Chupacabras, the Strange Case of Carlos Salinas de Gortari and his Transformation into the Chupatodo

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1. INTRODUCING THE CHUPACABRAS?

The Chupacabras is a mythological, vampire-like creature of cryptic status, first sighted in Puerto Rico and Mexico, and is now believed to inhabit several parts of the Americas and the globe. The name, Chupacabras, comes from its distinctive way of killing its prey, by sucking their blood. The Chupacabras tends to feed predominantly on livestock (such as chickens, goats, ducks, turkeys, rabbits, pigs), and other domestic and small animals. However, there have been several reports of cattle and horses killed by the creature. There are no reports of humans killed by the creature.

The first official sightings of the Chupacabras were reported in March 1995 on the island of Puerto Rico, when eight sheep were found with their blood drained and three distinct punctures on their bodies. Similar killings of livestock were reported in Puerto Rico in the past, as far back as 1975, in the small town of Moca. Soon after the events of 1995, other sightings and killings of livestock were reported in other countries. By 2008, the Chupacabras has turned into a global phenomenon. Today, the Chupacabras has been sighted on the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, in places like Spain, Portugal, Central Russia, and Philippines (Newton 127-131). There are several theories about the origin of the Chupacabras, ranging from the notion that the attacks are the product of known predators, to the claim that the Chupacabras is an alien from outer space, or a vampire. Other theories argue that the Chupacabras is the result of failed governmental experiments, or even demoniac/divine intervention.

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen argues in his book Monster Culture that, “we live in a time of monsters” (vii), and they are born “as an embodiment of a certain cultural moment–of a time, a feeling, and a place” (4), and that each monster “signifies something other that itself” (4). For him, monsters and many uncanny creatures as “epistemological device[s]”
[ix] that can provide information on how communities deploy imagination and fantasy in order to deal with social and economic realities at specific times. Furthermore, Cohen argues that monsters haunt humans (ix), as they constantly keep asking us “why we have created them” (20). In this context, our central question is, what a monster like the Chupacabras, can tell us about the time when it was born, and about the deep transformations experienced during the end of the last millennium. Can it be that the latest capitalist practices implemented in Mexico and the U.S. during those years is directly responsible for the birth of this blood-sucking creature?

2. THE MYSTERIOUS ORIGIN OF EL CHUPATODO

The story of the origin of the Chupacabras has been deeply affected by the political and social events of its time. One of its most impressive manifestations of the Chupacabras took shape during Mexico’s 1994-1995 economic crises. During the Carlos Salinas de Gortari administration (1988-1994), a series of economic reforms were put into place that seriously changed the lives of small farmers, especially indigenous communities, including the signing of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the United States, Mexico, and Canada. In 1995, just within year of the implementation of the international agreement, and after several poor economic decisions by the ruling political party in Mexico for 71 years, El Partido Revolucionario Institucional (or the Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI), the Mexican economy plummeted provoking a market crisis by inflation and devaluation that surpassed 50 percent (Gallo 17). The crisis was accompanied by soaring unemployment, high rates of housing foreclosures, and investor mistrust. In addition, Salinas’ government was marked by internal corruption, and massive privatization policies that, for example, reduced the number of state-owned industries from 600 at the beginning of his administration, to less the 250 by the end of 1994.

Following the departure of Salinas de Gortari, the Chupacabras started a mysterious transformation. As mass media began to unveil the dreadful state of the economy, the Chupacabras started to look increasingly as the ex-president. While many were still debating about the existence of the Chupacabras and the veracity of the events, the people in Mexico City in their popular imagination resolved the mystery, as Rubén Gallo explains:

The Chupacabras existed, and it was none other the Carlos Salinas (the reasoning seemed to go as follows; the Chupacabras sucks blood; Salinas sucked the life blood out of Mexico; thus Salinas is a Chupacabras. Almost overnight, the streets of Mexico City were flooded with figures depicting Salinas… as the fanged Chupacabras. (138)

Furthermore, the ex-President was more than the goat-sucker, Salinas de Gortari was perceived as being the sucker of many other things, such as the Chupadolares (“dollar-
sucker"), the Chupalanas ("money-sucker"), the Chupacasas ("houses/morgages-sucker") and finally as the Chupatodo ("suck-everything") (Gallo139). In the Mexican imagination in those days, Salinas de Gortari represented everything that was going wrong with the economy, the devaluation of the peso, the mortgage crisis, foreign intervention, and the effects of international policy and corruption.

The view that Carlos Salinas de Gortari was the Chupacabras was accompanied by the emergence in Mexican popular culture, of multiple memorabilia, figurines, jokes, graffiti, and songs. They represented Salinas de Gortari with his distinctive long forehead, big black eyes, and a mustache, but fused. He was represented with fangs, horns, wings, or a reptile tail. Some of these popular pieces eventually became the body of a protest-museum created by artist Vicente Razo, in what he called El Museo Salinas in Mexico City. In the museum, Razo criticizes the ruling power in Mexico, and the PRI’s traditional approach in supporting and institutionalizing art by the creation of many museums and institutes that lack funding, scope, or a clear vision.

In addition to the sarcastic and humorous character of these popular culture productions as practices of social activism, they worked as public illustrations of the deep understanding carried by the masses of Salinas de Gortari’s policies. As we encounter these pieces, it is clear that these vernacular productions were not oblivious to the implications of their claims in regard to the effects of Late Capitalism on their lives. Studying these cultural productions allows us to unravel how these communities were able to link the web of political and economic events that have threatened their lives. These everyday objects in many ways, reflects Américo Paredes’s notions that many border culture productions carried within the seeds of vernacular knowledge[s], as depositories of border folk knowledges or “sabidurías populares” (Saldivar 56). These cultural productions become narrations from the periphery that express what the community was experiencing and witnessing. These are not foolish narrations by over-impressionable people, quite the contrary. The Chupacabras is a highly elaborated narration that reveals the complex system of oppression in place in Mexico.

In addition to the multiple masks, t-shirts, costumes, cartons, graffiti, etc., there were also musical pieces. One of those pieces, La Cumbia del Chupacabras, became particularly popular during the 1995 public protests and marches in Mexico City. This cumbia was also used as a background for improvised sketches by street artists at stoplights in the City. In this piece, the writer, Alfonso Romero, exposes many of the events, criticisms, and long-term effects that framed the policies and decisions by Salinas de Gortari. In the second paragraph of the lyrics the writer says:

Orejón tiene bigotes y ya todo
El cabello se ha quedado en el espejo
Un mal día cuando se cayó el sistema
In this passage, the writer first describes Salinas as the Chupacabras, but he also explains how Salinas became president. The phrase, “a bad day when the system crashed” refers to the day when Salinas was elected and the controversy that surrounds the crash of the electoral counting system twice on the day of the elections. The notion that it was a “bad day”, clearly illustrates the negative sentiment generated after years of his administration. In addition, this cumbia calls attention to one of Salinas’s first moves, the Quinazo, just 40 days into his presidency. In January 10, 1989, Joaquín Hernández Galicia (La Quina), the top leader of the Sindicato de Trabajadores Petroleros de la Republica Mexicana (STPRM), the Mexican Oil Company workers syndicate, is arrested at his home. Hernández will be eventually sentenced to 35 years in prison for the illegal possession of firearms, for his personal collection of Mexican Revolution weaponry. For decades Hernández, not only ran the most lucrative governmental labor organization, he also had influence high in the PRI structure and was involved in the designation of many of its national Congress and Senate members, as well as municipalities and districts.

Known as the Quinazo, derived from Hernández nickname, this event was interpreted as a direct attack on the old managing structure of the PRI and the syndicates of State-run companies, as many of Hernández’s collaborators were also sent to prison. The Quinazo, allowed Salinas control over the oil syndicate, as well as giving him broader access to key transformations within the Mexican state-owned petroleum company (PEMEX), such as the dismantling of refinery plants, massive payroll cuts (over 100,000 during his administration), and bringing the discussion about the privatization of PEMEX and other companies to the table. To understand the magnitude of the Quinazo, we need to remember that PEMEX, with total assets of more than $400 billion, is considered second largest publicly-owned company in the world, and its revenues alone represent 40% of the Mexican federal government’s budget. The Quinazo furnished credibility to Salinas’s commitment to NAFTA and to foreign investment. In the cumbia, the long repercussions of the Quinazo, contextualize the Salinas-Chupacabras’ greedy nature and
premeditated intentions, as he is “sharpening... his brain, nails and tongue” for future attacks. In another fragment, the cumbia says:

A lo largo de seis años hubo casi
Seis centenas de frustrados perredistas
Que murieron con violencia... y no hubo pistas
Nadie supo y carpetazo así de fácil
Amasaba el Chupacabras mil tesoros
Y se hizo cada vez más poderoso
A los narcos y a los curas muy gozoso
Su amistad nunca miró con malos ojos.

Along six years there were almost
Six hundred frustrated PRDers
Who died violently... without tracks
Nobody knew and were shelved easily
Thousand treasures amassed the Chupacbras
And he became increasingly powerful
To drug dealers and to priests very joyful
Their friendship never looked askance.
(Romero, “La Cumbia del Chupacabras”)

In this section, the writer exposes the assassinations of many within the Partido de la Revolución Democrática, PRD (or The Party of the Democratic Revolution) who opposed Salinas de Gortari, in what was perceived as a political cleansing, allowing him to increase his power and fortune. Furthermore, it criticizes his personal and contradictive ties to the drug cartels and the Catholic Church in Mexico, both as part of an interconnected network of power. In another section of the cumbia, it says:

Ay compatriotas... el Chupacabras
Va a hacer huelga de hambre... el Chupacabras
Quien mató a Colosio?... el Chupacabras
Y no se hagan bolas... el Chupacabras.

Oh fellow compatriots... the Chupacabras
Going to do a hunger strike... the Chupacabras
Who killed Colosio?... the Chupacabras
Do not get confused...[it was] the Chupacabra.
(Romero, “La Cumbia del Chupacabras”)

Here, the cumbia is able to connect the assassinations of the two top PRI members, Luis Donaldo Colosio and Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu events that shadowed the Salinas administration and PRI’s reputation. The cumbia first refers to Salinas de Gortari’s hunger strike just three months after he left the presidency. According to Salinas, his strike had noting to do with his brother’s alleged involvement in the crimes, but rather it
Crossing the Borders of Imagination

was about restoring his own honor front the Mexican people. However, the hunger strike did not help him, but rather fueled the public anti-sentiment toward him. In the lyrics, Salinas as the Chupacabras, is directly connected to the killer of Colosio.

Rubén Gallo explains, “the more traumatic an event, the more elaborate the narratives it will inspire” (17). In this case, it can be said that one of the methods deployed by Mexicans in order to confront their reality and their multiple calamites, was to create and appropriate the narrative of the chupacabras, and build it around a new complex and extraordinary imaginary narrative which works as a venue for denouncing injustice, and inscribing a new history of the events and to deploy their agency. For Gallo:

The myth of Salinas as Chupacabras deploys extremely complex symbolic strategies, including the process of condensation and displacement… this postmodern monster was shorthand notation of the manifold fears and anxieties experienced by those wrecked by the economic crisis. (18)

As explained by Gallo, in the context of the Mexican economic crisis of 1994-1995 and the early social instability created by the neo-capitalist practices implemented by the PRI. The Chupacabras was very real, especially because it worked as a mirror for Late Capitalism, as he represented many of its effects. For example, the Chupacabras was attacking it victims clandestinely, sucking their life away, assaulting farms unexpectedly. In similar ways, the system of political corruption, bureaucracy, and the neoliberal policies in place in Mexico was also killing rural communities, by slowly sucking away their life.

During those months, the Chupacabras enabled everyday people to find a mechanism to express publically the toxic effects generated by ‘poor’ management of the State and the cruel results of those decisions upon the community. For Gallo, “the construction of a mythological blood-sucking president was an effective antidote to the generalized gloom and despair caused by the 1995 crisis” (19). Moreover, he perceives the deployment of this creature as a “form of political activism” (19) also meant to make fun of Salinas and “literally laughed [him] out of the country” (19) and to prevent him from reaching another public position, as he was removed from consideration to head the World Trade Organization shortly after leaving his presidency. Public mockery became the ultimate form of informal social punishment, as the President remains with impunity in a PRI controlled country. As we step back and look at the vast series of catastrophic events surrounding the socio-politico terrain of the Chupacabras, one can only wonder not only about the economic crisis, but also about what was really happening within the collective psyche of Mexicans and border-communities along the U.S.-Mexico border.

3. CONTEXTUALIZING NAFTA AS EL CHUPATODO

Certainly, during the attacks of the Chupatodo, many people, including farmers, saw their life-style tread upon as many livestock animals died. However, the connection
created between Salinas de Gortari and the Chupacabras, made evident that people in Mexico understood in a broad sense, that perhaps those animals were dying as a result of the attacks from a creature ‘not’ of this world, one with tremendous voracity.

In order to have a better picture of this ‘real’ monster they were confronting, let’s review in more detail how social and economic death (and distress) was implemented, constructed, and perpetuated, emotionally and economically in the years and months surrounding the first attacks of the Chupacabras, specifically in the years around the signing of NAFTA. I will explore three elements: (i) the moral erosion of the ruling Mexican party through the assassination of two of its top members; (ii) the Mexican privatization of indigenous collective landholdings during the late 20th century land reform; (iii) the Border Industrialization Program (B.I.P), the increased militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border and the recurring of femicides on the region. I believe that knowing about those elements allows us to contextualize the Chupacabras within the psyche of these communities, as a metaphysical representation of the horrors imposed upon them by Late Capitalism and Neoliberalism as manifested by NAFTA.

3.1. PRI High Profile Assassinations

Gortari’s administration was shadowed not only by the economic policies put in place, but also by a series of violent scandals that made evident the level of bribery that was consuming the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The assassinations of two of its most powerful figures eroded even more, the already fragile trust that Mexicans had in the PRI, unveiling an old and cracked structure of power. The PRI as the almighty ‘state party’ that had been running Mexico since 1929 was publically questioned and confronted. The level of mistrust reached the core of the party and doubted the values that were supposed to hold the party, and therefore, the nation together. The Mexican economic crisis of the 1990’s was accompanied by a deeper institutional crisis.

The first assassination case was that of presidential candidate Luis
Donald Colosio, who was killed on March 23, 1994 while campaigning in Tijuana, Baja California. A few months later that same year, Mexicans also witness another high-profile assassination, that of Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu, on September 28th in Mexico City. He was the brother-in-law of president Gortari, and was the current Secretary General of the PRI. The drama surrounding the Ruiz Massieu assassination achieved ‘Telenovela’ status when his brother, Mario Ruiz Massieu, became the attorney general in charge of leading the investigation. However, he renounced his post after several months, complaining of the corruption and obstruction from high-ranking PRI members.

Ironically, Mario Ruiz Massieu was later arrested in Newark, NJ, as he was trying to board a flight to Madrid, Spain, while carrying $46,000.00 in unreported cash. Subsequent investigations revealed several millions of dollars in his personal accounts, allegedly from bribery and money laundering. This allowed the Mexican government to bring charges against him for obstructing the investigation of his own brother’s assassination. The crime was never completely resolved. In 1999, Raul Salinas, the brother of former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari, was convicted as the mastermind behind the crime. That same year, Mario Ruiz Massieu committed suicide.

The murder of these high-ranking PRI official denotes and exemplifies the deep transformations at the core of the most powerful party in Mexico. As the PRI has represented itself as a stable and monolithic structure, that holds the state-nation together. Its public moral erosion created a sense of vulnerability, instability, and amplified the growing mistrust in the government. The nature and circumstances surrounding these events allowed for the possibility to publically criticize the then almighty institution, especially for the Mexican middle and upper class, the ones that particularly have benefited from PRI polices, and its long totalitarian control over the nation. In this sense, the political changes in the Mexican government by the late 1990's inscribed in the shift from the PRI, may be reevaluated, not necessarily as a shift of powers, but rather, as the continuation of class ruling. As the possibility of a violent and uncertain future without the protection of the state arose in the Mexican middle/upper class, particularly as these murders are correlated in the social mind, with the attacks upon Colosio, La Quinta, Massie, and their collaborators.

3.2. Late 20th Century Mexican Land Reform

Mexican social discontent was also manifested in the lower classes, as reflected during the uprising of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN) in Chiapas, on January 1st, 1994, the day when NAFTA came into effect. Th after years of PRI’s economic policies meant to “strengthen” Mexico’s private industry sectors and promote foreign capital investment. One of those polices affected indigenous communities directly was the implementation of the
PROCEDE-program, created by the Government of Salinas de Gortary. This massive new plan of land privatization, was not seen since the government of Porfirio Díaz, just before the Mexican revolution. This program was designed specifically to deregulate indigenous communal land and agrarians’ communities under the form of ejidos (or “collective landholdings”) and nucleos agrarios (or “agrarian collective”). In theory, PROCEDE was meant to (i) formalize the use of common lands, (ii) survey and certify parcels, and (iii) regulate the titling of urban plots for individuals. Certainly, PROCEDE was not solely responsible for the deregulation and privatization of Indigenous ejidos, however it was responsible for the creation of a process by which those changes could be made within a judicial framework of legality and impunity (Vázquez Castillo 38).

It is important to understand the de-regularization of ejidos, did not happen in isolation, but rather as part of a larger neoliberal project of privatization, and market expansion. In order for Mexico to be part of NAFTA, changes about communal indigenous land were needed in the Mexican constitution, Article 4 and 27. These Articles changed to allow the privatization of collective landholdings, in order to open indigenous ejidos lands for private capital, exploration, and foreign development capital. Under the new laws and constitutional changes, collective landholdings can be privatized, fragmented into individual parcels that eventually can be sold, leased, or used as collateral for a bank loan.

María Teresa Vázquez Castillo, in her book, *Land Privatization in Mexico: Urbanization, Formation of Regions, and Globalization in Ejidos*, (173) explains how the implementation of this and other laws compromised the already fragile indigenous land entitlement and created layers of illegality for those communities engaging in collective landholding settlements. Under the new law, indigenous eligio-users from then on, could be categorized as forms of illegal squatting, and were framed as dangerous to the security of the Mexican state, and its own development. The need for land privatization was sold to the Mexican public as a requirement in order to create stability, social security, and economic growth, completely disregarding indigenous people’s safety and ancient rights. Moreover, by 1997 Mexican exports of forest products to U.S. have increased by 69% (U.S. International Trade 1999: 4-22), and by 1998 more than a dozen U.S. wood extracting companies opened in Southern Mexico, previously dominated by ejidos.

The new wave of land privatization was also accompanied by the deregulation of import-restrictions on grains, such as corn, an intrinsic part of the Mexican diet. NAFTA allowed U.S. corn to enter the Mexican market. This shifted their economy, by favoring large corporations, as small farmers were unable to compete with U.S. subsidized prizes for human and animal consumption of corn. For example, within the first seven years of the implementation of NAFTA, U.S. corn exports to Mexico double (Ackerman 3-6), however cheap corn in Mexico did not traduced in low prices for Mexican consumers.
As Sarah Anderson explains, “while the price to corn producers dropped by nearly 50 percent, the price of tortillas rose about 200 percent due to monopoly price” (94). Clearly, the implementation of NAFTA did not translate into social wealth. On the contrary, according to the World Bank 2004 report, within four years of the signing of NAFTA, poverty in rural Mexico increased to 82 percent. They indicated that 28 percent of those living in rural Mexico were living below the food poverty line and 57 percent were moderately poor (171). Furthermore, as shown by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center in Mexico, the overwhelming majority of those living in poverty are indigenous communities such as Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Guerrero, communities highly linked to corn losses because of the unfair international trade (World Bank 172).

This monster was unstoppable, between 1993 to 2000 “Mexico lost 1.3 million agricultural jobs [...] as little farmers] and peasants struggle to complete with large-scale U.S. Producers” (Anderson 94). Moreover, these communities experienced a deep cultural shift as they became more dependent on wage income, as small agricultural venues were displaced (World Bank 172), and they were forced from collective land ownership to wage labor. Clearly, for those on the losing end, the experience of land dispossession, forced migration, and the loss of their sources for maintaining their families and preserving their culture, could have been perceived as the effects of a monster that was attacking them, one that little by little, was sucking their lives away. In those days, just as today, there were more than just livestock animals dying and succumbing, there were also communal histories, and traditions at stake.

3.3. Dancing with the Chupacabra: Border’s Horror, Maquiladoras, and Femicides

Many of these agrarians’ reforms and the process of neo-capitalist privatization started before Carlos Salinas de Gortary and continued under president Ernesto Zedillo, the last PRI presidency, until 2012. These changes set the background for the Zapatista revolts in Chiapas, Mexico and certainly favored the emergence of a unique life-sucking creature or Chupacabras, at least in the form of the Chupatodo. However, let us remember that after Puerto Rico, the early sightings of the Chupacabras happened along the U.S. Mexico Border, areas that were already transformed by a long process of capitalist expansion. First under the Border Industrialization Program (B.I.P) known also as the Maquiladora Program in 1965, and later by the Maquiladora Decree in 1989. According to the United States Department of Labor, by June 1994 in Mexico, there were around 2032 maquiladoras with a labor force exceeding 468,000 most of them were U.S. owned (Morales et al. 2).

However, through the implementation of NAFTA, the influence and expansion of maquiladoras changed dramatically, not only by allowing their construction outside the U.S.- Mexico border strip into the interior of Mexico, but also by the introduction of several executive power orders by the Mexican government on taxation exemptions.
This formalized the process of outsourcing exploitation, and limited maquiladoras’ accountability in regards to issues such as pollution, waste control, and environmental damage. In this sense, maquiladoras have been one of the central players in the geopolitical concentration of poverty, the perpetuation of gender power disparity, and labor violence along the U.S.-Mexico border since their introduction. In many ways, the maquiladoras, allow for the trans-institutionalization of cheap “third” world labor without the need of relocating individuals to the “first” world.

Since maquiladoras do not pay local taxes, the cities that host these ‘temporal’ capital investments are left depending on “state” funding and consequently without sufficient resources for their development and to accommodate the large influx of workers coming from the South of Mexico, and their demands for healthcare, security, education, transportation, etc. (Quinones 139). Maquiladoras in the north of Mexico feed their need of cheap labor by the migration generated because of the land deregulation reform in the South. For those running from the Chupacabras in the South, they became trapped by its incarnation in the North.

In this sense, maquiladoras have proved to be deficient models for long lasting development. Heavily relying on female manufacturing labor at the bottom of the hierarchical production line, maquiladoras, maintain the traditional structure of gender division of labor, where men remain on top of the decision and salary chain (Gaspar de Alba and Guzmán 10). Moreover, as John Cavanagh and Sarah Anderson explain in their 2002 report from the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington D.C., “Mexican manufacturing wages were no higher in 2000 that in NAFTA’s first year and considerably lower than in 1981, prior to Mexico’s sweeping free market reform” (58). As they explain, between the years 1993 to 1999 in Mexico, the “real value of the minimum [wage] has dropped nearly 18 percent while that of the average manufacturing wage has dropped nearly 21 percent” (2).

It is in this social terrain, that 1993-1994 also marked the beginning of the female homicides in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, where it is estimated than more that 400 women have been killed, in many cases after suffering rape, torture and mutilation. As Elvira R. Arriola exposes in her piece, Accountability for Murder in the Maquiladoras: Linking Corporate Indifference to Gender Violence at the U.S.-Mexico Border, “when gender abuse and violence, corporate power and indifference, and government acquiescence come together in the city of Juarez, they produce an environment hostile to women and hospitable to the rise of maquiladora murders” (55). Maquiladoras just as the mills and mines in the 1800’s Industrial Revolution represent new forms of wage-slavery. By the normalization of lower wages, entire families and communities are displaced in the search for work. Therefore, land reform and community displacement work together in order to generate a cheap and movable labor class, that is forced to work consistently day after day with the false promise of improvement, and without a real exit from poverty.
Separated from their lands, their history and their culture, women, indigenous, and poor immigrants are transformed into new subjects, defined by profit, and who are expendable. In this case, maquiladoras truly create ‘innovative’ objects; their most successful products are new subjectivities, and typologies of exploitation.

What the women in Juarez, and the border in general, experienced in the 1990’s by the Late Capitalism, reflects in many ways the same effects experienced at the beginning of modernity, with the rise of capitalism and the demise of feudalism. As Silvia Federici explains in her book Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation, these transformations were required in order “to pave the way for the development of a more oppressive patriarchal regime” (14). The transition from human-to-commodity happens in the context of a larger crisis generated as a whole, just as it did in the 16th and 17th centuries. In this sense, the killings of women in Juarez are part of a war against women and peasants. They mean to ensure the success of a system of exploitation, or as Federici says a “central aspect of the accumulation and formation of the modern proletariat” (14).

In Juarez, maquiladora workers and the city/border as whole are transformed to accommodate the re-enactment of an old system of capitalist blood sucking. Therefore, as explained before, the privatization of land in the south of Mexico should not be disassociated from the emergence of maquiladoras in the North; one feeds upon the other, as part of the same voracious creature. The conjunction of these multiple layers of subjugation upon the community and its individuals, create new phantasmagoric forms of unnatural and superlative violence. As Gabriela de la Rosa, a Ciudad de Juarez inhabitant, explains, the killings are “the product of the social decomposition of a place. [Where] the collective madness is making itself felt” (Quiones 151).

Maria Herrera-Sobek in her scholar piece The Devil in the Discotheque presents several versions of the legend where women encounter the devil, as they dance at night with a stranger, in a public event, along the border of U.S. and Mexico. In half of the accounts, the women were raped and/or killed (148-152). Clearly, in Juarez, the legend/ fear of the devil as a blond dandy, that came disguised to dance with women, has become real. In places like Casino Deportivo in Avenida Juarez, where maquiladora workers, predominantly young women, gather after their long week of work, and dance “to the polkas of a norteño band and to the thumping bass of disco”, (Quinones 147), here the devil comes and seduces its victims. However, he has changed. He no longer busts into flames, or runs away. He rapes, mutilates, and kills his victims and disposes the dead bodies in the desert. For more than 400 women, their encounter with the devil/Chupacabras has been a deadly one. Here, the bloodsucking creature has a different modus operandi, and it prefers a very particular type of victim. He feeds on poverty, urban segregation, the exploitation of women, and in this case, his areas of influence are expanded by free trade agreements and greed. The Chupacabras is real. As Late Capitalism promotes and
envisions the planet as one single market block, the Chupacabras moves unstoppable to the south as well as globally.

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