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## Trends. Mexican Politics and Hamlet: The Propaganda of Subcommandante Marcos and the Zapatistas

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IBPP has previously cited Shakespearean themes in contemporary Mexican politics. In "The Psychopolitics of Clowns" ((February 14, 1997)1(12)) similarities were explored between the political comedy of Hamlet's gravediggers in Act V, Scene I and the gravediggers implicated in an apparent plot to incriminate Raul Salinas de Gortari, the brother of a former Mexican president.

Most recently, Subcommandante Marcos, a leader of the Zapatista movement in the state of Chiapas, has actually used a fragment from Act III, Scene I of Hamlet in a document released for public consumption. The document was released to end an interlude in which the Subcommandante's whereabouts and health had been questioned.

Given that this document is an analysis of the Mexican Government's shortfalls towards the Zapatistas and other (according to the Subcommandante) oppressed groups--i.e., a J'accuse from the Subcommandante to Mexico's President Zedillo--the Hamlet fragment is quite extraordinary.

The fragment? Hamlet (to Ophelia): I have heard of your paintings well enough. God/hath given you one face, and you make yourselves/another. You jig and amble, and you lisp, you nick-/name God's creatures, and make your wantonness/your ignorance (ll. 144-148).

IBPP Propaganda Analysis: (1) Within the varied cultures of Mexican machismo, the Subcommandante as a man is addressing Zedillo as a woman (Ophelia). (2) Zedillo as Ophelia does not have a mind of his own but acts according to others. With Ophelia her family is paramount, with Zedillo his handlers and financial supporters. (3) Zedillo as Ophelia is not emotionally able to handle the stressors of negotiation and conflict. (4) Zedillo as Ophelia and, perhaps, Mexico as Zedillo as Ophelia will engage (and may already be engaging) in suicidal behavior. (5) Zedillo as Ophelia and as women generally has more than one face, paints himself to hide the true self, and revels in his deceitfulness as he strives to be everything but what he really is and intends.

Among target audiences of Mexican and international educational elites, the Subcommandante has scored a propaganda coup. As with Hamlet, however, his best words and thoughts may not make sense to his most important audiences and may impotently substitute for action. (See Diaz-Loving, R. (1998). Contributions of Mexican ethnopsychology to the resolution of the etic-emic dilemma in personality. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 29, 104-118; Mexico 1998, Arriba y abajo: Mascaras y silencios. <http://www.peak.org/~joshua/fzln/ezln980700b-esp.html>; Morales-Moreno, I. (1997). Mexico's national identity after NAFTA. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 40, 858-883; Shakespeare, W. (1994). *The Arden Shakespeare: Hamlet* (H. Jenkins, Ed.). NY: Routledge. (Original work published c. 1600); The psychopolitics of clowns. (February 14, 1997). *IBPP*, 1, 12.). (This IBPP analysis significantly benefited from Ms. Suzanne Kriehn's translation services and helpful suggestions.) (Keywords: Hamlet, Mexico, Politics, Shakespeare, Zapatistas.)