readings. I use these in a lower level seminar (small class) English course called 'Literature and Social Change' in which we study literary journalism and doc film in the US/Mex borderlands. These texts all focus on the book *By the Lake of Sleeping Children* by Luis Alberto Urrea. Before diving into this book, I generally teach Charles Bowden's 'Exodus' and Noam Chomsky's 'Notes of NAFTA' (included here together with an essay by Enrique Dussel and Homi Bhabha to apply to different chapters of Urrea's book for the essay assignment).

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Lesson Plans and Writing Assignment on *By the Lake of Sleeping Children* by Luis Alberto Urrea

1) Introductory discussion of Bowden, Chomsky, and Urrea

I generally teach Bowden's article 'Exodus' (in Mother Jones)

<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2006/09/exodus-border-crossers-forge-new-america> and and Noam Chomsky's 'Notes of NAFTA <

<http://www.chomsky.info/articles/199303--.htm>> to introduce Urrea's border writing.

Compare styles of Charles Bowden ('Exodus'), Noam Chomsky ('Notes of NAFTA'), Luis Alberto Urrea (Intro to *By the Lake of Sleeping Children*).

-Chomsky: straightforward expository essay but very skillfully crafted in term of incorporating history of capitalistic philosophy. Shows how current neo-liberal agenda betrays the values and tenets of capitalism: competition vs monopoly-capitalism.

-compare how Bowden and Urrea insert their personal histories in order to identify themselves as fully implicated in the stories they tell.

-we saw how Bowden's brief memory of a trip to Mexico with his father sums up an ethical lesson in compassion, generosity, and hospitality. He doesn't tell us much else about his personal story and doesn't implicate himself in terms of ethnic, racial, or cultural identity.

-Bowden is an Anglo, Euroamerican who nevertheless constantly inserts stories about friends and acquaintances (often times, people he admires) who are of Native, mestizo, or Mexican backgrounds. This suggests that he draws considerable inspiration from the lifeways of these people.

-how does Urrea's self-representation differ from Bowden's brief story of his father's generosity?

-much more foregrounded and detailed; conflicted identity and not just in binary ways: father=white Mexican with power and authority who plummets down the socio-economic ladder when they move to the US.

mother=white, Anglo from upper class who plummets down same ladder when she hooks up with U's father and moves to Tijuana.

-U has been called 'voice of the border;' what techniques does he use to explore this identity?

class group work: break into groups of 3 or 4 and review pp 3-6

-identify the strategies used by Urrea to represent himself in terms of his individual and collective history.

- uses simple physical markers to signal racial features but then troubles these with cultural factors. ie he and his parents are all white yet they are marginalized due to a number of factors; what are these?
- use of humorous details: ie how scalpels were decontaminated at his birth in Tijuana p 3.
- class markers using concrete objects: From white gloves and demitasse cups to a dirt street and outhouses... p 3.
- contradiction: each parent raised him to be 100% Mexican/American as binary.
- visual metaphorical imagery: I have a barbed wire fence neatly bisecting my heart. p 4.
- biblical imagery used in ironic way: feeding the poor and bathing the feet of the beggars p 4.
- rhetorical question that nevertheless introduces new interpretive perspective: besides, how can one immigrate from America to America?
- use of lists to emphasize quantity: Talking about the boys in the Tijuana barrio: They have watched... p 5
- neologism to signal global comparison: Palestijas p 5 bottom
- including others' voices in form of quotes p 6 top
- contradiction or antithesis (contrast or opposition in meanings in parallel structures): it is still 1896 in Tijuana. And it is also 2025.

2) Urrea's strategies and techniques

- discuss importance of presenting himself to reader; some bio info on his parents that focus on 'nepantla' identity he suffers but will turn to his advantage. Is neither insider nor outsider in Mexican borderlands; he has a borderland identity.
- humour: 4 see description of the neighbourhood where he lived as a child.
- how does humour work? what effects does it have on the reader?
- is contagious; most of us like to laugh; even people who are not very funny themselves, usually like to laugh, so humour is seductive.
- Native Am. observation about humour: is non-confrontational; is not self-righteous or preachy.
- is surprising: physical reaction to surprise: laughter; the surprising element is often something we might already know but have never considered in that particular configuration.
- use of lists: 5; 10; 15 (foods and prices): what effects? Takes what is familiar: products, images, and shows their cumulative impact. Can really drive home a point.
- unexpected reversals: 10: 'We have... We do not have...'; 6: at first seems to present the argument that all suffering is equal regardless of socio-economic factors; then pulls out the rug from underneath us: 'the only difference is: ... (and the differences are huge!)
- unexpected parallels or similarities in appearance that suggest deep similarities as well: 5 bottom: Tijuana-Palestine > 33; he doesn't say anything about Israeli politics; he doesn't have to. Implicit is the similarity between might is right US and Israel against Palestine and Mexico.
- taking a form of representation and placing it in an inappropriate or surprising context: the people who wanted to film a movie in the dump: bottom 7-8;

- what effect? doesn't just show absurdity of wanting to represent the Tijuana dump this way, it also shows the absurdity of this kind of representation generally.
- paradox: and again taken from strange context not immediately relevant: cities-as-Zen-koons: 9
- paradox related to split identity: 11 'We Americans... We Mexicans
- **Defamiliarization** or **ostranenie** (остранение) is the [artistic](#) technique of forcing the audience to see common things in an unfamiliar or strange way, in order to enhance perception of the familiar. A central concept [20th century art](#) and theory (Viktor Shklovsky), ranging over movements including [Dada](#), [postmodernism](#), [epic theatre](#), and [science fiction](#), it is also used as a tactic by recent movements such as [Culture jamming](#).
- so for instance, if you wanted to focus on this particular strategy in an essay, it would make sense to read some of Shklovsky's work, other critics' and theorists' discussion of its relevance to different art forms, and then to apply some of those ideas to how Urrea makes use of defamiliarization.
- very important strategy in 'A Lake of Sleeping Children' chapter.
- 43 first line second part: 'Miraculously peculiar things...
- timing; does he create suspense in this chapter? does he use foreshadowing to represent the cemetery and what he sees there?
- how? starts with a bizarre dream he has 38, paragraph 2 > bottom 42-43 returns to describe cemetery as part of the dump's terrain; 44 bottom-45 talks about effects of a flood; the home made grave markers > the gulls (at what point do you start to suspect where this is leading?)

what other strategies:

- the unexpected punchline that puts into question everything he has just told us that may have sounded comforting or familiar to the reader: 11 bottom-12 (on overpopulation and birth control).
- use of political slogan but in new, surprising context that interrogates the slogan: 15: the subtitle to this chapter 'home of the brave' context? how does he change or subvert that? **Home of the Brave**, a phrase from "[The Star Spangled Banner](#)"; 15: refers to it again in context of Anglo Americans; but overall, what does it refer to in his chapter? go back to photo of dump worker and epigraph by Richard Rodriguez.
- how does he joke about Canadians? which strategy does he use in those references? 11
- hyperbole (can be way of defamiliarizing as here): 9 bottom
- what strategy does he use to represent how the actual dump work is organized? were you surprised? 41-42 why might we be surprised? what would you expect in such a setting? law of the jungle? survival of the fittest? how does it force us to re-think community? and civilization?
- poetic techniques: making connections; metaphors that reveal similar realities around the world 46: image of sky.
- why is last paragraph italicized? (sets it apart from rest of text, why?)
- how does it interpellate the reader?

Interpellation is the constitutive process where individuals acknowledge and respond to ideologies, thereby recognizing themselves as subjects.

See: <http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/interpellation.htm>

3) Instructions for a Comparative Essay (5-6 pages double-spaced).

The objective of this assignment is to write a theorized comparative essay on one of the chapters of *By the Lake of Sleeping Children* by Luis Alberto Urrea in dialogue with an essay by another writer on related issues.

Choose one of the following pairs of texts:

‘Introductory Matters’ (from Urrea) and ‘Notes of NAFTA: “The Masters of Man”’ (by Noam Chomsky <http://www.chomsky.info/articles/199303--.htm>)

‘Pink Penitentiary’ (from Urrea) and ‘Sensibility, Justice, and Sacramentality’ (by Enrique Dussel *Ethics and Community*)

‘Dompe Days’ (from Urrea) and ‘On Mimicry and Man’ (by Homi Bhabha)

write a concise critical essay applying the theoretical text to Urrea’s chapter.

–Choose a key topic that you think connects the two texts you are comparing. Given the short length of this assignment, you will have to limit your discussion to 3-4 main points relating to that topic.

–Don’t think of the relationship between the two texts as some sort of contest or debate to determine which is better; that is not the purpose of a comparative reading. Instead, examine how the two texts/authors represent a certain problem/ set of issues, and show how the two texts illuminate each other, in other words, how you can put them into dialogue with each other.

–Always select a limited number of significant quotes to support and ground your topic. Quotes that warrant a close reading are the best choices. Tie your close reading of those selected passages to developing your interpretation of the topic as a whole.

For selection 1: Urrea ‘Introductory Matters/Chomsky ‘Notes on NAFTA’

—Choose the main topic: for example: the impact of NAFTA on Mexico’s already crumbling economy. Clearly, Urrea’s ‘Introductory Matters’ is more expansive (because it is storied) than Chomsky’s more focused essay, so you’ll have to infer some social issues from Chomsky’s economic analysis. Show how Urrea examines those issues using multiple discursive strategies: humour, overstatement (or hyperbole); understatement; lists; sudden reversals; self-representation; imagery; metaphorical language; play with paradox, etc. Consider too that although Chomsky seems to be engaged in a more academic, expository form of essay writing, he too makes choices and uses discursive strategies to communicate his ideas. He clearly made a decision to critique the current form of monopoly capitalism from the perspective of competitive capitalism, and the historical roots of capitalism as opposed to speaking from a leftist or anarchist perspective. You can also consider that Chomsky includes Canada in his critique of US

policies, for example he mentions the Canadian health care system, at a time when there was very little socialized health care in the US. (You can use your personal experience as a Canadian or American in your commentary about Chomsky's representation of each country's health care system. These are just some possible ideas to explore in your paper. You might have your own ideas with a different focus to this comparative reading and that is just fine as long as you put the two texts into a productive dialogue with each other, remembering to pay close attention to representation, discourse, language, and storytelling.

For selection 2: Urrea 'The Pink Penitentiary' / Dussel 'Sensibility, Justice, and Sacramentality'. Note that Urrea plays two of the older boys against each other in terms of their religious convictions and general outlook on life; Reuben and Ezequiel (a.k.a. Cheque) have similar roles in the orphanage but display markedly different approaches in their treatment of the younger boys, and in dealing with issues of discipline and punishment. Apply Dussel's chapter to this story by considering how Urrea represents Ezequiel as fulfilling certain key tenets of Liberation theology/ethics, and how Reuben, on the contrary, tends toward the asceticism that Dussel criticizes as a self-serving mode of righteousness.

For selection 3: Urrea 'Dompe Days' / Bhabha 'On Mimicry and Man.' When dealing with Bhabha's densely theoretical language, it's enough for the purposes of this assignment to focus on two key concepts in his essay: 1) the colonized are coerced in different ways to mimic the colonizer; 2) regardless of how well they mimic, the dominant elite never accept them as truly worthy, and their mimicry can have a parodic dimension that shows up the limitations, shortcomings, and injustices of the dominant elite. The way to apply these ideas to 'Dompe Days' is to focus on the character Chacho as being a kind of mimic man. Consider who is the neo-colonizer in this contemporary context and how Chacho's principles, values, behaviour show up the dark side of the dominant system.

4) How to Write a Short Response

Your short response should be in essay style by which we mean a structure made up of complete sentences, not point form or elliptical email style. Since the response is short, you have no space to waste. You can use more expansive techniques to prepare for the writing such as brainstorming, clustering ideas, trying to connect the dots in visual form, etc. but once you've done all that, it's time to focus on the main points you want to communicate, and to do so in clear and concise language. Try to imagine being both the writer and reader of your response; stop and ask yourself whether your reader will understand what you are getting at. Remind yourself that your reader is not telepathic and can't guess what you meant, if it's not written down.

Given the short length of this assignment, you need **not** worry about structuring the response as you would a long essay. Again, you don't really have the space or the need to formulate a long introduction, a complex argument, and a detailed conclusion. The nature of the questions you are being asked for the short responses, elicits a kind of jump-right-in, cut-to-the-chase response.

This does not mean that the response can be a knee-jerk response or a simple gut-reaction. An emotional response is common as a first reaction to any given text, but that's not the response you want to submit as your assignment. A short response is nothing like a personal diary entry and should not lament the difficulty of the text or how much trouble you have understanding it. Having trouble with a text that is subtle, complex and culturally unfamiliar is perfectly normal and nothing to be ashamed of. BUT, you should come to me for help BEFORE working on an assignment or writing a test or exam. That said I have nothing against a personal or even lyrical style of writing. You can use the first person pronoun "I" as long as what follows is a series of thoughts you want to share with your reader, something that will seem relevant to your reader. Try to imagine your reader not just as Professor X but rather as a discussion group (the whole class, and beyond!) Would all these people understand what you are saying?

Whenever you write an assignment however short, you should read it with a critical, distanced eye (this gets easier with more experience). In the case of your take-home midterm exam, think of your first draft as just that: a first attempt at putting your thoughts to paper. That draft will have to be revised and edited. You might end up writing a few pages containing lots of repetition and circling back to ideas that you have already expressed and don't need to belabour. Unnecessary repetition is one of the most common errors in beginners' writing. It happens often precisely because it is a normal thought process to return to and repeat ideas that you are struggling to understand. Go ahead and write as much as you need to in order to come to an understanding, but then you have to clean up that draft, leaving only the outcome of that struggle. This doesn't mean that everything will be resolved in your writing. Good writing is always open-ended and contains questions, doubts, and the possibility of endless revisions...

On the technical side, you should also revise your writing for spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Another common problem students have when learning how to write is the use of vague words that lead you to make generalizations or to fall into abstractions that part ways with the primary text to which you are supposed to be responding. Remember that your writing will be only as good as your reading. Stay close to the text that you are analyzing. Respect that text as the object of your inquiry even if you disagree with the ideas it promotes. Look for precise words to fine-tune your expression. I often use the example of the word "society" and complain that students over-use that word unthinkingly and without specifying **which** society they are referring to, or whom it includes or excludes.

Writing a response or an essay does not mean praising the value of the text that you are studying in any formulaic way: i.e. "My reading of Romeo and Juliet shows why Shakespeare was a genius" (though maybe nobody would hazard that opinion about our contemporary authors). What your reading should do is open up some of the many fascinating insights and connections in these texts and to show how they are crafted and what they mean to you personally and to us collectively.

It is not really good enough to summarize and describe what a text does. University-level assignments are not like book reports. Since we are **not** dealing with facts alone, your interpretation is vital. You are encouraged to express your opinions, but you must support

them with evidence drawn from the text, from other texts, from the world-at-large as text. The beauty and power of your writing will lie in how you interweave those connections into what, step-by-step, will become your own story.

Happy writing!

5) Secondary Sources for Essay:

Chomsky, Noam. 'Notes of NAFTA: The Masters of Man'
<http://www.chomsky.info/articles/199303--.htm>

Dussel, Enrique. 'Sensibility, Justice, and Sacramentality' chap 6 from *Ethics and Community*. Wipf & Stock Pub, reprint 2008.

Bhabha, Homi. 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse.' The MIT Press; *Discipleship* October 1984, vol.28 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/778467>

Notes of NAFTA: "The Masters of Man"

Noam Chomsky

The Nation, March, 1993

Throughout history, Adam Smith observed, we find the workings of "the vile maxim of the masters of mankind": "All for ourselves, and nothing for other People." He had few illusions about the consequences. The invisible hand, he wrote, will destroy the possibility of a decent human existence "unless government takes pains to prevent" this outcome, as must be assured in "every improved and civilized society." It will destroy community, the environment and human values generally -- and even the masters themselves, which is why the business classes have regularly called for state intervention to protect them from market forces.

The masters of mankind in Smith's day were the "merchants and manufacturers," who were the "principal architects" of state policy, using their power to bring "dreadful misfortunes" to the vast realms they subjugated and to harm the people of England as well, though their own interests were "most peculiarly attended to." In our day the masters are, increasingly, the supranational corporations and financial institutions that dominate the world economy, including international trade -- a dubious term for a system in which some 40 percent of U.S. trade takes place within companies, centrally managed by the same highly visible hands that control planning, production and investment.

The World Bank reports that protectionist measures of the industrialized countries reduce national income in the South by about twice the amount of official aid to the region -- aid that is itself largely export promotion, most of it directed to richer sectors (less needy, but better consumers). In the past decade, most of the rich countries have increased protectionism, with the Reaganites often leading the way in the crusade against economic liberalism. These practices, along with the programs dictated by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, have helped double the gap between rich and poor countries since 1960. Resource transfers from the poor to the rich amounted to more than \$400 billion from 1982 to 1990, "the equivalent in today's dollars of some six Marshall Plans provided by the South to the North," observes Susan George of the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam; she notes also that commercial banks were protected by transfer of their bad debts to the public sector. As in the case of the S&Ls, and advanced industry generally, "free-market capitalism" is to be risk free for the masters, as fully as can be achieved.

The international class war is reflected in the United States, where real wages have fallen to the level of the mid-1960s. Wage stagnation, extending to the college-educated, changed to sharp decline in the mid-1980s, in part a consequence of the decline in "defense spending," our euphemism for the state industrial policy that allows "private enterprise" to feed at the public trough. More than 17 million workers were unemployed or underemployed by mid-1992, Economic Policy Institute economists Lawrence Mishel and Jared Bernstein report -- a rise of 8 million during the Bush years. Some 75 percent of that is permanent loss of jobs. Of the limited gain in total wealth in the eighties, "70% accrued to the top 1% of income earners, while the bottom lost absolutely," according to M.I.T. economist Rudiger Dornbusch.

Structures of governance have tended to coalesce around economic power. The process continues. In the London Financial Times, James Morgan describes the "de facto world government" that is taking shape in the "new imperial age": the I.M.F., World Bank, Group of 7 industrialized nations, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and other institutions designed to serve the interests of transnational corporations, banks and investment firms.

One valuable feature of these institutions is their immunity from popular influence. Elite hostility to democracy is deep-rooted, understandably, but there has been a spectrum of opinion. At the "progressive" end, Walter Lippmann argued that "the public must be put in its place," so that the "responsible men" may rule without interference from "ignorant and meddlesome outsiders" whose "function" is to be only "interested spectators of action," periodically selecting members of the leadership class in elections, then returning to their private concerns. The statist reactionaries called "conservatives" typically take a harsher line, rejecting even the spectator role. Hence the appeal to the Reaganites of clandestine operations, censorship and other measures to insure that a powerful and interventionist state will not be troubled by the rabble. The "new imperial age" marks a shift toward the reactionary end of the antidemocratic spectrum.

It is within this framework that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and GATT should be understood. Note first that such agreements have only a limited relation to free trade. One primary U.S. objective is increased protection for "intellectual property," including software, patents for seeds and drugs, and so on. The U.S. International Trade Commission estimates that American companies stand to gain \$61 billion a year from the Third World if U.S. protectionist demands are satisfied at GATT (as they are in NAFTA), at a cost to the South that will dwarf the current huge flow of debt-service capital from South to North. Such measures are designed to insure that U.S.-based corporations control the technology of the future, including biotechnology, which, it is hoped, will allow protected private enterprise to control health, agriculture and the means of life generally, locking the poor majority into dependence and hopelessness. The same methods are being employed to undermine Canada's annoyingly efficient health services by imposing barriers to the use of generic drugs, thus sharply raising costs -- and profits to state-subsidized U.S. corporations. NAFTA also includes intricate "rules of origin" requirements designed to keep foreign competitors out. Two hundred pages are devoted to rules to insure a high percentage of value added in North America (protectionist measures that should be increased, some U.S. opponents of NAFTA argue). Furthermore, the agreements go far beyond trade (itself not really trade but in large part intracompany transfers, as noted). A prime U.S. objective is liberalization of services, which would allow supranational banks to displace domestic competitors and thus eliminate any threat of national economic planning and independent development. The agreements impose a mixture of liberalization and protection, designed to keep wealth and power firmly in the hands of the masters of the "new imperial age."

NAFTA is an executive agreement, reached on August 12, 1992, just in time to become a major issue in the U.S. presidential campaign. It was mentioned, but barely. To give just one example of how debate was precluded, take the case of the Labor Advisory Committee (L.A.C.), established by the Trade Act of 1974 to advise the executive branch on any trade agreement. The L.A.C., which is based in the unions, was informed that its report on NAFTA was due on September 9. The text of this intricate treaty was provided to it one day before. In its report, the L.A.C. notes, "the Administration refused to permit any outside advice on the development of this document and refused to make a draft available for comment." The situation in Canada and Mexico was similar. The facts are not even reported. In such ways, we approach the long-sought ideal: formal democratic procedures that are devoid of meaning, as citizens not only do not intrude into the public arena but scarcely have an idea of the policies that will shape their lives.

One can readily understand the need to keep the public "in its place." Though the scanty press coverage is overwhelmingly favorable to NAFTA in its present form, the public opposes it by nearly 2 to 1 (of the 60 percent who have an opinion). Apart from some meager rhetoric and a few interventions by Ross Perot, that fact was irrelevant to the presidential campaign, as were health reform and a host of other issues on which public opinion remains largely off the spectrum of options considered by the "responsible men."

The Labor Advisory Committee concluded that the executive treaty would be a bonanza for investors but would harm U.S. workers and probably Mexicans as well. One likely consequence is an acceleration of migration from rural to urban areas as Mexican corn producers are wiped out by U.S. agribusiness, depressing still further wages that have already dropped sharply in recent years and are likely to remain low, thanks to the harsh repression that is a crucial element of the highly touted Mexican "economic miracle." Labor's share of personal income in Mexico declined from 36 percent in the mid-1970s to 23 percent by 1992, reports economist David Barkin, while fewer than 8,000 accounts (including 1,500 owned by foreigners) control more than 94 percent of stock shares in public hands.

Property rights are well protected by NAFTA, the L.A.C. analysts and others note, while workers' rights are ignored. The treaty is also likely to have harmful environmental effects, encouraging a shift of production to regions where enforcement is lax. NAFTA "will have the effect of prohibiting democratically elected bodies at [all] levels of government from enacting measures deemed inconsistent with the provisions of the agreement," the L.A.C. report continues, including those on the environment, workers' rights, and health and safety, all open to challenge as "unfair restraint of trade."

Such developments are already under way in the framework of the U.S.-Canada "free trade" agreement. Included are efforts to require Canada to abandon measures to protect the Pacific salmon, to bring pesticide and emissions

regulations in line with laxer U.S. standards, to end subsidies for replanting after logging and to bar a single-payer auto insurance plan in Ontario that would cost U.S. insurance companies hundreds of millions of dollars in profits. Meanwhile Canada has charged the United States with violating "fair trade" by imposing E.P.A. standards on asbestos use and requiring recycled fiber in newsprint. Under both NAFTA and GATT, there are endless options for undermining popular efforts to protect conditions of life.

In general, the L.A.C. report concludes, "U.S. corporations, and the owners and managers of these corporations, stand to reap enormous profits. The United States as a whole, however, stands to lose and particular groups stand to lose an enormous amount." The report calls for renegotiation, offering a series of constructive proposals. That remains a possibility if the coalition of labor, environmental and other popular groups that has been calling for such changes gains sufficient popular support [see Amy Lowrey and David Corn, "Mexican Trade Bill: Fast Track to Unemployment," *The Nation*, June 3, 1991].

An October 1992 report from the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment reached similar conclusions. A "bare" NAFTA of the form now on the table would ratify "the mismanagement of economic integration" and could "lock the United States into a low-wage, low-productivity future." Radically altered to incorporate "domestic and continental social policy measures and parallel understandings with Mexico on environmental and labor issues," NAFTA could have beneficial consequences for the country. But the country is only of secondary concern to the masters, who are playing a different game. Its rules are revealed by what *The New York Times* called "Paradox of '92: Weak Economy, Strong Profits." As a geographical entity, "the country" may decline. But the interests of the "principal architects" of policy will be "most peculiarly attended to."

One consequence of the globalization of the economy is the rise of new governing institutions to serve the interests of private transnational economic power. Another is the spread of the Third World social model, with islands of enormous privilege in a sea of misery and despair. A walk through any American city gives human form to the statistics on quality of life, distribution of wealth, poverty and employment, and other elements of the "Paradox of '92." Increasingly, production can be shifted to high-repression, low-wage areas and directed to privileged sectors in the global economy. Large parts of the population thus become superfluous for production and perhaps even as a market, unlike the days when Henry Ford realized that he could not sell cars unless his workers were paid enough to buy cars themselves.

Particular cases fill out the picture. G.M. is planning to close almost two dozen plants in the United States and Canada, but it has become the largest private employer in Mexico. It has also opened a \$690 million assembly plant in eastern Germany, where employees are willing to "work longer hours than their pampered colleagues in western Germany," at 40 percent of the wage and with few benefits, as the *Financial Times* cheerily explains. Capital can readily move; people cannot, or are not permitted to by those who selectively applaud Adam Smith's doctrines, which crucially include "free circulation of labor." The return of much of Eastern Europe to its traditional service role offers new opportunities for corporations to reduce costs, thanks to "rising unemployment and pauperisation of large sections of the industrial working class" in the East as capitalist reforms proceed, according to the *Financial Times*.

The same factors provide the masters with new weapons against the rabble at home. Europe must "hammer away at high wages and corporate taxes, short working hours, labor immobility, and luxurious social programs," *Business Week* warns. It must learn the lesson of Britain, which finally "is doing something well," the *Economist* observes approvingly, with "trade unions shackled by law and subdued," "unemployment high" and the Maastricht social chapter rejected so that employers are protected "from over-regulation and under-flexibility of labour." American workers must absorb the same lessons.

The basic goals were lucidly described by the C.E.O. of United Technologies, Harry Gray, quoted in a valuable study of NAFTA by William McGaughey of the Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition: "a worldwide business environment that's unfettered by government interference" (for example, "package and labelling requirements" and "inspection procedures" to protect consumers). This is the predominant human value, to which all else must be subordinated. Gray does not, of course, object to "government interference" of the kind that allows his corporation, an offshoot of

the Pentagon system, to exist. Neoliberal rhetoric is to be selectively employed as a weapon against the poor; the wealthy and powerful will continue to rely on state power.

These processes will continue independently of NAFTA. But, as explained by Eastman Kodak chairman Kay Whitmore, the treaty may "lock in the opening of Mexico's economy so that it can't return to its protectionist ways." It should enable Mexico "to solidify its remarkable economic reforms," comments Michael Aho, director of Economic Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, referring to the "economic miracle" for the rich that has devastated the poor majority. It may fend off the danger noted by a Latin America Strategy Development Workshop at the Pentagon in September 1990, which found current relations with the Mexican dictatorship to be "extraordinarily positive," untroubled by stolen elections, death squads, endemic torture, scandalous treatment of workers and peasants, and so on, but which saw one cloud on the horizon: "a 'democracy opening' in Mexico could test the special relationship by bringing into office a government more interested in challenging the U.S. on economic and nationalistic grounds." As always, the basic threat is functioning democracy.

The trade agreements override the rights of workers, consumers, and the future generations who cannot "vote" in the market on environmental issues. They help keep the public "in its place." These are not necessary features of such agreements, but they are natural consequences of the great successes of the past years in reducing democracy to empty forms, so that the vile maxim of the masters can be pursued without undue interference.

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