CRACKING THE MALE CODE: THE POLITICIZATION OF GENDER IN LATIN AMERICAN GUERRILLA LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

CRACKING THE MALE CODE: THE POLITICIZATION OF GENDER IN LATIN AMERICAN GUERRILLA LITERATURE

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This doctoral dissertation explores how and why a new masculinity emerges in five rebel narratives that represent different phases in the history of Latin American revolutions: Ernesto 'Che' Guevara's *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria* (1963), and *El diario del Che en Bolivia* (1968), Omar Cabezas' *La montaña es algo más que una inmensa estepa verde* (1982), Gioconda Belli's *El país bajo mi piel* (2003) and Subcomandante Marcos' *Nuestra arma es nuestra palabra* (2001).

By using theories by Judith Butler, Slavoj Zizek, and Elizabeth Grosz, who propose gender as a category in flux, this dissertation shows how a male code struggles to break with traditional *machista* praxis dominant in bourgeois societies. For Guevara and Cabezas, the mountain, the domain in which the rebels experience the ideological limits of the bourgeois self, becomes the geography for such a change to take place. For Marcos, it is a *Zapatista* territory; a peripheral zone in which peasants, indigenous and other marginalized citizens that the Mexican State has consistently ignored come together to construct a plan for a more inclusive democracy.

From these standpoints, I propose a "politics of gender" that combines gender and class as two complementary categories of analysis to evaluate the construction of Guevara's model of a non-bourgeois masculinity. The dependence of the narratives on Cold War and post-Cold War rhetoric helps track the changes made to Che's vision on

rebels and revolution, point out the visibility (or invisibility) of Che in other guerrilla narratives and address why and how Che's model changes and the effects such modifications have on his view of the relationship between man and the successful carrying out of the revolution.

Chapter one first provides a biographical analysis of Che that highlights qualities that come up during his childhood and adolescence that later appear in his model of the guerrilla rebel and second explores how others have "used," "read" and mythified Che by labeling him as a *machista*, a heroic *guerrillero*, and a Christ-like figure. Chapter two evaluates the construction of Che's new masculinity by analyzing three main issues: the guerrilla rebels' wavering between the dominant bourgeois male code and Che's model; the revision of bourgeois loci in the mountain, and Che's construction of a masculinity that embeds the feminine through a focus on the body. Chapter three traces how the Sandinista Revolution rewrites Che through an evaluation of Nicaraguan rebel Omar Cabezas' bildüngsroman that was both written and published during the Cold War, and in which Cabezas traces his quest *to be like Che*.

Chapters four and five represent a shift in the trajectory of previous guerrilla narratives for Che either appears as a name or as a depoliticized figure but not as a model of the guerrilla rebel for the post-Cold War rebel to follow. In chapter four I evaluate what happens when gender becomes a form of doing politics and love replaces revolution as the core motivating force in Gioconda Belli's memoir. Chapter five examines Subcomandante Marcos as the final icon of the Latin American revolution that emerges in a post-Cold War period and explores how revolution and class are replaced by an identity politics that seeks to give a voice to those historically ignored by the government.

To Raúl and Bret

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I dedicate this dissertation to my husband Raúl and my brother Bret. Raúl, who often served as a sounding board for ideas, and as a source of support, energy, and motivation, and Bret, who much more than a brother is a role model that has often provided practical, intellectual, and professional advice, both proved fundamental to this process. Their unconditional and continual love and support and unwavering faith in me gave me the confidence and determination necessary to see the last phase of my doctoral studies through to the end.

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KEYWORDS

Latin America

Cuba

Nicaragua

Mexico

Ernesto 'Che' Guevara

Omar Cabezas

Gioconda Belli

Subcomandante Marcos

Twentieth century

Masculinity

Gender

Revolution

Class

Guerrilla Narratives

Ideology

Sandinismo

Zapatismo

Introduction: A Politics of Gender in Latin American Guerrilla Narratives

How does one *read* Che Guevara today? Critics in the field of gender studies have often read Che from a feminist point of view. These analyses highlight Che's purported "flaws," portray him as a "macho" (Guillermoprieto, "The Harsh Angel" 79), describe him as a man that seeks to exemplify an egotistical "model of the masculine desire for manliness" (Rodríguez, *Women, Guerrillas & Love* 50) and claim that beneath his thought and actions lie a desire not only to propose himself as a hero, but to demand that others "follow his impossible example" (Guillermoprieto, "The Harsh Angel" 86).

One of the most striking evaluations of Che is Alma Guillermoprieto's depiction of him as a man that after his participation in the triumphant Cuban Revolution (1959) believed he had the "remedy for every form of social disease" and was "inescapably committed to a certain definition of virility and to the code of conduct it implied: a macho definition [...] [a]s a result, he found it unbearably humiliating ever to lose face, back down, admit defeat" (79). Guillermoprieto's description of Che as an ego-driven man that flaunted his victory in Cuba and acted according to a *machista* code of conduct, especially when faced with defeat, eschews a discussion of him as a guerrilla rebel leader that fought and died for his ideals.

The evaluations of Che as a *machista*, a self-perpetuated myth, and an unreachable masculine model seem essentialist and synchronic. They "forget" to mention that class antagonism (and not gender) was the central issue for Che. This "slip" or moving away from "what really matters" for Che results in the embrace of an ostensibly "inauthentic" vision of the guerrilla fighter that aims to discount his political

value and fix him in a discourse that centers on identity rather than class politics (Zizek, *The Ticklish Subject* 354).

Such readings of Che seemed like a false start to me and I was not interested in further contributing to what appeared to be a series of unjust evaluations of Che. My dissertation sets out to "correct" such misinterpretations by reading Che as a discourse that appears in different forms in the guerrilla narratives of the 20th century in Latin America. In my analysis, I do not seek to analyze Che according to a limiting gender binary that differentiates the "feminine" from the "masculine," nor do I aim to depoliticize Che by examining his life according to a set of values that simply did not apply for him (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 22-23). The questions that arose for me were: how does Che change? What changes in Che? And when do such changes occur?

"Guerrillero" or "hombre nuevo"?

One of the misreadings of Che I strive to correct is the view of the guerrilla rebel (*guerrillero*) and the *new man* (*hombre nuevo*) as synonymous. Many have mistakenly interpreted these two "models" as transposable but my proposal marks a clear difference between them. To begin, I do not view the *new man* as a model. It is the ideological product of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution that arose out of Che's desire to promote Cuba (post-1959) as a political, aesthetic, social, and institutional vanguard. Che believed that in order to *reinvent* society in a post-revolutionary context, one had to *reinvent* man. The only way, then, to create a new society was to construct a social vanguard; a *new man* that would act as the motor of the new socialist system proposed by the revolution.

Contrary to prior evaluations of the *new man*, this figure was not individualist but rather stressed the necessity of collective unity under the banner of socialism.[1] In order to achieve shared values, the *new man* was to undergo a continual process of self-transformation that would begin after the triumph of the revolution and continue throughout the remainder of his life. In his compilation of theoretical essays on revolution and man, *El socialismo y el hombre nuevo* (1979), Che delineates the importance of self-awareness and progress in the construction of the *new man*: "En este período de construcción del socialismo podemos ver el hombre nuevo que va naciendo. Su imagen no está todavía acabada; no podría estarlo nunca [...] lo importante es que los hombres van adquiriendo cada día más conciencia de la necesidad de su incorporación a la sociedad y, al mismo tiempo, de su importancia como *motores* de la misma" (9).

If the *new man* is the result of the successful revolutionary movement in Cuba, then the model of the guerrilla rebel that is formed on the mountain, a laboratory for the rebel during the guerrilla phase of the insurgency, is the vanguard of the *new man.* The guerrilla fighter, a dynamic model of man that is in a constant state of transition, created the possibility for the revolution from this geography. For Che, the revolution would not exist without the mountain for it was in this space that the rebel consciously worked to build himself up in relation to the harsh living conditions and other rebels as well as gained access to and the support of the masses through the implementation of agrarian reforms and literacy campaigns.

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[1] Ileana Rodríguez, a canonical theorist on gender and revolutionary studies in Latin America that has written extensively on Che, views the *new man* as a model. She defines this figure as a "sujeto sexuado [...] un sujeto masculino individual" that fails to incorporate other social groups (i.e. women and the indigenous) in its scope ("Conservadurismo y disensión" 771).

In his fundamental text on the *foco* theory, *Guerra de guerrillas* (1961), Che defines the guerrilla rebel as "un reformador social" that fights to "[romper] con todo el vigor que las circunstancias permitan, los moldes de esa institucionalidad" (34). The idea that the guerrilla rebel's main duty is to "break" with established governmental institutions means that this task is carried out during the revolution, a quality of the model that sharply distinguishes it from the new man that emerges in a post-revolutionary society.

Because of his fundamental role in carrying out the revolution from the mountain, the guerrilla rebel also comes forth as a protagonist in the rebel narratives that I examine in this dissertation. For this reason, I am interested in working with Che's model of the guerrilla fighter and not the idea of the *new man*. My study traces the changes and adjustments that the guerrilla fighter experiments beginning with Che's proposal for a new code of manhood outlined in his Cuban and Bolivian rebel narratives and ending with Subcomandante Marcos' political texts. My analysis highlights a shift from a view of the revolution as a class-based radical political act that seeks to replace the existing hegemonic system with a new socialist society to indigenous-led social movements that aim to gain recognition from the neoliberal State and to construct a more inclusive form of democracy.

Literary Corpus

The corpus of the 20th century guerrilla literature in Latin America is vast and incorporates narratives from Central America, the Southern Cone and the Caribbean and from men and women alike.[2] Since the pool of titles is extensive, I took three factors into

[2] Some examples of guerrilla narratives include, but are not limited to: Guatemalan guerrilla rebel Mario Payeras' *Días de la selva* (1981), Nicaraguan rebel fighter Doris Tijerino's *"Somos millones": la*

account while choosing the rebel narratives I analyze in this dissertation. 1) If previous readings of Che had been done synchronically, I wanted to read Che historically to see how he appears as either a point or a silence in the texts representative of distinct revolutionary movements of the 20th century. 2) In Che's narratives, *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria* (1963) and *El diario del Che en Bolivia* (1968), the mountain and the guerrilla rebel emerge as two intricately related and fundamental aspects of the revolutionary process. I wanted to trace any modifications made to the foundational features in Che's texts in response to the shifting historical needs and demands of the rebel movements after the Cuban Revolution. 3) As I was selecting the corpus for this study, I realized that there was a clear difference among works that were written and published in a Cold War and works that were published and evaluated revolutionary movements that emerged in a post-Cold War setting. The dependence of these texts on these distinct periods seemed useful to me. This frame would help me track the changes that were made to Che's vision on man and revolution, point out the visibility (or invisibility) of Che in other rebel narratives and allow me to address why and how changes were made to Che's model and the effects such modifications had on his view of the intricate relationship between the guerrilla rebel and the successful carrying out of the revolution.

The model of the guerrilla fighter came forth in response to Che's conscious desire to build up a new code of manhood from the mountain that would break from the patriarchal male code both prior to and during the Cuban Revolution, one of the most controversial stages of the Cold War, if not the hottest period of this ideological war on

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vida de Doris María combatiente nicaragüense (1977), Chilean *Mirista* Marcía Alejandra Merino Vega's *Mi verdad: "más allá del horror yo acuso..."* (1993), and Claribel Alegría and D.J. Flakoll's *No me agarran viva: la mujer salvadoreña en lucha* (1983) and *Para romper el silencio* (1984).

"values" (Franco, *The Decline & Fall* 1). In Nicaraguan Omar Cabezas' narrative on the Sandinista Revolution, *La montaña es algo más que una inmensa estepa verde* (1982), a bildüngsroman that was both written and published during the Cold War, I noticed that Che visibly appears as a model for Cabezas – the narrative traces his quest *to be like Che* – and as the vanguard of the *Sandinista*, the model of man proposed by Carlos Fonseca, one of the co-founders of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), during the Nicaraguan Revolution (Cabezas 129). Yet how would the rebel authors that write in a post-Cold War context view Che?

If in Cabezas' work, Che continued to appear as a viable model to follow for the construction of the rebel during the revolution, in Gioconda Belli's memoir on love and revolution, *El país bajo mi piel* (2003), Che does not come up at all, at least not as an example to follow. For Belli, who writes about the Nicaraguan Revolution from a post-Cold War perspective, Che only appears twice: first, as one of the guerrilla rebels that fought alongside Fidel Castro or, later on, in her description of Henry Ruiz ("Modesto"), leader of the Prolonged People's War (GPP) from the mountain, as a "Nicaraguan Che Guevara" for his apparent bourgeois features and intellectual capacity (Belli 244).

In Subcomandante Marcos' anthology, *Nuestra arma es nuestra palabra* (2001), a compilation of political texts written about the Contemporary Zapatista Movement, an indigenous-based movement that began in 1994 (roughly five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall), something much different occurs. In his writings, Marcos employs a multicultural discourse that ignores class politics and emphasizes gender and other aspects of identity politics (i.e. ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation) as valid categories of analysis. As a consequence, rather than portray Che as a class-conscious guerrilla

rebel, Marcos depicts Che as a "ciudadano del mundo," a worldly citizen, a figure Slavoj Zizek calls the "subject of democracy" (*Looking Awry* 165). Che's appearance as a mere name in Belli's memoir and Marcos' democratization of Che marks a significant shift from previous rebel narratives in which he remained present as a model. Such a change raised more questions for me: why was Che's political value invisible or changed for Belli and Marcos but present as a model for Omar Cabezas? What had changed? What was the (missing) link among the Cold War and post-Cold War narratives?

A "Politics of Gender"

The answer to these questions appeared to be gender. Yet, if previous studies on Che within the field of gender studies proved problematic because he was evaluated according to a limited gender binary that marked his point of view as *machista* and avoided a discussion of class politics, then what type of gender was of interest to me? How could I conceive a gender-based analysis of Che while at the same time incorporating and addressing "what really matters" as Zizek would say?

It seemed to me that if Che is detached from his political actions and ideological beliefs when gender alone comes to the fore as a viable analytical tool, a possible solution was to move beyond a purportedly fixed gender binary by creating a "politics of gender" that connects gender and class and evaluates how these categories of analysis enter into dialogue with one another in a study of Che's proposal for a new code of manhood on the mountain. This crucial step has allowed me to move forward by providing an analysis of Che within the field of gender studies that does not "forget" to recognize class antagonism as a core issue in Che's proposal for his model of the guerrilla rebel.

This dissertation is theoretically indebted to Judith Butler's definition of gender as performative and as such, as a category in flux.[3] This view of gender emerged as a proposal of how to "break with patriarchy" in Butler's study *Gender Trouble* (1990). The idea of gender as a category that is not fixed, but rather in a constant state of motion has helped me explain why Che's proposal for a new standard for man begins as a contradictory male code that both incorporates and moves away from the hegemonic vision of man in patriarchal societies and only succeeds in "breaking" with such a model when the body, a locus typically associated with the feminine, emerges as a protagonist in his Bolivian diary.

Prior to explaining how I have arrived at a "politics of gender" that seeks to clarify how class and gender enter into dialogue with one another in Che's writings and in subsequent guerrilla narratives, perhaps it would be helpful to begin with a definition of the vision of "gender as a binary" that others have used to evaluate Che (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 22). A dichotomous perception of gender stems from the hierarchical patriarchal family structure, an institution that requires "both a stable and oppositional heterosexuality" to function and in which men not only appear different from but superior to women (22).

This organization defines men and women according to their difference to one another in the making up and securing of "masculine" and "feminine" identities. Because the family is a system that has historically structured the relationships between men and

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[3] Butler's theorization of gender as "performative" is based on her inversion of the discursive concepts of "cause" and "effect" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 25). She contends that the "doer" of an action is a fiction – the subject believes that he is acting on his own desires but he is really simply complying to a pre-established norm – and the "result" (the idea that I am man or woman and thus must act in a certain way) of this norm rather than the "cause" of one's actions motivates the "doer" to act (25). The act of blindly acting within a naturalized gender binary does not lead to "agency"; one only becomes an "agent" of his own actions when he consciously moves beyond a normative vision of gender.

women, this institution has fixed the "masculine" and the "feminine" in opposition to one another and as a consequence, has produced what Butler calls "normative gender". This type of gender is: "[d]efined by difference – it is a mutual process by which different genders, and even subjects within gender, define themselves by their differences in others" (Butler, *Bodies that Matter* 7).

Normative gender, then, is based and relies on the division of the "masculine" and the "feminine". Due to men's and women's incessant repetition and ostensible internalization of the hierarchical family structure and their assigned roles within this paradigm, such a view of gender has been widely accepted as the "core gender identity" in patriarchal societies (Ingham 66).[4] If the limiting gender binary strives to lock men and women into a system that defines them by their difference to one another, then the question that arose for me was how can one make a clean "break" with the binary and fracture the seemingly resolute nature of the gender norm in a patriarchal setting?

Butler submits that in order to "break" with the norm, one must first repeat it (and prove unable to reproduce it) to excess for it is only through the continuous reiteration of such an unreachable standard that traditional codes of gender are reified. The conscious questioning of a gender binary results in what Butler calls a "political genealogy of gender ontologies," a process that if successful "will deconstruct the substantive *appearance* of gender into its constitutive acts and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frames set by the various forces that police the social appearance of gender" (33 [emphasis mine]). It is only through the problematization of the mere

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[4] John M. Ingham defines core gender identity as a "central element of self-representation [...] a basic sense of being a male or female" that "comprises not only a personal sense of one's bodily self and sexual orientation but, also, a social identity and social role" (66). Thus, "core gender identity" is the normative gender for it is only through "proper" socialization that men and women begin to view themselves according to the limiting binary vision of gender.

existence of a naturalized gender hierarchy that the subject achieves "agency" and succeeds in creating "new possibilities for gender that contest the rigid codes of hierarchical binarisms" (147, 145).

If, as Butler suggests, the only way to propose a new way of doing gender is to move beyond the standard view of gender as a binary, then it seemed to me that Che would only succeed in creating a new code of manhood from the mountain by breaking from the patriarchal male code. This means that another effect of considering the relationship between class and gender was to think of the standard for men in patriarchal societies as a bourgeois model of manhood. In Che's writing, there is no doubt that the patriarchal standard is "the" bourgeois model of man. Argentine Marxist Aníbal Ponce's theories on the bourgeois man and the new man outlined in *Humanismo burgués y humanismo proletario* (1935) proved instrumental in Che's rethinking of gender as a class-based difference. But more influential than Ponce, from my point of view was, perhaps, Karl Marx's definition of the city, the family, education, and the future according to a bourgeois logic.[5]

The Bourgeois Model of Society and Man

In Marx, the city becomes a bourgeois space related to the idea of civil society and the rights of the citizens that make up this social body. In a civil society, all citizens or "free individuals" are bound to one another by their right to vote and ostensibly share other universal rights (Marx, "On the Jewish Question" 17). Yet for Marx, political emancipation and the recognition of civil rights and liberties did not address the main

[5] Apart from following Aníbal Ponce's and Karl Marx's thought, Che also most likely borrowed from Peruvian Marxist José Carlos Mariátegui, who united his thoughts on what he called the "Indian condition", land reform, and Marxist-Leninist tendencies in his compilation of essays, *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la Realidad Peruana* (1959).

problem he noted in capitalist society: the State's tendency to align itself with the owner of the "means of production" (i.e. land, factories, and capital) and the "means of coercion" (i.e. the police and the military) and the subsequent antagonism between the bourgeois (the modern capitalists) and the proletariat (the laborers) classes (*The Communist Manifesto* 225). The conflict of interests between classes has historically framed the construction of a hierarchical society.

The focal point of Marx's class-based model and at the center of capitalism rests the family, an institution headed off by the (capital-seeking) bourgeois male. The family, similar to bourgeois society, is driven by "capital," "private gain" (Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* 239), individual interests (237), and reproduction (239). All other institutions in bourgeois society cater to the family, particularly those involving education, which serve, only to circulate the values and discourse of the ruling class (239).

In this type of society in which, according to Marx, the family takes precedence over all, the man, the working man, who depends on the means of production of the bourgeoisie for his livelihood, is exploited and is vulnerable to all shifts in the expanding market caused by the privileged class's incessant quest to acquire capital and knowledge and the resulting social, economic and eventual political centralization. To rely on Ponce's words, in a capitalist society, "el hombre pasa a ser así un valor más de la Bolsa, una cifra más, fríamente calculada" (112). The only way, then, to destabilize the foundation of a capitalist driven society was to repoliticize the idea of public power by proposing a new type of society that was future-oriented and utopian-aimed. This new type of society erected in direct opposition to the bourgeois standard would seek to abolish class antagonism, address the immediate needs of the people, reformulate familial

and educational institutions to incorporate all and promote the deprivatization of land (Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* 237).

Marx's criticism of the self-interested hegemonic class that serves as the motor of patriarchal societies serves to outline the bourgeois loci Che seeks to consciously reformulate in his rebel narratives from the mountain. Yet, Aníbal Ponce's vision of the individualistic humanism adopted by the bourgeois man and proposal for a new model of man, the "new man" that would "break" with patriarchy and serve as the motor of a new socialist society provides the platform from which Che, in response to his class awareness, will rethink gender through his proposal for a new male code constructed in opposition to the dominant bourgeois model of man.[6]

Ponce describes the bourgeois man, the center of this urban-based class, as money-driven (43) and self-interested – "[a] los ojos del "hombre singular" que el Renacimiento inicia, las relaciones sociales son un simple medio al servicio de sus aspiraciones privadas. Ellas son su fin y su ley" – (82). If the bourgeoisie uses the working class as a tool to profit as a class, the intellectuals, according to Ponce, act as accomplices to the ruling class by promoting a vision of culture as a monopoly of the "bourgeois" man rather than of the "hombre todo," all men (86). With this, Ponce suggests that the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals work together to maintain the masses in ignorance by denying them access to the means of production and to knowledge: "[i]deólogos fieles de la gran burguesía, los humanistas no sólo no se interesaron en lo

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[6] Many scholars have pointed out Che's recognition of Aníbal Ponce as a theoretical precursor to his ideas on the revolution and man. See Michael Lowy's *The Marxism of Che Guevara* (1973), Roberto Fernández Retamar's "Calibán: Notes towards a Discussion of Culture in Our America" cited in *Theoretical Debates in Spanish American Literature* (1997), Jon Lee Anderson's *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* (1997), Néstor Kohan's *De Ingenieros al Che: ensayos sobre el marxismo argentino y lationamericano* (2000), and Julio Woscoboinik's *Aníbal Ponce en la mochila del Che: vida y obra de Aníbal Ponce* (2007).

más mínimo por la suerte de los trabajadores, sino que contribuyeron a mantener su ignorancia y prolongar su mansedumbre" (50).

Following Marx, Ponce believes that the only way to successfully "break" with a bourgeois status quo is to develop a new type of society led by what he calls "proletariat humanism," a society that will provide the platform for the rise of a "new man" through revolution.[7] Ponce outlines three major components in proletariat humanism: 1) the necessity of the union of theory and practice, intelligence and will, and culture and productive work (113-114); 2) the accessibility of culture to all sectors of society (115); and 3) the self-elevation of the masses through participation in the revolution and the importance of combining a desire to study with a need to live according to and act on socio-political and intellectual aspirations (119). The three elements in proletariat humanism would allow the members of the working class to experience the culture that up until this point had been reserved solely for the bourgeois elite, to become more self-aware through the combination of physical and intellectual labor and to actively contribute to the development of their own class-based political consciousness. All of these factors combine to create what Ponce calls a "new man"; a man that seeks to recuperate the rights denied him from the Renaissance to the 20th century and that could only be made possible through the coming to power of the marginalized masses by capitalism (Lowy 17).[8]

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[7] Aníbal Ponce's proposal for a "new man" or a new human being – "el hombre todo", and Che's later adaptation and application of it to a Cuban context was not gender-biased; it was an ideal that incorporated men and women alike (86).

[8] If the Industrial Revolution made the revision of the idea of man possible, according to Marx, the "New Russia" that emerged as a product of the successful Bolshevik Revolution (1917), the second movement in the Russian Revolution of 1917 that was carried out from the mountain and eventually overtook the Russian Provisional Government and formed the Soviet Union under the leadership of Vladmir Lenin, became the platform from which the "new man" would actively contribute to the transformation of society through the implementation of proletariat humanism. Post-Revolutionary Russia

The bourgeois standard of man and society outlined by Aníbal Ponce and Karl Marx constitute the model that Che and then his followers seek to revise in their rebel narratives. This seems to confirm, as I mentioned above, that the only way to evaluate Che's proposal is by creating a political nucleus, a "politics of gender" that incorporates gender and class as two primary and necessary categories of analysis.

It is this very idea of a "politics of gender" that allows me to first examine how Che constructs a contradictory code of manhood in his Cuban and Bolivian narratives and then to chart how such a model is interpreted, negotiated, and implemented (or not) in subsequent revolutionary projects in Nicaragua and Mexico. Each chapter of the dissertation serves to mark how Che's dynamic gender and class-based model shifts according to the different historical needs and demands of the revolutionary period of the 20th century in Latin America.

The Outline of the Chapters

The most appropriate beginning for this project is Che Guevara as he is the prism through which I have read the revolutionary texts I included in this study, yet this dissertation could very easily be read from end to beginning for it was only through my analysis of the (post)political texts of Zapatista spokesman Subcomandante Marcos and his proposal for a new democratic society in Mexico that I came to a complete understanding of the visions of man and revolution that Che had previously outlined in his works.

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enjoyed the benefits of the dissipation of class differences and a politically conscious proletariat, new generations of workers that were, in Ponce's words: "las más limpias, las que nada o casi nada conservan del pasado" (Ponce 161). The vision of the revolution as a purification process of man that cleanses the youth of a bourgeois past and paves the way for the new vocabulary that shapes the rise of the proletariat: "construir," "crear", and "superar" (161) is one that first Che adopts: "la revolución limpia a los hombres [...] los mejora [...] corrige los defectos" and that Cabezas later employs in his bildüngsroman to reflect the dichotomy between the "pristine" bourgeois man and the "dirty" rebel of the mountain (*Pasajes* 124).

Chapter one explores how others used, read, and mythified Che. First, I provide a biographical analysis of Che in which I highlight qualities that come up during his childhood and adolescence that later appear in the guerrilla rebel (i.e., self-discipline, education, change through self-awareness). Then, in a second part, I use Roland Barthes' definition of the myth as a bourgeois discourse that "does not want to die" and that seeks to stop history from taking its natural course, to explore how others have constructed Che as a myth by labeling him as a heroic *guerrillero*, a *machista*, a Christ-like figure, a Saint, and as the embodiment of his "model" of the *new man* ("Myth Today" 120). The mythification of Che is perhaps most clearly evidenced in the recent consumption of hism as a cultural icon whose political meaning is changed in a post-Cold War context.

If Chapter one outlines how others' read Che, in Chapter two, I seek to restitute Che's voice by exploring how he proposes a contradictory code of manhood from the mountains in Cuba and Bolivia in two of his guerrilla narratives, *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria* (1963) and *El diario del Che en Bolivia* (1968). These rebel narratives confirm that the guerrilla fighter in Che's writings is not a "product" of the revolution like the *new man*. It is a dynamic model that is in a constant state of construction that suffers setbacks and advances and incorporates qualities akin to both a bourgeois code of manhood and the new male code formed on the mountain during revolution.

I am particularly interested in analyzing three different components in Che's proposed new code of manhood: 1) the contradictory male code evidenced in the guerrilla rebel's constant wavering between the bourgeois standard for man as established by Aníbal Ponce and Karl Marx and the new way of being a man on the mountain; 2) Che's revision of prior bourgeois visions of the family, education and the future on the

mountain; and 3) his creation of a masculinity through an overwhelming focus on the body and its needs (food and drink) and functions. While Che consciously develops the first two elements of his male code in *Pasajes*, a text that was revised and rewritten for publication after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution and thus after the rise of the proletariat, the third factor of his proposal unintentionally surfaces in *El diario*, a work that was published without further revisions after Che's death.

In chapter three I question how the Sandinista revolutionary, Omar Cabezas rewrites Che. In this chapter it becomes clear that Che persists as a viable model for Omar Cabezas but his proposal for a new male code from the mountain is changed to fit the needs and demands of the Nicaraguan revolutionary project. Different from Che's writings that only describe the process of construction of the guerrilla rebel from the mountain, Omar Cabezas provides a more complete trajectory of the process by describing three distinct phases in his formation as a revolutionary: his time as a student in the city, the guerrilla phase of the mountain and his return to the city after spending one year there. The circuit of the new model allows Cabezas to trace the changes he experiments at different stages of the fight.

Cabezas' descriptions of life on the mountain also expose some of the aspects of the revolution that Che silences in his works. Cabezas sexualizes Che's model of the guerrilla rebel, highlights loneliness as an effect of living there and if Che only succeeds in breaking with the bourgeois male code when the body unexpectedly surfaces in his texts, Cabezas marks the changes of the bourgeois standard for man by using the contrasting images of "clean" and "dirty".

Chapters four and five represent a shift in the trajectory of the guerrilla narratives outlined above for Che either appears as a name or as a depoliticized subject and not as a suitable model for the rebel. In chapter four, I evaluate what happens when gender becomes a form of doing politics and love replaces revolution as the core motivating force in Gioconda Belli's memoir *El país bajo mi piel* (2003). Belli's text is an anomaly, a work that is in between the narratives of the Cold War and the writings characteristic of a post-Cold War period. This conditions her rewriting of the Sandinista Revolution. If the crux of Cabezas' narrative is his quest *to be like Che*, Belli seems to want to forget about Che or to simply reference him in association with the names of leaders of the Cuban (Fidel Castro) and Sandinista Revolutions (Henry Ruiz).

Furthermore, Belli only mentions the revolution when it forms part of her feminist agenda. This suggests that the only form of doing politics for Belli is through gender. As a consequence, her search for love during the revolution dictates her actions. Such a shift in focus disorganizes the relationships between comrades in the book and affects the vision of politics Belli promotes in her memoirs. Thus, Belli's work, rather than a guerrilla narrative, provides an example of how to write an autobiography from a gender(ed) perspective and does not continue to revise Che's male code.

In Chapter five I closely examine Subcomandante Marcos as the final icon of the Latin American revolution that emerges in a post-Cold War period. I evaluate the consequences of Marcos' shift from the "political act proper" or revolutionary action, to an emphasis on an identity politics that excludes class as a category of identification of the subject and that aims instead to incorporate the voices historically ignored by the government into a plan for a new, more inclusive democracy (Zizek, *The Ticklish Subject*

199). This plan not only alters Che's entire revolutionary package – the guerrilla rebel, the mountain, and socialism – but in prying open and aiming to address all of the different (cultural) battles that come forth as a result of Marcos' disregard for class antagonism (the only category that seemed to matter for Che) he, ironically, depoliticizes the idea of the revolution.

This suggests that rather than carry out a movement that seeks change from outside of and in opposition to organized governmental institutions, Marcos adopts a democratic plan for Mexico that strives for recognition from the State that he puts into question in his writings. The change from Che's utopian-aimed revolution to Marcos' new form of democracy results in an implosion of identities rather than progress and political action, and is indicative of what happens when gender is detached from class.

In conclusion, in this dissertation, I set out to create a "politics of gender" that links gender and class as two complementary and necessary tools of analysis when dealing with Che's new code of manhood that is formed in opposition to a bourgeois male code. Then, I trace the interpretations, adjustments, and silences of Che's new standard in other rebel narratives characteristic of the distinct revolutionary movements of the 20th century in Latin America.

Chapter 1: Che Guevara: The Man, The Myth

In this chapter, I seek to provide a biographical approach to Che Guevara's life that focuses on the aspects of his formative years prior to his involvement in the Cuban Revolution (1928-1953) that later appear as core qualities in the model of the rebel in his own writings. Following my biographical analysis of Che, I will evaluate the "machine of discourses" that emerges with his corpse from 1967 to present day that contribute to his process of mythification.[1] Departing from Roland Barthes' definition of myth as a type of speech "which does not want to die" and that is appropriated and "naturalized" by the various needs and demands of a bourgeois discourse, I will examine the significance of Che's corpse in death, as well as explore the various "narratives" of Che *post-mortem* – public, private, popular – that contribute to the myth of Che Guevara (Barthes, "Myth Today" 120).

The Formation of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara

Ernesto 'Che' Guevara was born on June 14, 1928 in Rosario, Argentina to parents Celia de la Serna and Ernesto Guevara Lynch, two educated, politically involved, and cultured people that valued education and often strayed away from the values of their bourgeois upbringing (Taibo II, *Guevara* 3).[2] Just two years after his birth, Che was diagnosed with asthma, an illness that would become one of the most defining aspects in his life.

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[1] The years of Che's life that I do not address, at least explicitly in the present chapter, will be considered along with Che's writings on his experiences as a revolutionary in Cuba and Bolivia in the following chapter. Also, since this chapter focuses primarily on others' representations of Che Guevara, his voice, *per se,* will not appear here but in Chapter 2, wherein I incorporate his perspective through an analysis of his Cuban and Bolivian rebel narratives.

[2] The values I refer to here are in line with Marx's vision of the bourgeois man as the core of the family and as such, is driven by reproduction, capital, and individual interests (*The Communist Manifesto* 239).

In what follows, I trace how this condition awakened his desire to surpass the confines of his physical limitations, shaped core characteristics of his personality, fomented his passion for education and provided the basis for Che's relationships with others.

From an early age and because of his asthmatic condition, Che developed a particularly special relationship with his mother (Castañeda, *Compañero* 5). Celia was, at once, Che's mother, primary confidant, and teacher. As Che's principal educator, Celia instructed him on the significance of historical and familial tradition, taught him basic social skills, and instilled in him a profound respect for other individuals, especially women. Also, while Celia disavowed her bourgeois background – she came from a fairly prosperous family of Spanish and Peruvian descent – she would not sacrifice Che's formal traditional education for the sake of her own socio-political beliefs. She taught him French and other European languages and cultures and exposed him to an extensive collection of literary, historical, and philosophical works: "Celia [...] que no podía desligarse de esa obligación subconsciente de darle una protección preferencial, empezó a enseñarle francés. Ella lo hablaba muy bien (había sido "el idioma de las clases cultas", como se decía en Buenos Aires a principios de siglo) y él lo aprendía a gusto" (Gambini 44-45).

What is more, in their household, the Guevara's practiced what Hans Konings calls an "open door policy" in which they allowed kids from distinct backgrounds to interact with Che and his siblings. This guiding principle demonstrated the Guevara's, and especially Celia's "respect for social justice and for learning, and disrespect for the holy pursuit of money" (Konings 14). Celia was the first to point out the effects of a capitalist system on Latin American society as well as presented Che with options on

how to question social norms through her example. Since she played such an elemental role in Che's education, it should not come as a surprise that he later adopts her anti-capitalist beliefs as principles that become the driving force behind his political action, embrace of a socialist ideology, and utopian impetus as a guerrilla rebel in the 1950s and 60s.

Celia's resolution to encourage Che to interact with people from different social upbringings without signaling any difference besides that of their distinct backgrounds most certainly impacted his world view. Later in his revolutionary period, instead of promoting a vision of the guerrilla fighter based on the inclusion of diverse categories of social distinction (i.e., gender, class, age, and ethnicity) as observed in Zapatista spokesman Subcomandante Marcos' writings, Che emphasized social class and political action as two key components of his socialist project and as core qualities of the guerrilla rebel.

Celia's influence on Che far surpassed his educational and human needs. For her resolve to put into question the social norms for women prevalent in the Argentine society of her day, which would limit her roles to wife and mother, Daniel James describes Celia as a "flaming rebel through and through" and contends that she combined with her rebelliousness a "fierce independence, an unwavering stubbornness, a keen intelligence, and a sharp tongue" (29). Celia's bold social stance and unwavering self-confidence also impacted Che's development.

From a young age, he demonstrated fervor for education and an impetus to defy the norm, two qualities Celia possessed and that allowed Che to act through intellect as a means to compensate for his corporal concerns: "Indeed, by the age of five, Ernesto had

begun to reveal a personality that echoed his mother's in many ways. Both enjoyed courting danger, were naturally rebellious, decisive, and opinionated" (Anderson 17). Ernesto Guevara Lynch also contributed to Che's formation by inculcating in his son an enthusiasm for literature and exposing him to a hands-on approach to learning. Guevara Lynch taught Che certain aspects of being a man in Argentine society – shooting a pistol, playing chess and talking about women – (Taibo II, *Guevara* 5). Taibo II contends that when his father would "let him win" at chess, Che would get angry; he did not want to win that way (5). Guevara Lynch, Che's most direct masculine role model at that point in his life, provided the platform from which Che could surpass the limits his asthmatic condition imposed on his body and demonstrate success through thought-provoking games.

Apart from these activities, when Che was confined to bed because of his asthma, Guevara Lynch often sat with him to keep him company and to bond with him. During such times, Guevara Lynch shared his oral family history with Che. Che's father told him stories of his adventurous grandfather and iconoclast grandmother and their experiences abroad in Spain, the United States, and Latin America (Gambini 46-47). Additionally, the two read works on war, revolution, and nation-formation from Guevara Lynch's extensive personal library (Anderson 18). As a result, reading became one of Che's preferred pastimes: "The asthmatic boy [...] spent long hours in bed, developing an intense love of books and literature. He devoured the children's classics of the time [...] but he also explored Cervantes [...] Pablo Neruda and Horacio Quiroga and the Spanish poets Machado and García Lorca" (12). Che's exposure to literature and the oral history of his family would not only motivate him as a learner, but as a guerrilla fighter and rebel

author as well. From a very young age, Che realized the power of the written word to move people to act. But it was only through his personal writings that Che began to put his view of literature as an ideological and motivational tool into practice. Jean Franco confirms that Che "who was particularly interested in literature [...] was conscious of the fact that form itself constituted an ideological question" (*Critical Passions* 290). Che's use of literature as a pedagogical tool will become evident in my analysis of his writings in the following chapter.

During the initial years of his childhood, Che, perhaps out of necessity, preferred reading and studying to any other extracurricular activities and consequently lived his life vicariously through the books he read. Through books and the stories of others, he converted his bodily awareness into a growing and active desire to supersede his physical challenges with a defiant temperament: "A los diez años," Paco Ignacio Taibo II relates, Che "no basta con resistir y leer en cama. Comienza entonces su personal guerra contra las limitaciones del asma: paseos sin permiso, juegos violentos [...] desarrolla una cierta fascinación por el peligro" (Taibo II, *Guevara* 20).

Such behavior was typical of someone living with a chronic condition according to Freud. One of the ways in which man gains awareness of the limits of his body is through bodily pain, or in Che's case, symptoms of his illness such as asthma attacks: "pain seems to play a part in the process, and the way in which we gain new knowledge of our organs during painful illnesses is perhaps a model of the way by which in general we arrive at the idea of our own body" (25-26). In line with what Freud submits here, Che's over-awareness of his body led him to overcompensate for his corporal anxieties with the development of a keen intellectual capacity and mindfulness that knew no

boundaries. This skill that Che developed out of necessity and as a means to change as a child will also prove fundamental for his self-construction as a guerrilla rebel, a political agent that is rooted in and whose livelihood on the mountain depends on self-discipline, confidence, and a physical and emotional alertness.

In her most recent study on Che Guevara, Diana Sorensen makes this connection as well in stating that Che's frequent bouts with asthma, both before and during the revolution "offered an opportunity for mastery through sacrifice" (*A Turbulent Decade* 26). If Che's "sacrifice" was his capacity to withstand bodily pain and to control his discomfort and asthma-related symptoms, it is ironic, then, that though he learned to command his body as a child, after having undergone years of training as a rebel and playing a key role as a leading participant in the Cuban Revolution, his body will surface as an uncontrollable force, as a "self-moving machine" that demands his utmost attention on the mountain in Bolivia (Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* 6).

Che's asthmatic condition also inspired him to develop an adamant nature. When he had the opportunity, he acted as the leader of the group: "Parece ser que a pesar de la enfermedad Ernesto se convierte en el jefe de un pequeño grupo de niños que se reúne en los terrenos del fondo de su casa [...] lo que el asma le niega se lo dará la tenacidad" (Taibo II, *Guevara* 20; 22). It is clear how Che shifted his focus from his body to succeed at virtually any task he set his mind to, thus proving that his desire to surpass his bodily limits was "active" and therefore fundamental in the construction of his reality (Cohen, Weiss 4).

Pushing the Limits of the Body: Che Embraces Sports and Travel

As I suggested above, though Che's illness limited him in some ways, it also allowed him to excel in others as well as taught him to test consistently the importance of his body. This is precisely why during his adolescent years, Che, against his parents' will, insisted on escaping the confines of his house by attending public school. This decision granted him independence from his parents and expanded his social and intellectual horizons. It also presented him with the opportunity to meet others and to put his physical capacities on display through his participation in sports. In front of his peers, Che acted as though he were "normal" or perhaps abnormal in the sense that he always seemed to exceed his own and others' expectations of him.

Che's "acting out" of his body would usually suggest that he performed according to a normalized masculine ideal that requires men to use physical strength as a means to gain the approval of other men (Kimmel, *The Gender of Desire* 33). Yet, I submit that for Che, the test of his physical capacity was more related to his attentiveness to his own body and need to prove his capacity to exercise self-discipline and control.

Che's participation in sports not only provided the platform from which he would test himself, but it also proved fundamental for his socialization as a male for it allowed him to take part in male bonding with other men besides his father. Through team sports, Che met Alberto Granado, a medical student at the University of Buenos Aires. Granado sparked Che's interest and integrated him in rugby, travels, and medicine, all activities that proved of utmost importance in Che's physical and professional growth as well as the development of a keen socio-cultural awareness.

Perhaps the most significant impact Granado had on Che, however, was the trip the two took on a motorcycle through South America in 1952 when Che was twenty-four years of age, an experience that would later be represented in Walter Salles' *The Motorcycle Diaries* (2004). During this journey, as is romantically portrayed in the film, Che, a bourgeois male, came face to face for the first time with some of the most impoverished and disease-stricken communities in the region and accordingly used his skills as a doctor to help others survive in spite of their illnesses and the poor economic conditions they lived in.[3] It may be true that Che's exposure to the indigenous communities and leprosy colonies in the regions surrounding the Andes opened his eyes to class-based issues prevalent at the time and thus may have served as a precursor for his later embrace of a socialist ideology as the film *Motorcycle Diaries* suggests. Yet, at that point in his life, Che was not a socialist nor had he been exposed to the prospect of carrying out a revolution in Latin America.

What Che's trip through South America did seem to awaken in him was a desire to link his interest in medicine to a study of the socio-cultural conditions that contributed to the poor health he observed in the communities he visited. He tackled this goal in his ambitious thesis project for the completion of medical school. In his study, Che concluded that "social medicine," an evaluation of the geographical, economic, and social conditions of specific regions during key transitional periods (i.e., from a totalitarian regime to a democracy-aimed one) as a means to explain the pejorative living conditions and illnesses that emerge in the people, could improve the socio-cultural conditions in

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[3] For Diana Sorensen, this film, rather than highlight Che's political activities and achievements, depicts a quijotesque figure "[t]he youthful romantic who undertakes the continental exploration with his Sancho-like friend" (51). The romanticization and consequent depoliticization of Che in the film is akin to a post-Cold War rhetoric.

which people lived (Anderson 135). Che's desire to test his thesis in a Central American context eventually led him to "revolutionary Guatemala" in 1953, a period of his life that would prove crucial for his theoretical, social, and political preparation for the revolution (136).

The Shaping of a Revolutionary

In the early 1950s, Guatemala became the first battleground of the Cold War in Latin America prior to the Cuban revolution.[4] At the time, the CIA decried the country as an "immediate and direct threat" to the United States because of elected president Jacobo Arbenz's focus on social justice and national interests and expropriation of the properties of United Fruit, a United States-backed corporation that monopolized large portions of land in Central America (Franco, *The Decline* 23).[5] The mistrust in Arbenz's plan for Guatemala, which Jean Franco contends "unleashed a monster" as "[a]nticommunism became an alibi for slaughter, torture, and censorship – often in the name of "stability" in opposition to "chaos,"" resulted in the invasion of the CIA in Guatemala, the same model applied in the Bay of Pigs years later, and Jacobo Arbenz's forced resignation from the presidency by Carlos Enrique Díaz de León under the direction of the CIA (23). Díaz de León was shortly thereafter replaced by Guatemalan military dictator Elefegio Monzón and Arbenz sought protection in the Mexican embassy in June of 1954.

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[4] Jean Franco contends that "it can be argued that the Cold War in Latin America actually began with the Cuban Revolution, although the 1954 intervention in Guatemala served as a prelude" (3).

[5] Other sources that evaluate the coup that resulted in Arbenz's forced resignation from the presidency include Scott D. Breckinridge's *The CIA and the Cold War: A Memoir* (1993), p.47, Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones' *CIA and American Democracy* (1998), p.90, Michael J Hogan's *The Ambiguous Legacy U.S. Foreign Policy in the American Century* (1999), p. 170, and Greg Grandin's *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (2006), p. 42.

It was in this atmosphere that reflected the effects of the ideological war between the United States and USSR during Arbenz's presidency that Che arrived to Guatemala. His presence there would prove essential to the formation of key relations with members of the Latin American radical Left. Apart from meeting Arbenz, Che was also introduced to Edelberto Torres Rivas Jr., secretary general of the Communist Youth in Guatemala, and Ñico López, a participant in the attack on the Moncada barracks in 1953, an event that Fidel Castro and others would later recognize as the start of the Cuban Revolution (Dosal, *Doing Business with Dictators* 36-37). However, according to some, Che only gained access to these and other men through Peruvian Hilda Gadea, a Marxist and self-proclaimed radical who would later become Che's first wife (37).

Like Che's mother, Gadea was nonconforming to the norms proposed by a capitalist society and acted on her political beliefs as a means to gain the respect and support of fellow Marxists and intellectuals. Gadea provided Che with a theoretical, political, and pragmatic base that was in line with the ensuing focus on the revolution in Guatemala. Che and Gadea shared a passion for politics, culture, and literature and discussed at great length Marxist-Leninist and Maoist ideologies. The combination of class and agrarian-based ideologies provided Che with the ideological frame that guided him in his practices as a socially conscious doctor as well as opened his eyes to the necessary imminence of revolution as the sole means for implementing change in Latin America. For Che "Marxism was not simply a political agenda derived solely from *The Communist Manifesto*" it was "a means of interpreting and changing reality" (Dosal, *Doing Business with Dictators* 39). As a result of Che's stay in Guatemala, a time in which the looming effects of the Cold War on Latin America dictated both the inflection

of existing social systems and the absolute need to catalyze the conditions necessary for a revolution to take place, Che developed much mistrust in the government of the United States and consequently viewed socialism as intervention as the only path for the future.

At the time, Mexico had become a safe-haven for left-wing intellectuals and political exiles. When presented with the opportunity to go there at Gadea's request, Che jumped at the chance. This decision, apart from his previous experiences in Guatemala, was the political move that would jumpstart Guevara's firsthand involvement in the Cuban revolution. It was there that Che met Fidel Castro just two years after the assault on the Moncada Barracks on July 26, 1953, Castro's first attempt to publicly decry the Batista Regime. This historical occurrence resulted in Castro's incarceration and subsequent writing of his own defense, *La historia me absolverá* (1953), on why he was unjustly imprisoned and should thus be liberated (Gott 147).

The Moncada assault, though recognized as an "aborted" mission, stressed for Castro the urgent need to carry out a revolution in Cuba that would recognize as its ultimate goal the abrogation of the Batista Regime and the implementation of a new socialist society in its place. Che's relationship with Fidel during such a crucial moment in his life and Latin American history would convince him that the armed path was the only and most effective way to social justice and socialism in Latin America.

At the time of their first meeting, Che had only recently begun to comprehend the significance of revolution from a theoretical standpoint and was unsure of his physical capacity to endure the training. Yet Castro persuaded Che to participate in the Cuban Revolution not as a guerrilla rebel (at least not at first) but as a "revolutionary doctor" or a "revolutionary," two terms Che would later link to the armed process and explain in

terms of the "social medicine" he began to practice years prior in South America and Guatemala in his work *El socialismo y el hombre nuevo* (1979) (19). With this status, Che, a doctor with some theoretical knowledge and little training in rebel praxis, opens his text *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria* (1963) and thus, initiates his participation in the revolution, a task that he took on *HASTA LA VICTORIA SIEMPRE*, as he would later state in his farewell letter to Fidel Castro in 1965.

It is apparent at this point that the factors in Che's life that shaped his upbringing and that will later appear in his writings as key components in the construction of the model of the guerrilla fighter formed on the mountain include the perpetual testing of the limits of his body, an emphasis on education, his relationships with others, and constant change through self-evaluation and discipline. Che's illness and desire to control his consequent corporal anxieties proved central in the development of his personality, self-determination, and intellectual competence. To complement such skills, the relationships he formed with others – especially his mother and Hilda Gadea – supplied him with the means to question social norms through education, action, and politicization. Che's closeness and reliance on these women suggest that gender was not an issue during his formative years, nor will it present itself as a central factor in his building up of a model of the guerrilla fighter as will become evident in the following chapter. What did prove of utmost importance to Che, however, was a capacity to change through self-awareness, education, and by undergoing a continuous process of politicization that emerges out of a desire to implement a form of humanist socialism through his participation in and implementation of a socialist revolution.

Myth in a Cadaver: Che Guevara's "Speaking Corpse"

> "Dispara hombre, después de todo sólo vas a matar a un hombre".
>
> - Ernesto "Che" Guevara

On October 7, 1967 after dedicating the previous fourteen years of his life to the revolution, thirty-nine year old international rebel Ernesto 'Che' Guevara was captured by officials of the CIA, one of which was Cuban exile Félix Rodríguez, and by Bolivian counterinsurgents called the Green Berets trained by the U.S. Special forces of the CIA in La Higuera, Bolivia (Gambini 23-29). After enduring two days of intense interrogations (during which time Guevara refused to reveal his strategic plan to carry out an armed revolutionary insurgency that would begin in Bolivia and spread to neighboring South American countries) Bolivian president René Barrientos ordered Guevara's execution. On October 9, 1967 in a rundown schoolhouse in La Higuera, Che Guevara was shot to death, but he would not utter his last words. His death unpacked the various ways in which others speak of Che and seek to make Che speak. In their quest to locate the *essence* of Che Guevara in his corpse, however, those that write about Che often make him express words and ideas that he never considered important.

As Che's purported last words suggest in the epilogue to the present section, though with his execution, Che Guevara "the man" would die, his ideas would live on. Che would "continue to shine" through his example and inspire others to act on an impetus to challenge the status quo as Nicolás Guillén so clearly expresses in these lines from his poem "Che Comandante": "No porque hayas caído tu luz es menos alta [...] No por callado eres silencio. Y no porque te quemen, porque te disimulen bajo tierra, porque

te escondan en cementerios, bosques páramos, van a impedir que te encontremos, Che Comandante, amigo" (Lightfoot 196).[6]

Guevara, a revolutionary who had ranked high on the CIA's most wanted list because of his embrace of a communist ideology after his time in Guatemala in 1953 and central role in the socialist revolutions of the 1960s in Latin America, was unable to rest even in death. After his corpse was placed on display for all to see in Bolivia, an action that conjured up visions of him in association with Christ, assigned him a saintly status, and deemed him the savior of the Latin American radical Left, his hands were cut off and shipped to Cuba to prove to his family and fellow comrades that they were his. Then, his body was vanished only to reappear or rather be dug up thirty years later in Bolivia.

Che's "absent body" (Sorensen, *A Turbulent Decade* 25) coupled with the fact that he was executed at the young age of thirty-nine for standing up for his ideals, an action that placed him at the center of the ideological war between the United States and the USSR, immediately catapulted him into a mythical status. Che biographer Hugo Gambini explains "Al comprobarse la identidad de Ernesto Guevara y desaparecer misteriosamente su cadáver, la figura del Che se convirtió automáticamente en mito [...] Realmente el símbolo de la época nueva; distinta" (309).[7] For Gambini, in death Che

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[6] Other poems and songs that pay homage to Che after his death include, but are not limited to Carlos Puebla's "Hasta Siempre Comandante" (in Fontalvo 265) Miguel Barnet's "Che," "Yo tuve un hermano" by Julio Cortázar, "Che" by Samuel Feijoó, Mario Benedettí's "Che" and Pablo Neruda's "Tristeza en la muerte de un héroe" (see http://www.patriagrande.net/cuba/ernesto.che.guevara/poemas.htm). Also, in remembrance of Che's passion for poetry, Paco Ignacio Taibo II recently compiled several of his favorite poems by Pablo Neruda, Nicolás Guillén, César Vallejo, León Felipe and others in *El cuaderno verde del Che* (2007). Taibo II's anthology was conveniently released on the fortieth anniversary of Che's death.

[7] For other analyses of the events leading up to and surrounding Che's death see Richard Harris' *Death of a Revolutionary: Che Guevara's Last Mission* (1970), Félix Fernández-Madrid's *Che Guevara and the Incurable Disease* (1997), Mike González's essay, "The Resurrections of Che Guevara" (1997), Hanno Hardt's "The Death and Resurrection of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara" (1998), Peter McLaren's *Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and the Pedagogy of the Revolution* (2000), José Yglesias' "Che Guevara; "The

came to embody the "energy of reinvention" and the new, though contradictory era that Sorensen contends defined the 60s in Latin America (*A Turbulent Decade* 4).[8]

Bolivian photographer Freddy Alborta was the first to photograph Che's corpse in the schoolhouse that day. In doing this, he explains: "I had the impression that I was photographing a Christ [...] I had in fact entered that [mythical] dimension. It was not a cadaver that I was photographing but something extraordinary" (*qtd.* in Dosal, "San Ernesto" 332). In death, the human body becomes something "extraordinary" (Kristeva 109). Precisely because of his death, Che enters the ineffable realm, and Alborta's photograph, Jean Franco contends "gave rise to an intense postmortem mythology" (*The Decline* 108). As a consequence, rather than view Che in relation to his political actions and the time period and circumstances under which he was killed, the desire is that Che will stop being Che and transform instead into Che in his many distorted forms.

Alborta would not be the only man to view Che as a martyr and to refer to his "Christ-like" qualities in death. Ariel Dorfman also comments on Che's "saintly" and "Christ-like" status *post-mortem*: "That Christ-like figure laid out on a bed of death with his uncanny eyes almost about to open: those fearless last words [...] the anonymous burial and the hacked-off hands, as if his killers feared him more after he was dead than when he had been alive: all of it is scalded into the mind and memory of those defiant times" (2). For Dorfman, Che becomes a metonymy for "those defiant times," an emblem of the fight between capitalist and communist ideologies and his sacrifice – one

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Best Way to Die"" (1967), Tony Sanouis' "Che Guevara: símbolo de lucha" (1997), and the Swedish documentary *Sacrificio: Who Betrayed Che Guevara* (2001).

[8] Though precisely because of the recent triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the sixties begins with a bang, so to speak, for the Latin American radical Left, Sorensen defines the decade as one built upon the contradiction between "euphoria" and "despair": "Latin America in the sixties encapsulates its predicament: a moment of hope and celebration produced a sense of multiple possibilities, only to reach closure and despair in its culmination" (*A Turbulent Decade* 3).

that is not to be underestimated – comes to signify the struggle of the Left to erect a new time for Latin America, again best summed up by Gambini as "el símbolo de la época nueva; distinta" (309).

Late Salvadorian revolutionary and poet Roque Dalton also compares Che to Christ by referring to him as a "Ché Jesucristo" and "Cristo Guevara" (37). Dalton bases this parallel between Che and Christ not solely on the visual resemblance of their corpses, but also on the fact that Che, though dead, would return for "centuries and centuries" to urge men to move forward towards his idea of the "new man," most certainly through constant self-evaluation and the changes that subsequently take place: "En vista de lo cual no le ha quedado al Ché otro camino que el de resucitar y quedarse a la izquierda de los hombres exigiéndoles que apresuren el paso por los siglos de los siglos" (37). Dalton's parallel of Christ and Che is evident in his juxtaposition of the image of Christ, who is "seated at the right-hand of the father" and is resurrected so that all men will be washed of their sins for all eternity and Che, the rebel savior who remains on the "Left" of all men to assure that the revolution lives on through man's constant movement, progress, and change.[9]

Che's almost instantaneous shift from man to myth in the form of a Christ-like figure is significant, especially when examined in relation to the revolution and Che's role as a guerrilla rebel. For Barthes, the revolution "a cathartic act meant to reveal the political load of the world" and the revolutionary, a man that "links language to the making of things" should, in theory, escape a mythical discourse precisely for their tie to political speech, the only form of speech that accurately reflects "action" ("Myth Today"

[9] See "The Apostle's Creed" http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/creeds/apostles.htm.

134, 135). In claiming, then, that after his death Che automatically became a myth is to attempt to describe him through the myth, a "depoliticized speech" that rather than emphasize the meaning he had for those that believed in him as a living example, minimizes Che's status as a political actor (134).

Apart from the intents to explain the significance of Che's body in death, the corpse conjures up a multitude of other representations of his public persona. When grouped together, such depictions of Che restitute images of him that instead of reflecting his thoughts, actions, role as a guerrilla fighter and place in history, seek to detach Che from the politics of the revolution and to lock him in a mythical discourse that rather than "make" things, fixes them in their place (135). By dint of this need to define the "essence" of Che Guevara according to the various needs and demands of the public, a recognizable quality of mythical discourse, Che is often depoliticized and de-historicized.

The Public Persona

In the years following or perhaps even prior to his execution in Bolivia, many viewed *Che* as the personification of revolutionary idealism and practice in Latin America as he united in his public persona the roles of guerrilla, writer, intellectual, leader, and ideologue. Che's purported multidimensionality and high level of exportability was first noted after the success of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 when "the romance of Che Guevara, the kind of revolutionary whose refusal to believe in the impossible [...] crossed class, ethnic, and political lines" (Mallon 211). Yet the "heroic" and "universal" nature of Guevara became evident particularly after his death when supposedly: "for the Radical Left, Che ha[d] become the uber-guerrillero, the all-purpose Saint" (McLaren 7).

Other political agents interpreted Che and the successful Cuban Revolution as a "sign of things to come" (Sorensen, *A Turbulent Decade* 3). Fidel Castro sums up his vision of Che as an image of human and revolutionary perfection in the prologue to *El diario del Che en Bolivia* (1968), Guevara's last written account of his participation as a guerrilla fighter in a revolution: "[Che] constituyó el único caso de un hombre extraordinario capaz de unir en su personalidad no sólo las características de un hombre de acción, sino que también las de un hombre intelectual [...] Che se ha convertido en un modelo de lo que debe ser un hombre de verdad, no sólo para nuestra gente, sino que también, para la gente de toda Latinoamérica (25). After Che's death, Castro not only describes Che as an ideal warrior that unites revolutionary thought and action in his example, but he implies that *every man* or every *real man* should strive to *be like Che*.[10] Such words also seem to implicitly encourage all men to aspire to reach the status of Che Guevara's vision of the *new man*, the ideological product of the Cuban Revolution and the only masculine ideal, according to Che, that seemed capable of facing the challenges that lie ahead in the future not because he strove for perfection, but because he welcomed and sought to promote change in a post-revolutionary society (*El socialismo y el hombre nuevo* 21).[11]

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[10] In *El Che Guevara* (1968), Hubo Gambini includes key parts of the speech in which Castro coins the phrase *to be like Che*: "Si queremos expresar cómo aspiramos a que sean nuestros combatientes revolucionarios, nuestros militantes, nuestros hombres, debemos decir sin vacilación de ninguna índole: ¡Que sean como el Che! Si queremos expresar cómo queremos decir como deseamos que se eduquen nuestros niños, digamos sin vacilación: ¡Queremos que se eduquen en el espíritu del Che! Si queremos un modelo de hombre que no pertenece a este tiempo sino al futuro, ¡de corazón digo que ese modelo sin una sola mancha en su conducta, sin una sola mancha en su actitud, sin una sola mancha en su actuación, ese modelo es El Che! Y cuando se hable de internacionalismo proletario y se busque un ejemplo, ¡ese ejemplo, por encima de cualquier otro, es el ejemplo del Che" (310)!

[11] In *El socialismo y el hombre nuevo* (1979), Che outlines the steps necessary for man to take in order to move towards the ideal of the *new man* "Se trata, precisamente, de que el individuo se sienta más pleno, con mucha más riqueza interior y con mucha más responsabilidad. El individuo de nuestro país sabe que la época gloriosa que le toca vivir es de sacrificio; conoce el sacrificio" (21).

Castro's view of Che as a pristine model of human and revolutionary excellence seemed to inspire the production of other testimonies of Che's life and achievements. In 1977, the editorial *Gente Nueva* published a biographical magazine on Che titled "Seremos como el Che," a phrase also popularized by Castro after Che's death. In it, Che Guevara appears again as the embodiment of the *new man*, an ideal that Che would argue was unreachable. For Che, the *new man* was an inspiration to undergo a continual process of change that would begin with the revolution and be carried out in a conscious way throughout life.

Another writer that portrayed Che as an embodiment of the *new man* was Cuban revolutionary Haydée Santamaría. In a letter she wrote to Che following his assassination in Bolivia, she laments his unexpected death and contends that even though he is dead, the new "human being" Che imagined will live on through his legacy: "Everything you [Che] created was perfect, but you made a unique creation; you made yourself. You demonstrated that the new human being is possible, all of us could see that the new human being is a reality, because he exists, he is you" (19).[12]

Not less emphatically, Michael Lowy equates Che's mythical status to the combination of his "extraordinary character" and his distinctive interpretation of Marxism-based ideologies through the prism of Latin America: "[w]ithout precedent in the history of the twentieth century, accounts for and illuminates the rise of the Che myth: Che the romantic adventurer, the Red Robin Hood, the Don Quixote of communism [...] the secular Christ of San Ernesto de la Higuera revered by the Bolivian peasants" (7).

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[12] Santamaría's letter was first published by *Casa de las Américas* in 1968, however, I reference the version entitled "Hasta la Victoria Siempre, Dear Che" included in the volume of Santamaría's works edited by Betsy Maclean, *Haydée Santamaría* (2003). Also see Bolivian revolutionary Inti Peredo's *Mi campaña con el Che*, specifically his chapter titled "El hombre del S. XXI" (1971).

For Lowy, Che's heroism is rooted in his political and revolutionary ideologies, discourses that since they aspire to change the status quo, escape the realm of the myth (Barthes, "Myth Today" 135). Yet in calling Che a "romantic adventurer" and associating him with hopeless dreamers, Lowy feeds the machine of mythical discourses.

Such views of Che as the quintessence of revolutionary excellence in the 20th century and as the ultimate masculine guerrilla rebel (Castro), "the new man" (Peredo, Konings, Santamaría), a romantic hero (Gambini), a saint (James) a *Christ-like* figure (McLaren), a dreamer (Sinclair), the "century's first Latin American" (Guillermoprieto) and a "Don Quijote of Communism" (Lowy) are just some of the interpretations released in the years following his execution. The universalization of Che, yet another symptom of mythical discourse, and the reduction of his life to a chain of virtues, future-oriented utopias, roles and identities suggests that rather than emphasize the political value he gained through his revolutionary endeavors as a guerrilla rebel, his image in death is defined by the intentions of others "much more than by its literal sense" (110).

In keeping with these representations of Che, there are photographs that capture him in moments that have come to represent for some his "larger-than-life" qualities and the various roles he occupied throughout his career. Victor Casaus' anthology, *Self Portrait Che Guevara* (2006) depicts Che as a versatile rebel as he unites images of Che working alongside members of the proletariat during the Cuban Revolution, cutting sugarcane, thinking alone in a hotel room, sitting in his personal library in Havana reading while surrounded by bookshelves full of books, teaching and reading during the

revolution and fighting as a guerrilla rebel in both the Cuban and Bolivian insurgencies (152, 153, 160, 161).[13]

Casaus' apparent "well-rounded" picture of Che aims to foreground his actions as a rebel, ideological beliefs, and emphasis on education. Yet one photograph in particular promotes Che as the personification of *the* guerrilla fighter of the 20th century: Alberto Díaz Gutiérrez, or Alberto Korda's "Guerrillero Heroico" (1960). After Korda took this photograph, he tucked it away in his apartment for seven years and released it to the press after Che's death with the title "Heroic Guerrilla". Why, one may ask, did Korda hold onto his photograph for so long only to publish it shortly after Che's death? Korda's explanation was that on the day that he took his snapshot, March 5, 1960, he was assigned to photograph Fidel Castro while he gave a speech in which he recognized the deaths (which surpassed eighty) caused by the tragic explosion of the French vessel *Le Coubre* in Havana, Cuba, an action that Castro associated with the CIA (Sorensen, *A Turbulent Decade* 25). However, the "immediate impression" that Korda's photograph would have and perhaps even sought to have on the public cannot be ignored (Barthes, "Myth Today" 117).

To add to the title and image presented with Korda's Che that were, most likely, meant to intrigue the viewer, in the caption Korda claims that such an image captures "Che's true character – the firmness, stoicism, resoluteness" (Ziff 33). Can one deduce a human being's *true* character from a simple two-dimensional snapshot, a text that for Barthes is one without a code or a hidden message? Korda clearly marks the picture with

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[13] Other anthologies that contain photographs of Che Guevara include Trisha Ziff's *Che Guevara: Revolutionary and Icon* (2006), *Che: Images of a Revolutionary* (2000) compiled by Fernando Diego García and Óscar Sola, Osvaldo Salas, Roberto Salas and Jon Lee Anderson's *Fidel's Cuba: Revolution in Pictures* (1998) and Christophe Loviny's *Cuba by Korda* (2006).

his own interpretation of who Che was thus achieving what Barthes describes as the impossible: "The description of a photograph is literally impossible; to *describe* [...] is [...] not simply to be imprecise or incomplete, it is to change structures, to signify something different to what is shown" (*Image, Music, Text* 18-19). Thus, in highlighting what he believes Che represents in the title and caption of the photograph, Korda converts "Guerrillero Heroico" into the most widely circulated visual "myth" of Che Guevara.

Phyllis Passariello approaches Korda's photograph in a similar way, only for her it fixes Che in that historical moment – 1960 – a year that represented one of the most controversial periods of the Cold War as it was sandwiched by the Cuban Revolution (1959) and the Bay of Pigs (1961): "The photographic image of the "messianic gaze" of a noble, young, handsome, uniformed Che moves us emotionally but impresses us rationally because we know that the very moment of that gaze existed; it really happened" (87).[14] Though Passariello does not omit the historical moment in which Korda took this photograph, she assigns an aesthetic importance to his "messianic gaze" in using the adjectives "noble," "young," and "handsome" to describe Che and assumes that these qualities move the public "emotionally". For Passariello, the photograph becomes what Barthes defines as: "a mad image, chafed by reality" or an image that is "false on the level of perception and true on a level of time" (*Camera lucida* 115).

[14] The Bay of Pigs was a mission of the CIA approved by President Eisenhower in 1960 and carried out during the Kennedy Administration led by Cuban exiles trained by the United States military on April 17, 1961. It served as a prequel to the Cuban Missile Crisis of October of 1962 that involved the United States, the Soviet Union and Cuba and is considered as another evidence of the intervention of the United States in political and military affairs in Latin America during the Cold War (*Fidel Castro: My Life* 257).

In my analysis of the written and visual representations of Che, I described how though some relate the guerrilla rebel to the revolution, his political value is often minimized and he is often depicted as "Christ-like", "superhuman" or simply associated with his "appealing" physical qualities. Such evaluations of Che seek to universalize his image (Barthes, "Myth Today" 108). If in this section I have examined the mythical interpretations of Che's public persona, the following works published around the thirtieth anniversary of Che's death in 1997 respond to the demands of historiography concerned with the private life and the "petite history" of Che Guevara.

Getting *Intimate*: Che's "*Petite* History"

One of the defining characteristics of a post-Cold War world is the desired inflection of political ideologies, especially Marxist-oriented discourses and ideologies. As a result, there is a renewed interest on origins and identity politics and the question of why people are the way that they are serve as elemental analytical frames (Goldmann 2-4). Such a change in emphasis, as one might imagine, affects the way in which others examine the life of Che, for whom politics, ideology and revolution surfaced as defining factors in his life.

In order to appeal to the needs and demands of the public towards the close of the 20th century, those that wrote about Che view him through the prism of his personal life and relationships with others. Between the years of 1997 and 2007, the years that mark the thirtieth and fortieth anniversaries of Che's death, there was a revived interest in Guevara.[15] The attention to Che was not a coincidence, for it coincided with the

[15] Other biographical studies that incorporate a vision of Che through the prism of the personal include: Ricardo Rojo's *Mi amigo el Che* (1968), Ernesto Guevara Lynch's *Mi hijo el Che* (1985), and Hilda Gadea's *Che Guevara: los años decisivos* (1972). Also see the films, *Mi hijo el* Che (1985), based on Guevara Lynch's biography of Che and *Aleida Guevara Remembers her Father* (2006). The studies

exhumation of his corpse in Bolivia in 1997, which had mysteriously disappeared thirty years prior, and the succeeding transportation of his remains to Cuba.

If in the Cold War context in which he is executed Che, though mythified, is often unavoidably associated with his political actions and belief in a class-based ideology, during the post-Cold War, he is brought back to life in a different form. Unlike the works released shortly following his death, the texts that surface with the "resurfacing" of Che's corpse focus on the intimate details of his life – his childhood, adolescence, relationships with others, and pre-revolutionary years – in the hopes of revealing the man behind the myth.[16] Paradoxically, in doing this, his biographers assign a new meaning to Che by superseding the political with the personal.

Three exhaustive biographical studies initiated the resurgence of interest in Che: Paco Ignacio Taibo II's *Guevara: también conocido como el Che* (1996), Jorge Castañeda's *La Vida en rojo: una biografía del Che Guevara* (1997) and his English translation of it, *Compañero: the Life and Death of Che Guevara* (1997), and Jon Lee Anderson's *Che Guevara, A Revolutionary Life* (1997). In a comparative study of these three biographies, Richard Harris contends that "Anderson, Castañeda, and Taibo piece together Che's plans, decisions, and actions from his writings and from the remembrances, observations, and opinions of the people who were closest to him"

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carried out by Che's close friend and members of his family analyze Che in the context of the relationships he had with these individuals. Each seems to evaluate the ways in which they contributed to Che's formation or remembered him as a friend, a son, a father, or a husband and thus not unlike other biographical studies of Che included in this chapter, present biased views of his life.

[16] My biographical analysis of Che Guevara in the first part of this chapter does, without a doubt, contribute to his process of mythification as well. It is almost impossible to talk about Che today without contributing to a vision of him as a myth. However, I sought to use my evaluation of Che's life towards a political end by highlighting the qualities that he develops during his childhood and adolescence that later appear as core aspects in his model of the guerrilla rebel formed on the mountain.

("Reflections" 2). Yet in the biographies, one observes an inflection from the political and a newfound interest in the private.

Spanish born Taibo II's heads off the recent series of biographies on Che with its publication in 1996 in seeming anticipation for the boom of interest in Guevara that would surface one year later. Taibo II restitutes Che's voice through the inclusion of several of his personal and political letters, diaries and handwritten notes to friends, family members and girlfriends – both published and unpublished. He also interviewed several of Che's family members, friends, and neighbors to provide multiple perspectives of Che's formative process and to gain objectivity in his very personalized examination of Che.

Taibo II emphasizes the aspects of Che's childhood and adolescence that he suspects contributed to his decision to lead the life of a revolutionary: his asthmatic condition, relationships, and ostensibly innate desire to question the norm. He also focuses on Che's pre-revolutionary period to represent Che as a product of his time and not simply as the mythical figure he became in the latter half of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries.

Ironically, precisely because of his desire to bypass Che's myth and to rectify his weaknesses, struggles, family life and origins, all of which he believes are hidden behind Guevara's public persona as a revolutionary and thus his myth, Taibo II emphasizes Che's personal life over his political actions.

One year after Taibo II's biography came out, Jorge Castañeda released *La vida en rojo: una biografía del Che Guevara* (1997) and *Compañero: the Life and Death of Che Guevara* (1997). The title of the Spanish version is much more provocative –"la

vida en rojo" is a clear reference to Che's connection to communism – which may lead the reader to believe that Castañeda will evaluate Che in such a context. Yet he views Che through the lens of the neo-conservative ideology that emerges with the neoliberal hegemony in the last decade of the 20th century. Castañeda talks about Cuba as Che's "revolutionary adventure" (237) and seems to condemn him from the start for his bourgeois upbringing; his "blue-blooded" lineage (3), political actions and link to Communism. What is more, Castañeda raises suspicions regarding Che's relationship to the Soviet Union and Fidel Castro prior to his execution, suggesting that he was caught and captured largely because he was betrayed by both due to his extreme radicalization (186, 262-264). This rhetoric seems to prove the shift from the Cold War to the post-Cold War rhetoric. Castañeda's "tribute" to Che is best expressed in the following statement: "Che Guevara is a cultural icon today largely because the era he typified left cultural tracks more than political ones" (*Compañero* 497).[17]

It is in this same spirit that Jon Lee Anderson writes *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* (1997). Anderson divides his study into three parts that focus on Che's formation ("Unquiet Youth"), pre-revolutionary adolescent years ("Becoming Che") and his experiences post-Cuban revolution ("Making the *New Man*"). In his evaluation of the different phases of Guevara's life that he proposes, Anderson too highlights his asthma as a central aspect in his formative years, outlines key relationships for Guevara's formation as a child and revolutionary, and offers the perspective of those that knew Che while he was growing up in an attempt to expose who Che was at distinct moments in his life.

[17] For similar analyses of the shift from the political to the cultural evidenced in a post-Cold War context see Jorge Castañeda's *Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left After the Cold War* (1993).

What is unique about Anderson's biographical study of Che, however; is that even though he spent five years compiling information for his biography and for three of those five years actually lived in Cuba where he had quick and consistent access to a wealth of personal testimonies on Che and official documents – his former wife, Aleida March, friends and other family members, as well as secured government documents – parts of Anderson's biography seek to call into question aspects of Che's and his family's lives through what seem to be unfounded rumors about them. One such statement claims that Che Guevara was not born on June 14, 1928, but actually one month earlier. Anderson believes that this date was falsified on his birth certificate to cover up the fact that his mother had become pregnant prior to marrying Che's father.[18]

It was common knowledge that Che had a close relationship with his mother; she was, after all, his primary educator, confidant, and caregiver. Yet Anderson links this closeness to Che's anger and ensuing estrangement from his father for openly running around on Celia with other women. He also associates his father's *machista* behavior with Che's apparent tendency to act in a similar way later in life. According to Anderson's account, in a conversation with Che's second wife, Aleida March, she states "Che was a *'machista'*, like most Latins" (762).

Anderson further draws on Che's life in his commentary in a propagandistic film released by the History Channel in 2007 titled, quite ironically, *The True Story of Che Guevara*. Similar to his book, the video talks about "key" moments in Guevara's life and

[18] The "evidence" that Anderson provides for such a statement is that one of Celia's friends, who was an astrologer, read Che's horoscope and realized that despite his "headstrong and decisive" nature, traits common to the Taurus, his birth date in the middle of June categorized him as a Gemini. Upon learning of her friend's finding, Celia confessed, according to Anderson, that Che was, in fact, a Taurus because he had been born one month earlier than the date stated on his birth certificate. Basing his view of Che's birthday on this "evidence", Anderson deduces that his actual birthday was May 14, 1928 (3).

compiles a multitude of testimonies from childhood friends, officers in the Bolivian Army, officials of the CIA and the son of former secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, in order to convey "objectivity". Accordingly, the first line of this "propaganda" seems to sum up both extremes of the Che Guevara myth: "Che Guevara, a hero to some, a monster to others" (*The True Story* 2007).

Again, towards the end of the movie, Anderson calls Che a paradox, a bourgeois man turned revolutionary that combined in his being a "cold logic" and a capacity to "kill in cold blood" and that of a humanitarian whose aspirations were "to change the world and stopped at nothing to achieve his goal" (*The True Story* 2007). The film also portrays Che as a *machista*, and a Marxist-Leninist who believed that the solution to "man kind's ills was the destruction of Capitalism" (*The True Story* 2007).[19]

Anderson's description of Che as a "bourgeois man" and a "womanizer" is framed by a set of values conditioned by the ideology prevalent during the post-Cold War. In evaluating Che in such terms, Anderson seeks to stray from the actions that gave Che his initial (political) sustenance (Barthes, "Myth Today" 120). The consequence of such a shift is clearly described by Argentine Che biographer Pacho O'Donnell: "El mito del Che ha crecido alimentado por la sociedad en la que vivimos, frívola y materialista, que está justo en las antípodas de los valores que él representa [...] la caída del régimen comunista lo ha desposeído además de su condición ideológica, con lo que ha quedado de

[19] For related studies on Che see Daniel James' *Ché Guevara* (1969), Martin Ebon's *Che: The Making of a Legend* (1969), Álvaro Vargas Llosa's *The Che Guevara Myth and the Future of Liberty* (2006), Humberto Fontova's *Exposing the Real Che Guevara and the Useful Idiots who Idolize Him* (2007) and Alma Guillermoprieto's "The Harsh Angel", published in *Looking for History: Dispatches from Latin America* (2001). In, "The Death and Resurrection of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara: US Media and the Deconstruction of a Revolutionary Life" (1998), Hanno Hardt examines other such representations of Che Guevara that come out within North American culture and scholarship towards the close of the 20th century.

él su idealismo y su fuerza de personaje épica. Mientras más crezca la carencia de valores, más va a crecer su mito".[20]

In my discussion on the biographical studies above, I pointed out that the transition from the Cold War to a post-Cold War period affects the way in which people approach Che. Instead of viewing him through the prism of his political actions and ideas as seems to occur in the texts that focus on his public persona, in the biographies that seek to restitute a personalized vision of Che, his involvement in politics and revolution becomes a secondary narrative that is explained through his upbringing, asthmatic condition, and relationships with others.

Che Today

Today, in a global era in which the Internet and web-based materials provide easy access to historical information, archival materials and video-clips on *youtube*, Che Guevara, a man that understood Marxism as the key to the new future in socialism, has paradoxically become one of the most reproduced myths and influential icons. If for Barthes, as I state above, the myth is a form of speech that is detached from its original meaning and oftentimes context, manipulated and changed to fit the needs and demands of a bourgeois discourse, different from the myth, an icon is a sign that (visually) resembles the original object it represents and often becomes a metonymy for the time and place in which it originated (Garlick 21). This means that Che's iconic status could be and is often used today to represent the 60s, a time in which the "spirit of liberation went hand in hand with the critique of what existed: old forms were to be superseded and even destroyed in order to inaugurate the new" (Sorensen, *A Turbulent Decade* 3).

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[20] See Jaume Bauzá's http://www.elpais.com/articulo/sociedad/Che/ambiguo/vende/elpepisoc/20080911elpepisoc_1/Tes.

If the hyper-production of the "myth of Che" in a global era is yet another neo-conservative aspiration to dissociate him from his political value, thus stripping him of his ideas and declaring the "end of utopia," the radical Left converts Che into an icon of the 60s and thus as an example of a new wave of political activism that disavows neoliberalism (Gardner 27).

Nowadays, Che's face appears on T-shirts, posters, underwear, and even in the form of tattoos. For the neo-conservative sectors that aspire to depoliticize Che, he has become something to be purchased, consumed, and controlled by the general public. It should not come as a surprise either that entire websites exist that both buy and sell Che paraphernalia. At www.thechestore.com one finds "all [your] revolutionary needs" as this website sells everything from clocks that display Che to hooded sweatshirts and belt buckles with Korda's "Guerrillero Heroico".

It is not only "hip" to buy items with Che's face on them, but it is also becoming more popular to display Che "on your person" as Adrian Perez contends, in the form of tattoos.[21] North American rap sensation Jay-Z, known for his explicit lyrics and relationship with fellow pop star Beyoncé, and former boxing champion Mike Tyson, more recognized for his cases of domestic violence and for biting off the tip of his competitor Evander Holyfield's ear in their match on June 28, 1997 than for his athletic ability, "sport" tattoos of Che. Former Argentine soccer player Maradona also has a tattoo of "Guerrillero Heroico" on his right arm and another one of Fidel on his right leg.

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[21] See Adrian Perez's article, "Ernesto 'Che' Guevara: From Guerrilla to Madison Avenue," published in *The Latino Journal* <http://thelatinojournal.blogspot.com/2008/05/ernesto-che-guevara-from-guerilla-to.html>.

The renewed interest in Che Guevara seems to find its roots in the conflicting desires of both the conservative and radical Left sectors. If the neo-conservative point of view seeks to mythify Che as a means to change or even nullify his political worth through a mass production of his image, for the radical Left, which expresses a desire to remember who Che was and what he stood for, Che is used – even in the form of a T-shirt – to make a political statement.

In the United States, Che's image is used in political demonstrations to recuperate the spirit of the 1960s, a decade in which the American people dreamt of a politically, socially and sexually liberated era (Dosal, "San Ernesto" 318-319). In the sectors of the Left in Latin America, Che's picture is present whenever there is a political protest. During the controversial 2006 elections in Mexico between current president Felipe Calderón Hinojosa and Andrés Manuel López Obrador, Che T-shirts, posters, coffee mugs and flags were sold alongside images of Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata and current spokesman for the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), Subcomandante Marcos. Che's image in these examples is not displaced, but is used to reflect a period in which he died in exchange for or in the hope that change would be enforced in Latin America.

Presidents Hugo Chávez of Venezuela and Evo Morales of Bolivia, for whom the idea of Che serves to revive an interest in a new form of socialism, "21st century socialism," in the Latin American people as a means to combat neoliberalism, have also restituted Che's ideals and voice in political discourses. At the close of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries, Aleida March, along with Che's son Camilo, founded the *Centro de Estudios Che Guevara*, the largest web-based information center on Che. The

website includes texts, pictures, speeches, letters, diaries and videos of Che. Together with the University of La Habana, the Center strives to document Che's life, works, ideologies and revolutionary achievements.

In sum, one cannot deny that an aspiration to erase any traces of Che's political agency and revolutionary status by globalizing his image as just another pretty face or associating him with non-democratic acts exists. Yet Che's reappearance as an emblem of the hope for change under neoliberalism suggests that, perhaps, utopia and ideology are not dead and that Che's reincarnation this time around is in response to a necessity to combat the longtime political injustice in Latin America.

Chapter 2: Contesting Masculinities, Reforming Spaces: The Emergence of a New Male Code in the Mountains in Cuba and Bolivia

> "Revolutions are the only political events which confront us directly and inevitably with the problem of beginning" (*On Revolution* 21).
>
> -Hannah Arendt

Che's qualities analyzed thus far are significant because in his works they appear as the foundation of the guerrilla rebel. This leads me to believe that the model that Che proposed in his own writings emerged out of the combination of his life experiences and practices during revolution. Through an analysis of two of his guerrilla narratives *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria* (1963), and *El diario del Che en Bolivia* (1968), I outline how Che constructs a new code of manhood through his evaluation of the revolutionary project and the formation and changes the guerrilla rebel undergoes during such a process from the mountain.[1] If in Marx's vision of the bourgeois society, man views himself in relation to concepts such as the city, the family, knowledge, and a future rooted in the past, Che proposes a male code that begins to form on the mountain, the domain in which the rebels experience the ideological limits of these core aspects of the bourgeois standard for man.

In *Pasajes,* a teleological text that was originally written during the Cuban Revolution but rewritten for publication after its triumph, Che's model of the rebel wavers between the bourgeois paradigm of manhood and the new male code of the

[1] I use the term "guerrilla literature" to refer to texts that are written during and/or about the revolution. This genre of literature, according to Juan Duchesne, emerged in the 1960s after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in an effort to record the happenings during revolution and to provide a model for future guerrilla fighters (82).

mountain.[2] In *Pasajes*, Che is mindful of the example he seeks to construct, yet in *El diario*, a journal that was published in an almost brute form after Che's execution in Bolivia, something much different occurs. Though Che opens his diary with an emphasis on political action and ideology, shifts occur in his discourse and in the mission that permit the body and its necessities, an entity Elizabeth Grosz describes as capable of generating "what is new, surprising, unpredictable" to surface (*Volatile Bodies* xi). The overwhelming presence of the body in his journal exposes aspects of the revolution that Che omits (consciously or not) from *Pasajes* and that are typically associated with the feminine in patriarchal societies, thus affecting the way one views Che's code of manhood (Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* 14).[3]

The result of the combination of different components in Che's male code - the wavering between the two models of manhood (bourgeois and revolutionary), the revision of bourgeois loci, and a masculinity that incorporates the feminine – promotes a heterogeneous vision of masculinity. The construction of such a model suggests that "gender is not static – it is always subject to redefinition and renegotiation" (Brittan 37).

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[2] In her article, "Montañas con aroma de mujer: reflexiones postinsurgentes sobre el feminismo revolucionario" (2003), Ileana Rodríguez criticizes Che for his contradictory nature and questions the validity of his model of the *guerrillero* for following a military model of man and for excluding woman (145). On the surface, Rodríguez is right. In *Guerra de guerrillas* (1961), text in which Che outlines the *foco* theory he began to develop during the Cuban Revolution as well as mentions the specific roles of the insurgents – men and women alike – he highlights women for their ability to aid in communication (122-123), act as teachers (123) skillfulness in all things related to health care on the mountain (124) and role as the chefs of the insurgency (123). Che does not assign such roles to women to exclude them from the armed action of the insurgency, but rather to recognize them as fundamental actors in the revolution. For Che, as I mentioned in my biographical analysis of him in the previous chapter, gender was not an issue; all were included in his model under the name of the "guerrillero" and after the revolution as "the new man".

[3] Elizabeth Grosz asserts that "[p]atriarchal oppression [...] justifies itself, at least in part, by connecting women much more closely than men to the body" (14). Thus, Che's attention to the body and its various needs and functions in his diary, though unconscious, allows for the emergence of the feminine in an analysis of the overwhelming presence of the body of the male guerrilla rebel in the diary.

The Mountain

The only possible starting point for this chapter is the mountain, a "masculine" space, according to Ileana Rodríguez in which the guerrilla insurgency is carried out by men that "engendran la "patria"" ("Montañas con aroma de mujer" 144). The mountain is a foundational geography upon which men, by dint of their demonstration of self-control, rigidity, austerity and intransigency, advance from this status to that of the *guerrillero,* a political agent that occupies a central space in revolutionary discourse as the driving force for change that assures a necessary transition to socialism (145).

This means that Fidel Castro's choice to carry out the mission from the Sierra Maestra was not a coincidence. Apart from its transformative capacities, strategic being the most important, several other reasons contributed to the Cuban rebels' decision to use the mountain both as a training camp and as a space from which they would perform the revolution. First of all, the mountain was conveniently isolated from the city. This was significant for both symbolic and practical reasons. The geographical distance between the territories, one bourgeois and one rebel, facilitated a vision of the mountain as a symbol of change or the possibility of change; an alternative space of authority from which the rebels would carry out their revolutionary project (Duchesne 145). The mountain was also ideal for practical reasons. Due to harsh living conditions, the rebels, out of necessity, developed survival skills, communicated with, politicized, educated and gained the support of and worked in collaboration with the peasant communities to learn to use the mountain as a combative and strategic tool (Guevara, *Guerra de guerrillas* 53). Because of the qualities it possesses, Che presents the mountain as the foundational

geography upon which the rebels will build themselves up in isolation from and in opposition to the bourgeois loci in the city.[4]

Che's Contradictory Code of Manhood

On December 2, 1956, after three years of clandestine preparation in Mexico followed by the Moncada assault in Santiago, Cuba in 1953, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Camilo Cienfuegos and several others arrived to the region surrounding the Sierra Maestra in Cuba on the yacht *El Granma*.[5] The ultimate goal of their mission was to abrogate the regime of military dictator Fulgencio Batista for his consistent reliance on the United States for economic, political and military matters and to supersede it with a new government rooted in socialism (Gott 154). Precisely because the Cuban Revolution found its roots in the class-based ideologies of Karl Marx and anti-totalitarian and imperialist aims, the movement seemed to encapsulate the spirit of Communism so harshly criticized by the United States during the Cold War.[6] If the official beginning of

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[4] In *La guerra de guerrillas* (1961), Che suggests that without the mountain, the revolution would not have occurred in Cuba. This space provides the revolutionaries with the platform from which to undergo change in the most difficult of living conditions, an action that would demonstrate conviction, self-discipline, and a capacity to move forward, as well as puts the rebels in close contact with the masses so that they could feasibly gain the support of the inhabitants through the implementation of land and education reforms in a space that is completely isolated from society: "el guerrillero ejercerá su acción en lugares agrestes y poco poblados. Y, en los lugares agrestes y poco poblados, la lucha del pueblo por sus reivindicaciones se sitúa preferentemente y hasta casi exclusivamente en el plano del cambio de la composición social de la tenencia de la tierra, es decir, el guerrillero es, fundamentalmente y antes que nada, un revolucionario agrario" (182).

[5] The reasons for their opposition to Batista's regime were clear. After staging the military coup that would oust Dictator Gerardo Machado, Batista assumed control of the military and the government in Cuba. Under his leadership, the relations between the United States and Cuba tightened for Batista sought out the support of American investors to strengthen the tourism industry (i.e. prostitution and gambling) as well as relied on the US military to train the members of the Cuban National Guard. Cuba suffered as a result. Twelve years, two presidential terms and one extended stay to the United States later, in 1952, Batista led a coup and assumed the presidency again (Scheina 441). This same year, Fidel Castro, at the time a lawyer, decided to run for congress. Batista's coup not only eliminated Castro's chance for election, but it would convince him that armed insurgency was the only means to overthrow the Batista Regime that had ruled in Cuba for so long. This is precisely why Castro and other rebels carried out the armed attack on the Moncada Barracks that would serve as the initial event of the Cuban Revolution.

[6] This would also make Cuba one of the few "real" battlegrounds of the Cold War in the 1960s and would solidify Cuban relations with the Soviet Union until the end of the Cold War in the 1990s.

the Cuban Revolution was the armed attack on the Moncada Barracks, the arrival of the rebels to Cuba in *El Granma* three years later marked the start of the revolutionary insurgency from the Sierra Maestra. This date also signifies the initiation of Che Guevara's participation in the revolution and career as a guerrilla fighter.

As I pointed out, Che agreed to participate in the Cuban Revolution as a doctor whose main role was to cure the ailments of the rebels. Yet upon his arrival, when immersed in battle, he faced the difficult decision of whether to leave his medical bag – symbol of his dedication to medicine – or his box of bullets – a badge of his future role as a guerrilla rebel – behind. Che chose his bullets (*Pasajes* 9). The significance of his decision is great for it is the first time in Che's career as a revolutionary that he made a conscious choice to actively put his theoretical knowledge on the revolution into practice through his participation in an event linked to a political act, a type of act that Slavoj Zizek contends breaks with an existing structure and thus ultimately leads to change: "[the political act is] is not simply something that works well within the framework of the existing relations, but something that changes the very framework that determines how things work" (*The Ticklish Subject* 199).

This decision is fundamental for Che's initiation to the revolution on the mountain, but it does not come without consequences for the rebel. In the moment that Che picks up his gun and his box of bullets for the first time, he is shot. Instead of reacting to his first gunshot wound by shooting back at the enemy soldiers, Che thinks of how the heroic male protagonist in one of American author Jack London's short stories resigned to die a heroic death when faced with no other option, an obvious link to his fear that death is near: "Inmediatamente, me puse a pensar en la mejor manera de morir en ese

minuto en que parecía todo perdido. Recordé un viejo cuento de Jack London donde el protagonista, apoyado en un tronco de árbol, se dispone a acabar con dignidad, su vida, al saberse condenado a muerte por congelación, en las zonas heladas de Alaska. Es la única imagen que recuerdo" (*Pasajes* 10).[7] Moments prior, Che arrived on the mountain as a doctor only to find himself in a life-threatening situation spurred by the enemy army's surprise attack on the rebels. Yet his recurrence to a heroic (literary) representation of man is significant for it suggests that in his confusion, Che seems to almost innately recur to masculine models that promote heroism over pragmatism.

Just as Che consciously decides to temporarily abandon his medical duties in order to give himself the proper start as a guerrilla rebel, he also instinctively reacts to the new revolutionary circumstances according to the very ideological model he will seek to replace. Che's action illustrates what Zizek identifies as the numbing effects of ideology, specifically a dominant ideology: "The concept of ideology," he states, "implies a kind of basic, constitutive naiveté [...] a divergence between so-called social reality and our distorted representation, our false consciousness of it" (*The Sublime Object* 28). Che's decision to become a rebel is conscious, yet his first "performance" as a guerrilla rebel is in line with the model of the "heroic bourgeoisie" Frederic Jameson ties to the French Enlightenment, which automatically deems men in combative situations as heroes whether they act or not (3).

One could relate Che's first scare to his swift and perhaps necessary decision to take up arms, a move he was not yet physically or mentally prepared for. Yet when faced

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[7] As *Pasajes* was not only well thought out, but rewritten and organized for publication, Che's reference to Jack London's story "To Build a Fire" (1908) was probably not a coincidence. London, similar to Che's writing and the guerrilla literature of male authors in general, often centered his stories on male protagonists that found themselves in situations in which they needed to prove their ability to survive life-threatening situations and prevail, despite the circumstances.

with death again, instead of recurring to the heroic models prescribed for him in literature, Che shoots his gun, only to find that he has a non-functioning weapon. In this moment Che, though unprotected, runs to avoid being shot: "Falló la primera bala y quedé indefenso [...] corrí con velocidad que nunca he vuelto a alcanzar y pasé, ya en el aire, doblando la esquina para caer en la calle transversal y arreglar ahí la ametralladora" (*Pasajes* 112). When Che finds himself defenseless in the midst of another possibly deadly situation, instead of facing his fears he flees from them. In revealing his "gut instinct" to run from his enemy Che allows his vulnerability, a "threat to [his] male identity" to reach the page (Seidler, "Men, Sex, Relationships" 13). This move indicates a break from the bourgeois male code, which would view masculinity in relation to man's capacity to perform heroic actions.

The new standard for men also surfaces when Che, torn again between his duties as a physician and role as a rebel, resigns to leave two injured men behind in the hands of the Batista Army's medical team in order to continue to advance up the mountain. In parting from Cilleros, the worse off of the two, Che, overwhelmed with guilt because this decision would most definitely result in his comrade's painful death, seeks to comfort him with his words and is even inclined to show him his affection by giving him a kiss on his forehead: "estuve tentado en aquel momento de depositar en su frente un beso de despedida [...] pero el deber me indicaba que no debía amargar más sus últimos momentos con la confirmación de algo de lo que él ya tenía casi absoluta certeza" (*Pasajes* 28). Instead of sealing what he knew Cilleros would recognize as his death sentence with a kiss, Che leaves him behind and justifies his decision in stating that he

and the others had the duty of continuing to fight for their lives, a statement that gives precedence to his role as a guerrilla fighter.

This example represents the first hint of the relationship of camaraderie between men, a bond that Eve Sedgwick calls "homosocial" in nature, which will eventually replace the bourgeois locus of the family that is founded on a heterosexual ontology (6). The compassion Che shows for his fellow comrade is representative of a new type of love between men, a fraternal love that Rodríguez calls "rarísimo, otro, ajeno a la masculinidad" and that emerges out of men's participation in combat and collective desire to realize a common socio-political goal ("Montaña con aroma de mujer" 147). As I will point out shortly, the love between the guerrilla rebels on the mountain in this instance is not "weird," "queer" (147) or akin to "feminine *tendresse*," as Rodríguez submits, but is related to a desire to build themselves up in terms unreflective of the bourgeois code of manhood from the city.

In contrast to the moments in which Che reveals his seemingly innate inclination to flee from danger and his compassion for others, he acts according to a bourgeois male code when he takes on the responsibility as primary dentist. When faced with an overabundance of patients and not enough medicine and anesthesia to go around, Che or "Fernando Sacamuelas," as he humorously calls himself, employs what he calls "psychological anesthesia": "Se sumaba a mi poca pericia la falta de <<carpules>>, de tal manera que había que ahorrar mucho la anestesia y usaba bastante la <<anestesia psicológica>>, llamando a la gente con epítetos duros cuando se quejaban demasiado por los trabajos en su boca" (94). Che discourages the rebels from vocalizing their pain by appealing to their *machista* background, knowing that in doing this, he would save

medicine by forcing them to conceal their pain. Che's move to address the guerrilla rebels' inner *machista* fits in a traditional (bourgeois) vein of masculinity in which men are expected to withstand all types of pain – physical, emotional and psychological – in order to save face in front of their peers: "We [men] learn to *minimize* pain we have suffered [...] we learn to tell ourselves 'it didn't hurt' and 'it was nothing really' [...] and prove that we could 'take it'" (Seidler, *Man Enough* 60).

Ironically, when Che proves unable to climb up the Maestra at the same rate as the others Crespo, a peasant and member of the group of guerrilla fighters on the mountain, motivates him to move forward by using a similar tactic that highlights one of Che's professed insecurities: "cuando yo no podía más y pedía que me dejaran, el <<guajiro>>, con el léxico especial de nuestras tropas, me decía: <<Argentino de... vas a caminar o te llevo a culatazos>>" (*Pasajes* 44-45). Che only acts when Crespo appeals to his inner *machista* by touching on an insecurity that forces him to doubt his right to assume a leadership position, even when he is later granted permission from Fidel to lead a quadrant of rebels ("yo sentía mi complejo de extranjero, y no quise extremar las medidas, aunque se veía un malestar muy grande en la tropa") (49).

This form of "stimulus," which Che also used as a dentist, promotes a bourgeois vision of manhood that encourages men to disregard or mask any anxieties related to their physical and emotional capacity in front of others. Such a vision of masculinity is in line with what Roger Horrocks calls the cryptic message of conventional masculinity, which states that men must at once conceal their weaknesses, fears and impotence and dominate others as a means to demonstrate the resolute foundation of their manhood (25).

Che's asthma, which often makes it difficult for him to perform as a guerrilla rebel, appears in other instances as a condition that both gains him special treatment – Fidel allows him to sleep on the ground instead of a cloth hammock like the others (*Pasajes* 55) – and forces him to carry out his duties under special circumstances: "Dado mi estado asmático que me obligaba a caminar a la cola de la Columna y no permitía esfuerzos extras se me quitó la ametralladora que portaba, la Thompson, ya que yo no podía ir al tiroteo" (62). If the primary role of the guerrilla fighter is to actively participate in armed action, Che's difficulty in bearing the weight of his weapon because of his asthma weighs heavy on his conscience and his vision of himself in relation to other rebels. In his struggle to combat what Sorensen calls his "double condition of estrangement" represented in his complex related to his foreign status and asthmatic condition, one finds Che's "frustrated desire" and "the kind of masculinity he represents, less epic in its actual achievements than in the nobility of his efforts and the longing to reach them" (*A Turbulent Decade* 37, 38).

The truth is that such scenes divulge the early development of a masculinity that instead of promoting heroism during revolution allows Che's body-centered anxieties to reach the page through a discussion of his bodily functions and needs and illness. Yet perhaps because of his consciousness of the limitations his asthma places on his body, a mindfulness he developed as a child out of necessity as, he seems to appreciate even more his personal and combat-related victories.

When Che is immediately thrust into battle – prepared or not – he consciously and perhaps theoretically more than practically assumes a new identity as a guerrilla rebel. The moment he associates with his self-recognition as an actor in the revolution and as

such, as an agent of change, is when he receives his first weapon. Che links this acquisition to the start of a new phase for him: "Siempre recuerdo el momento en que me fue entregado este fusil ametralladora, de muy mala calidad y viejo, pero que en aquel momento significaba una verdadera adquisición" (*Pasajes* 72). Che's description of his first weapon, though old (and defective) in relation to a new beginning for him, suggests that it becomes a symbol of his right to act as a guerrilla rebel, thus solidifying his change in status from doctor to political agent. What is more, Che's gun also signifies his belonging to a community of men that serve as catalysts for change through their participation in the revolution. Thus, it is "loaded" with significance for Che and comes to represent the combination of a "sense of community, solidarity, and of male pride" (Mallon 197).

Che's delight in the combative aspects of the revolution becomes clear when after the rebel army's victory in the battle of La Plata, the second of the insurgency; he wears a helmet he stole from one of the members of the Batista Army as a "trophy" symbolic of this triumph (*Pasajes* 19). Che's prideful behavior almost gets him killed, for in seeing the enemy helmet and hearing Che approach the rebel army's camp, Camilo Cienfuegos, a man Che later describes as one of the best guerrilla fighters in the rebel army, shoots at him and luckily misses because his weapon misfired due to his recent cleaning of it (19). Che seems to describe such experiences as personal milestones that boost his confidence and reassure him of his "right" to participate in the revolution as well as mark his individualistic approach to revolution. A view of the revolution as a performance and as a sequence of personal gains is a central aspect of bourgeois masculinity.

Obviously, such scenes emphasize Che's ostensible internalization of the bourgeois ideas and practices that formed him. Nevertheless, as I will point out shortly, the "internalization" of ideology never *fully* succeeds for there is always, according to Zizek, a kernel of the *real* – the present reality – left over which allows the opportunity for the subversion of the hegemonic norm for masculine conduct (*The Sublime Object* 43).

The most significant personal victory for Che is when Fidel, the omnipresent leader in his rebel narrative, names him *Comandante* in recognition of his leadership skills. Although prior to this, Fidel had given Che permission over other members in the rebel army to act as leader of a quadrant on the mountain, this new title concretizes his shift from guerrilla fighter to rebel leader: "La dosis de vanidad que tenemos dentro, hizo que me sintiera el hombre más orgulloso de la tierra ese día. El símbolo de mi nombramiento, una pequeña estrella, me fue dada por Celia junto con uno de los relojes de pulsera que habían encargado a Manzanillo" (*Pasajes* 106).

Perhaps more than the star that Che wears on his beret, now a symbol of his status as *Comandante*, is Fidel's public recognition of his noteworthy qualities and capacities to help him to lead the rebel army to victory and what Che's change in status from an Argentine doctor to an international rebel leader, a *Comandante*, implies for the impression others within the group have of him. Beneath Che's insecurities lies a desire to perform (triumphantly) as a guerrilla rebel in part for his own satisfaction but mostly to gain the respect and recognition of others. If in its conventional form "manhood is demonstrated for other men's approval" in taking pride in the symbols associated with his

right to act as guerrilla fighter and leader on the mountain, Che seems to align himself with such a paradigm in this instance (Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia" 61).

Che also mentions the rebel army's initial habit of viewing the revolution according to a bourgeois code of manhood and the consequences such an approach, which promotes a false sense of security in the group's combat-related capacities, has for the rebels. This vision is observed in the contradiction between the heroic aspirations that stem from the guerrilla fighters' immediate victories in the battles of Alegría de Pío and La Plata, the first two conflicts of the insurgency, and their realization that such triumphs do not exemplify their skills in armed combat but emphasize instead a need to build themselves up in a different way that incorporates survival "an emotionally driven force" that places basic human needs and self-protection at its center in place of heroic actions, as a key component in the construction of the guerrilla rebel (Seidler, *Transforming Masculinities* 127).

The rebels' initial instinct to act according to a bourgeois male code that views masculinity as a performance, blinds them to the reality of their situation on the mountain, the fact that the "hombres de ciudad, no estaban acostumbrados a verse frente a las penas del monte y no sabían vencerlas" (*Pasajes* 87). Such a reality becomes clear when the raw recruits directly face the harsh nature of life on the mountain (i.e. insufficient food, drink, and tools necessary to maintain proper health and hygiene), and accordingly their combat-related anxieties begin to surface: "las condiciones de la lucha eran muy duras, pero las condiciones morales lo eran mucho más todavía y se vivía bajo la impresión del continuo asedio" (42). What this "duro aprendizaje del hombre de ciudad" seems to point out is that key to a rebel victory is not to win a couple of battles

by chance, but to demonstrate a capacity to survive in spite of the harshness of the mountain and to work together as a group to develop the skills necessary for their livelihood in this space (Pogolotti 153). Only those that realized this would see the fight through to the end, according to Che, an awareness that would also eventually earn them a spot in the revolutionary vanguard: "los que quedaran y resistieran las primeras pruebas se acostumbrarían a la suciedad, a la falta de agua, de comida, de techo, de seguridad y a vivir continuamente confiando sólo en el fusil y amparados en la cohesión y resistencia del pequeño núcleo guerrillero" (*Pasajes* 30).

The rebel army's understanding that in order to triumph, men must first build themselves up in a different way that instead of pushing men to define themselves according to a traditional view of manhood that only seems to find merit in victory and heroic acts, promotes change through revolution, the only path to the construction of a better future. This realization exposes the fissures that exist within the bourgeois male code as well as provides the platform for change for, as Judith Butler contends, transformations only occur when the norms are "insistently constituted, contested, and negotiated" (*Bodies that Matter* 76).

As observed until now, the rebel army wavers between a bourgeois code of manhood that tempted men to strive to become heroes and a new model from the mountain that encouraged the guerrilla rebels to focus on their roles as part of a collective group carrying out a significant mission. Che employs what Diana Sorensen calls a "pedagogy of mistakes" by showing the ups and downs, the "instability between gain and loss, belonging and alienation" of the revolutionary process to prove how men change through the combination of their participation in the revolution and development of a

keen self-awareness (*A Turbulent Decade* 32, 37). In what follows, I evaluate how Che and the rebel army put the new self-awareness and resultant collective aspirations they begin to acquire on the mountain to work by revising the bourgeois ideas of the family, knowledge, and the future to fit the new socialist society in formation. They do this by replacing the family, which is firmly rooted in the bourgeois concepts of heterosexuality and reproduction, with a brotherhood of men that uses education as a tool to ensure not a future based on the past, but one that will aim to construct a horizontal society fixed upon the idea of equality for all (Sorensen, "Masculinidades ansiosas" 135).

The Brotherhood of Men

If in the initial phase of the fight from the mountain, the guerrilla rebels experience a series of ups and downs related to their coincidental "triumphs" and ensuing realization of an urgent need for change, the next phase of their experience is defined by a constructive self-awareness catalyzed by the cohesion of individuals into a collective body of men: "Al cumplirse dos meses del desembarco del <<*Granma*>>, estaba un grupo homogéneo reunido [...] nos sentíamos más fuertes y con mejor ánimo que nunca" (*Pasajes* 27). Such a shift is not only evidenced in the union of the members of the group, but also in Che's embrace of the first person plural in his description of the rebel army, which seems to indicate a break with the individual authoritative "I" typical of the bourgeois subject. The change in the position from which Che speaks is significant, for as Ileana Rodríguez submits, the "I" in revolutionary texts is representative of bourgeois authority and individualism while the collective "we" represents an attempt to break away from the bourgeois model ("Conservadurismo y disensión" 773).

More in tune to one another and to the needs of the peasant communities on the mountain (i.e., education and healthcare) the rebels develop strong fraternal bonds with one another. The view of the rebel army as a collective contra-hegemonic force also facilitates the recruitment of some peasants for the revolution: "La guerrilla y el campesinado se iban fundiendo en una sola masa, sin que nadie pueda decir en qué momento del largo camino se produjo, en qué momento se hizo íntimamente verídico lo proclamado y fuimos parte del campesinado" (*Pasajes* 65). The rebel group, now larger and more disciplined, not only possesses the look of a capable guerrilla force but performs it as well.

Che and the other rebels do not realize how much they have changed since their arrival several months prior until a group of fifty replacement revolutionaries led by Jorge Sotús, an inexperienced rebel leader that Che identifies as his direct nemesis on the mountain for his harsh criticism of Che for his Argentine nationality, arrive on the Maestra to fight alongside them.[8] The original group of rebels that arrived in *El Granma* was quickly humbled by the harshness of the mountain, yet a double challenge lie ahead for the new recruits. They are not only required to build themselves up in relation to the mountain, but are compared to the already experienced "barbudos" as well (63). Likewise, upon observing the pristine condition of the replacement revolutionaries, Che notices stunning differences between the two groups: "Era notable la diferencia entre la

[8] Che, through his climbing of the revolutionary hierarchy (i.e. doctor to *Comandante*) and demonstration of a capacity to adapt to the conditions on the mountain in spite of his asthmatic condition and little practical experience as a guerrilla rebel, presents himself as a man that is capable of change and worthy of his status as an exemplary leader for others. Quite the opposite, Jorge Sotús epitomizes the antithesis of the model of the guerrilla rebel Che seeks to promote in his text. Though Fidel Castro places Sotús in charge of a group of rebels on the mountain, said "rebel leader" struggles to walk up the mountain – Che explains that he was "uno de los que peor lo hacía y se quedaba constantemente atrás" – he has a poor attitude, and what is more, he ends up becoming a traitor to the revolution when he travels to Miami where he reveals crucial information regarding the fight from the mountain (*Pasajes* 49-50).

gente barbuda, con sus mochilas hechas de cualquier cosa y atadas como pudieran y los nuevos soldados, con sus uniformes todavía limpios, mochilas iguales y pulcras y las caras rasuradas" (63-64).

Che's comparison of the cleanly shaven men with their unsoiled clothing and perfectly proportioned backpacks to the dirty, bearded and rugged rebel army from the mountain should be understood both in visual and symbolic terms. The dirt of the mountain for Che seems to have washed him and the other members of the original group of the pristine bourgeois male code of which the new recruits will now have to cleanse themselves. Che's idea that on the mountain, men come together to "purify" themselves of their former bourgeois ways culminates in Che's assertion that "la revolución limpia a los hombres, los mejora como el agricultor experimentado corrige los defectos de la planta e intensifica las buenas cualidades" (124). The idea of revolution as a process of purification would be in line with the guerrilla rebel's gradual conversion into an iron-willed example, a masculine ideal that other men would strive to live up to and that would replace the bourgeois standard of man.

If the rebels arrive on the Maestra facing physical, emotional and ideological challenges, through their participation in the revolution they have consciously and consistently built themselves and their bodies up into sources of physical and moral strength. They have, ironically, attempted to rid themselves of the pure, a "defect" of the past, and in its place have embraced the impure, which becomes a symbol of the destabilized bourgeois norm. In *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982), Julia Kristeva establishes a connection between the pure (the norm) and the impure or abject,

that which destabilizes the norm for it both attracts and repulses the subject (77-87).[9] For Che, the inverse is true in Cuba for the pure takes the place of the abject and the impure as a catalyst for change becomes the key to his building himself up according to a different code of manhood from the mountain.

Another way that Che addresses the changes the rebel army has undergone while on the mountain is by distancing this group, which has thus far demonstrated a constant moving forward, to the stagnancy and arrogance of the Batista Army. If at the start of the revolution, despite their initial victories in Alegría de Pío and La Plata, the opponent intimidates the anxiety-ridden guerrillas because of the large number of soldiers and their experience in combat, as the rebel army gains force through their newly erected brotherhood of men, the roles of the two groups become inverted.

Che foregrounds the lazy, disloyal and uninterested nature of the Batista Army. Instead of preparing themselves for the fight – they seem blinded by their ostensible force as a military group and thus eschew the possibility of a rebel army victory – they eat, gossip, and wait motionless and unconscious of their actions for the rebel army to attack. "Los guardias," Che comments, "se lo pasaban en el cuartel, que solamente comían sin actuar, que hacían recorridos sin importancia; manifiesto que enfáticamente que había que liquidar a todos los rebeldes" (*Pasajes* 16). The inactivity of the Batista Army would, without a doubt, allow for the eventual triumph of the rebel army, and sharply contrasts the three key components in Che's *foco* theory that he develops after the Cuban Revolution based on his experiences on the Sierra Maestra that appear in the closing chapter of *Pasajes*: constant mobility, constant mistrust, and constant vigilance (124).

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[9] In my analysis of Che's Bolivian diary, the juxtaposition of pure and impure recuperates its traditional value – the pure (norm) the impure (abject) as Che realizes that the abject manifests itself in him in the form of physical, moral, and emotional demands, resulting in his self-interpreted "fall".

In clearly marking the fundamental differences between the rebel army, which has demonstrated a capacity and willingness to embrace change, and the Batista Army's over-confident nature and immobility (both literal and symbolic), Che puts into question the stability of the bourgeois code of manhood that on the surface is strict and "clearly out of reach for most men," yet is paradoxically weak and unstable for it allows for a rebel victory (Alsop 143). The comparison between the Army and the rebels is not merely military, it is also a difference in the code of male conduct: "siempre contrastaba nuestra actitud con los heridos y la del Ejército, que no sólo asesinaba a nuestros heridos sino que abandonaba a los suyos" (*Pasajes* 14). If the Batista Army exhibits indifference in matters related to the lives of others, the rebel army serves the people and approaches change in a caring, protective and productive manner. In outlining these core political and ideological differences between his and the enemy group, Che suggests that while the bourgeois State acts only when commanded and as a means to protect private property, socialism protects, serves, and acts according to the needs of the people.[10]

The model of manhood that comes out of the rebel army is a collective model of male camaraderie that rather than find its core in the bourgeois family is linked to "un espíritu de compañerismo y fusión de los ideales socialistas de la revolución con un imaginario político-simbólico fundado en nociones de liberación y de impugnación del orden existente" (Sorensen, "Masculinidades ansiosas" 35). The mountain, then, becomes the site where bourgeois ideas are broken down and tested by the experiences of the guerrillas. Such a view of said geography affects the relationship that develops between men. Rather than build themselves up in relation to women or the competition

[10] Such an approach to the revolution is rooted in what Ileana Rodríguez calls "patriotic love" or "the homosocial love of men for men and of men for their country" (*Women, Guerrillas & Love* 19).

between men for a woman as observed in the city, the rebels on the mountain unite their forces and work together towards a common socio-political goal.

Education

Key to the building up of a future rooted in socialism is education through self, community and political awareness. Che's use for learning on the mountain is double-aimed. It not only serves as a tool to educate the rebel army and peasant masses on the Maestra, but also provides the platform from which he will outline his revolutionary project based on agrarian reform, literacy campaigns, and plans for the future by providing concrete examples of individuals that change as a result of their involvement in the revolution.[11]

Che educates the guerrilla rebels through the implementation of *tertulias*. Viewed as discussion meetings, the *tertulias* focus on avant-garde theory and praxis aimed at strategizing and improving revolutionary tactics. In initiating such discussions, Che hopes to encourage rebels to think critically about the responsibility of the guerrilla fighter and the rebel army in carrying out the revolution. Self-criticism is necessary for change to take place during the revolution as well as becomes a central quality in the *new man* after the triumph of the revolution.

Ironically, the *tertulia* also provides some men with the opportunity to embellish the truth in order to appear more valiant in front of their peers. Che, who meticulously records the number of deaths for both the enemy and rebel groups, is quick to point out that the only means to combat the *macho* tendency to overemphasize heroic deeds is to appoint people in the rebel army to act as scribes that record facts, occurrences, deaths

[11] See "Se gesta una traición," chapter in which Che outlines the various components of his revolutionary project (*Pasajes* 100-106).

and other details of significance: "aprendimos claramente que los datos deben ser avalados por varias personas [...] ya que la preocupación por la verdad fue siempre tema central de las informaciones del Ejército Rebelde y se trataba de infundir en los compañeros el respeto profundo por ella y el sentido de lo necesario que era anteponerla a cualquier ventaja transitoria" (*Pasajes* 84).

This is not the first instance in which Che stresses the importance of self-criticism and truth-telling as critical components in narrating the revolution. In the prologue to *Pasajes*, Che, aware that he provides a first-person account of the Cuban Revolution in the context of a triumphant revolution, states that in writing his text, he consciously sought objectivity. Only in such terms does Che invite others to complement his text with different perspectives: "que se haga una autocrítica lo más seria posible para quitar de allí toda palabra que no se refiera a un hecho estrictamente cierto, o en cuya certeza no tenga el autor una plena confianza" (6). With such statements, Che expresses a desire to convert the individual-centered heroic discourse of the bourgeois man that "flaunts [his] subjectivity" simply to gain the approval of others into a group of men that is conscious of this human flaw and that seeks to correct it by employing a "will to truth that is forward looking and vigilant" (Sorensen, *A Turbulent Decade* 36, 31).

With the help of fellow revolutionary Camilo Cienfuegos, Che also addresses the educational needs of the peasant communities on the Maestra by creating *Ciudad Escolar*. Unlike educational institutions in the city that are saturated with bourgeois ideology and cater only to the ruling class, *Ciudad Escolar* does not exclude anyone. Che even allows Eutimio Guerra's children, a peasant that he frequently points to in *Pasajes* as a counter-example of a revolutionary for his attempts to kill Fidel Castro and

failure to comply with the revolutionary code of conduct, to attend his revolutionary institution.[12] Thus, the mountain not only serves as a type of training camp for the guerrilla rebel, but it becomes a school for the guerrilla fighters and peasants living there. At the core of Che's educational message lies his development of a type of socialist humanism that suggests that the "progress of humanity" depends on self-criticism, knowledge and an awareness of the need for change (Novack 123).

Learning is not only found in books in *Pasajes*; Che also provides concrete examples of men – "los retratos de los combatientes" – that have embraced the fundamental values mentioned above as a platform for change and thus earn Che's mention of them in his historical text (Iznaga Beira 155).[13] Let me take Banderas as a first example. When Che met this peasant, he was an undisciplined and stubborn revolutionary that demonstrated little capacity to alter his ways and to share his land for the sake of the revolution. Yet through his discussions with Che on the importance of land reform and communal land ownership, Banderas eventually realized his errors and became what Che calls an "agrarian revolutionary" (*Pasajes* 90). After Banderas died in combat, Che contends that had he lived, he would have accepted the revolution's goal of

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[12] Eutimio Guerra was a peasant that initially acted as a guide for the rebel army on the Sierra Maestra and pretended to support the goals of the revolution, but was actually hired as a spy for the Batista Army. His task during the revolution was clear: to exterminate Fidel Castro and to give up the location of the rebels on the mountain. While Guerra never succeeded in killing Castro and the location of the rebel army remained a secret, he was eventually executed and shamed in Che's account of the Cuban Revolution. Nevertheless, when asked if the revolution, or the main actors in this insurgency, would grant him one dying wish, he requested that the members of the rebel army care for his children. That is exactly what this group pledged to do, according to Che's analysis of the situation: "La revolución cumplió. El de Eutimio Guerra es un nombre que ahora resurge al recuerdo de estas notas, pero que ya ha sido olvidado quizás hasta por sus hijos; éstos van con otro nombre a una de las tantas escuelas y reciben el tratamiento de todos los hijos del pueblo, preparándose para una vida mejor, pero algún día tendrán que saber que su padre fue ajusticiado por el poder revolucionario debido a su traición" (40).

[13] Other men that Che mentions as exemplary guerrilla rebels include Frank País, a rebel leader from the city that he describes as a national hero and martyr for his dedication to the revolution, and Camilo Cienfuegos, a diehard revolutionary, quality that is best portrayed in his affirmation "aquí no se rinde nadie" when he and the other rebels find themselves in a life-threatening situation on the Maestra and some threaten to abandon the fight (*Pasajes* 38, 10).

land reform and served as an ambassador for change on the mountain. Banderas was "un luchador de vanguardia en el campo de la producción agrícola [...] Era un campesino despierto que sabía del valor de contribuir con su propio esfuerzo a escribir un pedazo de historia" (90).

Julio Zenón Acosta, an illiterate peasant that was Che's first pupil on the mountain, is another example of an agrarian revolutionary. Che depicts Acosta as an exemplary man that exercises self-discipline and is driven by his passion for learning. Despite his age – Acosta was forty-five years old when Che met him – Che describes him as "uno de los que más insistían en la teoría de la iluminación [...] con mucho empeño, sin considerar los años pasados sino lo que quedaba por hacer, Julio Zenón se había dado a la tarea de alfabetizarse" (32). In his embrace for education and change, Julio Zenón Acosta becomes for Che "un hombre orquesta de aquellos tiempos" (32). In other words, Zenón Acosta as a guerrilla rebel and social reformist is one of the many individuals that contribute to the building up of a new future through socialism.[14]

Another such rebel is Che Guevara's friend Guatemalan Julio Roberto Cáceres Valle, or "El Patojo," as Che refers to him, to whom Che dedicates the final chapter of *Pasajes*. In his retelling of "El Patojo's" experiences as a revolutionary and drive and determination to participate in the restructuring of Latin American societies through political action, Che pinpoints the aspects of what will also represent the crux of his *foco*

[14] In *Guerra de guerrillas*, Che comments on the significant role of the guerrilla not only as a model man as evidenced in his own experiences as a guerrilla rebel, but also as an ideologically mature subject: "El guerrillero, como reformador social, no sólo debe constituir un ejemplo en cuanto a su vida, sino que también debe orientar constantemente en los problemas ideológicos, con lo que sabe o con lo que pretende hacer en determinado momento y, además, con lo que va aprendiendo en el transcurso de los meses o años de la guerra" (69).

theory.[15] Also, through El Patojo's example, Che highlights some of the qualities in individuals that could act as barriers in the carrying out of the revolution.

El Patojo, similar to Che, had not been trained in the tactics of guerrilla warfare and possessed little theoretical knowledge on revolution. Yet his desire to take part in the construction of a new Latin America moved him to join the revolutionary fight first from Guatemala and later in Cuba. In order to maintain the predominantly national status of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, who had allowed Che to participate in the insurgency, denied El Patojo such a right (123).[16] After Castro's rejection, El Patojo returned to his native Guatemala to realize his revolutionary goals. Before his departure, Che, by now a rebel leader, outlined three strict rules of the guerrilla fight he learned through his experiences on the Maestra and that in their combination would establish the basis of his *foco* theory. Back in Guatemala, El Patojo violated each and every one of the three rules of clandestine life and died as a consequence (125).[17]

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[15] The *foco* theory, as Che establishes in *Guerra de guerrillas* (1963), describes the central role of the fast-moving informal politico-military groups formed on the mountain during revolution in isolation from society and outside of and in opposition to the State. The main duties of this group were to create the conditions necessary for revolution, to form relationships with and to gain the support of the peasant and indigenous populations on the mountain, and to serve as an engine for change during revolution by implementing agrarian reforms, carrying out education campaigns, and working consciously to construct a new future in socialism.

[16] Che comments: "Ya he dicho que Fidel no quiso traerlo, no por ninguna cualidad negativa suya sino por no hacer de nuestro Ejército un mosaico de nacionalidades" (123). Fidel Castro seems to apply a double standard when faced with the question of internationalizing the revolutionary fight. He justifies Che's participation by appointing him as the doctor of the rebel army, even though it becomes clear from the onset that Che was a guerrilla rebel from the start. Though Che ends up gaining more recognition after the success of the revolution than any of the national insurgents, Castro stands by his plan to leave the armed action on the mountain in the hands of the Cuban rebels.

[17] Che's final moments as a revolutionary would not come until years later during his participation in the Bolivian insurgency of the late 1960s as observed in my analysis of Che's Bolivian diary, yet one could assume that such characteristics may have contributed to his difficulties in the high mountain region of Bolivia. In his attempt to apply theories based on his experiences on the Sierra Maestra in Cuba to such a distinct geographical region, Che faced many of the same difficulties he outlines here in his reference to "El Patojo's" demise.

What Che foregrounds with men that for him represent the catalysts of the new future in socialism (and this point too is one that will be central to his *foco* theory) is that the revolution is a process of social change that reflects the dynamics of the socialist society (*El socialismo y el hombre nuevo* 9). The revolution (and consequently its participants) then, has two main responsibilities: to correct the errors of the past and to construct a new future (Sorensen, *A Turbulent Decade* 136).

In *Pasajes* there is an aspiration to change – on individual and collective levels – and the guerrilla rebel plays a crucial role in the process. In the push to construct the rebel army in isolation from society, the guerrilla rebels simultaneously disrupt the previously established standard of a bourgeois masculinity and gain agency through a collective experience on the mountain. They "intervene in the name of transformation" and convert "what has become settled knowledge and knowable reality" through self-awareness, mobility and change into the beginning of a new male code reflective of the fight for survival, the relationships between men, and the project of the revolution that come together on the mountain (Butler, *Undoing Gender* 27). What the conscious yet contradictory drive to change seems to imply is that gender codes are "fluid, malleable" and thus vulnerable to change (McDowell 24).

Such a point becomes particularly evident when Che continues to form a new standard for rebels on the mountain in *El diario del Che en Bolivia.* If in *Pasajes* Che embraces a transitional model that both incorporates and refutes bourgeois practices and ideals, in *El diario*, a journal that recounts the rebel army's futile efforts to implement Che's *foco* theory in the high mountain region of the Andes in Bolivia, Che unconsciously proposes a code of masculinity that embeds the feminine by gradually

substituting the teleological and political aims of *Pasajes* with an emphasis on the body and its functions, needs, and ailments (i.e., food, the scatological, sickness).

The Arrival in Bolivia

On November 7, 1966, Che Guevara alongside Cuban guerrilla rebels Harry Villegas ("Pombo"), Carlos Coello ("Tuma"), Alberto Fernández de Ocba ("Pacho") and approximately thirteen others arrived in Bolivia. Che's decision to travel to Bolivia, a country conveniently located at the heart of South America, is clearly outlined in his "Mensaje a la Tricontinental" (1966). In it Che attacked North American domination and affirmed that the only weapon against capitalism was an intercontinental revolution; the creation of two or three Vietnams: "El imperialismo es un sistema mundial, última etapa del capitalismo, y [...] hay que batirlo en una gran confrontación mundial. La finalidad estratégica de esa lucha debe ser la destrucción del imperialismo [...] el elemento fundamental de esa finalidad estratégica será [...] una Revolución Socialista".[18] Che's "Mensaje" disproves rumors that imply that he traveled to Bolivia to satisfy his adventurous spirit by participating in yet another revolution and suggests instead that Bolivia was the first step in his plan to arm a continental war against imperialism.[19]

Prior to traveling to Bolivia, Che had established contact with rebels aligned at the time with the Communist Party of Bolivia (PCB) that seemed willing to support his plan. Yet, upon his arrival there, several issues affected his ability to build up a collective unity of guerrilla rebels (*El diario* 40). Apart from his unfamiliarity with the region, the harsh weather conditions, bad maps and his difficulty in gaining the support of the already

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[18] See http://www.filosofia.org/hem/dep/cri/ri12094.htm.

[19] See Martin Ebon's *Che: The Making of a Legend* (1969), Richard Harris', *Death of a Revolutionary: Che Guevara's Last Mission* (1970), Alma Guillermoprieto's "The Harsh Angel" (2001), and Jon Lee Anderson's *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* (1997).

politicized Bolivian peasant mass, Che and Mario Monje, the current head of the PCB, had irreconcilable political differences that resulted in Che's taking over as leader of the fight and Monje's abandonment of the revolutionary project.[20] What is more, and Che was aware of this as well, he was not only up against the US trained Bolivian army, but U.S. Special Forces that were formed and trained by the CIA also came in "to provide on the spot training in counter-guerrilla operations to a hand-picked group of Bolivian Rangers" (Klare 178). It was under these less than favorable conditions that Che initiated the fight in Bolivia. How will such conditions affect the way Che writes revolution from Bolivia and what will this imply for the code of manhood from the mountain?

Che's Bolivian diary shows a desire to pick up where *Pasajes* left off. Once in Bolivia, Che continued to hold *tertulias* with pedagogic aims in which he outlined key components of his established *foco* theory as well as pointed to the qualities that the

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[20] If Che hoped to build up the revolutionary vanguard with this same international spirit, beginning with the Cubans that followed him there and later incorporating Bolivians, Peruvians, and rebels of other nationalities in the fight, Monje sought to create a national movement and he envisioned a revolutionary vanguard comprised primarily of Bolivian guerrilla rebels and peasants (*El diario* 59). As a result of their conflicting views, Monje ceded his leadership position and returned to La Paz where he actively worked to sabotage Che's movement from the mountain (Peredo 31). Monje hardly had a choice for Che concluded his initial conversation with the Bolivian leader in affirming: "El jefe militar sería yo y no aceptaba ambigüedades en esto" (*El diario* 60).

Bolivian Inti Peredo's recollection of this conversation is even more detailed than Che's. In his synopsis of the words exchanged between the leaders that day, Peredo recalls that Che justified his decision to assume leadership of the movement by bringing to the fore his former experience as a rebel leader and the historical circumstances that led him there: "Las circunstancias históricas me han situado en determinado lugar. Tengo una experiencia militar que tú no tienes. Tú no has participado en ninguna acción [...] yo ya estoy aquí y de aquí sólo me sacan muerto [...] la falsa modestia no nos conduce a nada" (31-32).

Although a reading of these statements attune to a bourgeois code of manhood would link Che's unwavering determination to lead the revolution in Bolivia to his overconfidence and unwillingness to cooperate with others, when observed in the context in which they were said, it seems to make sense. Che, an international rebel leader in the successful Cuban insurgency that had developed a seemingly stable theory (*foco* theory) on how to carry out a revolutionary insurgency implementing a revolutionary vanguard that appealed to the peasant masses on the mountain, sought to apply his former experience as a guerrilla rebel and leader in Bolivia. This is not a question of *machismo*, but rather Che's desire to address the historical needs and demands that presented themselves in Bolivia at such a crucial moment of the Cold War in which the United States had created ideological battlefields in other countries as witnessed with the Bay of Pigs (1961) in Cuba and the ongoing support of the Vietnam War (1959-1975).

guerrilla rebels should aspire to acquire – self-discipline, unity, an appreciation for education and constant mobility. In such meetings, Che also assigned specific tasks to the participants, although they often failed to comply, and strove to outline a plan of action for the days to follow (51, 65, 66).

Despite Che's plan for Bolivia, he could not ignore the problems that surfaced on a political level and as a consequence, the teleological end he initially sought to carry over from *Pasajes* is replaced with an inner monologue that reveals his anxieties related to the fight and the group, which never achieves the unity observed in the Cuban rebel army towards the end of *Pasajes*. On April 22, 1967, the day that Che realized that the Bolivian Army knew of their location, knowledge that eventually resulted in the death and capture of several rebels, Che wrote the following: "El balance de la acción es negativo, indisciplina e imprevisión por un lado, la pérdida (aunque espero transitoria) de un hombre, por otro; mercancía que pagamos y no llevamos y, por ultimo, la pérdida de un paquete de dólares que se me cayó de la bolsa de Pombo, son los resultados de la acción [...] falta mucho para hacer de esto una fuerza combatiente aunque la moral es bastante alta" (131).

Six months into the fight, in spite of Che's ultimate goal to "formar el núcleo ejemplo que sea de acero," he and the guerrilla rebels had not entered the combative phase of the revolution and had yet to prove their exemplary status (65). To add to their immobility, which should not be associated with the persistent self-imposed idleness of Batista's Army in *Pasajes*, but to their unfamiliarity with the region, lack of communication with the peasants and bad maps, Che and his men become perpetually lost (67, 163, 173). The feeling of being lost dictates every aspect of their mission in

Bolivia from where they sleep at night to what they eat and drink. If in *Pasajes,* learning to survive on the mountain was only one aspect of the revolution, in Bolivia it emerges as the central focus precisely because of the rebel army's difficulty in applying Che's *foco* theory to the high mountain region of the Andes. Thus, what begins as a revolutionary project transforms into a mission for survival.

Such a change in the initial plan shifts the focus of Che's writing as well. The activities of the day, which are seldom related to a political act that aims to alter the socio-political and economic structures through revolution, begin to center on the body and as a result, the politics of revolution presented in *Pasajes* is minimized. Why is the surfacing of the body significant and how will Che's shift from a discourse centered on political action to one that is preoccupied with the body, an entity that is bound up with questions of "emotions, sensations [and] experiences" affect Che's revision of the code of manhood that he began to construct in the Sierra Maestra (Grosz, "Refiguring Bodies" 50)?

The Body: the Threshold of Politics

The combination of the rebel army's unpreparedness, the callous conditions of life on the mountain and the lack of discipline of the group contributed to the issues that began to come forth from the start in Bolivia and that culminated in an overwhelming feeling of being lost on the mountain. The rebels' inconsistent access to sustenance oftentimes determines the course of the mission, for the rebels' quest to satisfy their physiological needs overtakes the combat-related aspects of the fight. Che covers up his anxiety related to the scarcity of food and drink with repetitive "small talk" centered on what the rebels eat (or not) on each particular day: "La comida: 3 pajaritos y ½ y el resto

del palmito, a partir de mañana, lata pelada, a un tercio por cabeza" (*El diario* 95), "queda comida para 5 días, pero muy escasa" (140), "se mató un caballo y se comió su carne generosamente" (109-110), and "se comió la penúltima comida, muy pobre, sólo se cazó una perdiz" (141).

It appears that Che's mention of the "menú del día" in the examples above is intentional. Yet these lines, which serve as the concluding words to Che's journal entries, are surrounded by other statements that signal a need to uncover the meaning behind Che's food-centered discourse: "la gente está cada vez más desanimada" (95), "murieron dos guerrilleros" (109), and "estamos pues en el arroyo del Congri, que no figura en el mapa" (141). Che's dissociation of the gastronomy of the mountain and his frustrations related to what he appears afraid to reveal leads me to believe that his emphasis on food, more than his mere superficial reference to it, serves to divert attention away from the real (repressed) "noticias del día" or "news of the day": the men's morale is low, guerrilla rebels are dying, and the vanguard continues to struggle with inaccurate maps (110).

By allowing his preoccupations with food to dominate the diary, Che seeks to "offer us the social reality itself as an escape from some traumatic, real kernel" (Zizek, *The Sublime Object* 45). What is the "traumatic, real kernel" or the repressed topic that Che tries to cover up? His discussion of basic human needs – survival versus the strengthening of the body witnessed in *Pasajes* – seeks to conceal the absence of politics; Che's drifting away from the utopian-centered discourse that he develops in *Pasajes* and the way in which such a change affects him and the other guerrilla rebels.

The rebels' overwhelming preoccupation with food is clearly evidenced when the Bolivian Army interrupts one of their routine hunts for food with an air raid. Rather than pick up their weapons, the guerrilla fighters continue their search and consume their findings prior to moving on: "Cuando estábamos fuera del camino, ocupados en recoger frijoles, sonaron descargas cerca y, poco después, vimos la aviación <<bombardeándonos ferozmente>>, pero como a 2 o 3 Kms." (*El diario* 146). Instead of addressing the issue at hand – the enemy Army's knowledge of the rebels' approximate location and ensuing attempt to wipe them out –, a turn of events certainly worthy of the rebel leader's attention, Che recognizes the guerrilla rebels' search for food as the important action of the day. This means that the needs of the body take precedence over a "political act proper" that consciously fights to derail existing bourgeois institutions (Zizek, *The Ticklish Subject* 199).

The shift to a non-ideological food-centered discourse is a significant one for it allows the body, and not political action, to determine rebel actions in Bolivia. The only common thread that seems to keep the relationships between men intact (or push them apart) is their collective obsession with serving the needs of their bodies, necessities they are scarcely able to address due to the lack of sustenance on the mountain.

Che addresses such a shift and seeks to correct it in a pseudo-*tertulia* he leads in which he addresses men's obsession with finding and consuming food not only as the motivating force behind their actions but as the root of the growing antagonism among the members of the group: "Reuní a todo el mundo y les tiré una descarga sobre los problemas confrontados; fundamentalmente el de la comida, haciendo críticas a Benigno por comerse una lata y negarlo; Urbano por comerse un charqui a escondidas y Aniceto

por su afán de colaborar en todo lo que sea comida y renuncia a hacerlo cuando se trata de otra cosa" (*El diario* 146). The significant point here is not the fact that food has transformed into an internal enemy that foments dishonesty and underhanded behavior in men, thus resulting in the gradual deterioration of the rebel army. Che's use of the *tertulia,* a meeting previously used to educate the rebel army on the goals of the revolution to scold men for their food-related "crimes" represents an unwanted moving away from the desired political focus of the mission.

In realizing this, Che recurs to a tactic he used during his days as *Fernando Sacamuelas* on the Maestra – "psychological anesthesia" – to regain control of the mission and his men. He publicly humiliates el Moro by denying him a place in the revolutionary vanguard for his food-related weaknesses (116) and calls Benigno's actions dishonorable in front of the entire group, a statement that results in the rebel's "crisis de llanto" (212). While such a tactic may have worked in Cuba, Che's stripping Moro of his title and shaming of Benigno in front of peers only seems to further pry open their insecurities and stress their overall frustration with the fight and with themselves.

Due to the rebels' long periods of starvation, when they do finally have the opportunity to eat, they tend to gorge themselves and often suffer severe corporal consequences. On one particular day, after feasting on pork, rice, butter, and other food items they received from a peasant in the area, Che and the others experience what he humorously describes as "un día de eruptos, pedos y vómitos y diarreas; un verdadero concierto de órgano" (145). Though Che seeks to make light of the situation by calling it a true "concert of the organs," a move that Butler calls "parody" as a "politics of despair" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 146) the result of Che's overindulgence is particularly

humiliating: he soils his pants and his fellow comrades have to medicate, change, and carry him up the mountain: "Se me inició un cólico fortísimo con vómitos y diarrea. Me lo cortaron con demerol y perdí la noción de todo mientras me llevaban en hamaca; cuando desperté estaba muy aliviado pero cagado como un niño de pecho. Me prestaron un pantalón, pero sin agua, hiedo a mierda a una legua" (*El diario* 146).

The juxtaposition of food, that which is pure and nourishing, and feces, the impure or contaminated, what René Prieto calls a "kinship of contraries," is significant (108). Che's violent purging of the very food that ensures his livelihood on the mountain is not only representative of his consequent dependency on others – a realization that he indicates by comparing himself to a "niño de pecho," an infant – but also implies the breaking down of the vision of his body as an autonomous fortress as well as his cleansing himself of the former bourgeois code of manhood. If for Kristeva, fecal matter "signifies [...] what never ceases to separate a body in a state of permanent loss in order to become *autonomous, distinct* from the mixtures, alterations, and decay that run through it" then for Che, food, the only means for survival on the mountain, also exposes his deepest anxieties and consequently forces the surfacing of an aspect of the revolution he silenced in *Pasajes* (108).

In this moment, Che's body becomes the host upon which the "impossibilities" the *feminine* characteristics he consciously left out of the model of manhood outlined in *Pasajes* manifest themselves in his body and thus seep through the cracks of his unedited journal. Che's body as a contact zone of the "good" and the "bad," the "masculine" and the "feminine," the "real" and the "illusionary," divulges other political ontologies of the

body (i.e. male vulnerability, dependence on others, the scatological) during the revolution (146).

If in *Pasajes,* Che associates the revolution with a self-induced process of purification that facilitates the guerrilla rebel's shedding of his bourgeois baggage (although this never completely occurs) and his building up of himself according to a different male code, the process of purification evidenced in the diary is much different. Che's purging of the feasts of food that nourish him in the form of fecal matter is, ironically, both self-imposed and involuntary and seems to emphasize Che's lack of control of his body on two levels: what he puts into it and what comes out of it.

What Che describes above as a temporary lapse in control of his body, a slip that results in his portrayal of himself as a "fallen object" (*El diario* 99), becomes chronic and thus unavoidable when in addition to his food-related illnesses, his asthmatic condition continues to persist in Bolivia and begins to dictate what he can or cannot do on the mountain – sleep, eat, move on his own, search for medicines – (170, 172, 189). When Che realizes that his asthma and not his actions control his body, the "impossible kernel" that he has, for the most part, effectively concealed is manifested in the form of physical aggression and emotional volatility (Zizek, *The Sublime Object* 163).

Che's ambiguous vision of himself through his body begins to deteriorate the authoritative "I" observed in parts of *Pasajes*. The man that coined the phrase "Until Victory or Death" starts to question his right to continue participating in the revolution: "[h]e llegado a los 39 y se acerca inexporablemente una edad que da que pensar sobre mi futuro guerrillero; por ahoar estoy <<entero>>" (*El diario* 159). Though this statement, which appears in Che's journal on June 14, 1967, his 39th birthday, most certainly relates

to his turning one year older, it also, I submit, is a symptom of his ensuing awareness of the frail state of his body and the consequent destabilization of his former self-perception as an autonomous and authoritative rebel leader.

Che's vision of himself as incapable of controlling his own body is also evident when he takes his own corporal frustrations out on one of the tired mares that accompanies the group: "Caminamos algo así como una hora efectiva, que para mí fueron dos por el cansancio de la yegüita; en una de ésas, le metí un cuchillazo en el cuello abriéndole una buena herida" (187). Che's impulse to harm the weak horse, in one way, is an acting out against his own fragile body, a fact first evidenced in the questioning of his capacity to see the fight through to the end and revealed again in his critical description of himself after this scene as "[yo soy] una piltrafa humana" (*Pasajes* 186).

Che's choice of words is deliberate and seems to solidify the connection I established above between his own physical challenges and those of the horse. According to the dictionary of the *Real Academia Española,* the word "piltrafa" can refer to the part of the meat on an animal that contains barely more than the skin, the leftovers of food, or a person that is physically and morally depleted.[21] Che, at this point in the insurgency, not only shows the physical signs of malnutrition (i.e., he is weak, skinny, and unable to eat because of his asthmatic condition) but emotional volatility as well, as evidenced in the episode with the horse.

After making this pejorative statement about himself, Che realizes and affirms that his outward aggression towards the horse was a symptom: "en algunos momentos he llegado a perder el control" (188). What is more, he tries to recuperate the ideological

[21] See http://buscon.rae.es/draeI/SrvltConsulta?TIPO_BUS=3&LEMA=piltrafa.

discourse that he gradually loses sight of throughout his diary in linking the revolution to the creation of the revolutionary, the highest species of man: "Este tipo de lucha nos da la oportunidad de convertirnos en revolucionarios, el escalón más alto de la especie humana, pero también nos permite graduarnos de hombre; los que no puedan alcanzar ninguno de estos dos estadíos deben decirlo y dejar la lucha" (188). With this statement, Che sums up, both directly and indirectly, his two main preoccupations with the revolution in Bolivia: his incapacity to control his physical and emotional needs – a problem that never even came up in *Pasajes* – and the loss of focus on politics. Ironically, it appears that only when Che reaches the physical and emotional limits of his own body does he attempt to recuperate the desired track of the mission. In a last attempt to get the mission back on course, Che makes one final plea to the revolutionary inside of the men to take advantage of the opportunity to either embrace their revolutionary identity or to leave the fight (188).

More significant and perhaps tragic still is the fact that Che, less than a week later, resigns to a life of suffering, thus ceding control to his "unpredictable and uncontrollable" body (Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* xi): "Ahora estoy condenado a padecer asma por un tiempo no definible" (*El diario* 191). In Che's statement lies the paradox of his life: the very illness he learned to control during his childhood becomes his biggest obstacle on the mountain in Bolivia. The overwhelming presence of Che's body in the diary reveals crucial aspects of the struggle that he silenced in *Pasajes* – the scatological, illness-related, and emotional. As a result, Che, though perhaps unknowingly, moves beyond the contradictory code of manhood he constructed on the Sierra Maestra and proposes a masculinity that incorporates aspects typically associated with the feminine in

a bourgeois context – emotions, physical weakness, and a lack of control – from the mountain in Bolivia.

Che's time as a guerrilla fighter comes to a close on October 7, 1967, exactly eleven months after his arrival to Bolivia and consequently the day that he was captured by the Bolivian Army and the Bolivian Rangers. Che's journal entry reflects a positive start to the day: "Se cumplieron 11 meses de nuestra inauguración guerrillera sin complicaciones, bucólicamente" (*El diario* 226). Yet, he quickly follows his almost surreal initiation to this statement with "hasta las 12.30 hora en que una vieja, pastoreando sus chivas entró en el cañón en que habíamos acampado y hubo que apresarla. La mujer no ha dado ninguna noticia fidedigna sobre los soldados, contestando a todo que no sabe [...] sólo dio información sobre los caminos" (226). Che's use of the word *chivas*, "goats" could also be used to refer to *chivato*, a word that in a revolutionary context means "informer" or in this specific case, a spy for the Bolivian Army.

The old woman promises to maintain the secrecy of the rebels' location after Che and the others offer her fifty pesos, but Che has "pocas esperanzas de que cumpla a pesar de sus promesas" (226). Shortly after Che and five of the six rebels that accompanied him reinitiate their climb up the mountain, he hears what he calls a peculiar announcement from the Bolivian Army over the radio. Che's reaction would be his last written words: "El Ejército dio una rara información sobre la presencia de 250 hombres en Serrano para impedir el paso de los cercados en número de 27 dando la zona de nuestro refugio entre el río Acero y el Oro. La noticia parece diversionista" (226). Che silences his anxiety – the enemy's knowledge of his whereabouts and the real possibility of his capture and death – yet he openly recognizes the tactics of the Bolivian Army that

would lead to his capture and ultimate execution on October 9, 1967 in an old schoolhouse in *La Higuera*, Bolivia.

In this chapter, I showed how Che builds up a code of manhood from the mountains in Cuba and Bolivia in his guerrilla narratives, *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria* and *El diario del Che en Bolivia.* Che's model emerged as a contradictory male code that incorporated aspects of the bourgeois man and the guerrilla rebel in formation. Yet through his conscious revision of bourgeois loci from the Sierra Maestra in Cuba – the family, knowledge, and the future – he sought to propose a new male code.

In *El diario*, Che continued to reformulate his new standard for the guerrilla fighter, although unknowingly. In this work, one observes an absence of the political discourse characteristic of *Pasajes* and in its place, the aspects of the revolution that Che had previously silenced – the body, the scatological, and emotions – surfaced. The overwhelming presence of the body as the host in which the impossibilities or silences of the revolution manifest themselves allowed for the further revision of Che's male code. In centering his discourse on the body, Che moved beyond a contradictory code of manhood to propose a masculinity that implants the feminine (Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* 14).

Chapter 3: From *Machista* to *New Man*?: Omar Cabezas Negotiates Manhood from the Mountain in Nicaragua

In the present chapter, I will evaluate how Nicaraguan rebel author Omar Cabezas reformulates the comprehensive male code that Che proposed in *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria* and *El diario del Che en Bolivia* in response to the historical needs and demands of the Sandinista Revolution (1979) in his political bildüngsroman, *La montaña es algo más que una inmensa estepa verde* (1982).[1] Cabezas writes this text, which was published three years after the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution of 1979, primarily to promote revolutionary consciousness, to endorse the Sandinista movement and to bring to light several factors that contributed to the changes he underwent during the revolution.

My analysis traces Cabezas' self-construction as a man and rebel during three distinct phases of his participation in the revolution that he outlines in *La montaña*: his time as a student and clandestine revolutionary in León, Nicaragua, his actions during the guerrilla phase of the revolution from the mountain and a third stage in which he demonstrates his continued service to the insurgency through his role as an educator of future rebels after coming down from the mountain. Cabezas, despite his working class origin, initially builds up his identity as a man according to the "pristine" image of the bourgeois male that defines men in relation to women, emphasizes the competitive nature of the relationships between men and requires that men demonstrate extreme physical and emotional vigor in front of others (Izenberg 6-8).[2] Yet upon his arrival to the mountain

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[1] Nydia Palacios Vivas defines the bildüngsroman as a bourgeois narrative that highlights significant experiences in the protagonist's life – typically a male protagonist – as a means to demonstrate his process of transformation; "the teleology of an individual, from one period of his life to another" (191).

[2] Some analyses of patriarchal masculinities include Gerald N. Izenberg's *Modernism and Masculinity* (2000), Ellen Bayuk Rosenman's *Unauthorized Pleasures: Accounts of Victorian Erotic Experience* (2003), Michael Kimmel's *Men and Masculinities: A Social, Cultural, and Historical Encyclopedia* (2004), and the second edition of Robert Connell's *Masculinities* (2005).

where he meets head on several aspects of the revolution that are unmentionable in an urban setting – the scatological, emotions, self-doubt, loneliness, and the (real) origin of his sexual desires – he begins to act both unconsciously and out of necessity according to a new way of being a man in Nicaragua embodied by the Sandinista. This code of masculinity, akin to Che's complete code of manhood, disputes traditional *machista* praxis – self-interested actions, the sexist relationships between men and women and the competition between men – and emphasizes instead the guerrilla rebel's capacity to survive and change in relation to the space, the relations with other men, and the Sandinista revolutionary projects.[3]

The City: From Bourgeois Space to Revolutionary *Inferno*

Cabezas opens *La montaña* in the spring of 1968, just months after the massacre of countless unarmed demonstrators in January 1967 by Somoza's National Guard and the subsequent battle of Pancasán, one of the first military encounters between the socialist-aimed Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and the National Guard (Randall, *Sandino's Daughters* 71). This moment not only ended with the second coming to power of Anastasio Somoza Debayle as the 76th president of Nicaragua but also resulted in the National Guard's elimination of several leaders of the FSLN, among which was Silvio Mayorga, a revolutionary that together with Carlos Fonseca and Tomás Borge founded this revolutionary organization.

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[3] Despite the revolutionary context, machismo still prevailed in Nicaragua. *Machismo,* Roger Lancaster contends, similar to capitalism, is a system that is not only supported by hegemonic ideological structures, but it is reinforced through what he calls a "field of productive relations" between men, women and children in a seemingly stable and standard way: "Machismo, no less than capitalism, is a system. Like racism, homophobia, and other forms of arbitrary power, arbitrary stigma, machismo is resilient because it constitutes not simply a form of "consciousness," not "ideology" in the classical understanding of the concept, but a field of productive relations" (19).

1967 stands out for other reasons as well. In Bolivia in October of 1967, as I pointed out in previous chapters, U.S. trained Green Berets and CIA operatives executed Che Guevara, a move that would, ironically, result in increased Soviet attention and economic aid to ostensibly progressive Latin American governments in an attempt to combat North American imperialism (Spenser 104). Also, on October 2, 1968, just one week short of the first anniversary of Che's death, Mexican Army and secret police forces brutally massacred 350 university students in *La Plaza de las Tres Culturas* in the Tlatelolco district of Mexico City to end what began as a peaceful protest for the undemocratic practices of the government under the leadership of President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz.

Cabezas consciously frames his political bildüngsroman between these years – 1968 and 1979 – that represent very distinct moments in the history of Nicaragua and of Latin America. The first, a time in Latin American history defined by much mistrust in United States backed governmental institutions and counterrevolutionary activity, which culminated in the early 1980s with President Reagan's support of the U.S. trained anti-communist Nicaraguan Contras and the latter, the year in which the Sandinistas declared their triumph in Nicaragua, a victory that resulted in Somoza's fleeing from the country and eventual assassination one year later in Paraguay.[4]

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[4] The Sandinistas succeeded in overthrowing the Somoza Regime on July 19, 1979 but this date would not end the North American intervention in Nicaragua so evident during the Somoza years. After the Sandinista triumph, the United States, threatened by Nicaragua's increasing relations with Cuba and the Soviet Union, consciously worked to overtake the new government by using U.S. Special Forces and counter-guerrilla activities. In the 1984 presidential elections in Nicaragua, the first held since the triumph of the revolution, Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega was elected president. Though this representative of *Sandinismo* had much of the support of the Nicaraguan people, the role of the United States in his eventual defeat in the 1990 elections against United States backed former editor of *La Prensa* (a publication that during the revolution was anti-Somocista) Violeta Chamorro, took over the presidency. Beginning with the Carter Administration but especially during Ronald Reagan's two-term presidency, North American involvement in Nicaragua was great. During Ortega's term, Reagan cut all funding to Nicaragua and

Cabezas' formation as a student and shaping of his revolutionary identity in relation to such significant moments in history allows him to define himself according to two of the models of masculinity in Nicaragua at the time: the bourgeois male embodied by the members of the National Guard (the *Somocistas*) and the revolutionary code of manhood represented by the *Sandinistas*. At the onset, Cabezas acts according to a bourgeois code of masculinity but his desires to rebel against his father and to participate in the formation of a clandestine revolutionary base in the city, an action that would eventually lead him to the mountain, result in his gradual detachment from such a model and the later embrace of a new way of being a man through *Sandinismo*.

Cabezas initially presents himself as an exaggeratingly typical *macho* college student that drinks, smokes, philanders with women, and gambles to pass the time. In a normal weekend, he visits the bar, steals condoms from neighborhood drugstores, frequents brothels, and makes trips to local hot spots with his friends from the university. One of his favorite diversions is to provoke the bourgeois girls, the *burguesitas*, that he spots during routine cruises around town in a car by sticking his tongue out at them and following them around: "A nosotros nos gustaba verles el cutis, la forma de mover los labios, les mirábamos las uñas cuando hacían los cambios, las manos eran bien bonitas, dan ganas como de que te acaricien unas manos así; y cuando las ventanas iban abiertas y

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ordered the US military training and governmental finance of "the Contras," a counterrevolutionary group comprised of former members of Somoza's National Guard. Due to Reagan's pressuring of the Honduran government for use of territories to train the counter-guerrilla groups, Honduras became a "training camp" for the Contras and it was also through this country that Reagan acquired mass amounts of weapons to use against the Sandinistas (Wright 175). The United States support of Chamorro – the US created systems that "monitored" the 1990 elections and provided economic support for her presidential campaign – also led to Ortega's "loss" of the presidential elections of 1990. For more information on the Nicaraguan Contras and United States involvement in Nicaragua see Odd Arne Westad's *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Times* (2005) p. 345, Don Oberdorfer's *From the Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union 1983-1991* (1998) p. 268-271, Andrew Battista's *The Revival of Labor Liberalism* (2008) p. 123-125, and Roger Miranda and William Ratliff's *The Civil War in Nicaragua: Inside the Sandinistas* (1993) p. 77-78.

el viento soplaba se les agitaba el pelo y quedaban sus cabelleras frente a nosotros, sobre el espaldar del asiento" (30).

Cabezas describes such infantile games as a way to merely pass the time during the weekends. Yet his detailed description of the coveted lips, nails, hair, and hands and ensuing desire to be touched by girls suggests that a key aspect in his identity as a man at this point centers on the sexist (heterosexual) nature of the relations between men and women, a type of relationship that, according to Judith Butler, in patriarchal societies operates as a regulatory gender norm (*Gender Trouble* 136). Such a scene also reveals Cabezas' class consciousness – one was either bourgeois or not and he was of the working class – an awareness that will contribute to his eventual decision to participate in the revolution as becomes clear in what follows.

At the time, though Cabezas begins to "hear and hear" of the revolution and even helps to promote it by handing out pamphlets, participating in manifestations and speaking to other revolutionaries from the city, he continues to see it as a mere pastime (10). Cabezas' body-centered anxieties and his inexperience in revolutionary praxis played a part in his indifference to the movement: "yo era joven, débil físicamente, sin ninguna preparación militar [y] sin posibilidad de pasar algún curso de entrenamiento" (34). His wavering opinion of Marxism (the theoretical basis of the FSLN) and confusion on what organization to support largely contributed to his passive attitude towards the cause as well (16, 11).[5] Yet, one of his main concerns, if not the main one, lie

[5] Cabezas does not explicitly name the different factions that emerged within the FSLN – the Proletarians (*Proletarios*) led by Jaime Wheelock Román, the Prolonged Popular War (GPP- Guerra Popular Prolongada) led by Henry Ruiz ("Modesto") and Tomás Borge after Carlos Fonseca's assassination, and the Insurrectionals (*Terceristas*), a group that was primarily led by Daniel and Humberto Ortega that practiced "ideological pluralism" as it sought the involvement of members of the bourgeois class in the fight. During his time as a university student in the city Cabezas seems to identify with the

in the fact that his father was a member of the Conservative Party; he was a *Somocista*: "yo sabía que a mi papá le ganaba la Guardia [..] [m]i padre era de familia opositora, militaba en el Partido Conservador" (12). Cabezas' participation in the Sandinista cause, then, would force him to go against his father's political beliefs and the very ideological structures he supported as a member of the Conservative Party.[6]

Implicit in Cabezas' description of his father as a guard in Somoza's Army is his perception of a powerful man, a quality that Cabezas both fears and takes pride in. Such contradictory feelings become evident when he watches his father direct a secret meeting of other *Somocistas* in León. At that moment, Cabezas states "tuve la sensación de ser hijo de una persona muy importante" (8). Yet, on the other hand, Cabezas had always associated the National Guard, Somoza's Army, with unnecessary violence, blood, and injustice done unto people for simply drinking and brawling outside of the bar (7).[7]

Another component of his father's power that Cabezas silences in his narrative but mentions in a 1984 interview with Margaret Randall was his race, and more importantly, what this meant for Cabezas, a self-described physically weak boy of *mestizo* origin: "[w]hen I was small, I was a runt of a kid, a skinny child, and the ugly duckling of the family. All of my brothers were fair [...] [m]y father was fair, too. But

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Proletarios, a Marxist-oriented group that sought to organize the working class and poor neighborhoods (Brás). Yet, because of his participation in the formation of clandestine cadres in León and role as a main contact with the peasant populations and subsequent time on the mountain under the leadership of René Tejada and Henry Ruiz, among others, Cabezas' view of the revolution comes to reflect that of the Prolonged Popular War as the organization and role of the peasantry comes to the fore as an essential factor in the successful carrying out of the revolution (Brás).

[6] In his article, "Omar Cabezas y el testimonio de aprendizaje," Thomas Ward describes Cabezas' father as a puppet of the United States: "Al padre, le gustaba más hablar en inglés que en castellano. Era un muñeco de los Estados Unidos. Representa un ejemplo típico de las élites latinoamericanas que dejan seducirse por el poderío angloamericano" (305).

[7] The National Guard in Nicaragua emerged as a militia group during the North American occupation in Nicaragua in the early 20th century (before Augusto Sandino waged a guerrilla war to combat United States imperialism from the mountain) and during the Nicaraguan Revolution, acted as the oppressive military force that supported and was controlled by the Somoza Regime and the United States and sought to put a stop to guerrilla activity (Chasteen 295).

my mother wasn't. My mama is Indian, *mestiza*. And my father was white. I came out like my mama. I was skinny, physically weak. Physical weakness gives you a certain sense of fragility, on the outside" (124). If, as Roger Lancaster contends, the question of race in Nicaragua is not necessarily related to an established racial structure, but rather reflective of "discursive gestures that are contingent and contextual and whose motives are eminently logical and self-interested" then Cabezas consciously uses the terms "mestizo" and "fair" to distinguish his racial and ethnic background. It indicates that he inscribes his family into an understood, but not an established, racial hierarchy in which "mestizo" is clearly different from and most likely inferior to "fair" (225).[8]

Apart from his awareness of his weaknesses – both physical and ideological – and his racial and ethnic background, all qualities that, in Cabezas' mind, categorize him as a subaltern when compared to his "fair" *Somocista* father, he is conscious of his social class. This implies, but does not necessarily concretize his alignment with the *Proletarios*: "yo estaba muy consciente de que era de familia proletaria y, entonces, cuando se hablaba en la Universidad de la injusticia, de la pobreza, yo me acordaba de mi barrio que era un barrio pobre" (Cabezas 10).[9] Though Cabezas initially questions his belief in a class-based Marxist ideology, such a consciousness would soon condition his view of the revolution as a way to surpass the boundaries he established above – physical,

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[8] Though Cabezas makes this comment that suggests his consciousness of the implied racial hierarchy in Nicaragua in an interview, and not in his rebel narrative, it is significant. It is the first time that a rebel author studied in this project talks about race as a quality that contributes to one's self-perception during revolution.

[9] The term "subaltern" was coined by Antonio Gramsci in his *Prison Notebooks* (I use J. A. Buttigieg's 1992 edition of this work) (1992). "Subaltern," which in this case refers to the peasants but varies with each socio-political and historical context, is not to be thought apart from "hegemonic," a term often associated with the ruling class. Gramsci would argue that the relationship between the hegemonic and the subaltern, which was purely ideological but affected the political, would remain intact until the latter developed the tools and political consciousness necessary to change the order of things in the existing social, economic and political systems (353).

ideological, racial, class-related and most importantly, that of his father, who, for Cabezas, not only epitomizes the bourgeois code of manhood but represents patriarchy –: "Me gusta o atrae eso porque es contra la dictadura, contra Somoza, contra la Guardia, y por otro lado viene la cuestión clasista" (10).

Up to this point, Cabezas has reflexively defined himself according to and thus aspired to his father's individualistic and militaristic model and accordingly adopts a *machista* lifestyle.[10] One could assume, for instance, that Cabezas' vision of the revolution as a way to prove himself to others (especially his father) and to surpass barriers of race, class, and gender in moving from *machista* to *Sandinista* are all related to a seemingly inherent vision of himself in relation to a traditional model of manhood. Cabezas' participation in the revolution would definitively dissociate him from his father's political affiliation as well as the teachings of the University where the message was clear: "los del Frente [...] eran comunistas y venían de Rusia y de Cuba y que sólo mandaban a la gente a morir como pendeja a la montaña" (12).

As a first step towards his embrace of *Sandinismo*, Cabezas agrees to take theoretical courses on the revolution, attend local meetings of several different student revolutionary organizations and eventually participates in the formation of clandestine cadres in the city. Cabezas' actions, at least on the surface, demonstrate a growing interest in the revolution, but his *hombría,* or masculine pride is what drives him to commit completely to the movement: "Me imaginé tantas cosas...y entre más cosas me

[10] Although he doesn't mention it in this work, Omar Cabezas later reveals in an interview with Margaret Randall that when he was thirteen years old, his father left his mother for another woman; a decision that left her alone to raise seven children. Such an act, Cabezas contends, awakened his need to "change the world" for in noting the harsh conditions of life for his family and the economic consequences of his father's abandonment of them, he made a conscious decision to do something to break with the individualistic example his father set for him (122-123).

imaginaba el miedo era mayor pero, por supuesto, yo estaba de lo más serio y sereno delante de Juan José [Quezada], porque delante de él yo no podía aparentar ser un miedoso [...] porque ahí había una cuestión de hombría (15-16). Cabezas covers up his anxieties by appearing "manly" in front of his ostensibly more qualified friend. His confident façade and desire to show his convictions would categorize him within a patriarchal code of manhood that according to Alexandra Shepard "endorsed a gender hierarchy that exalted maleness as a cultural category by ranking men generically above women" and was also "rooted in prodigality, transience, violence, bravado, and debauchery" (246, 248).

When Quezada asks Cabezas to accept his historical responsibility by actively participating in the movement, he responds "Sí, hombre, perfectamente," rather than reveal his disbelief in his ability (or illusion) to see the process through to the end, something that he openly expresses to his reader: "Yo tenía miedo a perder la vida [...] Recordá que estaba recién pasada la masacre de Pancasán" (Cabezas 12-13). Cabezas' instinct to perform his masculinity in front of his seemingly more qualified friend, to "flout the codes of behavior expected of [him]" confirms his internalization of a bourgeois code of masculinity that judges men on their capacity to appear strong and unwavering in front of others (Shepard 248).

It seems that Cabezas associates his purportedly stable (manly) façade and political agency, similar to what Che does when he picks up his box of bullets and gun and leaves his medical bag behind. It is only as a result of Cabezas' persistent failure to live up to this impossible masculine standard that he will succeed in opening up a new possibility, a "variation on that repetition," as I will point out below (Butler, *Gender*

Trouble 145). Cabezas eventually participates in *Sandinismo* not necessarily because of his beliefs, but as a means to surpass the insecurities related to his male identity. While the revolution will provide Cabezas with the platform from which he will build himself up in different, more inclusive terms, the only possible starting point for his disavowal of his father, an embodiment of "patriarchy," is to act within the very "normative injunction" of the bourgeois code of manhood as a means to permit the surfacing of other alternatives (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 148).

Cabezas' interaction with Quezada and his subtle participation in the movement inspire his superficial shift from a *machista* living according to the *rules* established by the ruling party and his *Somocista* father to a future Sandinista. Yet his reencounter with longtime friend and revolutionary Leonel Rugama, a self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist aligned with the Prolonged Popular War (GPP) and intransigent revolutionary from the mountain, forces the impressionable college student to pursue a new way of being a man: "Leonel te planteaba la cuestión de ser hombre, pero no ya en el caso del macho, sino del hombre que adquiere responsabilidad histórica, un compromiso para con los demás, de quien lo da todo para felicidad de los demás" (23). The new standard of manhood that Cabezas' friend persuades him to live by, and that is akin to the model of humanity that pervades through Che Guevara's writings, proves central to the ideology of the GPP.

It should not come as a surprise that Che Guevara serves as an example for Omar Cabezas in his process of building up his identity as a revolutionary for he not only redefined the vision of the revolutionary man, but also sought to change the homogenous vision of the family that has historically dominated Latin American patriarchal societies. Che also gave priority to the working class, a sector that Cabezas identifies with for

reasons outlined above, and by naming this group as the impetus for change during the Cuban Revolution (Rodríguez, *Women, Guerrillas & Love* 148).

In Nicaragua *to be like Che* is to be a Sandinista

In Nicaragua the idea of striving *to be like Che* was most readily embraced by the Sandinista on the mountain. First outlined by former Nicaraguan revolutionary and co-founder of FSLN, Carlos Fonseca, and then used by Leonel Rugama to entice Cabezas to further commit to the Sandinista Revolution, such a model eschews several of the components embedded in the patriarchal male and embodies instead man's historical responsibility and the capacity to demonstrate the complementary nature of words and actions in a revolutionary context through respect, sincerity and fraternity. In his essay "¿Qué es un Sandinista?," Fonseca states that in order to assume this title, rebels are not only expected to promote the revolution through words, but they must also demonstrate their belief in the cause through actions as well. Such militants, he continues, should be aware of their own physical and emotional limits and make a conscious effort to transform themselves as human beings and as members of a collective group.

Fonseca's definition of a Sandinista adopts several qualities of Che's model of the guerrilla rebel and idea of the *new man*. In his famous programmatic text of 1965, "El hombre nuevo," Che states that "the new man" is a self-aware and socially conscious actor that undergoes a constant process of change that begins during the revolution and continues through his implementation of socialism. For Che, men should not strive to *become new men* (such a goal would undoubtedly prove impossible to reach), but rather continue to improve through a growing consciousness of the necessity for social justice: "Lo importante es que los hombres van adquiriendo cada día más conciencia de la

necesidad de su incorporación a la sociedad, y al mismo tiempo, de su importancia como motores de la misma" (12).

At this point, Cabezas, still concerned with preserving his male pride in front of others than his embracing of the Sandinista code, hesitates to purge himself completely of his old *machista* ways while dedicating himself fully to the revolution. He fantasizes, however, about what it would be like to meet the illustrious bearded men from the mountain and seems eager to reach the "heart of the Sandinista Front": "Iba a conocer personalmente a esos famosos hombres, a los guerrilleros, a la gente como el Che. Cómo serían las barbas, cómo hacían la comida [...] iba a estar en el corazón del Frente Sandinista, en lo más oculto, en lo más virgen del Frente, en lo más delicado" (32).

In providing a vivid picture of both the mountain and "heroic" bearded guerrilla rebels formed there, Cabezas' comrades reveal what Renata Salecl calls the "trick" of a successful political discourse (33). They supply him with images with which to identify as well as construct a symbolic space from which he could feasibly move beyond his identity as a "normal" man from the city and convert himself into a noteworthy rebel despite his self-perceived deficiencies and traditional tendencies. With such a shift, Cabezas advances from a student whose participation in the revolution consisted of the simple (non-political) act of passing out pamphlets to view himself as a future guerrilla rebel; a political man who could *be like Che*.

The link between rebels and peasants that proves crucial to Che's vision of the overall success of any revolutionary movement is also central for Leonel Rugama's ideological beliefs. Thus, in alignment with the GPP, one of Cabezas' first missions as a clandestine revolutionary is to gain support of the indigenous communities in the cities

surrounding León. At first, the students struggle to communicate with the natives due to the combination of mistrust, fear of the revolutionaries and deficient exposure to the Sandinista movement. Yet Cabezas gradually succeeds in gaining the peasantry's trust by combining a use of history and language that crosses class and race lines to explain the terms of the insurgency. He relates former revolutionary hero and peasant Augusto Sandino's role in the rebellion against the United States in the first half of the 20th century to Adiac, a key figure in the formation of the indigenous practices and culture in Subtiava. Cabezas also links Sandino to Marxism and the importance of the struggle between social classes: "Nosotros proyectamos a Sandino como continuador de Adiac, y entonces encarnamos a Sandino en Adiac, pero a Sandino con la proyección del *Manifiesto comunista*" (52). In linking such historical figures and introducing the core components of Marxist ideology, Cabezas gains the trust of the people of Subtiava and explains the significance of a class-based revolution in terms relevant to their history and culture.

Another way to disseminate the revolution among the natives of Subtiava is the use of "unmarked" (or non-hegemonic) colloquial language, what Cabezas calls "malas palabras" or bad words. In doing so, he talks of the revolution in a humorous and entertaining way that facilitates communication and understanding: "ellos entendían, entendían, entendían, y como que luego del cerebro se volvía a los ojos y por la expresión de la mirada yo sabía que estaban dando la vuelta al mundo" (54). Cabezas is very careful in his selection of words: "No es lo mismo ir a hablar de la coyuntura histórica a un barrio, que decirles que los ricos con los reales que explotan se van a putear a Europa,

¿te das cuenta? Entonces [...] el pueblo se empieza a identificar con eso, con ese planteamiento. Se empieza a identificar con esa mala palabra" (59).

In utilizing this tactic, which brings to the fore questions of class, economics and history, Cabezas "dirties" the ostensibly pristine bourgeois image and derides the illusive rhetoric common to the Somoza dictatorship. Such an observation goes along with Laura Barbas Rhoden's affirmation that "[e]n *La montaña* el uso del habla popular representa un rechazo de las pretensiones del régimen anterior [...] [Y] al emplear el habla popular en su libro, Cabezas distingue a los sandinistas del gobierno derrotado" (66).[11] The fact that Cabezas' work was published after the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution suggests that his distancing himself from the Somoza Regime and fervent embrace of the language and ideological forces of the movement is deliberate and symbolic of the shifting of power in Nicaragua at the time.

Cabezas' contact with the people of Subtiava ignites a revolutionary fire that spreads to the neighboring villages. Such an effect talks both of growing interest and support and Cabezas' capacity to build up and lead a strong clandestine base from the city (Ward 306). With the combination of his self-interpreted (yet perhaps illusive) revolutionary competence and a well-built up politicized indigenous base to back the movement up, Cabezas takes Rugama's initial advice and travels to the mountain to meet

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[11] Cabezas employs colloquial language throughout his narrative as a tool to communicate with his diverse audience. He often uses language tags and directly requests his reader's attention with comprehension checks: "Entendés," (*La montaña* 26), "¿te das cuenta?," (92), "¿te vas resignando?," (96), "¿me explico?," (215), and "no sé si la he contado ya," (80). This foments a close relationship with his reader as well as brings forth the oral quality of his narrative (Rivero 72). He also poses questions to his audience: "¿cómo se llaman estos huesos de aquí?," (87), "¿nunca te has fijado en las fotografías del comienzo de la victoria?," (218), and "¿quizás vos te acordarás de la canción?," (86). Apart from the proximity that the discursive strategies Cabezas employs create with his reader, his use of language dissociated with the illusive rhetoric of the Somoza Regime, a tactic that M. Bakhtin calls a "[v]erbal-ideological decentering," should be understood as another demonstration of his embrace of the anti-Somocista ideology of the Sandinistas (370).

Henry Ruiz ("Modesto") and René Tejada ("Tello"), two of the most influential leaders of the guerrilla groups on the mountain. Upon leaving his comfort zone (the city), Cabezas' anxieties resurface: "Yo iba pensando cómo serían los campamentos, cómo será Modesto, de qué tamaño será Modesto [...] y toda esa cuestión, es decir la idea de llegar al campamento y develar, ésa es la palabra, develar para siempre, conocer y las interioridades, todo por lo que yo había pasado trabajando" (Cabezas 89).

In Che's texts, the mountain assumes a foundational role as the authority on the revolution; the geography upon which men change as a result of the successful implementation of guerrilla tactics and self-awareness. Following Che's model, Cabezas centers his participation in the guerrilla phase of the revolution in "la estepa verde". For a man from the city like Cabezas, the mountain is an idealized space where men go to transform themselves into Sandinistas, men with a purpose: "La Montaña en la ciudad era un mito, la montaña era un símbolo, como ya dije anteriormente...en función de esa montaña, en función del FSLN, de ese misterio, que cada día se hacía más grande ese misterio" (Cabezas 89). It will not be long before Cabezas realizes that his quest *to be like Che* becomes a mere mission for survival. Cabezas' experiences on the mountain force him to deconstruct his previous fantasy construction of revolution and to build himself up according to a different code of manhood specific to the isolation characteristic of such a space. As Cabezas works towards surviving in this geography, he continues to act according to a *machista* code that defines man in relation to women, the competition between men and his individual approach to the revolution. Yet his mission to become a Sandinista allows aspects of the revolution that appear unmentionable in an urban setting to surface.

"Dirty" *Machista* or *New Man*?: Cabezas and the Mountain

During his college days, Cabezas' body was the vehicle through which he acted on his rebellious and sexual desires. On the mountain, it becomes an instrument essential for the completion of basic tasks such as carrying his heavy backpack during routine climbs; an action Cabezas is hardly capable of doing with ease at the onset. Aware of the fragile state of his body Cabezas faces duties like these and others that require him to rely on his physical competence in the presence of other revolutionaries and peasants. He hides his flaws and instead strives to perform his role as a guerrilla fighter with an unwavering confidence in order to *show off* in front of his fellow comrades as well as to trick himself into believing that he possesses the capacity to survive on the mountain.[12]

In his first description of the guerrilla phase of the revolution, Cabezas compares such a process to a series of *golpes* or hits: "Ese camino de ser un solo hombre es la composición de un montón de pequeños golpecitos me daba horror pensar que me podían estar viendo, entonces, yo le hacía huevo para que ese golpe fuera un golpe elegante [...] un golpe guerrillero, un golpe valiente, un golpe dominante [...] aunque no me estuvieran viendo" (92). Cabezas' recognition of his efforts in front of others suggests that he continues to identify with a conventional male code that, as Roger Horrocks asserts, requires men to always be on guard, to be vigilant about their own and other's masculine image, even in moments of weakness, one of Che's principles outlined in *Pasajes* (98).

The façade of competent guerrilla rebel that Cabezas uses to protect his self-image reveals the theatricality of his actions. Soon after his arrival, Cabezas mentions his improved capacity to perform in front of others: "De repente siento que voy caminando

[12] Cabezas' capacity to perform precedes his experiences as a guerrilla on the mountain for in his interview with Randall, he affirms: "I always had a certain talent for histrionics. For theater. For acting. People believed I was doing something real. And it was a lie; it was pure imagination" (124).

bien [...] siento que las piernas como que se van acostumbrando y que se me van amacizando un poquito, siempre, claro, con debilidades, con poca experiencia, pero yo siento que ya no es lo mismo" (103). Cabezas' anxiety to cover up his debilities in the presence of others has resonances of Slavoj Zizek's definition of the cynical subject; one that though aware of the distance between the ideological mask – in Cabezas' case, a vision of himself as a competent rebel – and the social reality – his incapacity to live up to such a standard – still insists upon the mask (*The Sublime Object* 29). Cabezas' initial tendency to act according to a bourgeois paradigm of manhood is evident in his desire to *show off* in front of his peers while at the same time he highlights "noticeable" improvements early on in his stay on the mountain.

But on the mountain "los golpes" are also literal: "Nos deslizábamos, y ¡pum! Te caes de culo y te levantás y se ensucia el saco; entonces uno viene trata de limpiar el saco porque el saco se ensució y era nuevo, pero luego que le limpiás el lodo al saco ¿adónde limpiás las manos? ¿en un palo...? Das otro paso más y te escapás de caer y metés la mano, y te volvés a embarrar el lodo" (72). Cabezas' initial repulsion of the dirt of the mountain is symbolic of his continual identification with the pristine bourgeois ideal, for, as Mary Douglas understands it, impurity is, "that which departs from symbolic order," which, for Cabezas, is the Somoza Regime (91). But, there is also another element to it: Cabezas associates his inability to avoid "dirtying" himself and his personal belongings with his inexperience and loss of authority. This is clearly noted when he realizes that whereas he and the other rebels are characterized by their dirty uniforms, hands, and bags, the peasant that leads them through the path maintains an impeccably clean appearance: "Nosotros mirábamos que el campesino [...] ni iba lodoso, sólo las botas

llevaba lodosas. Sacó un pañuelo limpio y se limpió el sudor de la cara, mientras mi pañuelo ya estaba hecho lodo" (Cabezas 74). The mountain appears to be *el mundo al revés* for Cabezas, for it is a space in which the theoretically sound students from the city are "dirtied" and guided and taught by peasants.

Cabezas left the city as one of the leaders of the clandestine cadres that worked to politicize the peasant masses. Yet on the mountain, the peasants seem more capable to carry out the revolution. This realization puts into question the validity of the texts Cabezas read on revolutionary theory and practice in preparation for the guerrilla phase of the insurgency: "a pesar de que habíamos leído el *Diario del Che,* escritos sobre Vietnam, sobre la Revolución china, una serie de relatos, de trabajos sobre los movimientos guerrilleros de América Latina y de otros lugares... la idea que teníamos era muy general... no sabíamos lo que era en concreto esto" (69). Furthermore, it causes him to accredit his initial difficulties on the mountain to his *machista* "crimes" in an effort to salvage his male pride: "Recordá de dónde venía, bebiendo, desvelándome, fumando, mal comido, sin hacer ejercicios, de repente, pum, a esas cuestiones que eran para hombres" (77).

Cabezas' need to validate his shortcomings by highlighting his lack of preparation on all levels – practical, theoretical, and ideological – underscores his ostensible "internalization" of a *machista* norm. His exacerbated impulse to pose as a veritable rebel is even further emphasized when, in facing the perils of life in this indomitable space, Cabezas summons images of Claudia, his love interest from the city and the family he desires to build with her as inspiration to perform at his utmost capacity. Claudia "era motor, era seguridad, era confianza, era balas, era ver por sobre la oscuridad de la noche,

era más aire en los pulmones, más fortaleza en las piernas, era sentido de orientación, era fuego, nuestro amor era ropa seca y calientita, nuestro amor era champa, victoria, tranquilidad, era todo... futuro... hijos... era todo lo computable para mi cerebro" (256).

In using the family, a typically bourgeois locus based on a "naturalized heterosexuality that requires and regulates gender as a binary relation in which the masculine term is differentiated from a feminine term" to comfort and motivate him to act heroically on the mountain (an aspect of bourgeois life that Che never recurred to) Cabezas further demonstrates his acting according to a patriarchal mandate that defines man in relation to such an institution (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 22-23). Cabezas' impulse to recur to the bourgeois standard for men is normal, for as Butler states as well, the first step in refuting a "naturalized" view of gender is to repeat it (unsuccessfully) until the boundary between the "real" and the "phantasmatic" constructions, the "illusions of substance [...] that bodies are compelled to approximate, but never can" expose the prospect of a new gender code (146).

Despite the centrality of the family in a bourgeois discourse, the fissures of this institution are later exposed when the reader learns that during his absence, Claudia leaves Cabezas for one of his revolutionary comrades even though she is pregnant with their first child. Such an event, without a doubt, has negative repercussions for Cabezas' self-perception as I will point out at a later point in this chapter.

If Cabezas fools himself into believing that he can "be like Che," "Tello," a peasant that serves as his direct leader and that would become his primary role model on the mountain until members of the National Guard assassinate him, quickly points to the students' weaknesses when he realizes their difficulty in carrying out what he views as

even the most basic tasks: "Hijueputas, aprendan a cargar la comida que se hartan [...] son unas mujercitas... son unos maricas, estudiantes de mierda que para nada sirven..." (105). Ileana Rodríguez evaluates such a process within the paradigm of patriarchal masculinity: "To keep pushing oneself, to be resilient and strong, giving more than the body's physical strength and endurance allow, always giving a little bit more" (*Women, Guerrillas, & Love* 45).[13] Yet I submit that Tello, a man that Cabezas describes as physically and mentally tough but capable of crying when faced with deception and disappointment, feminizes the men – a tactic that bears a striking resemblance to Che's use of "psychological anesthesia" – to force them to act by appealing to their inner *machista* (Cabezas 106).

The examples above serve to foreground how Cabezas initially constructs his identity as a rebel according to a limiting paradigm that defines man in relation to his capacity to perform in front of others and his role within the family unit. The question that arises is, when certain aspects of life on the mountain not typically addressed by men in a traditional setting seep through the cracks of such an identity, will Cabezas succeed in finally breaking with the limiting patriarchal norm?

Initially sheltered by an ostensible capacity to perform (or lie) in front of others, Cabezas realizes that in order to survive on the mountain he must depend on the other guerrillas, even at the risk of revealing the falsehood of his masculine pride. This becomes particularly evident when, after three straight days of marching, he feels the sudden urge to go to the bathroom. In noting the novice guerrilla's difficulty in carrying

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[13] Rodríguez's feminist approach to Cabezas' text is evident in her association of the (*machista*) male code of the mountain in Nicaragua and Cabezas' quest to *be like Che* to "having balls": "[T]he new subjectivity has been predicated on the basis of the male sexual gender: to be like Che, or to have "balls"" (*House, Garden & Nation* 175).

out such a basic bodily function, a fellow *compañero* guides Cabezas through the process and instructs him to first dig a hole, then grab some leaves, and finally, clean himself off with them. Cabezas complies, but the end result is quite unsettling: he fills his entire hand with his own feces and in a hurried effort to "sterilize" himself; he almost instinctively sticks his fingers in the dirt: "Me voy con todos mis chimones, el pobrecito, abrí el hueco, me llené toda la mano limpiándome, no podía [...] todo me lleno allí, las uñas, entonces hundo la uña en la tierra, así, para limpiarme, entonces me limpio con más hojas" (86).

If upon his arrival to the mountain, Cabezas views the dirt and mud that cover him when he falls down and tries to wipe himself off as representative of his failure to live up to the pristine code of manhood, his reaction now is much different for it appears as though his vision of what is "clean" and what is "dirty" have changed. This shift is normal, according to Mary Douglas, who affirms that the rules of what is "clean" and "dirty" change according to the circumstances and knowledge structures of each situation (7). When Cabezas realizes after countless attempts and failures to "be a man on the mountain" according to the bourgeois code of manhood from the city that he is incapable of living up to, his "injunction to be" something he isn't allows for a new possibility to emerge (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 145).

This awareness affects Cabezas' view of the revolution and his role in the process. Instead of seeing his clandestine revolutionary experience as a series of *golpes* or competition as he did at the onset; he now views it as a quest for change through survival in "la estepa verde". Cabezas' shifting perspective also affects the way in which he interprets Tello's earlier feminization of him and the others. Whereas before, Cabezas

views Tello's ostensible discursive violence on the rebels as his promotion of yet another unreachable military-type masculine ideal, he now understands it as a strategy Tello used to urge the guerrilla rebels to build themselves up in relation to the mountain: "Tello parece que el jodido nos había querido hacer de piedra físicamente y luego también a nivel psíquico, a nivel de voluntad, de la conciencia, hacernos indestructibles la voluntad y la conciencia" (130).[14]

The changes in Cabezas' view of the dirt, Tello's teachings and the revolution from the mountain also allow him to see that his experience is not any different than that of his fellow comrades, a realization that will eventually condition him to employ the collective "we" rather than the individual "I" dominant in the first part of his narrative (215). Consequently, Cabezas actively works to rid himself of all of the socio-political and materialistic baggage of patriarchal society and begins to act according to the standard of the *new man*. If for Che, the *new man* was the ideological product of the Cuban Revolution, for Cabezas, it is the guerrilla rebel who, in training on the mountain, suffers, learns, and builds himself up according to the new code of manhood: "Para ser el hombre nuevo tenemos que pasar un montón de penalidades, para matar al hombre viejo y que vaya naciendo el hombre nuevo [...] El hombre que da más a los hombres que lo que el hombre normal puede dar a los hombres, pero a costa de sacrificios, a costa de destrucción de sus taras, de sus vicios [...] ser como el Che, ser como el Che" (129).

Now, different from the romanticized version that Cabezas coined back in the city, *to be like Che* means to adapt to the mountain, to show emotions, to form part of a

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[14] When Cabezas first meets Tello, he aligns his instruction of he and the other rebels with a military model: "La forma de Tello para tratar de adaptarnos a nosotros, era una forma grosera, era una forma de academia militar, o bien el tipo de entrenamiento que dan los palestinos que es un entrenamiento sumamente pesado; entonces su formación militar era una mezcla de las dos cosas y las quiso implementar de sopetón con nosotros que éramos unas <<gualdarapas>>" (90).

brotherhood of men, to demonstrate self-awareness and to shed (either consciously or not) layers of the bourgeois code of manhood. The mountain is, as one of the Sandinistas calls it "una gran escuela." In the following lines, I will outline how Cabezas' physical challenges, emotional needs and "cleansing" himself of his "old" *machista* ways combine and consequently enable him to encounter a *tender* side of manhood that he did not even realize existed prior to living in the harshness of the mountain.

Cabezas distances himself from his *machista* façade when certain sentimental needs begin to emerge. His anger for the loss of what our consumerist society considers as small or big pleasures is apparent in the mountains: "Se cocina con poca higiene, casi no te bañás, o lo hacés sin jabón, la comida es el mayor aliciente, pero te das cuenta que siempre es la misma mierda [...] y luego con esa hambre tenés que ir a hacer trabajo político con los campesinos y te vas... te mojás... y estás tiritando de frío y con hambre... y no hay caricias y no hay risas" (115). It is not a coincidence, I suspect, that Cabezas juxtaposes or even intermixes the men's need to find and cook their own food – a task that in a patriarchal context is typically assigned to the woman – and the fact that in this harsh environment, there is no one to touch him or laugh with: "Nosotros no podíamos acariciarnos, éramos puros hombres, no podíamos recibir palabras dulces; entonces, esa soledad, esa ausencia del mimo, que nadie te mima, y que a nadie podés mimar [...] y lo peor era que no sabíamos cuánto tiempo íbamos a pasar así" (115).

The uncertainty of when he will be touched, pampered and be in a position to pamper someone else again causes his feelings of loneliness and despair to surface. Cabezas' unconscious disclosure of his feelings represents a break, though most likely unintentional at this point, with the unreachable *machista* standard of manhood that

requires man to maintain his tough exterior and to resist all opportunities to openly express emotions. In doing this, Cabezas reveals that the purported "foundational and fixed" patriarchal norm is not stable at all, but rather allows for the reification of standardized gender codes as well as permits the opening up of other possibilities: "The loss of gender norms would have the effect of proliferating gender configurations, destabilizing substantive identity, and depriving the naturalizing narratives" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 146-147).

After several months Cabezas begins to adapt to the dampness, hunger, and dirt of the mountain – the dirt even comes to serve as his protective armor –. Yet an astonishing feeling of loneliness that overcomes him erodes his vision of himself as an autonomous being, a factor that further contributes to his moving away from a bourgeois code of manhood. Out of mere necessity, Cabezas and his peers come together to form a brotherhood of men that replaces the norm of the bourgeois family, an institution that heavily relies on the distinction of men from women (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 22). As Cabezas now describes the homosocial relations, the reader notices a significant change: "Esa soledad nosotros la tradujimos en fraternidad entre nosotros mismos [...] Entre nosotros, no había egoísmo. Como que la montaña y el lodo, el lodo y la lluvia también, la soledad, como que nos fueron lavando un montón de taras de la sociedad burguesa. Nos fueron lavando una serie de vicios [...] Allí, aprendimos a ser humildes" (118-119).

On the mountain that is void of the luxuries and vices of the city, men bond in their questioning of the faultless patriarchal code of manhood that defines masculinity in relation to the family unit, material possessions and the independence of man (Sorensen, *A Turbulent Decade* 27). As an alternative to the bourgeois norm, the guerrillas use the

filth, dirt, and seclusion they sift through to build themselves up according to a new sense of manhood – a new man that Cabezas now sees as free of competition – that is specific to this place. This typically male-dominated sphere foments what Diana Sorensen recognizes as an "imagined community of men," a type of brotherhood that incorporates Che Guevara's vision of *compañerismo* and that, she asserts "espouses the grammar of fraternity [...] while fostering the conditions for utopian growth" (27). Thus, only through his experiences during the guerrilla phase of the revolution, does Cabezas come to view the relationships between men as a catalyst for the personal changes he undergoes in his working towards a different man embodied by the *Sandinista.*

Cabezas' experiences as a rebel not only urge him to revise his view of the homosocial bonds on the mountain, but they expose the origin of his alleged sexual desires as well. If he initially describes himself as a man with a powerful sexual drive and an irrepressible lust for women, after spending months living in solitude, he realizes that what he previously perceives as an innate need to be with a woman is not necessarily related to his sexual impulses at all, but emerges as an effect of his initial incapacity to perform even the most basic duties of the guerrilla on the mountain (i.e. carrying his backpack, marching up the mountain, and tending to his bodily functions) and his loneliness (Cabezas 114). When such anxieties creep up, Cabezas reactively alleviates them through masturbation: "Un principio así de ideas eróticas, sexuales, me empezó la idea y la cabeza se me sexualizó también, cuando me di cuenta es que ya había terminado de masturbarme y me sentí tranquilo, suave, reposado" (138). Despite the sexual undertones in Cabezas' description of how man "relieves" the pressures of quotidian life on the mountain (an aspect of the revolution Che never mentions in his texts) this action

is not representative of Cabezas' desire to be with a woman or to restore his position within a heterosexual episteme. What it reveals instead is the fact that when this very structure that is based on the illusive differences between the male and female genders is displaced or located outside of its original constrictive site, it appears to have little to do with sexual desire and surfaces instead in response to other concerns unrelated to sex (Butler *Gender Trouble*, 22-23). Yet how will Cabezas react when the "brotherly bond" he forms with the other rebels on the mountain is juxtaposed with a key component of his former identity as a heterosexual male from the city?

In the initial stages of his stay on the mountain, when faced with the difficulty of completing routine tasks, Cabezas summoned images of Claudia and the family he hoped to create with her upon his return to León as a means to inspire him to act heroically in spite of the obstacles he confronts. The fantasy ends when Claudia confesses that she has fallen in love with another Sandinista as a result of his long absence. In the closing of her letter, Claudia discloses her feelings: "Siempre te querré, o que siempre te respetaré y te admiraré, fraterna" (257). Ironically, Claudia's now "brotherly" bond with Cabezas forces him to embrace a different type of masculinity that rather than find its roots in the family unit, core of a bourgeois society, is defined by a fraternal bond with his comrades in arms.

Such a change is clearly evident in Cabezas' reunion with his longtime friend from the city *El Gato* (Ventura), a meeting that is not void of anxieties for Cabezas. Prior to his reencounter with Ventura, who seems to epitomize both the *machista* and the *Sandinista*, Cabezas worries about how his old (and more qualified friend) will receive

him after months without seeing one another.[15] The reunion is joyful and thus highlights the mutual respect and love that these two continue to have for one another, even if they now meet under different circumstances: "[*El Gato*] me abraza y entonces yo lo abrazo y el Gato se cae en el suelo. Y entonces quedamos los dos acostados en el suelo [...] Y entonces, nos quedamos así un rato medio caídos los dos en el suelo, y abrazados y entonces nos levantamos, y el Gato se sienta en su hamaca y yo me siento frente a él y eran tantas cosas que decir, y no sabíamos qué decir" (183). Cabezas' reunion with El Gato demonstrates his shedding of yet another layer of the *machista* standard for man as he seeks comfort in the company of his old friend and takes pride in his position as a member of a community of men that fights towards a common socio-political goal.

What I tried to demonstrate with such examples is how first through his body and then through his emotions and relationships with others Cabezas reaches the limits of his *machista* identity. When this occurs, he consciously begins to reformulate his vision of the revolutionary process and of himself as a Sandinista that forms part of a larger group of rebels. If, according to Judith Butler, in a traditional context "[g]ender is [...] a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being," then it is only through the constant repetition of and failure to achieve the limiting norm – the compulsory *machista* paradigm – that other (gender) possibilities become possible (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 33). Thus, Cabezas' (unsuccessful) attempts to act according to a bourgeois code of manhood on the mountain pry open the possibilities that lie beneath such an unstable model.

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[15] Prior to going to the mountain, Cabezas remembers that *El Gato* was the "ultimate" *machista* because of his large collections of shirts, shoes, and many girlfriends. Cabezas also suspects that this revolutionary, who had been in Cuba, served as a student leader and had spent the last two years of the revolution on the mountain, is a Sandinista leader in this space (181).

Clashing Codes of Manhood: The *New Man* Confronts his *Machista Past*

Upon learning from El Gato of his imminent return to the city, Cabezas protests and states that he has since proven his right to carry out his duties on the mountain. But what most perturbs him about Sandinista leader Rodrigo's decision to send him back to the city is that his mission there was not complete; there was still one aspect of his former *machista* identity that the mountain had not yet "dirtied":

> Las ilusiones que yo siempre anduve en forma egoísta desde que entré de la ciudad a la montaña y que nunca se las transmití a nadie; me fui entre el lodo, me harté lodo, me embadurné de lodo, me cagué en lodo, lloré dentro del lodo [...] en el pene andaba lodo; pero es que yo andaba algo en la montaña que a nadie se lo dije, que nadie lo supo [...] y es que yo quería vivir, porque yo subí a la montaña llevando entre los puños aferrado un puño de ilusiones que nunca solté, que nunca se me ensució, y que nunca se me perdió [...] Yo andaba con una rabia de combatir, con una rabia de morirme contra la Guardia (166).

While the dirt of the mountain served to cleanse Cabezas, for the most part, of any traces of the bourgeois code of manhood, the only aspect of his previous identity left in its original form was his illusion to participate in combat. If Che's guerrilla narratives – from start to finish – centered on the combative aspects of the revolution from the mountain, Cabezas never reaches that phase of the fight. If he returns to the city, what stories will he tell others? How will he explain his experiences? In terms of the contrast between what is "dirty" and what is "clean"? Herein lay Cabezas' innermost anxiety:

after spending almost a year on the mountain, he had yet to contribute to the combative phase of the revolution, or even pick up a gun for that matter. His early return to the city represents the fact that he will never have a chance to "dirty" this quality of his *machista* identity.

It is for this reason that Cabezas' anxieties related to his return to León creep up when Rodrigo tells him that he will, in fact, go down from the mountain. Rodrigo's affirmation would, at once, close the door to Cabezas' participation in combat and send him back to the city to face his *machista* past without the protection of the dirt, mud, and community of Sandinistas: "La topografía en la montaña viene a ser en alguna medida, como vestido para uno, como protección para uno, y se me ocurrió que si no me iría a pasar o sentir lo que sentí cuando subí la a montaña, pero ahora en otra dirección" (197).

The filth of the mountain is, for the most part, void of *machista* preoccupations. Yet, when Cabezas falls ill first with leprosy and later with appendicitis and is forced to return to the city sooner than expected, he has to face the difficult task of reinserting himself into a context defined by the admonitory *machista* code. Cabezas' return to León is his reencounter with the "old," what he knew before, though a space somehow different now since his experiences on the mountain had changed him. Out from under the shelter of the mountain, Cabezas, a *new man* in formation, struggles to reacquaint himself with the city in his new role as educator of future Sandinista rebels.

Almost one year later, he realizes that his house, his family and his friends have all remained unaltered (Cabezas 228). This suggests that while for Cabezas, the mountain represents change and a moving towards the future, the traditional symbols that define his past stay the same. The image of the city, the University and even the people

as stagnant, unmoving, fixed in place is not only significant for its obvious symbolism of the purportedly "stable" nature of the bourgeois social code, but it also begs the question of how Cabezas, who learned to purge himself of the traces of his former *machista* identity on the mountain, will face the task of reinserting himself as changed, but "normal" at the same time.

Soon enough, his friends seek to thrust him back into the sexist relations Cabezas covered up with the protective layer of dirt he acquired on the mountain. They do this by convincing his nurse to touch him in what Cabezas deems a "sexual way" while he awaits his emergency appendectomy (206). When Cabezas finds it hard to resist such a temptation, he calls upon the dirt, mud, feces and hardships of the mountain as a means to neutralize his sexual impulses: "Yo sentía lo que me estaba haciendo y sentía y me imaginaba sus manos con las uñas pintadas, y sentía su piel, sobre mi carne, sobre mi pene, sobándolo, restregándolo, moviéndolo y entonces, volvía rápido a pensar en la montaña (206). Regardless of his conscious efforts, Cabezas eventually gives in as his desire to come together with a woman and to prove his manhood in front of his friends takes over.

Cabezas' difficulty in acting as a *new man* in an urban context is further evidenced when shortly after his surgery, still struggling to walk on his own, he gets the sudden urge to have his first post-operative bowel movement during the march he leads through one of the peasant villages surrounding León. Unable to find a restroom or a latrine, Cabezas recurs to the skills he learned on the mountain to deal with similar situations and proceeds to dig a hole, cover up the evidence with dirt, and clean himself with some leaves he finds on the ground nearby. This time, however, surrounded by a

"pristine" context, Cabezas views his action as vulgar and inhumane: "Yo a duras penas podía caminar, y así fue la primera vez; me tuvieron que llevar entre dos compañeros, me bajaron el pantalón y luego, yo agarrado de los hombres de ellos, tuve que cargar de pie. Era una cuestión de lo más incómoda y engorrosa... te sentías animal o vegetal, pero no te podés sentir gente en esas condiciones" (172). Cabezas' affirmation that one could not possibly *feel* human in a situation like this one seems to resemble a duplication of the first experience with feces, dirt and mud in which "filth" was taken as a "boundary" between his "pristine" *machista* identity and his other Sandinista side (Kristeva 69). The resurfacing of a view of "dirt" as repulsive and impure breaks from the code of manhood from the mountain and proves that the scrupulous *machista* standard that teaches men to censure their thoughts, words, and actions continues to prevail in the city.

The examples above confirm that regardless of the seemingly transformative changes Cabezas undergoes throughout the revolutionary process, when confronted with the symbols of the bourgeois norm that define his past, he initially fails to perform according to the standard of the *new man*. Instead, he reverts back to the limiting vision of men he seeks to refute through his participation in the revolution. Whereas Zizek would affirm that this proves that Cabezas' internalization of ideology – whether bourgeois or revolutionary – never *fully* succeeds, at least on a subconscious level (*The Sublime Object* 43), Judith Butler would interpret such a failure or relapse as a necessary starting point for the creation of the conditions for a new gender-related episteme (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 146). It is not until Cabezas vows to make a conscious decision upon his coming down from the mountain to build a new life in the city that incorporates the dirt, feces and hardships as well as the physical, emotional, and sentimental needs that he

succeeds in proposing another option of masculinity that is based on the *new man* from the mountain that strives to *be like Che*.

Cabezas' primary duty as a leader from the city now, similar to his role prior to going to the mountain, is to teach others to relate to the peasant and indigenous populations of León. Before, Cabezas won the trust of the group by first associating major figures in their culture to Sandino's role as a peasant and revolutionary and then by employing "malas palabras," as an effective means to transmit the message of the revolution. Now, well aware of the difficulties he faces in establishing strong ties with the indigenous peasants due to the government's propaganda and the resultant fear of the *Sandinistas*, rather than approach them as revolutionaries, Cabezas and his comrades present themselves as salesmen as they move from town to town "selling" medicines to different Nicaraguan towns (Cabezas 203).

In the process, Cabezas comes into contact with Don Leandro, a peasant that is not only familiar with the *Sandinistas* and their commitment to the revolution, but had participated in the revolutionary fight alongside former revolutionary Augusto Sandino. Don Leandro's personal story opens Cabezas' eyes to the link between Sandino's fight and the contemporary Sandinista movement: the peasant and indigenous populations' struggle for land and basic civil rights: "Yo era un joven estudiante que había conocido a Sandino a través de los libros, había llegado a Sandino por el estudio del sandinismo, pero aún no había llegado a la raíz, a la paternidad verdadera de toda nuestra historia. Entonces, cuando yo encuentro a ese hombre [...] comprendo mi propio pasado, me ubico, tengo Patria, reconozco mi identidad histórica (235).

The dialogue between men that serve as symbols of the two faces of *Sandinismo* – the old (nationalism) and the new (internationalism) – is essential for Cabezas' understanding of the movement and the building up of his own identity and duties as a revolutionary rebel: "Encontré mi fuente de alimentación, que no lo conocía, yo estaba siendo alimentado por Sandino, pero no había logrado ver materialmente mi cordón umbilical, a eso mi nación, lo descubrí en ese momento" (236). Through his contact with Don Leandro, Cabezas realizes that to be a *Sandinista* in Nicaragua is not necessarily to aspire to *be like Che,* but it is to return to the land; to Sandino, the root of *Sandinismo* in Nicaragua. As Thomas Ward puts it "[l]a epopeya oral de Leandro es valiosa porque [...] [a]hora [Cabezas] tiene mayor concepto de la patria, el terruño, la dignidad, el valor y la rebeldía" (Ward 309).

From this point on, rather than relay the message of the revolution in Marxist terms, Cabezas uses the words of the old Sandinista that had a problem with his land and decided to do something about it (Cabezas 203). Even more significant still is that apart from his newfound desire to reach the people of Nicaragua in a different way that is specific to their past, present, and future – the new socialist hegemony that eventually came out of the triumph of the *Sandinismo* – his exposure to Nicaragua's past through Don Leandro uncovers his need to rebuild his own identity in a new way that reflects his needs, desires and *mestizo* origin: "Yo voy a hacer una vida y voy a pintar la historia de mi vida del color que más me guste y aquí cada quién que pinte la historieta de su vida del color que le parezca; yo voy a pintar la mía y la voy a pintar de los mejores colores" (221). Hence it is only when Cabezas makes a conscious decision to construct his identity as a Sandinista revolutionary in terms specific to his own experiences and those

of his country that he succeeds in revising Che's model both as gender code and socio-political vanguard.

In this chapter, I sought to trace how Omar Cabezas revises the code of manhood that emerged out of Che Guevara's guerrilla narratives according to the needs and demands of the Sandinista Revolution in his bildüngsroman *La montaña es algo más que una inmensa estepa verde*. In his narrative, Cabezas offered a complete view of his process of formation as a revolutionary from his time as a university student in León to the mountain and his return to the city. By narrating three distinct phases of his formation as a revolutionary, Cabezas allowed aspects that Che leaves out from his texts – his *machista* past, relationships with women (both real and illusive), sexual desires, apprehensions prior to his stay on the mountain and the difficulty of living up to the standard of the *new man* after reintegration into the city –.

Crucial to an understanding of why Cabezas joins the revolution and what he sought to achieve through his participation were his university days in the city. It is only in this section of his bildüngsroman that he reveals the role his father played in his joining the Front because of his affiliation to *Somocismo*. Here too, one observes how Cabezas starts out as a typical *machista* soon to be a *Cheista* when he eventually goes to the mountain to follow the illusion of becoming a hero by helping others create change.

At the onset, Cabezas seems to follow Che's code of manhood wholeheartedly, but some core differences exist between the practical and ideological standards Che proposes and Cabezas' revision of the same. For Che, the guerrilla rebel on the mountain served as the primary catalyst in carrying out the revolution and ensuring the smooth implementation of socialism while the *new man* comes as a result of the changes

implemented by a successful revolution. For Cabezas, however, the guerrilla rebel and the *new man* are virtually synonymous. The main difference between the two figures lies in the fact that the new man is a physically, morally, and ideologically sound being that emerges out of the combination of the harsh and *tender* aspects of the revolution. Another difference between the models worth noting is that for Che the body becomes the key to his clean break from the bourgeois code of manhood whereas for Cabezas, the dirt and mud of the mountain serve as a boundary between the *machista* standard and the new masculinity represented by the *new man.*

Perhaps the most important distinction between both codes is that towards the end of his narrative, Cabezas, upon realizing that the model of the *new man* from the mountain does not apply to an urban context, adopts a new view of the movement from Nicaragua that incorporates Sandino's pre-communist ideology through the voice of Don Leandro. Such a shift would allow the inscription of origins, particularly ethnic and racial, into the question of a national identity.

Chapter 4: Gioconda Belli's *El país bajo mi piel* (2003) and the Dichotomy of the Female "Guerrilla" Rebel in Nicaragua

In the current chapter I trace Gioconda Belli's self-construction as a woman and revolutionary rebel through an analysis of her memoir, *El país bajo mi piel* (2003). Belli's text outlines her attempts to propose a feminist agenda that aims to break with a patriarchal code of gender during the Sandinista Revolution.[1] Complementing my analysis of the male code that emerged in the guerrilla narratives in previous chapters, in my evaluation of *El país bajo mi piel* it becomes clear that her intended and intentional "moments of rupture" from patriarchy (which are framed by her relationships with men) are not without contradictions. In her incessant quest to gain ground through her feminist aspirations, Belli continues to waver between what she equates in her narrative as her "feminine" (bourgeois) and "masculine" (revolutionary) tendencies (12). I am particularly interested in exploring if this view enforces or suppresses a limiting gender binary that mirrors the "imposition [...] of the rules of social interaction" through the stabilization of a norm that differentiates men from women (Scott, "Gender" 1063)?

Belli locates her self-described dichotomous existence in the following lines that serve as introductory words to her memoir:

> He sido dos mujeres y he vivido dos vidas. Una de mis mujeres quería hacerlo todo según los anales clásicos de la feminidad: casarse, tener hijos, ser complaciente, dócil y nutricia. La otra quería los privilegios masculinos: independencia, valerse por sí misma, tener vida pública,

[1] The two decades that act as the bookends to Belli's narrative are the 1950s and the 1990s. Thus, in her memoir, Belli takes the reader from one of the most controversial periods of the Cold War, moment in which the Cuban Revolution had not yet occurred, but the "spirit of utopia" was already brewing, to a post-Cold War neoliberal context (Sorensen, *A Turbulent Decade* 2).

> movilidad, amantes [...] creo que al final he logrado que ambas coexistan bajo la misma piel. Sin renunciar a ser mujer, creo que he logrado también ser hombre (12).

With this statement, Belli makes clear that rather than create "new possibilities for gender that contest the rigid codes of hierarchical binarisms" she interprets her actions within the purportedly fixed gender binary that she sets out to destabilize with her feminist agenda (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 145). Such a vision, which reflects her bourgeois upbringing, will affect how Belli approaches every aspect of her life from marriage to her lovers' rejections of her, as will become evident throughout my analysis of her attempts to break with a male hegemony.

Raising Belli: The Formation of a Bourgeois Girl

Gioconda Belli was born into a family of a privileged social class. As a child, though her parents exposed her to certain aspects of Nicaraguan high culture – dances at the local Country Club, debutant balls and expensive dinners with friends – she received most of her education abroad in Spain and in the United States in Philadelphia where she studied advertising and journalism (Belli, *El país* 41). In receiving most of her formal education in Spain, a country largely defined by its Catholic tradition at the time, Belli learns from a very young age to see the world through the lens of Catholicism.

Such a view, which urges women to fulfill their social duties as wives and mothers before addressing their own desires, is further solidified through her relationship with her parents, particularly her mother, who supports a vision of the woman in relation to the family unit, an institution that – as Lerner contends – "not merely mirrors the order in the state and educates its children to follow it, [but] also creates and constantly

reinforces that order" (217). This becomes evident when Belli's mother, aware that her daughter was about to begin her first menstrual cycle, a biological indication that this bourgeois girl would soon "become a woman" and thus require the proper socialization, responds to such a situation by relaying her romantic vision of the heterosexual sexual experience through an apology of marriage, reproduction, and monogamy: "Un acto grandioso [...] el acto de unión y comunicación más profundo que puede haber entre dos seres humanos," and by explaining to Belli the "responsabilidades de la maternidad" (Belli 25, 45). Her words sustain an idea of the female body as a mirror of an imposed and naturalized social realm that teaches women to build themselves up according to their roles as wives and mothers, as Monique Wittig affirms: "[w]e [women] have been compelled in our bodies and in our minds to correspond, feature by feature, with the *idea* of nature that has been established for us" (10).

Belli's mother reproduces a conventional "naturalized" view of woman as a (sexual) servant to her husband again when she instructs Belli on her duties as "a perfect wife": "Una mujer debe ser una dama en su casa, pero no en la cama. En la cama, con tu marido, podés hacer lo que querrás. Nada está prohibido" (44).[2] With her juxtaposition of the two basic, yet fundamental responsibilities of the bourgeois woman – to maintain order and "proper" appearances in the household and to keep her husband happy – Belli's mother emphasizes a key concept in a patriarchal ideology: the role of women in the domestic sphere is to "serve" the needs of her male partner through her work around the

[2] In saying this, Belli's mother seems to reinforce the myth of "the perfect wife," an idea that Spanish poet Fray Luis de León made famous with the publication of one of his most well-known works, "La perfecta casada" (1583). While Luis de León originally wrote this text to educate his recently married niece on the etiquette of the Sacrament of marriage, it was subsequently widely used as an instruction manual for all wives and mothers throughout Spain (http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/12471634333485940765657/p0000001.htm#I_1_)

house, the "proper place" for her – cooking, cleaning and keeping up the appearance – (Coons 186). A conventional interpretation of the "social responsibilities" of men and women links man to the "symbolic structure" (patriarchy) that imposes order by fixing the assigned "differences" between the functions of men and women in place while at the same time allowing the male to reap the (sexual) benefits of the female body (Butler, *Undoing Gender* 119).

If in the examples above, Belli's mother attempts to socialize her daughter by teaching her how to express her sexual desires within the boundaries of her role as a woman without neglecting her social duties as wife and mother, Belli takes something much different away from these teachings: "[a]unque su intención era seguramente inculcarme las responsabilidades de la maternidad, sus palabras acerca del poder de la feminidad en una mente joven y sin prejuicios como la mía, despertaron ecos que trascendían la mera función biológica. Yo era mujer" (45). Such an epiphany, which Belli relates to the existence of an inherent female power, "I was a woman," frames her approach to the traditional role of a woman and what she comes to understand as her right *to be* a woman in a bourgeois context.

In what follows, Belli consciously seeks to change the conventional view of marriage as an idealized bourgeois institution imposed on a woman of her class in viewing it as an "option" that she willfully chooses by hastily marrying her first husband against her parents' will. Belli's decision to rebel against patriarchy from within the domestic sphere, a choice that would allow her to negotiate the relations of power in patriarchal society and the roles imposed on the bourgeois woman while at the same time maintaining a proper appearance as a wife and a mother, would locate her inside of the

"power network" and allow for her first intended moment of rupture from a male hegemony (Foucault 96).[3]

Upon marrying her husband, Belli initially assumes that her change in social status will provide her the platform for achieving "economic independence and personal and sexual freedom" (Willis 131). Yet instead of granting her the autonomy she seeks and guaranteeing the glorified passionate sexual union between her and her husband that Belli's mother refers to above, her relationship with her first husband is dysfunctional – they lack sexual chemistry, communication and have very different views of life – and it actually ties her socially, emotionally and legally to a man with which she has little in common and that immediately reinforces a traditional vision of marriage as a relationship of servitude: "Ya instalada en mi nueva vida independiente me pregunté más de una vez por qué mi experiencia de joven casada no se parecía a las palabras de mi madre [...] en mi relación de pareja no lograba, ni la unión de titanes, ni la comunión e intimidad que la convivencia con un hombre estaba supuesta a producir" (46).

Belli's marriage not only fails on sexual and communicative levels, but it also strips her of her independence. If at the onset she succeeds in convincing her husband to allow her to work, another crucial factor in her pursuit of breaking away from patriarchal codes and from her family as it would allow her to alter the social and "family organization" (Scott, "Gender" 1063), he eventually requests that she abandon her career and stay at home "como acostumbraban hacer las mujeres casadas" to nurture her

[3] In *The History of Sexuality* (vol. I) (1978), Michel Foucault affirms that contrary to prior analyses of the relationship between resistance and power, resistance is not located outside of power but both would represent different coordinates of an intricate web of power relations: "[w]here there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power [...] these points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network" (96)

relationship with him and have children (Belli 47).[4] In doing so, Belli's husband reinforces a conventional vision of gender roles that assigns different functions to men and women but never places the male outside of his traditional role as the head of the family (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 22).

When Belli realizes that her marriage, which she now describes as "un desierto sin esperanzas mantenido por miedo y por un penoso sentido del deber" does not grant her the freedom that she initially sought, despite her conscious attempt to make her marriage different, she finds through motherhood another way to express her feelings and subversive desires from the home (58). This role allows Belli to experience the euphoric love for her first daughter that she never achieves with her husband as well as puts her in a position to take advantage of what she views as biological and social power unique to women: "Yo era mujer. En el género humano la única que podía dar vida, la designada para continuar la especie" (45). Belli's goal to exploit her gendered power as a mother to gain access to a reproductive absolute suggests that rather than accept a patriarchal view of motherhood as one that demonstrates "little concern for women's subjectivities" she sees it as an expression of her unique social power (Barbas-Rhoden, *Writing Women* 87). Although Belli's aspirations to both reach and move beyond her role as a typical bourgeois woman are defused by her domineering husband, her "failed" marriage forces her to find other ways to carry out her feminist agenda outside of the home, while at the same time occupying her traditional roles as wife and mother. Belli's relationship with

[4] I cannot ignore the striking similarities between Belli's first marriage and that of Sofía in her novel *Sofía de los presagios* (1996). Despite their distinct backgrounds, (Sofía is the daughter of a gypsy), like Belli, Sofía views marriage as a way to achieve autonomy. However, upon marrying her husband René, her vision of the institution begins to disintegrate as she realizes that for her husband "la mujer, si no es pasiva y complaciente, es una puta" (Carrasco 38).

the Poet, a man she meets in the workplace, provides the platform from which she will achieve "sexual liberation" (Castells 268).[5]

Belli's "Poetic" Discovery

Shortly after giving birth to her first daughter, Belli begins to work at Publisa, the advertising company. Belli's job is not necessarily significant for her career, but it is the first conscious step she takes outside of the home to go against her husband's rule and one that proves significant for her process of socialization, exposure to Nicaraguan history and culture, and the development of her artistic and intellectual capacities. Intellectuals, clandestine revolutionaries and artists expose her to a way of life that inspires creativity and social awareness, as well as highlights the necessity and historical responsibility to act on one's personal and political impulses. Far different from her husband, the men at Publisa read and discuss historical and current events, Marxism, art, sexual liberation and the socio-political responsibility of the intellectual.

One such man is the Poet, who upon meeting her, names himself as her "tutor intelectual" (55). Whereas Belli's husband urged her to repress her intellectual, professional, social, and sexual interests, the Poet stimulates and nurtures her concerns and desires as well as gives her the confidence and recognizes her *right* and socio-historical responsibility to act on her developing interests and political views. The Poet, who demonstrates his sexual attraction for Belli through his incessant (failed) attempts to be with her (a fact that initially perturbs her for she takes this to mean that he disrespects her status as a married woman), ends up provoking her interest because of his ability to make her feel attractive and irresistible (56). In her description of the Poet it is clear that

[5] In his study, *Power of Identity* (1997), Manuel Castells describes "sexual liberation" as the most radical way in which women "challenge patriarchy" by taking control of their bodies and innermost desires (268)

Belli's attraction to him is not physical at first, but is rooted in his apparent self-confidence and passion for poetry, history and culture: "El Poeta no era guapo pero se comportaba como si lo fuera [...] [m]e bastaba oírlo hablar con pasión de un poema, un trozo de historia, un plato delicioso para considerarlo enormemente atractivo y seductor" (57).

Thus, more for awakening a cultural side of herself that she never knew she had than his physical attributes Belli makes a conscious choice to pursue a romantic relationship with the Poet. Belli's decision does not come without guilt at first, but it does serve as an outlet for the expression of crucial aspects of her feminine identity that she is forced to repress in her relationship with her husband: "Algo me decía que si me negaba a conocer esa parte de mí misma nunca me adentraría en los misterios de la vida [...] [n]o me parecía justo que un contrato social como el matrimonio implicara que yo debía resignarme para siempre a una situación que no era más que el producto de un mal juicio, una equivocación" (56).

Contrary to Belli's description of her passionless and monotonous life with her husband, she portrays her first sexual relationship with the Poet as one that embodies her mother's mythical representation of marriage and that results in what she calls her personal "Big Bang": "Ni la imaginación ni la literatura ni mi madre se equivocaban [...] Esa trasgresión fue mi Big Bang personal. Me hizo cuestionar mis deberes y considerar mis derechos, lo que era mi vida y lo que podía ser" (Belli 58). Belli's conscious decision to break her legal marriage contract by acting on her emerging sexual desires for the Poet is significant. In part, it is a step she takes in her personal quest for sexual liberation through the recuperation of her sexual desires. Yet perhaps more importantly

still, Belli's experiencing sexual pleasure for the first time makes her aware of the difference between social "duties" and women's "rights". This realization leads her to believe that "gender [is] a choice," not an obligation and not a natural given and as such, she has the option to choose to be the type of woman she wants to be (Butler, "Sex and Gender" 29).

The sexual aspirations that Belli's relationship to the Poet awakens in her also spur a creative revolution from inside that reaches the page through her poetry.[6] If, as Hélene Cixous suggests, "[w]riting has been run by libidinal and cultural – hence political, typically masculine – economy" (350), then Belli seeks to break with this view by using her poetry as a form of feminine resistance founded on a sexual-erotic that speaks through her body and aims to "reconstruct [...] the female identity" in terms located outside of an illusive bourgeois discourse (Barbas-Rhoden, *Writing Women* 54). Some, such as Laura Barbas-Rhoden, situate such a practice outside of a bourgeois realm, but from my point of view, said interpretation is highly questionable. Belli continues to define herself according to the established moral standard for women, which distinguishes "good" women – wives and mothers – from "bad" women that act on their sexual desires.

In these poems, Belli recalls: "Yo nombraba mi sexualidad, me apropiaba de ella, la ejercía con gozo y pleno derecho. Los poemas [...] celebraban mis plenos poderes de mujer" (68). Belli's poetry, reflects her desire to reveal "that other limitless country [...] the place where the repressed manage to survive: woman," the country under *her* skin

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[6] For detailed analyses of Belli's poetry see Greg Dawes', *Aesthetics and Revolution. Nicaraguan Poetry 1979-1990* (1993), Pilar Moyano's "La transformación de la mujer y la nación en la poesía comprometida de Gioconda Belli" (1993), John Beverley and Marc Zimmerman's, *Literature and Politics in the Central American Revolutions* (1990), and María A. Salgado's, "Erotismo, cuerpo y revolución en *Línea de fuego* (1999).

through eroticism (Cixous 350). Belli's appropriation of her bodily rights and pleasures through poetry caused much criticism from within her family. In reading her poems an aunt would exclaim, "Qué vergüenza," others would call it, "<<poesía vaginal>> [...] <<pornográfica, desvergonzada>>" and her husband, embarrassed to say the least, would demand that prior to publishing another poem, she allow him to read it so that he could censure it (Belli 68). Belli sees her "subversive" language as a vehicle through which she and other women could break away from the rigid male code in patriarchal societies that limits the roles of woman and confines her to certain spaces – [in my poems] "[d]e objeto la mujer pasaba a sujeto" (68) –. Yet more than "break" with patriarchy, Belli's erotic poetry seems to reinforce a bourgeois morality for it would imply a dichotomy between the bourgeois standard for woman, the "proper" way of being a woman outlined by her mother, and the transgression of this norm through woman's acting on (forbidden) sexual desires. In what follows, I evaluate how Belli's "erotic" revelation and ensuing desire to distance herself from a bourgeois standard for women leads her to contribute to the Sandinista Revolution.

The Romanticization of the Revolution

Perhaps a starting point for Belli's participation in the revolution is the opening chapter to her memoirs situated in Cuba in 1979. Such a beginning intends to contextualize the Sandinista Revolution within Nicaragua and in relation to the previous Cuban Revolution. Belli opens her memoirs and thus provides the first glimpse of her participation in the revolution in Cuba in 1979, a year that marks the 20th anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution as well as the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua. The success of the Nicaraguan revolution signified the end of the over forty year rule of the

U.S. backed Somoza Dynasty that began in 1937 with the rule of Anastasio Somoza García (who three years prior to his assumption of power ordered the assassination of Augusto Sandino for his anti-imperialist revolutionary activity) and ended with his son, dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle's fleeing from Nicaragua in 1979 and eventual assassination in Paraguay one year later (Booth 50).

According to historian Thomas Walker, the domination of the Somoza Dynasty in Nicaragua rested on: "co-optation of key domestic elites, direct control of the National Guard, and the support of the United States," which, in turn, spurred rigged elections, genocide, embezzlement, the privatization of lands and industries, the governmental control of capital and a lack of basic human rights (Walker 69). The Sandinista Revolution emerged out of a desire to combat the despotism and North American imperialism evidenced both during and prior to the Somoza years.[7]

The initial chapter of Belli's memoirs also serves to highlight her experience in a rebel training camp in Cuba, which causes her diremption between her revolutionary desires and romantic (bourgeois) tendencies to surface. This division is observed in Belli's attraction to the heroic symbols or heroic "bearded" men of the Cuban Revolution

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[7] In the second chapter, Belli records a mini-history of the intervention of the United States in Nicaragua from American filibuster William Walker to Anastasio Somoza Debayle's totalitarian regime. Walker, who was most likely attracted to Nicaragua for its important role in the transportation of goods between the United States, Central America and the Caribbean prior to the existence of the Panama Canal, traveled to Nicaragua with approximately sixty military soldiers and appointed himself as president of Nicaragua in 1856. As president, Walker took control of the Nicaraguan assets of North American Cornelius Vanderbilt's international shipping company, Accessory Transit Route, which was founded in 1851 during the California Gold Rush, an action that would cause much resistance to his presidency. Walker was eventually stripped of his presidency, sent back to the United States and executed in Honduras (Scroggs 196-229). Belli connects Walker's imposition of his rule in Nicaragua to Anastasio Somoza Debayle's totalitarian dictatorship by foregrounding the consequences of United States intervention in Nicaragua (Belli 23). In providing this brief outline of the events leading up to the Sandinista Revolution, Belli seeks to locate and justify the origins of the insurgency and to highlight the significant role of the United States in condoning and making possible the financial, political, military and ideological domination of ultra conservatives in Nicaragua, her "pequeño y rebelde país, donde las guerras parecían no detenerse nunca" (23).

during her childhood – "Fidel era para mí el símbolo del heroísmo más puro y romántico" (Belli 19) – and her seemingly innate repulsion for weapons when she finally has the chance to take up arms under the direction of her idol, Fidel Castro.[8]

If, as I pointed out in the previous chapter, Omar Cabezas' main anxiety was the fact that despite his undying desire to participate in the combative aspects of the fight from the mountain as a guerrilla rebel, he was forced to return to the city before he had a chance to pick up a weapon, with Belli, one observes a much different reaction to the fight and her role in it. Though too embarrassed to admit it, Belli views the act of picking up a weapon as vile and associates it with her loss of integrity: "Con cada disparo el cuerpo se me descosía [...] lejos de sentir ningún placer, experimenté de manera inequívoca el profundo rechazo que me inspiraban las armas de fuego" (17-18).

If, in fact, this core aspect of the revolution provokes such a strong reaction in Belli, it begs the question, how will this bourgeois woman contribute to the revolution? Though up until this point, Belli has consciously worked to move away from her bourgeois upbringing in her attempt to carry out her feminist agenda, her social class actually serves as a cover up for her involvement in clandestine activities in Managua as well as minimizes suspicion by the government as Belli explains: "Por ser hijas de la burguesía andábamos juntas sin despertar sospechas" (80).[9] Thus, Belli's bourgeois

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[8] Though Belli seems to idealize Fidel, her heroic vision of him is sharply contrasted during another trip to Cuba when Belli portrays Castro as a "typical *machista*" that rather than listen to her wanted her to listen to him and that abused his power as a man and rebel leader to try and get information out of her regarding relations between the Popular Revolutionary Party (GPP) and the Insurrectionals (*Terceristas*) (293-296).

[9] At the start of the revolution, Belli aligns herself with the the Insurrectionals (*Terceristas*), a faction within the FSLN that sought the participation of workers, peasants and the bourgeoisie as a means to establish a "broad anti-Somoza Front" that would not be easily identifiable as communist in nature (Kagan 38). Such a move, which would emphasize democratic rather than utopian-aimed aspirations, placed the *Terceristas* in opposition to orthodox Sandinista ideology rooted in Marxism-Leninism. Belli

upbringing becomes an essential tool in the initial stages of her participation in the revolution. During the day, Belli participates in the movement by connecting with members of distinct social classes under the banner of humanitarian work, sending medicines and money to the guerrilla rebels on the mountain and publishing opinion pieces against the actions of Somoza and his men in *La Prensa*.

At night, in order to preserve her façade as a respectable bourgeois housewife in public, Belli dictates courses in English on Parent Effectiveness Training to other women of a similar social standing. As teacher of these classes, Belli, still married at the time, assumes the role of a typical woman of her class and pretends to share her students' concerns about time management, developing skills for mothers, and other topics related to the private sphere and women's responsibilities. Such activities, especially Belli's work for *La Prensa* which reveals the injustices of the Somoza Regime to the public, lead key members of Somoza's Secret Police to suspect her affiliation with *Sandinismo* (124-125). As a result, Belli decides to leave Nicaragua to participate in the revolution from exile.

To go into exile means an inversion of roles that are typically assigned to men and women in the family unit. Her decision to choose the Revolution over her family not only earns her the title of an "unfit mother" from her husband, but in her absence he moves beyond his traditional role as a man to take on the additional responsibility as the primary or shared caregiver of their children during her absence.[10] Belli's choice to give priority to the Revolution and the consequent shifting of roles within the family unit –

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later joins the GPP when she participates in the revolution from exile as I will point out at a later point in this chapter.

[10] Belli explains: "Mi marido consideraba que yo no estaba capacitada para responsabilizarme por el bienestar de mis hijas; que las dejaría abandonadas" (193).

another example of her working within the domestic sphere to reformulate the complex web of the relations of power – is conscious and as such is to be understood as another intended moment of rupture from patriarchy. Yet in her later affairs with guerrilla rebels it becomes clear that both act according to the naturalized "regulatory frame" of the gender binary as even in the context of the revolution, the roles of *machista* and submissive woman remain intact (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 33).

Similar to her initial connection to the Poet, Belli's relationship with Nicaraguan guerrilla leader Eduardo Contreras ("Marcos"), whom she first meets in Managua in 1973 and reconnects with in Mexico two years later, begins as one of a platonic and education-based nature, for Marcos serves as Belli's intellectual and political tutor at the start of her clandestine revolutionary missions in Nicaragua (Belli 124). Marcos helps Belli gain a greater theoretical grasp on *Sandinismo* and encourages her to use her bourgeois status and talents as a writer to uncover and document significant information about the Somoza Regime and relate it to the public. Yet, soon after meeting Marcos, her political tie to him turns into a mutual sexual attraction.

Belli is quick to point out that Marcos initiates this change in their relationship by grabbing her hand one day when they are in a car, together and saying "[v]os me gustás, ¿sabes" (126)? It is obvious though, that Belli is unable to resist the temptation to explore an unknown terrain with a man to whom she assigns an almost mythical status: "[a]quel hombre era un ser mítico para mí [...] [c]on él no funcionaban las mismas fórmulas aplicadas al común de los mortales" (126). Belli's desire to engage in a sexual relationship with Marcos, a male rebel that for her embodies revolutionary excellence and

her aspiration to form part of a brotherhood of man – "la fraternidad, el calor de los compañeros" – emerge as conflicting "feminine" and "masculine" tendencies (172).

The underlying narrative in the interaction between Belli and Marcos is the revolution. The idea that one's commitment to the cause is until "Victory or Death," settles in when she learns that the whole time they were together in a car, Marcos was carrying a bag around with him with a grenade in it; an object that Belli fearfully mentions could go off at any time (127). Belli associates the anxieties that emerge due to this situation with the presence of the grenade. Yet her description of such a scene suggests that they are more related to her concern that the inevitable will happen: she and Marcos will actually act on their sexual desires for one another, a fact that would demonstrate Belli's difficulty in separating her goals as a rebel from her seemingly feminist agenda: "[m]etió la mano bajo mi camisa. Sacó su pistola, la puso entre ambos [...] Me miraba. Nos tocamos los rostros, el pelo. Cerré los ojos y puse mi oído en su pecho. Sentí ganas de llorar. Era tan fácil detener un corazón. La pistola. La granada. Marcos me besó. Me bebía el alma a través de los dientes. Sus manos un poco torpes buscaban los cierres de mi blusa" (127).

The two aspects of the revolution that attract and repulse Belli, the image of the heroic *guerrillero* and the violent symbols and ideas surrounding the movement – guns, grenades, and the possibility of death – collide in this scene. Rather than relate what she views as a temporary slip in judgment to a conscious decision to act on her sexual impulses as she does with the Poet, Belli links her lapse of control to the revolution and the uncertainty of whether or not the two would ever see each other again: "[s]ería por el peligro, el riesgo perenne, no saber si sería la última vez" (128).

It soon becomes clear that Belli's sexual attraction for Marcos overrides her "fraternal love" for him when in anticipation for their reunion at another point in the insurgency; she hopes for another explosive meeting and feels deceived when Marcos confesses to her that he is in love with another woman. Belli's ostensible independence is put into question by her own insecurities and her bourgeois identity creeps up as a result of Marcos' rejection: "Desde el abandono de Marcos dudaba de mí misma – terrible debilidad femenina –" (192). In associating her self-worth with her relationship with Marcos, Belli ends up recognizing her condition according to the very standard of woman that she seeks to surpass both through her participation in the revolution and her sexual experience. This provides an example of why Jane Gallop affirms that within the field of feminism, critics often view a woman's desire to act on her sexual impulses with a man as contradictory to her political stance and agenda (108).

Marcos' unrequited love for Belli also paralyzes her creative production. In losing Marcos, Belli states "Comprendí que el único mecanismo de control del desbordado erotismo femenino es que requiere del amor para desatarse plenamente. La poesía me abandonó. Apenas un poema ocasional" (Belli 199). Belli's creative block seems to represent the traces of what Roger Horrocks deems as an emotional castration, especially if one understands Belli's writing as an extension of herself and as her utmost expression of her feminine (sexual) desires (105).[11]

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[11] The rupture of her relationship with Marcos also seems to intensify Belli's longing for her country which, in turn, affects her capacity to produce poetry as well: "Sin Nicaragua me secaba" (199). Now, without Marcos, it appears as though this geographical distance becomes a much stronger link between Belli and Nicaragua, thus making it difficult for her to overcome the effects of her temporal loss of a national identity and the nostalgia she feels for her country in her absence. Such a reaction of an exiled subject is normal, according to Hilda Zamora, who states that "[a]l estar presente el exilio, se establece una conexión indisoluble con el recuerdo, la memoria y la nostalgia como factores complementarios de dicha condición" (126). This inerasable footprint that stays when Belli leaves her country conditions the way in which she remembers and expresses her longing for Nicaragua in her poetry (239-240) as well as the

Belli's loss of what previously served as a vehicle for poetic expression seems to trigger what she calls a "masculine" reaction to Marcos' rejection of her: "Se despertó en mí un instinto casi masculino de conquista. Los hombres dejaron de sorprenderme [...] Aprendí qué costuras sutiles penetrar para que se tornaran dúctiles y dóciles" (199). Belli seeks to combat Marcos' act of leaving her with a *machista* impulse of domination. When Belli's "femininity" is threatened, she follows a rigid male code and emotionally detaches herself from her future *conquistas*. Belli's description of the man as impressionable inverts the vision of the bourgeois woman promoted in a patriarchal paradigm by describing the woman as dominant and the male as "conquerable" and suggests, as Carole Pateman contends, that such a reversal of the symbolic structure promotes a vision of women as "replicas of men" but does not, I submit, categorize them outside of the view of gender as a binary (187).

Given Belli's reactive reproduction of the role of the patriarchal male when faced with rejection, perhaps it would be helpful to turn yet again to Horrocks' interpretation of a similar state in the man, which contends that while castration usually refers to the act of detaching the male reproductive organ from the male body, it also refers to the symbolic disconnection from one's feelings (105).[12] If one applies such an idea to Belli's actions, it appears that her emotional detachment from the men that follow Marcos is her way of rebelling against the *machista* that still seems to exist, even in the context of the

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indifference with which she looks upon the geographical landscape of Costa Rica: "La belleza de Costa Rica no lograba despertarme. Demasiado plácida [...] Echaba de menos los atardeceres furibundos, los árboles enmarañados, las cañadas y los aguaceros. Costa Rica se me hacía un agua mansa, leve como la llovizna interminable de San José" (199). For Belli, Costa Rica, a space that would normally inspire romantic visions in a poet, transforms into an almost unattractive place when compared with the images of Nicaragua.

[12] Horrocks explains "[c]astration means that something has been cut off, literally the male genitals. But we also talk about men 'cut off' from their feelings, or simply that someone seems very cut off. So, this is a kind of emotional castration [...] a state of being withdrawn or remote" (105).

revolution. It could also imply an outward expression of her anxiety related to the loss of her "feminine power," so clearly evidenced in her statement "Yo era mujer," which she previously exercised as if it were a choice (45).

Belli's attempt to regain control of herself by demonstrating indifference in her relationships with men after Marcos leads her to her next intended moment of rupture with the patriarchal norm when she tries marriage again, but in a different way with Brazilian political activist Sergio de Castro. Prior to marrying, Belli and Sergio live together, both were involved in the revolution and the two seemed sexually compatible. In this case, her second marriage is not related to the impulse of a rebellious adolescent, but is based on a combination of factors related to her own and her family's pressure – her daughters' attachment to Sergio as a father-figure, her father's push for her to uphold the moral standards expected of a woman of her class, and her vision of Sergio as the ideal lover, father-figure and man.[13] Belli's decision to alter a conventional vision of marriage would represent what Judith Butler calls a "*dis*continuity" with the norm; a slight shift that would "reveal the temporal and contingent groundlessness of this "ground"" (*Gender Trouble* 141). Belli's step to participate in marriage, while at the same time consciously altering its structure, could potentially result in a revision of the bourgeois institution (141).

In Sergio, Belli finds a balance between her sexual, revolutionary, and traditional desires that she lacked in her previous relationships, which makes it relatively easy for

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[13] Belli marries her first husband in order to gain independence from her family, yet this time, she specifically states that she accepts Sergio's marriage proposal in part to regain her father's respect: "Accedí a casarme porque estaba cansada de que mi padre se negara a visitarme porque vivía con un hombre que no era mi marido" (228). Ironically, she later explains that her marriage to Sergio was never actually legal for they lacked a significant document when they went to marry but decided to go through with the ceremony anyway to please her family (228).

her to adapt to her new life with him and even sparks her desire to have another child, Camilo.[14] Yet shortly after they marry, Sergio starts acting as her father as well, a fact that Belli finds difficult to ignore: "Nunca he tolerado la tendencia de los machos a adoptarnos a las mujeres, como si al casarse con nosotras adquieran una hija o un ser desvalido que deben guiar por el mundo. Aunque Sergio era un ejemplar aventajado de su género y usaba métodos más sofisticados, a mí no se me escapaba el paternalismo" (229). With this confession, Belli points out that while on the surface, Sergio appears progressive and accepting of her desire to exceed the norm for the bourgeois woman, upon wedding, he assumes the role assigned to him within a traditional paradigm. Sergio's shift seems to suggest that the institution of marriage conditions men and women to act according to a "naturalized binary" that assumes and superimposes male superiority over women (Butler, *Undoing Gender* 43).

If Belli depicts Sergio as a microcosm of patriarchal society for following his "assigned gender role" upon marrying her, such concerns do not seem to matter when, while involved in underground missions in Costa Rica and Panama, Belli falls in love with Henry Ruiz ("Modesto"), leader of the Prolonged People's War (GPP) from the mountain. Belli's falling for Modesto would not only force her to exchange her family life with Sergio for her relationship with him but also to sacrifice core feminist aspirations and revolutionary goals for an alternative role as his lover and secretary.

Belli meets Modesto in Panama in 1978, shortly after transferring her loyalties from one faction of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) – the Insurrectional

[14] Belli explains the nature of their relationship in the following statement: "Me acomodé al amor plácido de Sergio, que era como una cascarita de nuez cómoda y acogedora flotando en las corrientes tumultuosas que anegaban mi vida. Dormíamos acurrucados el uno en el otro y hacíamos el amor aventurero y explorador, pleno de fantasías eróticas y juegos; intenso y cotidiano" (229).

(*Terceristas*) – to another – the GPP (234). In the only description of the Sandinista leader that Belli offers in her memoirs, she contrasts what she deems as his unimpressionable physical (racial) attributes – white skin, delicate-type features and smooth hands – with his sharp rhetorical skills and self-determination; qualities that earn him the reputation of what Belli calls a Nicaraguan version of Che Guevara:

> Modesto, el máximo jefe de la GPP, una versión nicaragüense del Che Guevara [...] no poseía un físico memorable: de estatura mediana, su piel era muy blanca, y sus rasgos finos [...] [p]oco tiempo necesité, sin embargo, para percatarme de que tenía la cabeza bien puesta sobre los hombros [...] Aquel hombre era, a todas luces, una persona que gozaba el conocimiento, y que lo poseía como producto de un sobreesfuerzo personal realizado en condiciones sumamente hostiles (244).

It should not come as a surprise that among the community of Nicaraguan revolutionaries, Modesto, "el máximo jefe de la GPP," earns the title of the Nicaraguan version of Che Guevara (244).[15] According to Belli's description, Modesto, similar to Che, would not earn the respect of his peers based on his physical force, but rather for his assertiveness and intellectual capacity.

Similar to her relationships with other male rebels, Belli's connection to Modesto has its roots in the revolution. With his guidance, she uses her bourgeois status as a cover up for transporting documents, money, correspondence and other materials necessary for

[15] Belli dissociates Che from his political value by using his image to emphasize Modesto's ostensible "bourgeois" qualities.

those involved in the Sandinista movement to Costa Rica, Panama and Honduras.[16] As a result of her involvement in such revolutionary missions and close contact with Modesto, the two develop a type of fraternal bond that is not void of sexual tensions but that is inspired – not unlike her relationship with Marcos – by the combination of the dangerous circumstances surrounding their participation in the revolution and her seemingly innate romantic nature of getting involved in heterosexual relations.

As a result of Belli's overwhelming attraction to Modesto – "me caían las miradas de éste como una miel pegajosa" – her relationship with Sergio suffers (259). Such a fact makes itself manifest in the physical and emotional distance she consciously creates between her and Sergio: "La relación con Sergio sufría [...] el desgaste de mi corazón puesto en otra parte. Me distanciaba de él día a día porque hacerlo disminuía mi sentimiento de culpa" (302). Belli associates the angst that her decision to leave Sergio behind produces in her with her guilty conscience for having to choose between her family and her sexual desires for Modesto. Yet, as she later points out, her hesitation in leaving Sergio was more related to her doubt of Modesto's capacity to be a "good" partner. Sergio, without a doubt, possessed this quality: "A pesar de su dogmatismo, de su rigidez moralista que me irritaba, Sergio era [...] [m]ucho mejor pareja, en muchos sentidos, que Modesto cuyo carácter mostraba suficientes señales de peligro como para que yo advirtiera la precaria y efímera felicidad que podía ofrecerme" (310).

Though at the onset, Belli appears to dictate the course of her relationship with Sergio and Modesto, it is Modesto that demands that she either choose to lead a

[16] Belli explains: "Modesto consideró que yo era la persona ideal para transportar dinero, mensajes y documentos delicados entre Costa Rica, Honduras y Panamá. Pensaba que mi estampa de mujer de cierta clase me libraría de las sospechas de las autoridades en los aeropuertos" (261). Belli transports such items by stuffing them in the arms and legs of dolls and in hidden compartments of suitcases (261).

conventional lifestyle with Sergio or accept an alternative deal with him in which the two, though romantically involved, continue to live in separate houses. The decision is difficult, but Belli chooses Modesto. The price of this decision is high. In exchange for her physical and emotional closeness to Modesto, instead of acting as the sole mother of her children, Belli is forced to share this duty with Sergio: "[s]er consecuente con la aspiración de igualdad entre hombres y mujeres era aceptar que los hombres podían ser madres también" (339). Yet, her decision to agree to a splitting of the maternal duties in the home is also an implicit negotiation when she chooses to give priority to her relationship with Modesto over her marriage to Sergio.

Belli not only compromises her position within the family unit when she chooses Modesto, but her role as the lover of a high profile rebel leader in the movement requires her to exchange her position as director of a revolutionary television station – a responsibility that she earned for her strong journalism skills after the triumph of the Revolution – for a position as Modesto's secretary. According to Laura Barbas-Rhoden, such a decision causes Belli to slip back into the "old gender codes" for she acts according to the bourgeois standard for women (*Writing Women* 50).

Belli's decision to give priority to Modesto's demands over her own professional and family desires causes her to suffer an internal conflict: "A ratos me arrepentía de haber tomado una decisión a todas luces equivocada, pero de pronto Modesto se me acercaba o alguien me mencionaba que yo era la compañera del comandante, y eso me hacía sentir torva y oscuramente validada, importante" (345). Belli rationalizes her delicate choice by reminding herself that as Modesto's secretary, she is in close and constant contact with him, even if it means that in the public eye many only view her as

the submissive servant to the revolutionary commander. Is this not the very position assigned to the women of her class that Belli has sought to refute from the beginning when she "chose her gender"; when she chose to *be a* woman?

Though Belli succeeded in performing her traditional duties as a wife and mother while at the same time carrying out her feminist agenda through her work, poetry, participation in the revolution and relationships with other men, her relation with Modesto foregrounds the fact that in spite of all of her previous intents to break from the norm, she has proven unable to create an identity of herself as a woman outside of a power relationship with men: "No sabía estar sola. Me había arriesgado a las balas, a la muerte, traficado con armas, pronunciado discursos, ganado premios, tenido hijos, tantas cosas pero [...] [n]o sabía quién era realmente yo sin la referencia de alguien que me nombrara y me hiciera existir con su amor" (378).

Perhaps even more striking still is the fact that Belli's social class, which was so useful for her involvement in the revolution at the onset, is a mark that she cannot erase and that Modesto never forgives: "Ya me había admitido [...] que temía que sus hombres, su tropa, no comprendiera que se hubiera enamorado de mí. Le mortificaba que consideraran que era una debilidad suya amar a alguien como yo" (376). Modesto's vision of Belli as a weakness, a shameful mark on his rebel leader status, leaves her with no other choice but to leave him in the end. For Modesto, Belli has not only become a symbol of the ruling class but an emblem of the bourgeois involvement in the revolution as well and as such, she embodies one of the main points of conflict between the Marxist-

based GPP and the *Terceristas* that eventually emerge to dictate the course of Nicaragua post-1979 (376).[17]

Belli's difficulty in viewing her role as a woman outside of a gender binary begs the question, if the only *true* ruptures with patriarchy are those that "contest the rigid codes of hierarchical binarisms," as Judith Butler suggests, then does Belli's feminist agenda, which seems to culminate in her relationship with Modesto, create "new possibilities for gender" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 145)?

The New Sandinista Society

After the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution, Belli participates in literacy campaigns, healthcare revisions and the management of the information regarding the 1984 governmental elections, the first democratic elections since the triumph of the revolution in 1979.[18] Precisely because of the Sandinista victory, United States military intervention through the *Fuerza Democrática Nicaraguense* (FDN) or the "Contras," a counterinsurgent army comprised of Untied States trained former members of Somoza's National Guard, increased during Ronald Reagan's two-term presidency (1981-1989). As a result, the Sandinistas closely monitored the presence of North Americans in Nicaragua at the time (Blanchard 78).

In this context, Belli met and fell in love with Charlie Castaldi, a North American journalist that was in Nicaragua covering the elections for National Public Radio (NPR).

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[17] After the Sandinista Victory, Belli explains: "[a] la gente como yo [...] se les cobraba el origen de clase, era como una vergüenza con la que uno debía acostumbrarse a vivir, una suerte de pecado original perdonado pero que nunca se olvidaba" (376).

[18] The revision of the healthcare system in Nicaragua was of particular interest to Belli. During her pregnancies, she mentioned her discontent with various aspects of the system in Nicaragua including doctors' oversimplification of pregnancy-related complications and unequal treatment of women from distinct social classes.

Her relationship with Charlie is portrayed as one without lies: "[con Charlie] me arriesgué a ser exactamente quien era. Decir exactamente lo que sentía. Asumir los riesgos de mis emociones" (Belli 280). At the time Belli writes her memoirs, she declares her ability to maintain a professional career as a journalist, continue her participation in politics, and live between two countries – the United States and Nicaragua –.

Perhaps the ultimate proof of such a relationship becomes apparent when Belli became pregnant again and had to choose to go through an abortion, given the risks involved for her health. This choice does not come easy for Belli, who recalls: "[m]uchos años lloré por lo que pudo haber sido. Compadecí tanto a mis cogéneres, todas las mujeres que nos vemos desgarradas por ese tipo de decisiones de vida o muerte, decisiones que tomamos en pleno ejercicio de nuestra libertad, pero que por siempre nos dejan una zona bombardeada en el corazón" (255). Belli's decision to terminate her pregnancy, a right that emerged with the feminist movement in the 1960s, is not only a sign of her taking control of her health and her body, but it is also another intended moment of rupture from patriarchy that challenged the Catholic Church and the "natural relations of marriage and reproduction" (*Critical Passions* 124).

Belli also proves her relationship with Charlie in the political arena. When co-founder of the FSLN, Tomás Borge learned of their relationship, he requested that Belli stop seeing Charlie because of his possible connection to people involved in the CIA (Belli 118). Though Borge states that he trusts Belli, his demand, apart from revealing his concern with security, suggests that even after the triumph of the revolution, sexism continued to prevail among the leading Sandinistas (118). Borge's request, perhaps even

more than Modesto's punishment of her for her bourgeois upbringing, makes Belli feel marginalized and unrecognized despite her years of dedication to the revolution: "No podía concebir que la Revolución me marginara. El sandinismo era parte fundamental de mi identidad. Afectivamente era mi familia, tan parte de mí como mi apellido. No podía tolerar la idea de un posible ostracismo o de que se me tratara con desconfianza" (119). Though Belli initially complies and leaves Charlie, she eventually chooses her happiness – her future with Charlie – over the orders of the leading officials in *Sandinismo*. For Belli, Charlie's uniqueness lie in the fact that she believes he is the man that can "tame her," a quality that no other man in her life up until this point has possessed: "en aquel hombre [...] yo intuía el puerto final de mis tempestades" and for this reason, she proposes marriage to him (281). Belli's proposal, which Carlos accepted, is another example of her inversion of roles within the family unit. It is also, ironically, her attempt to solidify her future in marriage and to build a life founded on a heterosexual absolute within the very patriarchal paradigm she has sought to refute from the onset (281).

In this chapter, I sought to stress Belli's intended moments of rupture with patriarchy in Nicaragua during the Sandinista Revolution. In my analysis, it became clear that though intentional, Belli's carrying out of her feminist agenda was not without contradictions for as she worked towards a new way of being a woman in Nicaragua, she continued to act according to both her bourgeois ("feminine") and revolutionary ("masculine") tendencies.

Belli's choice to be a woman – "[s]in renunciar a ser mujer, creo que he logrado también ser hombre (12) – who does not renounce to "love" in the same detached way as a "man" and her actions throughout *El país bajo mi piel* suggest that though she proves

capable of inverting the roles typically assigned to men and women in the family unit, she fails to propose a code of gender that goes beyond the norm imposed by a bourgeois hegemony.

Chapter 5: Citizens for Change: Subcomandante Marcos, the EZLN and their Cultural War on Democracy

On January 1, 1994, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), an "armed" masked rebel group based in the region of Chiapas in Mexico and their spokesman Subcommander Marcos, came out of the jungle quite literally, to wage war on the State of Mexico. Some of the events leading up to the EZLN's decision to take up arms – an action that for them was a last resort in their fight to survive – include several instances of electoral fraud, former President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's disavowal of the democratic practices outlined in the Constitution of 1917, the official document that came out of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, and the complete disregard for the land, basic human rights and mere existence of the indigenous communities (Taibo II, "Zapatistas!" 22).

On the same day, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a trilateral trade bloc involving the United States, Mexico, and Canada that the Zapatistas publicly recognize as their death sentence, or as Paco Ignacio Taibo II very candidly puts is "the final kick in the stomach to the indigenous communities," came into effect (22).[1] The combination of these reasons force the EZLN and Marcos to put their ten year process of preparation in the Lacandon Jungle in Chiapas, a phase that Marcos attributes to his "indianization," into practice as they break the silence imposed on them by a

[1] This agreement not only serves as one of the primary reasons that Marcos and the EZLN rise up against the Mexican government in 1994, it also serves as a platform for his criticism of the United States for historically supporting Latin American dictators, one that he makes in "Estados Unidos ¿de Vietnam a Chiapas?": "Es hora de que el pueblo de Estados Unidos cumpla con su compromiso histórico respecto a su vecino del sur. Ya no equivocarse respecto al hombre al que hay que apoyar. Apoyar no a un hombre sino a un pueblo, al pueblo de México en su lucha por la democracia, la libertad y la justicia" (*Nuestra arma* 195).

neoliberal state and push to restore the past of the indigenous population of Mexico by using the very element repressed for over 500 years: the indigenous voice.[2]

The post-Cold War context in which Marcos and the EZLN emerge – one that Carlos Vilas submits is defined by an "economic globalization and new informational technologies" – differs greatly from the years following the Cuban Revolution, a time in which the Latin American radical Left continued to view armed revolution as the only means to combat North American backed dictatorships (100). For Marcos and the EZLN, words take the place of weapons, masks cover faces in an attempt to erase differences and a post-political proposal for the construction of an inclusive democratic Mexico that finds its roots in the indigenous communities (but does not exclude other sectors of society) replaces the political agenda of the Cuban and subsequent revolutions.[3] Marcos' distancing himself from the movements of the past and embrace of "absolute democracy," a post-Cold War ideology, begs the questions: is the Contemporary Zapatista Movement a continuation of the revolutionary projects of the radical Left of the 20th century in Latin America (Prozorov 126)? Or, does it indicate a break from the "political act proper" (Zizek, "Class Struggle or Postmodernism" 99)?[4]

The identity-oriented code that Marcos uses to unite distinct sectors of society in their difference and in their common aims to gain recognition from the State and to

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[2] See Yvon Le Bot's interview with Marcos, "Encuentro con las comunidades indígenas: el choque cultural," in *Subcomamdante Marcos: El sueño zapatista* (1997). Also see the following articles published in *La Jornada:* Luis Hernández Navarro's "Sublevación en la Lacandona" (January 4, 1994), and Blanche Petrich and Elio Henríquez's article "Ellos dijeron: "la muerte es nuestra, ahora decidimos cómo tomarla," (February 6, 1994). See also Juan González Esponda and Elizabeth Pólito Barrios' "Notas para comprender el origen de la rebelión zapatista," in *Revista Chiapas 1* in 1994.

[3] Zizek defines "post-politics" as that which "[e]mphasizes the need to leave old ideological divisions behind and confront new issues, armed with the necessary expert knowledge and free deliberation that takes people's concrete needs and demands into account" (*The Ticklish Subject* 198).

[4] Zizek would argue that though Marcos' multicultural discourse allows the "new multiple political subjectivities" to come to the fore, it does not "reach this radical level of the political act proper" ("Class Struggle or Postmodernism?" 99).

reinstate basic human needs not only causes a saturation of group-oriented issues, but creates a noticeable gap between Marcos' multicultural movement and Che's desire to implement a class-based system structured around the economic differences so prevalent in Latin America.[5] Marcos, then, locates his movement in what Slavoj Zizek would identify as a post-political realm in which an emphasis on the "inauthentic" and a steering away from "what really matters" becomes evident (*The Ticklish Subject* 354).[6]

What does this shift from "what really matters" for Che – a political agenda centered on the socio-economical – to Marcos' "post-political" desire to carry out an agenda that seeks to include the groups previously left out of the nation in his plan for an alternative Mexico? And what does Marcos' emphasis on a politics of identity that consciously omits the differences between classes, a slip that is so clearly noted in his well-cited communiqué delivered on May 28, 1994: "Marcos es gay en San Francisco [...] machista en el movimiento feminista, mujer sola en el metro a las 10 p.m," mean for the view of his movement as one that is political in nature?[7]

In this chapter, I seek to respond to these and other questions that focus on how Marcos strives to correct Che's model of revolution in interviews and in his anthology *Nuestra arma es nuestra palabra* (2001). If for Che the most significant category in the building up of a new society is social class, Marcos forces an implosion of identities

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[5] See Ernesto Laclau's "Structure, History and the Political" in *Contingency, Hegemony and Universality* (2000), p. 203-04: "The proliferation of particularisms not linked by any more global emancipatory discourse could lead not only to the preservation of the status quo but also to a more pronounced swing to the Right" (204). In other words, Laclau affirms and Zizek would agree that the focus on and merging together of the distinct struggles of different sectors of society could end up reinforcing the ostensible stability of democracy, the "dominant system" (203).

[6] "The talk about new forms of politics bursting out all over, focused on particular issues (gay rights, ecology, ethnic minorities...)" Zizek affirms "has something inauthentic about it, and ultimately resembles the obsessional neurotic who talks all the time and is otherwise frantically active precisely in order to ensure that something – what really matters – will not be disturbed, that it will remain immobilized" (*The Ticklish Subject* 354).

[7] See http://www.bibliotecas.tv/chiapas/may94/28may94.html.

reinstating them in a new light: that of a non-difference that could be summed up in the Zapatistas' slogan "todos somos Marcos". The result is a proposal for a democracy that "requires unity, but is only thinkable through diversity" and that defines as its base the indigenous and other minorities left out of the official Mexico (Laclau, "Democracy and the Question of Power" 2).

Key to understanding Marcos' "creation" of a new democracy are the origin and formative phase of the EZLN in the mountain and Lacandon Jungle in Chiapas, the rural and urban movements he uses to construct his political identity as the spokesman for the Zapatistas, and his "unauthoritative "I", a clear indicator of the post-political stance he uses to correct the errors of the past by incorporating minorities previously ignored by the State in his plan for a horizontal society.[8] Marcos' fleeing from a position of power and grouping together of identities under the banner of a cultural war on democracy suggests a movement towards an inclusive gender code that displaces the differences in class and recognizes women and other minorities as its center. It becomes clear in my analysis that though the Zapatista Movement begins as a socialist project inspired by Che Guevara's utopian aims, it gradually shifts in response to the new global context in which the Zapatistas emerge, and aims to construct another Mexico through emancipation and democracy.

Following Che: The FLN Arrives to the Mountain in Chiapas

In 1983, in reaction to a combination of the atrocities that occurred during General Absalón Castellanos Domínguez's term as governor of Chiapas (peasant

[8] Since Marcos and the EZLN do not desire to assume a position or power but rather hope for recognition from the State, one could argue that rather than "create" a new movement, Marcos provides another option for Mexican citizens that though in opposition to the State, does not propose to replace it with a new system.

assassinations, disappearances, kidnappings, and torture) and the corrupt practices of the leaders of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) over the course of several decades, a group made up of six members National Liberation Forces (FLN) –three Indians and three *mestizos* — arrived to Chiapas with some theoretical knowledge extracted from military-oriented guerrilla and counter-guerrilla manuals but without any prior practical experience in the war.[9] Such emphasis on the cultural background of the small nucleus of men that formed the FLN brings up the question of ethnicity, a factor that apart from Cabezas' allusion to it in the closing words to *La montaña* has proven insignificant in a revolutionary discourse. Marcos' distancing from previous rebel insurgencies with his emphasis on culture and ethnicity will become evident with the formation of the EZLN, an indigenous-based army, as I will point out shortly.

The FLN, similar to previous rebel groups, goes to the mountain to undergo a process of adaptation: "[n]osotros vamos a aprender a vivir en la montaña, a aprender a pelear, y a esperar a que algún día la revolución estalle en México" (Le Bot 138). Yet, their idea of waiting until the conditions are ripe for revolution differs greatly from Che's foco theory. Ironically, Marcos names Che's theory as the main source of inspiration for the FLN's preparatory phase in an interview with Yvon Le Bot in 1997: "Se planteaba una guerrilla en términos muy cercanos al foco guerrillero. En sus inicios es una guerrilla que con su accionar, con su propaganda armada, pretendía crear conciencia y jalar a otros

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[9] In an interview with Yvon Le Bot, Marcos names the tactics he used in preparation for the guerrilla phase in the Lacandon Jungle: "Durante esos años en la montaña, como no tenemos apoyo exterior, ni asesoría, ni nada, tenemos que recurrir a la formación militar autodidacta, la que podamos darnos nosotros mismos, a través de las experiencias que leímos de las guerrillas latinoamericanas, pero sobre todo a través de los manuales de guerrilla y contraguerrilla del ejército norteamericano. Nosotros aprendimos guerrilla en los manuales de los "Rangers", de los "Marines", de los "Siespos", de los "Seals" y todos los aparatos de tipo comando militar que hay en el ejército norteamericano y en la OTAN. Ahí aprendimos lo que era la guerrilla; lo que era el ejército regular lo aprendimos de los manuales de historia militar" (Le Bot 138). This statement seems to suggest that the source of the group's tactical knowledge on the revolution comes more from the United States military manuals of counter-insurgency.

grupos que optaran por la lucha armada, hasta culminar con una guerra popular" (123-124).

The FLN's choice to follow Che Guevara's model rather than other groups such as the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) seems interesting.[10] The Guatemalan rebel group would have been the most logical referent for Marcos and the FLN due to the geographical proximity of Guatemala and Chiapas and the URNG's emphasis on peasant and indigenous rights. The URNG, similar to the FLN, initially sought a government takeover but due to much resistance from the military junta of General Efraín Ríos Montt, what began as an armed insurgency transformed into a plea for negotiations and recognition within the Guatemalan State. Yet, when Le Bot asks Marcos if the FLN found inspiration in the URNG, he responds: "No. Nuestro referente guerrillero no era la guerrilla centroamericana, sino el Che." (135).

Che's vision of the mountain and the guerilla rebel as two intricately related aspects of a revolutionary insurgency proved highly influential for Marcos and the FLN at the onset. What is more, Guevara's plan to replace North American backed totalitarian regimes in Latin America with a society grounded in socialist practices emerges as the central focus of the FLN's project in Mexico. The leaders of the FLN clearly outline their plan in *Statues of the Forces of National Liberation (FLN)* (2003), a political pamphlet that was originally written in 1980, three years prior to the small group's

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[10] The URNG was primarily a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla group formed in 1982 out of four different revolutionary groups in Guatemala: The Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR), the Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA), and the central committee of the Guatemalan Worker's Party (PGT). The aims of the URNG, whose members were predominantly Indian, were the following: "Elimination of repression and guarantees of life and peace; distribution of property of the very wealthy, agrarian reform, price controls, and the allowance of reasonable profits; guarantee of equality between Indians and non-Indians; equal representation by patriotic, popular, and democratic sectors in the new government, equal rights for women, protection for children, and guarantees of freedom of expression and religion; and national self-determination and a policy of nonalignment and international cooperation" (Barry 242-243).

decision to travel to the mountain. In it, the members of the FLN identify themselves as a political-military group with socialist aspirations, define North American imperialism, the capital-driven Mexican ruling class, and the means of coercion as their enemies, and lay out their goal to carry out a movement that adopts core principles of previous Latin American revolutionary campaigns:

> The FLN is a political-military organization whose end is the taking of political power for the *campesinos* and the workers of the Mexican Republic, to establish a popular republic with a socialist system. The enemies that oppress and exploit the Mexican people are: imperialism, mainly North American, their local compass, the Mexican bourgeoisie and the puppets that form the Mexican bourgeois State and their armed arms: the policemen, the army, and the diverse paramilitary bodies [...] To defeat these enemies, the FLN combines different forms of struggle, mainly the politico-economic, the political-military and the ideological (5).

If the FLN initially followed and sought to implement Che's vision of the mountain, guerrilla rebel and revolution as the most effective means to combat imperialism and despotism in Mexico, when does Marcos abandon Che and his project for a socialist revolution only to promote instead a predominantly indigenous movement of a democratic nature and why does such a change take place? Local, national and international circumstances contribute to the FLN's transformation into the EZLN and

the latter group's goal of carrying out a new type of movement that both responds to and is driven by the immediate needs of civil society, a shift that would align Marcos with the very democratic (bourgeois) discourse of the State.

On a local level, a clash of cultures between the FLN and the indigenous and peasants in Chiapas sparks change. Once on the mountain, the members of the FLN reeducate themselves in response to the contact with the indigenous and peasants in Chiapas and the surrounding areas: "Sufrimos realmente un proceso de reeducación, de remodelación [...] Como si nos hubiesen desmontado todos los elementos que teníamos – marxismo, leninismo, socialismo, cultura urbana, poesía, literatura –, todo lo que formaba parte de nosotros [...] Nos desarmaron y nos volvieron a armar, pero de otra forma. Y esa era la única manera de sobrevivir" (Le Bot 151). If in the guerrilla narratives examined in previous chapters, one of the fundamental roles of the rebel is to educate and politicize the peasant and indigenous masses on the mountain and in the city as observed in Cabezas' text, in Chiapas the opposite occurs: there is a depoliticization and detheorization of the guerrilla rebel and an added emphasis on the basic needs of the local communities in Chiapas (Kampwirth, "Marching with the Taliban" 235).

Apart from local changes, events occur in Mexico that emphasize the government's disregard for the indigenous and other communities: the earthquake of 1985, which unveiled the State's discount for the resultant destruction of impoverished areas of Mexico City, the electoral fraud that brought Carlos Salinas de Gortari of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) to power in 1988, and his subsequent revision of Article 27 of the Constitution of 1917 in 1992. Such an action went against revisions

made to the document after the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and resulted in the privatization of *ejidos* and thus the indigenous communities' loss of land (Hansen 11).

These events made evident the continual disrespect for the rights of peasants and indigenous communities, an argument that proved central to Emiliano Zapata's campaign for land and freedom during the Revolution, and emphasize the urgent need to carry out a different type of movement in Mexico – as Marcos stated – centered on basic human needs: liberty, justice and democracy (*Nuestra arma* 19).[11] Consequently, the FLN united with the already mobilized communities in Chiapas to form the EZLN, a group that aimed to revive in a more peaceful way the fight of former national revolutionary hero and martyr Emiliano Zapata.

Also, two international historical occurrences that took place in the late 1980s and early 90s frame the formative period of the EZLN: the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, bringing to an end the ideological struggle that was the Cold War, and the preparation for and coming into effect of NAFTA five years later, forcing the State to place an added emphasis on international capital and thus thrust the Zapatistas into a global context.[12] Marcos defines the new era of globalization as one in which the State's desire to attract and accumulate foreign capital replaces an appreciation for humanity and human rights under a democratic government: "En el mundo de ellos, los que en el Poder viven y por el Poder matan, no cabe el ser humano [...] El mundo del dinero, el mundo de ellos,

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[11] These words, which Marcos symbolically uses as "weapons" in his non-violent cultural war on the State, are also key components of a post-Cold War ideology and thus emphasize a shift from the utopian spirit of Che-inspired movements in the 60s, 70s, and 80s.

[12] My relation of these two events and use of them to link the Cold War and post-Cold War period is not meant to highlight what many deem as the fall of Communism, but rather to foreground the historical circumstances and symbols (the Berlin Wall) that frame the emergence of Marcos and the EZLN and to stress that very different from previous revolutions, the Contemporary Zapatista Movement is a product of a post-Marxist era that explains a moving away from materialism and other class-based politics and an embracing of democracy, a bourgeois concept that forces the surfacing of battles that for Che were of little or no significance – gender, race, sexual orientation and age.

gobierna desde las bolsas de valores. La especulación es hoy la principal fuente de enriquecimiento y, al mismo tiempo, la mejor muestra de atrofia de la capacidad de trabajo del ser humano" (*Nuestra arma* 120).[13]

Prior to the 1990s, Latin American revolutionary projects sought to replace totalitarian regimes with socialist models, yet in the post-Cold War period in which the EZLN comes forth, a national cultural problem surfaces. The change from the political to the cultural will define the heart of the diplomatic Zapatista Movement and shape Marcos' discourse and view of revolution. How, exactly, will the global context in which he builds up his movement affect Marcos' treatment of the mountain, the guerrilla rebel and the revolutionary process in Mexico in his writings?

From *Guerrilleros* to *Ciudadanos:* the EZLN's Revision of the Revolutionary Package

In their narratives, Che, Cabezas, and Belli depicted the mountain as a rebel territory that was isolated from society, transformative in nature, and largely populated by peasants and indigenous groups. For these reasons, the mountain became the geography upon which change took place during revolution. In following such a vision, Marcos and other urban rebels traveled to the mountainous region of Chiapas where they planned to undergo a rigorous training regimen. Yet, once the group joins forces with the indigenous communities and together, they take on a new collective identity as the EZLN, the view of the mountain as the model space of formation of the guerrilla rebel shifts. Instead, Marcos calls it "Zapatista territory," a peripheral zone that though tightly

[13] Additionally, when in his interview with Marcos in 2006, Jesus Quintero, host of *El Loco de la Colina*, asks him how he understands politics in Mexico today, Marcos responds: "Para nosotros, la política en México es la prostituta más cara que hay ahorita, la más fea además y pensamos que es necesario construir otra política porque el estío, la desilusión que antes provocaba ahora se está convirtiendo en rabia. Nos estamos acercando [...] a la desesperación a la orilla de la violencia a la gente de abajo" (*El Loco de la Colina* 2006).

guarded by the National Army of Mexico, becomes an autonomous space in which peasants, indigenous, and other citizens of Mexico that the Mexican government has previously ignored come together to construct a plan for a more inclusive democracy (*Nuestra arma* 255). This means that the mountain is no longer symbolic of the guerrilla rebel's intentional separation from the city but rather represents another sector of society.

A marginalization of the mountain also occurs on a textual level. Instead of occupying the foundational space it does in other guerrilla narratives, Marcos only mentions it in interviews in response to questions regarding his formation in Chiapas or it appears as a signature in his writings "Desde las montañas del sureste mexicano. Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos," alongside the three definitive "words" of the movement: "democracia, libertad y justicia" (*Nuestra arma* 80).[14] The change between previous views of the mountain as a key component in revolutionary discourse and narratives to an erratic place only restituted by interviewers means that, though in both cases the isolation from society is key to the implementation of change, Marcos moves his focus from the proletariat to the local economy willing and ready to fight against a neoliberal state.

Such a shift in the meaning of the mountain transforms Marcos' view of other key aspects of revolution. In other rebel narratives, the revolutionary formed on and in harmony with the mountain is the mobilizing force for change and the key to the building up of a new future rooted in socialism. For Marcos, the Mexican citizens, specifically those members of society that form part of the Nation but are excluded by it for reasons

[14] Marcos does speak directly to his formative years on the mountain in *Yo, Marcos* (1994). Yet, the mountain appears as a prequel to January 1, 1994, date in which the movement actually begins, and thus it does not carry the significant ideological weight nor does it assume the central role in the movement that it does in former *Cheista* revolutions.

of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and age become the driving force behind the Contemporary Zapatista Movement: "La sociedad civil [...] [l]os olvidados de siempre, menos a la hora de los procesos electorales. Los prescindibles, menos a la hora de exigirles el cumplimiento de obligaciones. Los excluidos, menos a la hora de imponerles tributos. Los despreciados, menos a la hora de la muerte. La sociedad civil y su proyecto de país [...] enfrentada al poder y su proyecto de destrucción" (*Nuestra arma* 134). Marcos' view of the citizen as a person bound to others by the right to vote, basic civil liberties and difference is built up in relation to the State and the idea of civil (democratic) society. The crucial question to ask is what does the change from Che's focus on the guerrilla as a fundamental agent of change during revolution to Marcos' view of the citizen, a human being bonded to others by concepts of equal rights (i.e. voting rights), freedom and justice in a democratic society, as the engine for change of the Zapatista movement imply (Heller 1-5)?[15]

Prior to the emergence of the EZLN, the revolutions studied have, for the most part, implemented aspects of Che's guerrilla tactics. Yet, a core component in the Contemporary Zapatista Movement is the citizen that makes up part of a civil society founded on cultural difference, inclusion, tolerance and hope for a fair future (*Nuestra arma* 126).[16] Rather than focus on the differences in class, the fundamental problem for other rebel authors, Marcos and the EZLN's movement foregrounds what Judith Butler

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[15] In *Beyond Justice* (1987), Agnes Heller suggests that citizens are united by sets of rules, norms and concepts. One such concept is justice, which Heller departs from Chaim Perelman's definition of the term in the context of equal rights: "Justice means the consistent and continuous application of the same norms and rules to each and every member of the social cluster to which the norms and rules apply" (5).

[16] In his interview with Quintero, Marcos explains that the reason why he and the other members of the EZLN wear two watches, one on their right hand and the other on their left, is to symbolize the intricate relationship between civil society and the EZLN. Once demands have been met and the war is over, the citizens of Mexico and the EZLN will be one and only then will one watch be necessary.

recognizes as an emphasis on "'particularisms' in search of an oversearching universal" ("Merely Cultural" 38). In other words, Marcos' shift from a class-based movement to one that not only seeks to incorporate forgotten identities but strives to unite them in their difference results in the depoliticization of the guerrilla rebel and the cultural recognition of the citizen.[17]

What is more, Marcos even seeks to "correct" the vision of Che as an exemplary international guerrilla rebel by remembering him as "El Che," "citizen of the world": "Ciudadano del mundo Che recuerda lo que ya sabíamos desde Espartaco y que a veces olvidamos: la humanidad encuentra en la lucha contra la injusticia un escalón que la eleva, que la hace mejor, que la convierte en más humana" (105). The words that Marcos uses to shape Che are common to a post-political discourse that intends to change his political value and status and emphasizes instead his force as "a worldly citizen," a "subject of democracy" (Zizek, *Looking Awry* 165).

Ironically, the qualities that Marcos associates to Che's status as a model citizen bear a striking resemblance to Che's definition of the revolutionary from the mountain in *El diario del Che en Bolivia*: "Este tipo de lucha nos da la oportunidad de convertirnos en revolucionarios, el escalón más alto de la especie humana, pero también nos permite graduarnos de hombre" (188). If for Che, the change from man to guerrilla rebel relates to revolution, the mountain and the other rebels in the revolutionary vanguard, Marcos displaces Che's political focus and emphasizes instead the citizen's role in the construction of a democracy that respects differences, seeks recognition from the State, and grants all sectors in society the right to maintain and exercise civil liberties.

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[17] See also George A. Collier and Jane F. Collier's "The Zapatista Rebellion in the Context of Globalization" in *The Future of Revolutions* (2003), p.245.

The basis of such a movement is best described by Marcos, who, when asked in an interview by Mexican journalist Carlos Monsiváis what he and the EZLN hoped to achieve through their uprising and subsequent negotiations with the State responded: "Lo fundamental de nuestra lucha es la demanda de los derechos y la cultura indígenas, porque eso somos. En torno a esto se da el reconocimiento a la diferencia. De allí nuestra liga con el movimiento homosexual y de lesbianas, y también con otros movimientos marginados" ("Entrevista" 38). Marcos classifies the Contemporary Zapatista Movement as a cultural war that fights for an appreciation of the differences in "others" through a non-difference: "A Zapatista is anyone anywhere fighting injustice" (Klein 116).[18] Such an idea is symbolized in the black ski mask that the members of the EZLN wear on January 1, 1994 and vow not to remove until the Mexican government meets their demands.

Marcos further identifies the change between Che's model of utopian-aimed revolution and the EZLN's plan to "correct" the past when he states:

> Hace 30 años el Che soñaba y repetía el sueño de una realidad transformada, nueva, mejor. El sueño de la rebeldía. Ese sueño atravesó el tiempo y las montañas y se repitió de nuevo, igual pero diferente, en las montañas del sureste mexicano. El sueño que hoy nos convoca es ruptura y continuidad con ese sueño del Che Guevara, así como su sueño fue ruptura y continuidad de ese otro sueño

[18] I understand the term "other" according to Joan W. Scott's definition of this category as one that is prevalent in the history of difference and that highlights "the attribution of characteristics that distinguish categories of people from some presumed (and usually unstated) norm" ("Experience" 22).

que desveló por igual a Simón Bolívar y a Manuelita Sáenz

(*Nuestra arma* 107).

Marcos inserts the EZLN and its vision of democracy into a tradition of "dreamers" that fought for change in Latin America. He characteristically recognizes Bolívar and Che as exemplary leaders of the Independence and revolutionary movements of the past, yet his inclusion of Manuela Sáenz, the former mistress of Simón Bolívar that became active in the Independence movements of the 19th century mostly because of her association to her lover, points to a trend in his writing to insert the minorities typically left out of "official history," a typically male-centered discourse, by mentioning the often forgotten "petite history" of Sáenz and Bolívar.

Marcos' strategy to involve all sectors of society in the carrying out of the Zapatista's democratic agenda, again best expressed in the slogan "Todos somos Marcos," does not come without consequences. His push to cover up the anxieties of a post-Marxist era by reinstalling such topics into a multiculturalist discourse results in what Slavoj Zizek recognizes as "the depolicitization of the economy" (*The Ticklish Subject* 356). In other words, rather than focus on the way the national economy functions and results in the differences in classes, he makes his argument about the effects of neoliberalism – the internationalization of the economy – and the poor democratic practices of the State regarding culture. Zizek would associate this logic with what others have called the "end of ideology" (353) and thus represents a point in history in which: "[t]he political struggle proper is transformed into the cultural struggle for the recognition of marginal identities and the tolerance of differences (218).[19]

[19] Though Zizek is quite critical of this newfound emphasis on identity, Judith Butler seems sympathetic to such a shift. See *Bodies that Matter* (1993) and "Merely Cultural" (1998).

If class antagonism determines the political struggle Zizek refers to, the vocabulary that shapes the Zapatista movement post-January 1, 1994, apart from highlighting a vision of the State as an instrument of oppression of the minorities, reflects questions of human rights, democracy and national identity: "We want democracy; I mean the right of these people to choose the government. We want liberties [...] we want justice [...] We don't want more papers. We want schools, we want hospitals, we want land, we want support of the government" ("Subcomandante Marcos Interview" *60 Minutes* 1994).

Marcos' conscious moving away from the Marxist-based model and guerrilla-centered discourse so prevalent in past revolutionary projects and the creation instead of a movement that incorporates the citizen as the main actor in the construction of a horizontal society that seeks recognition rather than a position of power changes the entire revolutionary package. In Marcos' plan, a culture-centered politics that strives not only to incorporate those previously left out of the Nation-state, but to identify the forgotten sectors of society as the base and basis of a new democracy replaces key concepts of former revolutionary insurgencies – utopia, the assumption of power, and socialism –.

Marcos also follows a nation-centered model to create his political identity as the spokesman for the Zapatistas by relating himself to two national occurrences: the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and the Student movement of 1968. Marcos' construction of his identity in relation to these events – one a rural peasant movement and the other an urban middle-class driven uprising – is a political gesture that he uses to avoid alignment with the class-centered international movements of the past and to link his public persona

instead to the wide ranging sectors of Mexicans – peasants, indigenous, students and other members of the middle class – that take part in such movements.

1910/1968: Marcos (Re)Defines his Political Identity

Over eight decades prior to the emergence of the EZLN, Mexico experienced the first revolutionary revolt of the 20th century with the Revolution of 1910. Throughout the revolutionary period over a third of the population in Mexico was comprised of indigenous peoples and *mestizos* that were often ignored by the government and denied basic human rights, access to their land and autonomy (McLynn 33). With the guidance of such leaders as Pancho Villa in the north and Emiliano Zapata in the south, the people of Mexico, particularly the indigenous populations of the regions surrounding the southern state of Chiapas, an area that though rich in natural resources was and is still one of the poorest regions in the country to date, sought democracy, social justice, agrarian reform and the right to reclaim basic human rights (Le Bot 34).[20]

It was not a coincidence, according to Marcos, that out of all of the leaders that emerged during the Revolution, he and the Zapatistas chose to associate themselves with Zapata's name and battle for "Tierra y Libertad," or "Land and Freedom," outlined in his Ayala Plan: "La figura de Emiliano Zapata posee una resonancia, un peso y una presencia mayores para los mexicanos, para los campesinos indígenas, incluso para los mayas, que siempre, tanto en la época prehispánica como durante la Colonia y la Revolución, han permanecido en la periferia de la sociedad mexicana" (Le Bot 74). Zapata, then, not only

[20] Yvon Le Bot affirms: "De todos los estados de México, Chiapas es el que presenta los índices de pobreza más elevados y el que mejor ilustra las nuevas y las antiguas desigualdades extremas" (34). Also see Marcos' essay originally written prior to January 1, 1994 "Chiapas: el sureste en dos vientos, una tormenta y una profecía" in *Nuestra arma es nuestra palabra*, p. 23-38.

represents the struggle for democracy, liberty and justice but he serves as a symbol that unifies Mexico's past, present, and future under the banner of democracy.[21]

Marcos' emergence as a spokesman for the citizens of Mexico on January 1, 1994, a moment defined by much mistrust in the practices of Salinas de Gortari, evokes images of Zapata and his struggle. Enrique Rajchenberg and Cathering Héau-Lambert explain that for Mexico "[d]e la identidad individual de Marcos, oculta tras el pasamontañas, sólo quedaba la identidad simbólica de un héroe guerrillero agrarista. Esta reparación sorpresiva de un pasado remoto [...] resurgía la figura emblemática del defensor del pueblo campesino que murió por sus ideales" (http://www.revistachiapas.org/No2/ch2heau-rajch.html).[22]

Marcos transforms the symbolic link between Zapata's former struggle and the Contemporary Zapatista Movement into one that has real political and legal antecedents in his "First Declaration from the Lacandon Jungle" (1994).[23] The declaration expresses

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[21] Marcos also draws on the significance of Zapata as an antecedent to and inspiration for the Contemporary Zapatista movement in his essays on Votán Zapata, "Votán Zapata o 500 años de historia," and "La historia de las preguntas," a god that, according to the myths of the Tzeltal Mayas, was the first one brought to earth to distribute the lands to the Indians (*Nuestra arma* 22). Correspondingly, Zapata, whose Ayala Plan outlined, among other things, his proposal for land reform in Mexico, was the first Mexican revolutionary of the 20th century to fight until his death for the rights and lands of the indigenous peoples. For this reason, both Votán Zapata and Emiliano Zapata have come to represent the "heart" of the Mexican population for Marcos and the EZLN.

[22] In her study, *Marcos, la genial impostura* (2005), Maite Rico Beltrand de la Grange explains that "Esta foto de *Marcos* (con su caballo) hace pensar inevitablemente en Emiliano Zapata, el general incorruptible de la Revolución de 1910)" (32). Similarly, in an evaluation of the emergence of the EZLN, *Zapata Lives!: Histories and Cultural Politics in Southern Mexico* (2002), Lynn Stephen explains that from the onset, the Zapatistas' "Name, methods, and message clearly invoked the spirit of the Mexican Revolution, advancing a simple platform of work, land, housing, food, health, education, independence, liberty, democracy, justice, and peace in the names of Emilliano Zapata and Pancho Villa" (144).

[23] Marcos states: "La dictadura porfirista nos negó la aplicación justa de leyes de Reforma y el pueblo se rebeló formando sus propios líderes, surgieron Villa y Zapata, hombres pobres como nosotros a los que se nos ha negado la preparación más elemental para así poder utilizarnos como carne de cañón y saquear las riquezas de nuestra patria sin importarles [...] que no tengamos nada, absolutamente nada [...] Pero nosotros HOY DECIMOS ¡BASTA!, somos los herederos de los verdaderos forjadores de nuestra nacionalidad, los desposeídos somos millones y llamamos a todos nuestros hermanos a que se sumen a este llamado como el único camino para no morir de hambre ante la ambición insaciable de una dictadura de más de 70 años encabezada por una camarilla de traidores que representan a los grupos más conservadores

the Zapatistas' search for historical legitimacy and justifies the reasons for their seemingly abrupt appearance and declaration of war on the Mexican government for its failure to act according to the principles outlined in the Constitution of 1917. Julia Preston and Samuel Dillon, authors of *Opening Mexico: the Making of a Democracy* (2004), contend that this constitution, which was the official document that came out of the Mexican Revolution, initially reflected the spirit of the revolution. It emphasized the democratic ideals that Zapata and others fought and died for, enforced the separation of church and state, implemented free secular public education and radical land reforms, and recognized worker's rights. Also, in Article 27, the constitution promoted Mexican nationals' right to use the land and its resources through the implementation of the *ejido* system that Zapata supported (48).[24]

Because this document not only recognized the autonomous nature of the indigenous communities of Mexico, but pushed for radical Agrarian reforms, it became what Marcos and the EZLN deemed the "Magna Carta" of the Contemporary Zapatistas (441). Accordingly, after Salinas de Gortari called for the revision of his Article 27 in 1992, a move that would deemphasize the reforms accomplished during the Revolution, and thus eschewed the democratic spirit of the original document, the Zapatistas made the reinstatement of the terms of the original constitution a main priority in their cause.

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y vendepatrias" (*Nuestra arma* 13). With this, Marcos uses the government's perception of the indigenous peoples as "carne de cañón" an "easy target" and the complete disregard for and inhumane treatment of such groups in Mexico as a means to gain the support of the women, children, elderly, and indigenous in an uprising against the oppressive Mexican government.

[24] Some texts that I consulted for information on the Constitution of 1917 and Article 27 include Noel Hilarion Branch's *The Mexican Constitution of 1917 Compared with the Constitution of 1857* (1917), Don M. Coverver, Suzanne B. Pasztor and Robert Buffintgon's *Mexico: an Encyclopedia of Contemporary Culture and History* (2004), Julia Preston and Samuel Dillon's *Opening Mexico: The Making of Democracy* (2004), Yvon Le Bot's *Subcomandante Marcos, El sueño zapatista* (1997).

In a list of demands published on March 1, 1994 from the EZLN to the Mexican Government, Marcos orders the reinstatement of the original terms of the constitution and calls for the annulment of Salinas' revision of Article 27: "El artículo 27 de la Carta Magna debe respetar el espíritu original de Emiliano Zapata: la tierra es para los indígenas y campesinos que la trabajan. No para los latifundistas [...] La reforma salinista al 27 constitucional debe ser anulada y el derecho a la tierra debe volver a nuestra Carta Magna" (*EZLN* t.1 181). The association between Zapata's and Marcos' cause reveals that although one of the biggest triumphs of the Mexican Revolution was the recognition of land use principles in the Constitution of 1917 and the subsequent public and legal recognition of the minority groups that make up the foundation of the Mexican-nation, the same fight persists as the Mexican government continues to disregard popular standards in practice over seventy years later when the Zapatistas come onto the scene.

The other national event that Marcos uses to define his political identity is the Student Movement of 1968, another consequence of the persistent lack of a democratic spirit on the part of the Mexican government. The movement of 68' originated in the form of a peaceful protest that sought to use the growing national and international attention placed on Mexico, chiefly Mexico City, due to the 1968 Olympic Games to be hosted there to highlight the non-democratic practices of then President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, whose undemocratic actions, according to Carlos Monsiváis, suggested that "Reprimir es Gobernar. Gobernar es explicar serena y patriarcalmente la represión" ("1968: Dramatis Personae" xi).[25] Though the students sought to establish a dialogue

[25] The bibliography on this movement is vast, but some valuable resources include: Ramón Ramírez's *El movimiento estudiantil de México, julio/diciembre de 1968* (1969), Elena Poniatowska's *La*

with government officials on how to implement what they deemed as reasonable changes in the government (a tactic that Marcos and the EZLN would use nearly thirty years later) the State responded with the brutal massacre of more than 350 citizens.

Even more shocking than the actual massacre, however, affirms Kate Doyle, senior analyst and director of the Mexico Project and the Guatemala Documentation Project for the National Security Archive in Washington, DC, was the government officials' decision to swiftly "sweep the evidence away". The initial silencing of this scene of carnage by the government became a "non-spoken pact to leave things as they were".[26] On the thirtieth anniversary of the massacre, Marcos broke the implicit agreement with his letter "Tlatelolco: Treinta años después la lucha continúa" (1998) dedicated to the "Digna Generación de 1968." In an attempt to use his word as a weapon of resistance against the government's implicit breeching of a social contract with the citizens of Mexico, a move that clearly distinguishes Marcos' project from former armed insurgencies, Marcos exposes the struggles, unnecessary deaths, lack of a fair, just democracy, and the silences still evident in Mexico even decades later at the close of the 20th century: "El movimiento de 1968 marcó la historia de este país de manera definitiva. Entonces se enfrentaron dos países: el construido sobre la base del autoritarismo, la intolerancia, la represión y la explotación más brutales; y el que se quería y quiere construir sobre la democracia, la inclusión, la libertad y la justicia" (*Nuestra arma* 155).

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noche de Tlatelolco: testimonios de historia oral (1971), Sergio Zermeño's *México, una democracia utópica: el movimiento estudiantil del 68* (1994), Alejandro Toledo and Marco Antonio Campos' compilation, *Poemas y narraciones sobre el movimiento estudintil de 1968* (1996), Julio Scherer García's *Parte de la guerra, Tlatelolco 1968 documentos del general Marcelino García Barragan: los hechos y la historia* (1999), Paco Ignacio Taibo II's *'68* (2004), and Claire Brewster's *Responding to Crisis in Contemporary Mexico: the Political Writings of Paz, Fuentes, Monsiváis, and Poniatowska* (2005).

[26] See *Mexico's 1968 Massacre: What Really Happened?* (http://www.npr.org/templates/player/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=97546687&m=97661089).

Marcos magnifies the importance of such a moment by calling out for the construction of a different form of democracy from below "Abajo, el México de 68" that finds its roots in those that resist, those that continue, those that died and those that first survived 68 and now 98 (156- 157).[27] The difference between the two Mexicos that Marcos suggests emerge as a result of the massacre lie in the two opposing forces involved: those that hide the truth and those that seek to expose it.[28]

In defining himself in relation to the Mexican Revolution, a peasant-run movement and the Student Movement of 1968, an event that united middle-class intellectuals and other sectors of Mexican society, in a struggle against an unjust government, Marcos highlights two significant points: the construction of his political identity in relation to key events in Mexican history and his incorporation of citizens from all sectors of society in his fight. In doing this, he detaches himself from Che's Marxist practices, ideologies on man and eventual internationalization of the revolution.

In an interview with Jesús Quintero, Marcos explains the distance he puts between his and Che's visions for the revolution. When Quintero asks what he thinks when people compare him to Che, Marcos responds:

> Es una comparación injusta para el Che por supuesto. Se trata de otra época de América Latina, de otra época mundial de otra forma de ver el mundo. De ninguna

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[27] Marcos' reference to those from below here could be linked to M. Azuela's *Los de abajo* (1915), which, as is well-known, referred to those that participated in the uprising, mainly peasants and indigenous peoples, as *los de abajo*, or those from below.

[28] Marcos also contrasts "silence" with "the word" in "La larga travesía del dolor y la esperanza" and "La palabra y el silencio" where he makes reference to what he views as three Mexico's: the Mexico from above, the one from the middle, and the one from below (*Nuestra arma* 62, 86). Although Marcos never explicitly mentions a class-related component, his exclusion of class from his discourse seems to manifest itself in his use of the words above, middle, and below.

> manera me compararía pues con el Che como no fuera en desventaja pero no es nuestro objetivo ni compararnos con ninguna de las figuras revolucionarias o rebeldes que hay en el mundo. Lo que nosotros queremos construir es una identidad colectiva en la que quepan todos; todos los que están proponiendo otro mundo (Quintero 2006).

Such a statement, coupled with Marcos' previous definition of his public persona in relation to both a rural and an urban movement, foregrounds his rupture, though humble, with the Marxist tradition that provided the basis for Che's vision for Latin America. Marcos defines a new order based in a collective body of citizens that the State has ignored, silenced and brushed aside by "promoting the rights of the traditionally excluded: indigenous people, women and even [...] sexual minorities" (Kampwirth, "Marching with the Taliban" 237).

If Che employs a Marxist-oriented discourse in which an authoritative didactic "I," the guerrilla rebel that seeks to assume a position of power and appears unconscious of the demands of political correctness that Marcos obsesses over, Marcos strives to further sanitize his political identity of any traces of an aspiration to power or a class-based ideology by speaking from the position of a "correct" dialectic un-authoritative "I". Such a change would explain Marcos' self-identification as *Sub*comandante Marcos and not *Comandante* Marcos – a title he claims he earned on the mountain due to his "flaw" of proving impatient when dealing with the press – and his constant use of the first person plural "nosotros" or "we" –, although this often proves inevitable due to his role as the

leading voice and face (or mask) often associated with the Zapatista Movement (*Yo, Marcos* 92).[29]

Apart from its didactic aims, Marcos' "I" mentions gender and sexual orientation as central issues for the EZLN. Marcos' conscious implementation of women's and gay rights in his discourse signals movement in the male code for in his desire to appear un-authoritative he also consciously avoids actions and words that would categorize him as *machista* or anti-gay by recognizing women and other sectors oppressed because of their gender or sexual orientation as "doubly othered" due to their need to change society and themselves in order to achieve progress.

Marcos' emphasis on identity politics is typical in a post-Marxist (post-utopian) age in which: "Politics and theory are no longer oriented merely toward internal struggles to establish their identities but are actively concerned with and directed toward issues and struggles for our time" (Taylor, Vintges 4). Taylor and Vintges bring up a relevant point: what was for Che and other rebels a "time" for class-struggle and revolution for Marcos is a "time" in which the defense of the increasing distance between cultures and cultural practices in a global era becomes a priority. Such a displacement means that for the first time, the differences in class, though implicit, do not take center stage in Marcos' gender-centered discourse. What he emphasizes instead is a fight for the inclusion and recognition of "others" in a horizontal society constructed from the bottom up.

Marcos' Didactic "I": Building a more (Politically) Correct Form of Democracy

[29] Marcos is a paradoxical figure for though he seems to consciously flee from power – when Quintero asks him in the same interview cited in the previous note if *he* desires to assume a position of power, he responds in the collective "we", "No, no sólo no aspir*amos* sino que *nos* provoca repulsa" – the public defines him as the leader of the Zapatista Movement as well as associates him with noteworthy leaders of the past ranging from Che Guevara to Robin Hood to Zorro.

Often in his writing, Marcos creates heteronyms or characters through which he transmits his ideologies and uses as didactic tools to teach the reader about topics such as diversity, difference, neoliberalism, rights, and justice. One figure Marcos uses to achieve his educative aims is *El Viejo Antonio,* or Old Antonio, a member of the Mayan indigenous community in Chiapas that served as Marcos' mentor during his preparatory phase on the mountain and that revives in his stories an oral Mayan tradition (McCaughan 73).

The myths that Old Antonio relates to Marcos, which often come forward in response to questions that the guerrilla in training on the mountain asks his elder, attempt to explain the origin of the world through an indigenous perspective. Much different from Western accounts of Latin American history that, according to Marcos, fail to recognize the significance of the indigenous communities in the building up of a Mexican (mestizo) national identity, Old Antonio builds the world from the bottom up, establishing as its base the indigenous peoples that walked the earth "muy al principio de los mundos" (*Nuestra arma* 405). The concepts that shape Old Antonio's creation of this world prove of utmost importance to Marcos' latter cultural war – difference, colors, communication, national symbols and unity (405). Through an analysis of Old Antonio's story, "La historia de las preguntas," I intend to demonstrate how Marcos incorporates Old Antonio's voice as a means to revise official history and to recognize the indigenous peoples as the origin of modern Mexican society.

The story begins in the mountains of Chiapas in 1984, ten years prior to the appearance of the EZLN and thus before the coming into effect of NAFTA. At this point, Marcos is not yet Subcomandante Marcos, but rather an inexperienced rebel living in the

Lacandon Jungle. When asked by Old Antonio why he and the other urban rebels traveled to the mountain, Marcos responds by naming Emiliano Zapata and his contributions to the changing of Mexican society during the Revolution of 1910.

Marcos, the inexperienced guerrilla rebel with much theoretical but little practical training on the mountain at this point, focuses on Zapata's material achievements. Such accomplishments, which are later recognized in accounts of the official history of Mexico, include the creation of his Ayala Plan, military campaign, and capacity to organize the community against the Mexican government of Porfirio Díaz. Yet Old Antonio actualizes Marcos' vision of Zapata and his historical significance by explaining his unknown origin. Zapata, according to Old Antonio's account, was born out of the Mayan myth of Ik'al and Votán Zapata, two gods that though separate learned to walk as one by asking themselves three simple questions: how to move, where to go and how to continue to move forward (*Nuestra arma* 438). The point of Old Antonio's story becomes evident in the end when the two gods achieve movement through communication. Old Antonio links such an idea to Zapata, a man that learned to move by leading a revolutionary movement against the regime of Porfirio Díaz, and encouraged others to follow in his footsteps (439). After Old Antonio relates Zapata's story to Marcos, which emerges out of his desire to correct Marcos' traditional view of history, a naïve Marcos seems to have missed the point and asks "¿Y Zapata?," Old Antonio responds: "Ya aprendiste que para saber y para caminar hay que preguntar" (438).

What needs to be foregrounded here is not necessarily the message of Old Antonio's story, which also appears in Marcos' essay, "La palabra y el silencio" (1995),

but rather the subordinate position Marcos assumes.[30] From the beginning, he presents himself modestly as an inexperienced guerrilla rebel that takes at face value conventional representations of Emiliano Zapata. Yet through his interaction with Old Antonio, a respected elder, Marcos represents the view of the indigenous people as well as highlights key concepts for a Zapatista – recognition, respect, dignity, communication, unity in difference, and the use of the past (in this case an indigenous past) to construct a new present and future.[31] It becomes clear, then, that Marcos uses Old Antonio as a tool to reinstate the indigenous voice in the history of Mexico and to recognize it as the origin of a new Mexican society, without assuming a position of authority. This move inverts the hierarchical order presented by official history and questions "history," a discourse that Joan Scott states is often viewed as a "foundationalist discourse" ("Experience" 26).

One also notices such a tactic through Marcos' creation of and speaking through Don Durito de la Selva Lacandona, a beetle (perhaps the most versatile species in the entire insect and animal kingdom), that is also a knight errant that implicitly criticizes the neoliberal Mexican State and acts in defense of the rights of citizens ostracized by the hegemonic system (Ponce de León xxvii-xxviii).[32] In his relationship with Don Durito,

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[30] The crux of Old Antonio's message also appears in "La historia de las preguntas" through Marcos' description of the differences between the powerful and the Zapatistas: "Cuentan los más antiguos abuelos que tuvieron por regalo la palabra y el silencio para darles a conocer y para tocar el corazón del otro. Hablando y escuchando aprenden a caminar los hombres y mujeres verdaderos. Es la palabra la forma de caminarse para adentro. Es la palabra el puente para cruzar al otro [...] Nosotros usamos la palabra para hacernos nuevos. El poderoso usa el silencio para esconder sus crímenes. Nosotros usamos el silencio para escucharnos, para tocarnos, para sabernos" (87).

[31] See also "La historia de los otros" (*Nuestra arma* 413), "La historia de los colores" (395), "La historia del león y el espejo" (415), and "Historia del uno y los todos" (420).

[32] By giving authority to these two characters – one representative of the voice of the elder (Old Antonio), a figure that is highly respected in the indigenous community and the other a knight errant (Don Durito), the heroic protagonist in the *novelas de caballería*, a genre of writing whose parody became famous with Miguel de Cervantes' publication of *El Quijote*, Marcos succeeds in disseminating his message to the people of Mexico and correcting accounts of official history without assuming a position of power.

Marcos, or the "not quite Commander" SupMarcos, describes himself as Don Durito's loyal squire (*Nuestra arma* 330).[33] Through an evaluation of "El ratoncito y el gatito," I will show how Marcos continues to rewrite history from the bottom up, only this time through Don Durito.

"El ratoncito y el gatito" relates the age-old fairytale – a genre of literature known for its didactic and moralizing function – of the rivalry between the cat and the mouse. Different from traditional interpretations of the story, Durito's telling of it, which, I submit, is a political allegory of the fight between the neoliberal Mexican State (post-NAFTA) and the Zapatistas, has a different ending. The *ratoncito* (the Zapatistas), in the end, says "Ya Basta!" and eats the cat (the neoliberal State).

Durito, the self-described ultimate (beetle) warrior that women dream of and men aspire to become, opens his story by clearly outlining the roles he and his loyal squire SupMarcos occupy (330). While Durito assumes the role as SupMarcos' superior and as the educator of the masses, SupMarcos is a diplomat, a mediator that relays Durito's messages in the form of communiqués to the citizens of Mexico. In this particular instance, Durito tells the story of the cat and the mouse while, in the meantime, he orders SupMarcos to write to the people of Mexico to inform them of what he views as the basic

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[33] Ironically, Marcos attributes to Don Durito all of the qualities associated with the heroic views of the guerilla rebel leader that he evidently seeks to avoid but that the media assigns to him in an attempt to install him in the same tradition of Latin American revolutionary leaders that Che Guevara and other rebel leaders of the past belong to: "Este pequeño escarabajo decide recorrer los caminos del mundo para deshacer entuertos, socorrer doncellas, aliviar al enfermo, apoyar al débil, enseñar al ignorante, humillar al poderoso, levanter al humilde [...] Las noticias de sus hazañas han dado ya la vuelta al mundo y millones de mujeres suspiran por él, miles de hombres lo nombran con respeto y cientos de miles de niños lo admiran" (*Nuestra arma* 311), For further analyses on the public persona of Subcomandante Marcos see the following articles included in *The Zapatista Reader* (2002), Octavio Paz's "The Media Spectacle Comes to Mexico," Alma Guillermoprieto's "The Unmasking," "Andres Oppenheimer's "Guerrillas in the Mist," Naomi Klein's "The Unknown Icon," and José de la Colina's "As Time Goes By: "Marcos," or the Mask is the Message". Also see the following interviews with Subcomandante Marcos: "Subcomandante Marcos Interview with Ed Bradley" (1994) and José Quintero's *Entrevista al Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos* on *El Loco de la Colina* (2006).

requirements needed to ensure that diplomatic relations exist among countries. Durito's instructions include explicit orders to eliminate topics such as the forces of rapid intervention, economic programs and the flight of capital, definitive practices of the Mexican government during the presidency of Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León (1994-2000).

Though at this point, Durito's task of relating the story of the cat and the mouse and SupMarcos' responsibility to inform the public of the diplomatic practices between countries appear unrelated, it becomes clear in the conclusion to the "rewritten" fairytale that they are very much linked: "Es claro que existen, al menos, dos cosas que están por encima de las fronteras: la una es el crimen que, disfrazado de modernidad, distribuye la miseria a escala mundial la otra es la esperanza que la vergüenza sólo exista cuando uno se equivoca de paso en el baile y no cada vez que nos vemos en un espejo. Para acabar con el primero y para hacer florecer la segunda, solo hace falta luchar y ser mejores" (331). Implicit in the introductory and concluding words to Durito's story is Marcos' harsh criticism of Zedillo's neoliberal policies.[34] The State's desire to attract foreign capital and strengthen the relations abroad through the privatization of lands and the deregulation of the economy has a high political price for Mexico. When the State, which Marcos states should serve as the protector of the people, places more emphasis on foreign relations and accordingly concerns itself less with the conditions at home, the people suffer the consequences. Change is in order and Marcos seeks to address such a

[34] Marcos highlights the demoralizing effects of Zedillo's embrace of neoliberalism on the indigenous communities in Chiapas in two letters he writes to him in 1994 and in 2000 (72, 164). For Marcos' further discussion of this concept and its consequences see also, "Palabras en el Acto de Inicio del Primer Encuentro Intercontinental por la Humanidad y contra el Neoliberalismo" (*Nuestra arma* 112), "Mañana comienza hoy" (*Nuestra arma* 120), "Segunda Declaración de la Realidad por la Humanidad y contra el Neoliberalismo" (127), "La sociedad civil, el concepto incómodo y la realidad molesta" (131), "El caracol del fin y el principio" (136), "Los misterios de la Cueva del deseo" (319) and "Otra nube, otra botella y otra carta de Durito" (341).

need through the creation of a new form of democracy that does not denounce but rather respects difference as a means to correct the past: "No es necesario conquistar el mundo basta con hacerlo de nuevo..." (331).

Marcos, at a first glance, assumes a subordinate position and Don Durito comes forth as the more authoritative and didactic voice. Yet it becomes clear from the onset that Durito, similar to Old Antonio, is a heteronym that Marcos uses to disseminate his views on neoliberalism and the violence of the State in a global era as well as to spread his message on how to resist a State that embraces foreign capital at the expense of humanity among the citizens of Mexico and abroad. Marcos' belief, as stated through Don Durito's moral of the story of the cat and the mouse, that nationality is only a mere circumstantial accident (331) is symbolic of the post-Cold War context in which he and the EZLN emerge. It emphasizes a moving away from the idea of the individual and an aspiring towards a collective identity under the banner of universalism; a move that seeks, according to Zizek "cultural recognition," and the inclusion of all in lieu of a combating of "material repression" as observed in previous revolutionary projects (*The Ticklish Subject* 39).

Marcos expresses a similar desire in his letter to French historian and author of *Révolution et sacrifice au Mexique* (1986), Eric Jauffret. Marcos opens his letter with Jauffret's homage to David Alfaro Siqueiros and Diego Rivera's use of the mural as a political statement and as representations of the fight of Mexican society for democracy during the Mexican Revolution (*Nuestra arma* 292). Yet in it, he recognizes the work of a not so well renowned artist and political thinker from the Chiapas region: Beto, an indigenous child. In spite of his young age of ten, Beto, out of necessity, matures quickly

because of the conditions in which he lives. He has already impregnated a woman in the camp, served as the mentor to the three year-old orphan Nabor and through his inverted drawing of the sea and the sky and other means of artistic expression, Beto proposed very simple solutions on how to survive in a world plagued with corruption.

If in the first part of his letter to Jauffret it appears that Marcos writes him simply to revel in Beto and Nabors' political maturity as well as to validate an often unheard voice, he makes his desired point in a second part of the letter when he speaks directly to Jauffret and links Beto's inverted vision of the world to the words and peaceful actions of the Zapatistas and their struggle to survive and create a more inclusive democracy in a neoliberal world. Marcos' didactic "I" pervades in the form of the collective "we" of the Zapatistas: "Aspiramos a que nuestra voz sea escuchada en todo el mundo y a que nuestra lucha sea asumida por todos en todo el mundo. Nuestra causa no es la causa de la guerra, no es la causa de la destrucción, no es la causa de la muerte. Nuestra causa es la causa de la paz, pero con justicia; es la causa de la construcción, pero con equidad y razón; es la causa de la vida, pero digna y siempre nueva y mejor" (291-292).[35] Marcos clearly distinguishes between the "cause" of the State (war, destruction, and death) and that of the Zapatistas (peace, justice, construction) as well as justifies the Zapatista's, and the citizen's right to strive to live a better life.

Marcos' emphasis on a different sector's struggle for recognition is evident in another story that he relates through Don Durito, "La verdadera historia de Mary Anne y

[35] This association of the simplified yet mature political consciousness of the children from the mountain and that of the Zapatistas comes up again in Marcos' "Segunda declaración de la selva Lacandona": "El EZLN tiene una concepción de sistema y de rumbo para el país. La madurez política del EZLN, su mayoría de edad como representante del sentir de una parte de la Nación, está en que no quiere imponerle al país esta concepción. El EZLN reclama lo que para sí mismo es evidente: la mayoría de edad de México y el derecho de decidir, libre y democráticamente, el rumbo que habrá de seguir. De esta antesala histórica saldrá no sólo un México más justo y mejor, también saldrá un mexicano nuevo" (49).

Bonny Read". This story is Don Durito's correction of the original tale of two pirates, Mary Anne and Bonny Read, that fall in love despite the fact that they are both of the same gender. In its official version, the two women cross-dressed, traveled the sea in a pirate ship in the company of other men, eventually fell in love and when the true (gender) identity of each was revealed, order was restored; in other words, the "normalized" societal codes are respected once again (358).

In this story Durito, similar to Marcos in his writings, seeks to uncover the story beneath history: "lo más grande siempre está oculto, en lo profundo" as well as highlight his interpretation of difference and vision of unity as a means to subvert the norm (359). What matters for Durito is the love between these two human beings that he describes as "muy "otro" y grande por diferente. Porque resulta que el amor sigue caminos propios y es, siempre, un transgresor de la ley" and thus pushes the limits imposed on citizens by society and serves as an example for others to follow (360). What is more, Durito explains that Mary Anne and Bonny Read are "doubly" others for they not only changed society through their decision to embrace their "abnormal" sexual orientation, but underwent change within themselves as well: "Los diferentes en preferencia sexual son doblemente "otros", pues son "otros" dentro de los que de por sí son otros" (360).

The voice of Marcos as SupMarcos, Durito's loyal squire, only appears twice in this story, once in the beginning to provide general information prior to the reading of the text, and another in the end when SupMarcos, stumped by Durito's explanation of the double "otherness" he refers to in his story, requests that he further enlighten him on this subject (360). It is quite simple to distinguish between Durito's and SupMarcos' voices in this particular tale for the simple fact that SubMarcos' words are highlighted in italics

and also because he clearly states at the onset that while going through some of Durito's writings, he found this story. Afterwards, Durito asked him to set it aside to include in his new book. SupMarcos assumes yet again a subordinate position as Durito's pupil by further inquiring on topics he deems of utmost importance in grasping his superior's message after his abrupt conclusion to the story.

Though Durito takes on the central role as narrator of the story, SupMarcos has the first and last words. Before Durito even begins to relate his story, SupMarcos opens the narrative by pointing out several significant details that are not to be overlooked by the reader but that are all unknown: the author, public (even though, ironically, the public is stated quite clearly as the lesbians, homosexuals, transgender and transvestites), gender of the protagonists and original date of publication of this story. SupMarcos leaves it up to Durito's audience to determine the gender and time of publication, both of which he suggests explain themselves in the text: "A fe mía que la indefinición entre masculino o femenino se explica por sí sola en la epístola. La fecha está emborronada [...] [p]ero también me parece que igual pudo haber sido escrita hace siglos o hace semanas. Ya me entenderéis" (358). From the onset, SupMarcos or Marcos strategically places himself in a subaltern position in his relationship with Durito and in the periphery of the text by only appearing at the beginning and end. Yet, the voice that really "speaks" in the story is Marcos' (unauthoritative) didactic "I" that allows the reader to interpret the story as well as determine the gender of the protagonists and the time in which it took place.

Marcos' voice reappears at the end to emphasize the moral of Durito's revelation of his version of the story of Mary Anne and Bonny Read: "Cuando luchamos por cambiar las cosas, muchas veces olvidamos que eso incluye cambiarnos a nosotros

mismos" (360). It is evident that Marcos speaks through Don Durito here because the same message appears in another one of his essays in reference to a different group that he recognizes as "doubly othered" and thus all the more oppressed: the Zapatista women. Marcos submits that because these women that he names as "las mujeres de abajo," are oppressed in both the public and private spheres, they suffer a double domination. Not only are they ruled by their husbands at home, but they suffer from higher percentages of illiteracy, are paid lower wages and are marginalized by a system that fails to recognize equal rights between men and women (70).

Marcos does not highlight the case of women simply to outline their subordination, but rather to suggest that precisely because of their double domination; Mexican women fight harder than the average citizen for rights and thus their (political) awakening is doubly noted: "Algo empieza a no acomodar esta doble sumisión. La doble pesadilla duplica el despertar" (70).

Because of their situations in the private and public spheres, women feel the pressure not only to change societal norms, but to evolve from within as well. The result is the birth of the awareness of humanity that Marcos ties to a feminine consciousness: "La conciencia de humanidad pasa a conciencia de femininidad, el saberse seres humanos implica el saberse mujeres y luchar. No necesitan ya que nadie hable por ellas, su palabra sigue la doble ruta de la rebelión con motor propio... el doble motor de las mujeres rebeldes" (71). Such a statement also dissociates Marcos from a *machista* point of view. What is more, his desire to describe how women that are victims of the State and of the continual flourishing of a *machista* code of conduct heads off a new type of movement that occurs in parallel with that of the Zapatistas. Karen Kampwirth makes such an

association in *Women and Guerrilla Movements* (2002): "Women, equipped with new independence and new skills [...] became open to mobilization directly in the EZLN, or indirectly into a social movement that sympathized with the EZLN" (93). In linking women's fight to the Zapatista movement, Marcos emphasizes their capacity to achieve a dual-oriented collective goal that seeks change on both personal and public levels.

Marcos' recognition of the central role of women in the Zapatista movement also implies a shift from previous revolutionary insurgencies.[36] Whereas for Che, Cabezas and Belli, the agents of the revolutionary movement are the guerrilla rebels trained, formed and changed as a result of living on the mountain, for Marcos, the consciousness of the female revolutionary is not born in relation to the mountain, but is a product of her double domination.

Marcos' preoccupation with reconstructing history and society by inverting the power structures in an attempt to recognize "others" traditionally excluded from the Mexican nation is in line with the identity politics that emerges in a post-Cold War era, or what Zizek calls a "politics of particular (ethnic, sexual, etc.) [...] in which every particular group is 'accounted for', has its specific status (of victim) acknowledged through affirmative action or other measure destined to guarantee social justice" (*The Ticklish Subject* 208). Marcos not only "accounts for" previously silenced voices in his texts, but he places them at the center of his democratic project as the driving force for change from within the system. Such an action suggests that Marcos is not only "politically correct," but he is anti-*machista,* pro-women's, gay, children's, and indigenous rights.

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[36] See "Doce mujeres en el año 12" (*Nuestra arma* 5).

In *Nuestra arma es nuestra palabra* Marcos proposes a new direction for Mexico through the inclusion of sectors of civil society that the government has historically silenced. The distinct voices serve as the vehicles through which Marcos transmits his moralizing teleological discourse and proposes a different code of conduct that brings gender, race, culture, sexual orientation and age to the fore as the foundation of a reproductive democracy without ever having to assume a position of power.

Marcos' evasion of a position of power, conscious and careful recognition of all identities (a sign of his multicultural discourse) under a proposal for a nation built upon the tolerance of and embrace of difference proposes a new code of conduct that more than simply promoting a masculinity that incorporates the feminine, situates the feminine and other historically forgotten identities at the core of his rhetoric and his fight for a more just Mexico. The position from which Marcos speaks promotes an image of him as a self-sacrificial immaculate male that is highly mindful of what he is doing by serving as the spokesman or negotiator of a movement that aims to emphasize human potential in an inhumane era by including the identities left out of official history.

This chapter examined how what emerged as a class-based model in Che's writings changes in response to historical shifts and different demands of the Left movement in Mexico. If for Che, the only identity category that proved significant in his building up of the code of manhood was social class, Marcos incorporates all identity differences. Such a change explains Marcos' desire to "correct" Che's vision of the revolution by promoting a view of the mountain as a Zapatista zone that rather than serve as the foundational geography upon which the formation of the guerrilla rebel takes

place, becomes the territory in which citizens, core constituents of a democratic society, unite in their difference.

Marcos' prying open of this multitude of factors in his erection of a new and all-inclusive gender code that seeks to blur the lines between categories rather than emphasize their differences suggests that he is a product of the post-Cold War context in which he and the EZLN emerge. Marcos replaces the political model for revolution with an identity politics that strives to promote political-correctness and a proposal for democracy structured around a bourgeois democratic discourse that seeks inclusion from the State, the recognition of differences and basic human rights for all.

Conclusions: From Revolution to Reform: Democracy and Culture as Politics, the Future of the Revolution in Latin America?

In this dissertation, I proposed a "politics of gender" that links gender and class as two complementary tools of analysis to evaluate Che Guevara's new code of manhood. In each chapter, I traced how Che's model was interpreted, modified, and/or silenced in guerrilla narratives and political texts representative of distinct revolutionary movements of the 20th century in Latin America.

In my concluding words to this study, rather than attempt to "close" this project, I will point to questions that may help determine a possible line of future analysis: what does it mean to be a guerrilla rebel in a post-Cold War context? Is it possible to think of "revolution" today? How should one think of a "politics of gender" post-1990s? Before I attempt to answer such questions, I will outline the points in this dissertation that have proven most difficult for me.

The main challenge I faced is one that I alluded to in the introduction but it is worth mentioning again here: if much of the scholarship within the field of gender studies written on Che eschews his political agenda as a point of discussion and projects instead mythical visions of him as a *machista*, a hero, a Christ-like figure, a power-driven guerrilla rebel and a failure, how could I provide a study of Che's code of manhood that rather than "forget" to recognize class politics as a fundamental component in his rebel narratives, actually brings it to the fore as a core aspect in the model of man he constructs from the mountain?

The answer to this question seemed to be a study of Che's revision of the bourgeois male code through a "politics of gender" that recognizes gender and social class as analytical tools. One of the loci that helped Che rethink gender in relation to his

model, though unconsciously, is the body. The uncharacteristic presence of the body in Che's Bolivian diary allowed him to move beyond the contradictory code of manhood presented in *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria* and to completely "break" with a bourgeois model of man by proposing a new type of masculinity that incorporates the "feminine" by focusing on the body and its various functions and needs. Che's contradictory male code allowed for other crucial aspects of the revolution that he had previously silenced in *Pasajes* to seep through the cracks of subsequent rebel narratives (i.e. emotions, the scatological, and sexual desires), particularly in Omar Cabezas' bildüngsroman.

Another challenge I faced while writing this project was that although the rebel authors that write and publish their works during the Cold War period appeared to follow Che's class-based model of the guerrilla rebel, in the final two chapters in which I explored texts by Gioconda Belli and Subcomandante Marcos, revolutionary authors that write on the revolution from a post-Cold War period, Che no longer persists as a viable model. Rather than exclude these works that seemed to disregard Che as an example from my analysis, the contrast between the Cold War and post-Cold War guerrilla narratives turned into an interesting and crucial analytical point and led me to another query worth exploring. If Che disappears as a possible option for rebel authors that write during a post-Cold War period, what does it mean to be a guerrilla rebel post-1990s?

For Subcomandante Marcos, the last revolutionary icon I studied, Che is no longer a paradigm for the guerrilla fighter, but rather reaches the page of his political texts as an elevated citizen; a "worldly citizen" (Marcos, *Nuestra arma* 105) that is linked to a "national cause" (Zizek, *Looking Awry* 165). The shift from a vision of Che as a class-conscious guerrilla rebel that set out to "break" with patriarchy through his

participation in the revolution and construction of a new model of man from the mountain to a citizen "the subject of democracy," is certainly significant for it changes the entire revolutionary package (165). Instead of treating the revolution as a "political act proper" that seeks to replace the existing hegemonic system with a new socialist society, Marcos carries out a reformist movement that aims to recuperate the historically silenced voice of the indigenous peoples and to integrate groups previously ignored or left out by the State in Mexico by implementing a more inclusive form of democracy.

As a consequence, an implosion of identities (i.e. gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation), which Zizek relates to the idea of origins – "hereditary ties as a crucial feature of capitalism" – takes the place of the class politics that served as the driving force behind the revolutionary movements of the 60s and beyond (162). Marcos' aim to achieve the "leveling of all social differences" by uniting all sectors of society in spite of and in their difference under the banner of universalism (but not socialism) is not the same radical political act that Che sought to carry out. What this confirms is that democracy as a form of neoliberal capitalism persists as an absolute system (165).

In a post-Cold War context, the class-based revolution that emerged as a potent political force in the 1960s, 70s and even 80s is replaced by what Zizek calls a "'planetary' democracy based upon the community of all peoples as 'citizens of the world'" and accordingly associates "politics" with a saturation of identities that brings culture and the restoration of basic human rights to the fore as the main components in Marcos' cultural war on democracy (165). Yet, how can one conceive a "politics of gender" in a post-political period? Is it possible to think of a "politics of gender" in a post-Cold war context?

Marcos, for whom "culture is [...] political" seems to suggest that a view of class and gender as two complementary and necessary categories of analysis is not possible in 1994, year that marks the start of the Contemporary Zapatista Movement, nor is it necessary. Instead, Marcos and the EZLN fight for the recognition of sectors of society that have been previously ignored by the neoliberal Mexican State, a goal he seeks to achieve through his proposal of a new and more inclusive form of democracy (Franco, *The Decline & Fall* 270). This leads me to believe that in a post-Cold War context, gender must be thought of in relation to other social markers besides class. In her article, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" (1986), Joan Scott argues that gender in combination with class and race are useful categories of analysis for they serve as tools that lend to a better understanding of the complex nature of the relations of power in a patriarchal context.

If my discussion of Scott's third proposed point (race) has been minimized, perhaps a renewed perception of a "politics of gender" that unites these three social marks is in order for the evaluation of rebel authors in a neoliberal context in which "gender difference and ethnic difference" come forth as a way of doing politics while the prior emphasis on social class seems to fade away (Franco, *The Decline & Fall* 270). This begs the question, how is class antagonism re-inscribed in the implosion of identities that emerges as the basis of the socio-ethnic movements that seem to replace the radical revolutions of the past in a new global context? I propose that a possible line of future investigation would be to explore how gender and ethnicity compete with or incorporate social class as identity markers in the rebel narratives and political texts that surface with the contemporary socio-ethnic movements in Chiapas, Ecuador, Bolivia and Perú.

If gender and class came to the fore as the two complementary tools of analysis for the rebel narratives written during the Cold War, a period in which the polarization of classes represented a "problem of knowledge" (Myers 63) that distinguished the ruling class from the masses, as Tony Myers suggests, in this post-Cold War context, gender and ethnicity combine to form a "new kind of political agency" (Franco, *The Decline & Fall* 271). Rather than strive for a changeover of governmental systems, as observed in Marcos' writings, the indigenous-based movements of the 1990s in Latin America aim to "contest the terms and practice of citizenship," demand recognition from and dialogue with the State, promote the erasure of differences, and seek "territorial autonomy, respect for customary law [...] and bicultural education" (Yashar 30, 23).

One observes the new culture-based focus of politics promoted by the Contemporary Indigenous Movements in the writings, political speeches and communiqués of EZLN Commanders Ramona and Ana María, Luis Macas, founder of *La Confederación de Nacionalidades de Indígenas del Ecuador* (CONAIE) and leader of the Pachakutik Movement, an electoral coalition of indigenous and non-indigenous social movements, and Felipe Quispe (El Mallku), co-founder of the Guerrilla Army Túpac Katari (EGTK) in Bolivia and Alberto Pizango Chota, current president of the Interethnic Association for the Rainforest Development (AIDESEP) in Perú. These leading voices that both write and act in the name of the indigenous sectors of their respective societies, support the new type of socialism, a "21st century socialism" (Manwaring 8) that seeks to challenge prior "anachronistic" visions of the indigenous peoples, reclaim their land and combat the new form of capitalism that emerges in a global era: neoliberalism (Yashar 27).

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