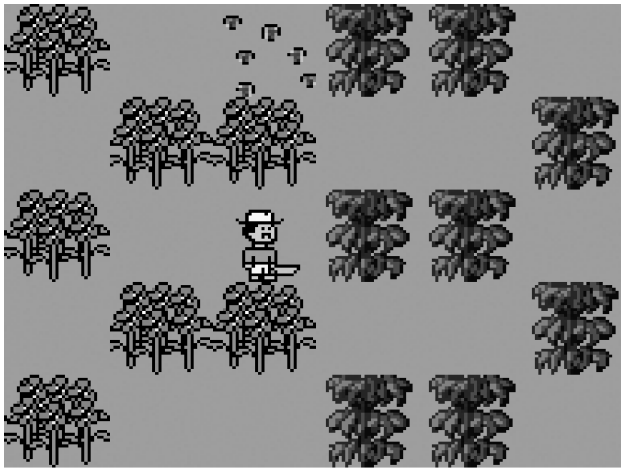


## ***Juan & The Beanstalk:* A Game Work in Progress**

*Rafael Fajardo and SWEAT*

*Juan & the Beanstalk* is a product of SWEAT, a loose collective that creates socially conscious video games. Its members are designers who are in the privileged position of being able to help un-or under-represented people express their plights to a broader audience than they would ordinarily have. Our primary medium is the computer game, and in addition to *Juan & the Beanstalk* we have also created *Crosser*<sup>™</sup> and *La Migra*<sup>™</sup>, both of which deal with U.S.-Mexico border issues.

The following images are drawn from a work-in-progress called *Juan & the Beanstalk*, a game that is set in Colombia, home of the richest coffee in the world. The player's character is Juan, the owner of a small farm. Juan's son has disappeared just before the planting season.



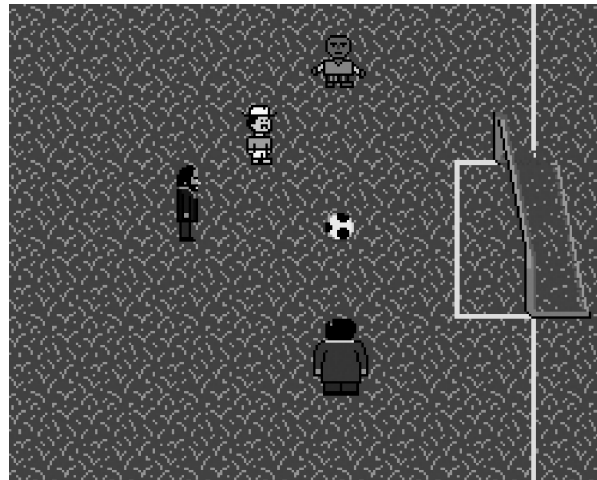
**Fig. 1: Juan in the fields.**

The player is given the choice between cultivating poppies for the narcos or coffee for the federation. Poppies grow fast, give a high rate of return, and carry a high degree of risk of expropriation by the government. Coffee grows slowly, gives a low rate of return, and runs a high degree of risk of expropriation by the narcos.



**Fig. 2: Pablo, the head narco**

Getting stuff is hard. Sometimes the player has to consort with the narcos to get something she needs. The head narco, Pablo, likes to play soccer and won't talk to you unless you play with him first.



**Fig. 3: Playing soccer with Pablo, Carlos, and a campesino**



will pose interesting challenges to the player. It is better not to reveal too much here because the game will reveal itself to the player.

The choice to turn the logic on its head is as much a critique as the choice of politically inspired subject matter. If our games reflect our cultural values, as McLuhan asserts, then the introduction of these other values to a North American audience will create some interesting dissonance.

*Juan & the Beanstalk* is being developed in fragments that are available for play at [www.sudor.net](http://www.sudor.net).