

The New Social Subject as Transgender: Woman as Revolutionary Man

El nuevo sujeto social como transgénero: la mujer como hombre revolucionario

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Abstract. The purpose of this presentation is to explore: 1) the nature, possibility, or impossibility of the political, and for that, I examine the makeup of the social subject –in this paper that of woman as urban guerrilla; and 2) the understanding of “the feminine” as an entry point to the malleability or transformability of being. How these two questions are related and how the crossover between the political and the philosophical discourse takes place is the burden of this exhibit. My compass in the first point is the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe on hegemony and radical democracy; my compass in the second is Catherine Malabou’s work on plasticity. My ground for this exercise is an interview of Leticia Herrera, urban guerrilla commander of the Sandinista Revolution, published as *Guerrillera, mujer y comandante de la Revolución Sandinista. Memorias de Leticia Herrera*. The presentation moves directly to the second point, the malleability or transformability of being, as the transgender nature of the social subject: woman as a revolutionary man; and show how this premises the (im)possibility of politics as hegemony or radical democracy.

Keywords: Political - Social subject - Woman - Guerrilla - Transgender

Resumen. El propósito de esta presentación es explorar en primer lugar la naturaleza, la posibilidad o la imposibilidad de lo político, y para ello, examino la composición del sujeto social, en particular el de la mujer como guerrillera urbana. En segundo, la comprensión de “lo femenino” como punto de entrada a la maleabilidad o transformabilidad del ser. Cómo se relacionan estas dos

preguntas y cómo se produce el cruce entre el discurso político y el filosófico es el eje central de esta exposición. El punto de partida en el primer punto es el trabajo de Ernesto Laclau y Chantal Mouffe sobre la hegemonía y la democracia radical. En el segundo es la propuesta de Catherine Malabou sobre la plasticidad. El corpus elegido para este ejercicio es una entrevista a Leticia Herrera, comandante de la guerrilla urbana de la Revolución Sandinista, titulada *Guerrillera, mujer y comandante de la Revolución Sandinista. Memorias de Leticia Herrera*. El trabajo se centra principalmente en el segundo punto: la maleabilidad o transformabilidad del ser como naturaleza transgénero del sujeto social: la mujer como hombre revolucionario. A partir de allí muestra cómo esto asevera la (im)posibilidad de la política como hegemonía o democracia radical.

Palabras Claves: Político - Sujeto social - Mujer - Guerrilla - Transgénero.

I want to make clear at the onset of this presentation that my purpose is to explore: 1) the nature, possibility, or impossibility of the political, and for that, I examine the makeup of the social subject –in this paper that of woman as urban guerrilla; and 2) the understanding of “the feminine” as an entry point to the malleability or transformability of being. How these two questions are related and how the crossover between the political and the philosophical discourse takes place is the burden of this exhibit. My compass in the first point is the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe on hegemony and radical democracy; my compass in the second is Catherine Malabou’s work on plasticity. My ground for this exercise is an interview of Leticia Herrera, urban guerrilla commander of the Sandinista Revolution, published as *Guerrillera, mujer y comandante de la Revolución Sandinista. Memorias de Leticia Herrera*¹. Having said that, I move directly to the second point, the malleability or transformability of being, as the transgender nature of the social subject: woman as a revolutionary man; and show how this premises the (im)possibility of politics as hegemony or radical democracy.

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¹ All translations of this text into English are mine.

Guerrillera, mujer y comandante... is the result of an interview of Leticia Herrera conducted by several people. Herrera was a Sandinista guerrilla commander, an outstanding woman who participated in the uprising against dictator Anastasio Somoza first and in the governing of Nicaragua subsequently. She was called “empress of urban resistance”, for her organizing dexterity. During her interview, we get acquainted with her biography, beginning with her parents, education, commitment to the revolutionary struggle, and the role she played in it. In her body, gender performance battles militant performance. This folded over, dual performance prompts me to see in it the birth of the militant woman as a man. My argument rests on conflicting demands: whereas cell biology embeds her on an ineluctable womaness, politics claims her as masculine. Pregnancy and affect provide me with a lead. Both are directly related to sexuality and to the anatomical topographies of woman. In this paper, when I refer to “womanness” and the biology of woman, I am speaking about cisgender women, those who were assigned female at birth and identify as women.

In her piece titled “The meaning of the feminine”, Catherine Malabou calls for a deneutralization of ontological differences, claims that “sexual difference is pluralized ontologically” (2009: 33), and concludes that “Being and being change from one into the other” (2009: 36) and in that consist the plasticity of difference for “transvestitism comes with difference” (2009: 37). Almost a quarter of a century ago, I argued something similar, although not within philosophical terrain (Rodríguez, 1998). My texts were cultural and immersed in the political discourse. I sustained that the “new man” modeled on the projection revolutionary militants made of the figure of Che Guevara, was indeed a woman, a copycat of bourgeois feminine ideas of “the angel of the hearth” (Rodríguez, 1998: 8), and rested my claim on the words used to describe Che, mainly devotion, sacrifice, and *tendresse* – all attributes of “the feminine”. Man and woman “would thus have the same relation to ‘the feminine’, the same relation of source or origin as beings to Being” (Rodríguez, 1998: 8). So my claim was then and is today a transgender proposal that underscores the possibility of the plasticity of difference and of being. The processes from one to another, or their concurrency, is my very point, and the two anchoring legs are affect and maternity. The first difficulty I find is that of working with two unequally validated discourses, one philosophical, the other political; and the second, the aporetic nature of the “the feminine”.

In representing his society and struggle, the testimonial male subject of revolutionary narratives made explicit the strong trace of the past, one that shows little concern for the asymmetries it secured, and neglecting or sidestepping that equality, collectivity, and democracy his pamphlets, speeches, and slogans so vociferously proclaimed. This dual take created a perplexity. I want to take this perplexity to a completely different contemporary ground and bring to my discussion a question Malabou raises which moves away from the political field into the flesh and blood, or what I, in this paper, call cell biology or maternity. She asks: “must we really avoid the mark of sex in order to think gender? Is all sexualizing of gender outdated? Do beings and bodies benefit from being deneutralized, or should we think on the contrary, that a certain transcendental disincarnation does harm to both the flesh and the concept of difference?” (Malabou, 2009: 9).

Is it then a matter of re-sexualizing the subject? Following Luce Irigaray’s work, Malabou’s argument rests on wonder (admiration) and hospitality (as “the ontological opening as a maternity”) as qualifiers of “the feminine” as gender specificity, which

does not designate a gender, but rather the free play of genders, their distance, their wonderful difference, the cusp of ethics once again... [feminine] does not designate a sex and can be expanded to transsexuality or to all the occurrences of transgenders, if it no longer refers exclusively to heterosexuality... “feminine” does owe something to women!... The choice of feminine recognizes precisely the body of women, its morphology, the anatomy of her sex organs... So the link between the feminine, woman, and the woman’s sex organs appears to be a reality that cannot be undone (2009: 13-15).

On these precise ideas I want to rest my reading of Leticia Herrera’s testimonial. My baseline is first to accept transgender as a gender and make ours Irigaray’s idea, in Malabou, that “There are not just two genders; there is a multiplicity of gender” (Malabou, 2009: 6). In this manner we are given “to plasticize difference and *différance*” (Malabou, 2009: 3).

The Vulva's Scheme -Flesh, Blood and Cell Biology

Malabou revisits Derrida's, Hiedegger's, Levinas's and Luce Irigaray's position on the question of gender to establish that there is a multiplicity of gender; to explain how "the feminine" is the opening to the other and to conclude that "woman" and "man" would have the same relation to the feminine, so "the feminine" permits the deneutering of Being. Yet, her aim is a return to "the feminine" as woman or as owing something to woman. In this endeavor, we walk together. Luce Irigaray provides the gravitational field through "the vulva scheme" which Gustave Courbet's painting "The Origin of the World" serves to illustrate –see image below. Irigaray grounds "the feminine" on labiae. What matters to me here is not only to bring back anatomy, morphology, metabolism, and cell biology into a discussion of "the feminine", which I do, but also to show the difficulties in approaching "the feminine" in relation to maternity and affect philosophically, and politically.



Gustave Courbet (1819-1877). *The Origin of the World* 1866 Oil on canvas H. 46; W. 55 cm. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski

In philosophy, “the feminine” is caught in the system through a dual constraint: it appears as an ontological promise...while at the same time it is nothing but a new figure of the “proper” (Malabou, 2009: 119). I take “ontological promise” (or failure) to mean a being that is not, or not yet, and carry it to what Malabou calls “the mobility of the trace”, its plasticity. One example is her assertion that woman or “the feminine” is “a body that refuses to allow itself to be erased by the very erasability of the trace, the trace that never has even the tiniest wrinkle. Plasticity renders impossible the inconvertibility of the trace into anything other than itself and ruins any claim to resist transformation” (Malabou, 2009: 121-122).

The trace is nothing, can be nothing but a trace –but a trace of what? A trace of being –promise or failure? This point allows me to introduce the body of woman into the political insurgent discourse and pinpoint its prohibition of pregnancy and child rearing as a negation of the body of woman, “a body that refuses to allow itself to be erased”. It is in the body of woman itself, and in pregnancy and maternity specifically, that the philosophical and the political discourse meet: in one, it is a promise of being while in the other it is a prohibition of being. The trace is enabled in and by a promise or a prohibition –both as negation of womanhood. Let’s now move on to affect.

In Irigaray, Malabou tells us, affect is “affect of difference,” which “the morphology of the woman incarnates in the ‘vulva’s scheme,’ where another mode of affection, touching without the predicative contact of the subject with him or herself” (Malabou, 2009: 15), “self touching without self, without mastery or conscience, a space of withdrawal and separation without ego” which takes form and materializes in “at least two (lips) which keeps woman in contact with herself (Malabou, 2009: 16) and which “suspend the opposition of me and other” (Malabou, 2009: 17). This is not what I read as affect in Leticia Herrera’s interview, the kind of self-eroticism implied here, but affect as transcendence, the opening to the other, as in Levinas, something that for Descartes, holds Malabou, “is unimaginable without the animal spirits, the blood, the parts of the body that support and materialize it” (2009: 16-17); a type of affect that is also attached to the morphology of woman and to maternity and that is touched upon in the following quote,

the existence of lips that cannot open by themselves, lips which, prior to expulsion (humors, blood, birth) are simply next to each other, split, Siamese, acritical. According to Derrida this priority of anatomy over ontology, this priority of the vulva (woman) over the concept (the feminine), is no contradiction. The lips of the vulva form a schema that places flesh between the sensible and the concept, without being one more than the other (Malabou, 2009: 16).

The move is to prioritize anatomy over ontology, biology over philosophy to speak of “the feminine”, philosophically, or to keep them at the same level, equally relevant. This coming down and touching bases on the sensible and material is the instrument, for me, to dig into the fault line of woman as performance of gender, woman as performance of politics –a militant urban guerrilla fighter– and woman as “the feminine”. I beg your pardon. My purpose is to work “the feminine”, posed as a metaphor for plasticizing gender difference and *différance*, in an effort to forge a sodality between flesh, ontology, and the logics of militancy germane to woman as a political social subject, in this case, militant urban guerrilla. Here, I favor the prohibition of maternity and child attachment as affect, which I interpret as the constitution of the new woman into a man –the body of woman or “the feminine” in her disincarnation, skinned out, turned into a trace and into a “promise of being”. This is a place where woman’s flesh and anatomy come into conflict in the body politics and in the body of woman –maternity and child affect as the shading out of “the feminine” as it strives to tip over into masculinity. This is an arduous delivery from one gender into another, the unique possibility of being and of the political as radical democracy. That is, in order for hegemony to serve radical democracy, the condition is a trans-gender type of ontology. Is the only possibility for a woman to be a man; is “being as possibility” in her that of becoming a man?².

In the text I am reading here *Guerrillera, mujer y comandante...*, the hard border is the binary male-female assumed absolutely as the only valid way for speaking

² For Hélèn Cixous: “We’ struggle together, es, but, who is thi we? A man and beside him a thin, somebody –(a woman: always in her parenthesis, always repressed or validated a woman, tolerated a non woman, accepted!)- somewone you are not conscious of, unless she effaces herself, act the man, speaks and thinks that way. For a woman, what I am saying is trite”.

and performing sexuality –hence woman as the so called “revolutionary pussy” How then to move from this position into that of a revolutionary subject, militant guerrilla? Here maternity and affect is the litmus test. Let’s first explore the field of “the masculine”. In revolutionary discourse, “the feminine” differs from “the masculine” in that the latter is not tied to any discussion on paternity. This discourse zeros in uniquely on sexuality. Sexuality is the vortex. There is an ample and shameful discussion on it. Texts written by militant guerrilla men are appallingly phallogentric and stage a hyperbolic male heterosexuality as a crucial trope. The archive inexcusably flashes out a sexual anxiety to the point of constituting a type of exhibitionism that flaunts their desire and self-satisfaction; their masculine prowesses reveal to be a much stronger drive than their celebrated love for the fatherland³. This creates a safe “penis closed-circuit” which entirely shrouds “the masculine”.

Sexual satisfaction, or discharge, as they call it often, is a male prerogative that presumes woman is not only willing but ready to comply without complaining or grieving. Within this “penis-closed-circuit”, woman signifies “revolutionary pussy”, a flesh and blood apparatus presumed to supply sexual services upon request, or command. Woman is here a body part, a vagina, a dispositif to be used as are those rubber ones for sale in the market for a man to masturbate. In fact, the use of woman resembles very much a masturbation and coupling does not even raise to the level of fucking let alone of making love. Male sexuality is a show off, and one is often actually prone to wonder if woman in guerrilla insurgency is orgasmic. Furthermore, since woman is a vagina, vessel of pleasure, device for discharging the pressures and stresses of insurgency, more so under clandestinity, woman is not en-gendered as a social but as a biological subject, species being kept apart from any relevant theoretical revolutionary discussions. In this regard, this view fits into the vulva’s scheme otherwise. Expelled from strategy meetings, woman is relegate to the realm of tactics, often carrying on very dangerous tasks: their goal is to

³ See narratives by Mario Roberto Morales, *El esplendor de la pirámide*. Costa Rica: EDUCA: 1986; Arturo Arias. *Sopa de caracol*. Guatemala, Alfaguara, 2002; Horacio Castellanos Moya. *Baile con serpientes*, El Salvador, Alfaguara, 1996; Miguel Hueso Mixco *Camino de hormigas*. El Salvador, Alfaguara, 2014.

service the revolution, either in menial jobs, in dangerous political activities or in en-gendering the new man—a desubjectified woman that is only body, a body without head as in Courbet's image. Such is woman plotted in the testimonial Herrera renders in her interview.

On the other side of this so much publicized need, woman's reproductive apparatus, that dispositif or device, turns into a collateral damage for guerrilla warfare, and when cell biology begins its work inside the anatomy of woman, all hell breaks loose. So woman's anatomy cannot be figured out of guerrilla discourse. When cell biology gets to work, men flee the scene, disengaging and retreating. Woman's morphology and anatomy, that which cannot be undone, become a personal and social liability, trauma. Woman is then held in contempt of revolutionary discipline and the weight of the law falls uniquely on her. At this point, she must fend for herself, be in charge or take charge of her anatomy individually, held uniquely responsible for coupling. Men (here also in the sense of cisgender), in contrast, are bracketed and their morphology and anatomy perturbs not revolutionary strategy or tactics. This is also inscribed in Herrera's-interview.

Affect in Herrera is the negation of others in her close flesh and blood proximity and intimacy. She does not open or welcome the other, rather, she rejects them all except her fellows-in-arms. In this she mimics or simulates guerrilla men. Her closing off to affect is directly related to her biology. Hurt affect, or affect turned trauma, is plotted in this interview from her very first intimate relationship, that of a girl with her father. Although a political activist, her father is autocratic and authoritarian, a figure that induces her, as woman, to close herself off to affect. The other two men with whom she is intimate are René Tejada and Daniel Ortega. Her relationship with René was one of self-negation, or so she paints it. René is always spoken about as suffering from unrequited love. When they get separated she doesn't register any feelings, and when he dies, she laments he had succumbed when there was so much left to do for the liberation of the country yet. Her relationship with Daniel is not plotted. We only know she was assigned to guard his security but she really never tells us anything, not even that he was her second son's father. Perhaps she hints some kind of affect from Daniel once, when she sobs over Carlos Fonseca's death. Her self image is one of self-control, and at no point she acknowledges sadness or joy with either of them. The figure of an emotional eunuch comes to mind here.

As if explaining her closing up to others, the self-imposed negation of militants, she explains

All those who integrated the Front acquired from the beginning a commitment to subject ourselves to the iron discipline we must have, with the intent of preserving one's own life and the lives of others...[We] have had a very strong disciplinary formation...[As] I was getting hold and positioning myself in responsibility positions...I had the right to object...but always provided that it would not endanger the disciplinary system which was always closely related to security measures, with compartmentation, which in the end were protection measures for the organization and for the people in particular (2013: 97).

Like the new man, woman defines herself as a revolutionary militant through the fulfillment of discipline and obedience, a matrix that delivers insurgents and insurgency. Feelings of affect are offset by these two primary mandates, justified in terms of survival and protection of organization members and the revolutionary cause. Neither man nor woman could have an affective life or a family life—except for a few leaders: Carlos Fonseca and Humberto Ortega lived with their respective families in Havana. Herrera tells us how it took her a year to find out where her son was after the 1972 earthquake and that “the situation affected [her] sentimentally and emotionally, but [she] could not do anything” (2013: 100). It was always the Frente who kept her informed of her child's whereabouts and the one who knew how to find him. Leticia's husband never knew his child because el Frente cut loose every and all family and affective ties between them. Leticia could not even communicate with her husband through letters because he, she says, “could not break with me emotionally; that each time he got a letter from me, that would unsettle him; his soul got very, very bad and that was creating disciplinary problems in the mountain; and it was most convenient to cut that off, more for his own sake than for mine. But truthfully I was more stable and controlled” (2013: 105).

And now please hear what she says regarding René's dead: “I was thus that...I heard that René Tejada had died in combat. The news impacted and wrapped me in the murmurs of night, in silence meditated: neither distance nor time and

space....my dread was the notice that you were in danger, nonetheless I resist to accept that you had succumbed when there was much left to do yet” (2013: 180).

All her affective expressions are of this tenor. There is always a gap, a blank space, silence. Shutting down affect is the degree zero of “the feminine”. She realized these were all compulsory and arbitrary measures that she did not accept but could never combat. As it was forbidden to express one’s own subjectivity, she expresses affect in terms acceptable to the organization. They come out as intuitions, fears, impressions, and forebodings conveyed through spectral apparitions, ghost-like figurations, extra-sensory perceptions and magic. She knows when somebody is in danger or about to die and her greatest grief is expressed when Carlos Fonseca dies:

The following day, when I heard the communiqué, there, yes, I felt struck. I felt the world sinking. I had become very hardened. Nonetheless, when I heard that Carlos had died, I felt like everything was over, I felt that the earth sunk and I was overtaken by desperation. Then I was on the grip of tears. I do not believe that I cried so much even for my father. I began to cry, and cry, and cry. And I did not stop, and Daniel brought me water. I felt that everything was over. And Daniel was only looking at me, and he could not say anything either, and we could not talk because...we had to be careful with the neighbors....These things created like a lacunae, and things I buried there.... I believe I even got sick....Only in this occasion and when Angela was killed, in those moments, I got out of so much contained repression that I entered in shock, had fever, but fortunately it was only fever...and then I became sweaty which only in sleep it passed. A horrible thing. I do not even remember how I recovered from that (2013: 233-234).

Could we borrow from Malabou’s discussion of essence, and extrapolate it to affect stating that woman is “nothing”, “essence negated”, “suppressed metabolism”, “negated being”, “emptiness”, a “fugitive of lightness”? Woman is thus en-gendered in violence, negation, trauma and the only way to have some resemblance of being is “to act as if”, that is, to mimic her guardian, to resemble or simulate him. This is my theoretical basis for arguing guerrilla woman as transgender, a transvestite of man.

Pregnancy, abortion, child custody: the politics of affect

I am actually surprised that there is only one explicit reference to maternity in Malabou's text and it states that "[the] admiration of wonder is in fact structurally linked to the feminine in so far it reveals the ontological opening as maternity" (2009: 13). Nonetheless, her discussion "Woman's possibility, philosophy's impossibility" could be read as deliverance, a given of birth to woman philosophically. Here the quest is for demonstrating that woman has been multilaterally dominated and how that domination has been en-gendered as well as the riddles it has produced philosophically. The kick off point is the notion of essentialism which calls essence into the quest. In gender studies, essence invokes "a combination of natural, biological, or anatomical determinants...and a given social construction, feminine identity as it appears as a product of the heterosexual ideological matrix" (Malabou, 2009: 97). To specify woman this way "reduces biology to nothing more than the science of constituted identities and culture" (Malabou, 2009: 97). Emptied of her essence, woman is self-defined as the violence done to her and she exists only in and through violence, "Woman is nothing anymore, except this violence through which her "being nothing" continues to exist. She is nothing but an ontological amputation, formed by that which negates her" (Malabou, 2009: 98). Woman is thus delivered as and in trauma. In a post-deconstructionist gesture, Malabou asks us to consider "the possibility that, in her name woman, there is an empty but resistance essence...a stamp of impossibility" (2009: 99). Woman always brings her body with her and she has deserved scorn, inequity in symbolic status, lack of recognition; woman is "vagina", an anatomical piece, and the only way open to her is simulacra –becoming like a man. Woman does not invent philosophical questions but she does create problems for it. "The impossibility of being a woman thus becomes the impossibility of philosophy" (Malabou, 2009: 111), and of politics, I may add.

En-gendered in violence, negation, and trauma, to have some resemblance of being woman is "to act as if", that is, to mimic "her guardian", to resemble or simulate him. Malabou's point is to reintroduce the question of essence and of difference, to give it birth and have it reborn, understanding it differently –essence as change and metamorphosis, a modifiable structure, de- and re-forming forms.

There is a dissatisfaction tout court in Malabou's review of key feminist points, and an affirmation of body, "the feminine", and essence. They take us to how woman is plotted in political texts which I use to read the pregnancy scene in Herrera's interview.

At the beginning, there is the couple, René and Leticia. While in Europe, they live and train together but, on reaching Nicaragua, they get separated: he is sent to the mountains while she is kept in the city. Soon after, she realizes she is pregnant. This becomes a problem for child bearing and rearing are forbidden by her political organization. This is the moment of woman as stillborn amputation. Leticia tells us she gets pregnant because she is ignorant and oblivious of her biological functions:

[I] could have been an excellent student, politically and ideologically mature, but on all those intimate affairs, personal matters, I never had any instruction. For instance, I knew that women menstruated as part of a natural process, but I did not know this had consequences in a couple's relationship. I did not know how long the ovulation period lasted, nor that of the fecund period. All those things for me were untranscendental, with no color or odor (2013: 78).

But René does know because he is older and a medical student. Before they separate he becomes anxious for progeny, and since he is in charge of her menstrual cycle, he gets her pregnant. He took "advantage...of my ignorance" (2013: 78), she says.

Several things come together here: self-ignorance, self-negation, organizational amputation, "acting as if". All this is already ingrained in Leticia's upbringing. She had been taught how to be a woman. Her father, a politically progressive yet authoritarian man, taught her self-negation, instructed her and all the women in the household in being nothing. At home, self-governance was obtained through deception or "acting as if". Women obeyed or lied. For Leticia, going to school was a struggle and asking for something, either manipulation or a rogative. The models for gender performance were subservience, compliance, and self-erasure; and in men, authoritarian-insurgency, and autocratic-militancy. So to become politically active, Leticia breaks with her family but is always kept captive by her

father's rules. As a grown up woman, she practices self-negation by marrying a fellow student, also a militant, because he is emotionally troubled, but she is not particularly attracted to, much less in love with him. When she joins the organization, she is ready to accept the maternity prohibition without actually being in charge or aware of her body functions. The gap between her ideological growth and her body functions is critical.

Philosophically, we are told, woman's body, morphology, anatomy, sex organs are key to beings and Being and the link between "the feminine", woman, and woman's sex organs cannot be undone. They are all part of gender and of gender performance and cannot be ruled out from the field of play. But here they are at odds with each other. Politically, we find woman at a crossroad between politics of resistance, sexual politics and politics of affect. The question comes to a head when woman's anatomy and political party disciplinary structures clash. When Herrera realizes she is pregnant, she panics. She knows pregnancy is forbidden and abortion frightens her to death. She proceeds to speak to the person in charge and here is what he responds: "you are going to keep [the baby], but under three conditions: one, you will work at all times...; two, once the child is born you will keep him only for three months; three, you have to look for a person to take care of him" (2013: 86).

Notice that while insurgent directives turn into woman's panic –panic to inform, panic of verdict, panic to abort, male sexualities and masculinities disappear from the plot. The verdict is to instrumentalize pregnancy and maternity: woman's biology and essence become servants of insurgency, instruments to benefit the struggle: a pregnant woman can come and go without raising suspicion. Instrumental logic and political expediency rule over the body of woman while the woman-child bond is excised from the realm of being, and affect, as opening to the other, shaded. This will comes to haunt guerrilla warfare, insurgency, the struggle for a better world, and justice: the impossibility of woman's being is an impossibility for radical democracy. Hence political participation from woman is predicated on shedding all her anatomical parts, charting another route and "acting as if": woman must become man. In the political texts, woman's affect turns sour, and anatomy, a liability. Through prohibition and disobedience the organization firms up the unique form of affect that it encourages: caring for one's own fellows-in-arms. Of all

organizational forms of affect, patience and solidarity are withdrawn from woman. Solidarity cracks before woman's biology.

But it gets worse: if there is an injunction on pregnancy, delivering a child becomes a simple supplement. Herrera delivers under duress. There is a hospital workers' strike, and she finds herself without assistance after a cesarean intervention. With IV's in both arms and incapacitated to attend to a child, she suddenly realizes the infant is suffocating in his own vomit. That sets the tone for trauma in a mother-child relationship and marks once again the shift over from woman into man, the only possibility for becoming a revolutionary.

A child thus conceived and delivered, is a clandestine child, subjected to his parents' rules of engagement. He is neither Tejada, like his father, nor Herrera, like his mother. He is David Sánchez to avoid having his parents identified by the national guard. When he is two months old, Herrera reintegrates "immediately to [her] work and [she does her] job walking around with that child" (2013: 94). Walking the streets, neighborhoods, working with the students? Is he a militant child? When he is three months old the child goes to doña Avelia, her mother-in-law, who becomes the foster mother. Leticia will not see him until he is seven years of age.

The forbidden path to affect leads me in a straight line to woman's cellular biology. Disregarding it is disregarding her ontology. It is scary to think that woman, here Leticia Herrera, "feels alleviated" or relieved from her digression and happy for getting rid of her child to a woman who "totally distorts his mental and emotional scheme...[and] only cultivated resentment and lack of affect towards oneself" (2013: 96). It becomes clear from this passage that woman's biology serves just as a device to be profited from at maximum or to have her chastised. Is this not an actual training on suppression of affect? Isn't it here that the real proof of her political commitment demands muting "the feminine" in her? Sacrificing maternity becomes compliance with insurgency rules but also a rite of passage, a consecration of her masculinity, the emblematic proof that she is now a true man. Woman pays with her children for her emancipation. Herrera's silence regarding her feelings during this ordeal, as well as during many other things regarding her sensibility impacts me hard, maims me as a woman. Is this truthfully the content and materiality of being politically and ideologically mature? What is staged here is a devoted, self-

sacrificing (wo)man who gives everything for the fatherland, like el Che. There are no feelings, maternal or otherwise, that we can read in Herrera's interview. Having a child turns an ideological test. Woman is eunuch, a term referred only to male disempowerment. There are no equivalent terms to define a maimed woman.

But when affect is interrupted and forbidden, it emerges like affliction. Affliction is the impossibility of affect, and the resolution comes out in magic, forebodings, extra-sensory perceptions. Here is how she puts it:

When I wake up, I happen to look at the child's cradle and then I see he is vomiting and the vomit is running through his nose and the little guy is suffocating. Then, I lift up myself to call the nurse, and I call, and call, and call, but I cannot move with the sensation of the needles in my arms and I was afraid of any movement. Then I am in angst and call, and call and see the boy is turning purple.... I am really in desperation with big tears running, congested and seeing that (2013: 91).

Suddenly, a man dressed in white happens to pass by and sucks through the child's nose and saves him. Affect burst through panic, angst, and impotence finds its resolution in the extra-natural. This is a woman interrupted, one that to become a true member of the insurgent needs to shed what is essentially hers. This was the Leticia Herrera turned into a man, but who was Leticia Herrera otherwise?

During the 1970s, Leticia Herrera worked in the urban resistance. She was in charge of looking for and establishing security houses for clandestine members of the Frente Sandinista. At the barrios, her work consisted in identifying potential collaborators and in helping them to familiarize themselves with the most pressing needs of the community. In this manner, the Frente could get acquainted with problems facing the society while broadening their social base. She also worked with students, those of the Revolutionary Student Front (FER) and those of the High school Student Front (Frente Estudiantil Secundaria FES). In this manner, she established a relationship with people in many distinct neighborhoods and with the most intellectual members of the community while simultaneously doing community work, instructing neighbors on how to plan actions, organize their

demands, always trying to be taken for one of them. Most of the barrios lacked basic services, so identifying the problems was easy.

In this task she demonstrated great capacity for organizing, good criteria for selecting the houses and deep insights in identifying the collaborators. This speaks highly about her organizing skills. Selecting a house implied making sure it was going to be a safe haven for insurgents, that the owners of the house were going to take care of the militants, and that the house provided a minimum of intimacy and individuation so that the activities could be planned and organized there. Carrying on these tasks, she came to know the city very well and also established a strong collaborator's network.

Urban guerrilla was hard. It meant living close to the enemy. They could be caught and denounced anytime. So they had to be leery and careful. Leticia Herrera worked clandestinely for ten years, nine of which were in the cities of Managua, Granada, and León, without being detected or captured.

She survived thanks to her competence, ability, good sense of things, excellent reading of her circumstances, and expertise in military tactics and organizing experience. She could arm and disarm weapons with ease, was knowledgeable in the use of explosives, taught clandestine work, and conducted teams of territory operatives. Notwithstanding her mastery of the situation, whenever a man was assigned the same job, she was put under his direction, and he appropriated all the credit due to Herrera. She tells us that in those occasions she wondered why if it was her who had organized the situation a man was placed above her. She had demonstrated she had all the capacity to organize and lead. She had amply demonstrated leadership skills.

Orders are never discussed. Dialogue was impossible. Commands were vertical and if a woman protested, she was punished. Throughout the texts, there are concrete instances of maltreatment of women. The effort was to bring woman down, to punish her for her excellence, to take revenge on her when she refused to comply with orders she considered unfair. Women often got punished and criticized for what men were usually forgiven. There is ample evidence provided on how work done by women was attributed to men, how she was constantly displaced from positions of leadership, and how male sexual impulses were always carried without

restrain. Fellow insurgents are often described as arbitrary, self-sufficient, disobedient, endangering their lives and the lives of others. These types of events were not the burden of this paper, nonetheless they prove that “‘woman’ refers to a subject overexposed to a specific type of violence. This violence can be defined...as a dual constraint or schizoid pressure” (Malabou, 2009: 94), whereas cell biology embeds her on an ineluctable womaness, politics claims her as masculine. And it is pregnancy and affect that provided me with a lead. Both are directly related to sexuality and to the anatomical topographies of woman. Throughout this exercise I have argued the possibility of an insurgent female social subject as transgender. A discussion on “the feminine” is an entry point to the malleability or transformability of being. I have subdued Laclau’s and Mouffe’s work on hegemony, as well as privileged Malabou’s work on plasticity. Both meet in the relationship between difference and *différance*. The discussion has been centered on the malleability or transformability of being, as the transgender nature of the social subject: woman as a revolutionary man; and shown how this premises the (im)possibility of politics as hegemony or radical democracy.

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