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Krissie Butler, Student

Dr. Susan Carvalho, Major Professor

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Krissie Butler, Student

Dr. Susan Carvalho, Major Professor

Dr. Susan Larson, Director of Graduate Studies

DECONSTRUCTING AN ICON:
FIDEL CASTRO AND REVOLUTIONARY MASCULINITY

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By
Krissie Hannah Butler

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Susan Carvalho, Professor of Hispanic Studies

Lexington, Kentucky

2012

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

DECONSTRUCTING AN ICON:
FIDEL CASTRO AND REVOLUTIONARY MASCULINITY

The goal of this project is to investigate the way in which various representations of Fidel Castro, between the years 1957-1965, have left an indelible mark on Cuba, transforming its landscape, I argue, through gendered means and conscious strategies. Thus it is less concerned with Fidel as an historical person than with examining with a gendered lens the ways in which he has been represented in foundational photographs, interviews, songs, and texts (both narrative and poetry as well as blogs). Drawing from theories of masculinity, which conceive masculinity as both a social construction and material body, my dissertation explores the ways in which these representations make visible a gendered body, mapping definitions of masculinity on Fidel, which are intimately linked to power. These constructions of Fidel's masculinity, which are portrayed as hegemonic and a legitimating feature of patriarchal control, are a central feature of Fidel's political authority and the Revolution's hegemonizing project to shape Revolutionary men and women. I argue that representations of Fidel frequently invite a gendered encounter between the *Comandante* and his followers, resulting in the production of gendered Revolutionary subjects. The present study adds to current scholarship by shedding light on the ways in which gender foregrounds politics by problematizing the ways in which men are often at the center of political discourse. By decoding the foundations of Fidel's "gendered" power, we find it to be a construction whose maintenance depends on the body's ability to conform to hegemonic definitions of masculinity, thus reinforcing rather than Revolutionizing masculine paradigms of authority.

KEYWORDS: Fidel Castro; masculinity; Cuba; Revolution; gender; power; politics

Krissie Hannah Butler
October 18, 2012

DECONSTRUCTING AN ICON:
FIDEL CASTRO AND REVOLUTIONARY MASCULINITY

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Director of Graduate Studies

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Date

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CHAPTER ONE

FIDEL CASTRO AND THE CUBAN REVOLUTION:

A GENDERED APPROACH

"Men are made, not born."
~Joshua Goldstein

While one young man dies in his pursuit to be a "real man" like Fidel Castro in the novel *Ciudad rebelde* (1967) another woman secretly masturbates to the *Comandante* in Cristina García's novel *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992). Both texts demonstrate the personal and intimate ways that the representation of Fidel has invaded the lives of his fictional subjects.[1] To be sure, Fidel's political power and authority have deeply penetrated and impacted the lives of many Cubans. As famous Cuban blogger Yoani Sánchez has said: "for years, so many lives and livelihoods have hung on the gestures of his hands, the way he raises his eyebrows or the twitch of his ears."[2] But these texts also reveal how men and women have encountered their *Comandante* in a decidedly gendered way.

In light of these gendered encounters, the goal of this project is to investigate the ways in which various representations of the *Comandante* have left an indelible mark on Cuba, transforming its landscape, I argue, through gendered means and conscious strategies. This study aims to explore representations of Fidel within Cuba. Thus it is less concerned with Fidel as an historical person than with examining, through a gendered lens, the way in

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[1] This thesis refers to Fidel Castro as "Fidel." I agree with Ana Serra who in her work *The New Man in Cuba: Culture and Identity in the Revolution* (2007) argues that the appellation "Fidel" is more appropriate than "Castro": "The Cuban leader is purposefully referred to here as 'Fidel,' rather than 'Castro,' to allude to the discursive position of this political figure within the Cuban regime, which has been appropriated and transformed by Cubans over the ensuing years (4). Because this thesis looks at representations of Fidel within Cuba, he is referred to as Fidel because Cubans do not refer to him as "Castro," but rather as "Fidel." It in no way implies that I support or want to convey an emotional attachment to the leader, but rather that in this analytical sense and within the conventions of this critical group, to call him "Castro" is simply unusual and strange.

[2] This blog entry can be found on Yoani's blog from August 18, 2010.

which he has been represented in foundational photographs, songs, narratives, and poetry. More specifically, my dissertation explores the ways in which these representations make visible a gendered body, arguing that Fidel's masculinity was a central feature of his political authority and of the Revolution's hegemonizing project to shape Revolutionary men and women.

Each chapter of this thesis is principally centered around a narrative (either a war memoir, short story or novel), including Luis Amado Blanco's *Ciudad rebelde* (1967), Che Guevara's *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria* (1961-64), Ana Menéndez's short story "Baseball Dreams" (2001), Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992), and Juan Arcocha's *Los muertos andan solos* (1962). Each work was selected because 1) it frames Fidel's relationship with another character as an expression of his masculinity, which is directly tied to his political power and authority; and 2) the principal action takes place between the years 1957-1965. The periodization of this thesis (1957-1965) is meant to reflect the formative years of Fidel's Revolutionary leadership, from the initial months of armed insurrection against Batista (1957-58), moving into the first six years of the Revolution—characterized by a massive attempt from the government to transform Cuban society and the individual—and culminating with the year 1965, which marks the publication of Che Guevara's "Socialism and Man in Cuba" where he called for the creation of a "New Man."

Politics and Gender

In her essay "Gender and Sociopolitical Change" (1991), Sandra McGee Deutsch hints at the central role that representations of Fidel's masculinity may have played in the Revolution's sexual politics. Informed by Joan Scott's famous proposition that "politics

construct gender and gender constructs politics," Deutsch's groundbreaking article highlights the nuanced meanings behind Revolutionary discourse and culture, arguing that Cuba's sexual politics—which had celebrated the creation of a new man and proclaimed the changes among women a "Revolution within a Revolution" –were ambiguous and contradictory.[3] Politics, she perceived, did construct gender insofar as the regime "implemented many programs for women," but the extent to which politics had cultivated a new gender regime was still debatable (286). With respect to the way gender constructed politics in Revolutionary Cuba, Deutsch's investigation centered on the New Man and implied "that men are the Revolutionaries…so they do not require special attention. It also implies that men, unlike women, do not need to alter their identity to join the Revolution" (287). More importantly, however, the examination of gender in Revolutionary Cuba would inevitably have to take into consideration its leader's masculinity: "the definition of manhood may draw upon Castro's image as well as traditional notions" (287). For Deutsch, Fidel's "image" foregrounds notions of masculinity:

> The leader of the Cuban Revolution serves as a model of virility. Many photographs feature Castro engaged in sports or in the company of athletes. His large physique and apparent attractiveness to women add to his masculine image as does his history of standing up to the United States. This, in turn, reinforces his popularity among Cubans, who affectionately call him 'el caballo.' While Castro offers an image of

[3] In her essay "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" (1986), Joan Scott views gender as "a primary way of signifying relationships of power" and "a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated" (1069). For Scott, gender "provides a way to decode meaning and to understand the complex connections among various forms of human interaction," which, Scott says, is particularly relevant to politics: "when historians look for the ways in which the concept of gender legitimizes and constructs social relationships, they develop insight in the reciprocal nature of gender and society and into the particular and contextually specific ways in which politics construct gender and gender constructs politics" (1070).

virility, he has been single for many years, and although he has fathered children, he does not portray himself as a paternal type or family head—unlike Juan Perón. (287)

Fidel's un-fatherly image, says Deutsch, demonstrates one of the ways in which Fidel's masculinity has helped shaped Cuban Revolutionary politics, serving as a "paradigm for a socialist movement that has sought to destroy old hierarchies" (287).[4] She concludes this portion of the article calling for more research "on Castro's image and its influence on male roles under Cuban socialism" (287).

In many ways this thesis is a response to Deutsch's call for further investigation into representations of Fidel's masculinity.[5] In addition, it seeks to extend Deutsch's initial observations, which conflate the terms "gender" and "women" and do not take into consideration men as gendered subjects. As we will see, men did in fact "have to alter their identity to join the Revolution" and this was done, in some instances, by conforming to Fidel's model of Revolutionary masculinity. Moreover, this thesis broadens our knowledge of the way in which the Revolution sought to redefine manhood. Although scholarship has greatly enriched our understanding of this process, it has limited itself in large part to the examination of Che's New Man ideology, which was put forth in his collection of essays from 1965. For example, in *The Transformation of Political Culture in Cuba* (1969) Richard Fagen notes that the New Man was a central project of the Cuban Revolution during the 1960s: "the transformation of Cuban man into Revolutionary man is one of the primary goals of the Revolutionary leadership" (16). Julia Bunck in *Fidel Castro and the Quest for a*

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[4] See my chapter "Fidel es mi papá" where I argue that Fidel has, in fact, been represented as a father figure.

[5] My use of the word "representation" (rather than the word "image") is intentional. I am investigating the way in which Fidel has been represented in various genres, principally in narrative, but also in photos, poetry, newspapers, and speeches. I believe the term "image" is too heavily associated with visual images, which are not the principal sources for this thesis.

Revolutionary Cuba (1994) sees how the socialist government called for a New Man, urging the "Cuban people to adopt as their model someone who was selfless and cooperative, obedient and hardworking, gender-blind, incorruptible, and nonmaterialistic" (4). In *Gay Cuban Nation* (2001) Emilio Bejel also points to the centrality of the "new man":

> During this early stage of the Revolution, the idea of forming a new subjectivity and a 'new man' in this 'new' society began to take shape. It was thought that this Revolutionary Cuban subject ought to be free of the impurities of the bourgeois past, willing to sacrifice for this country, ready to renounce utilitarian values, and eager to possess a great disposition and aptitude for the struggle (a physical struggle, if need be) for nationalist and socialist ideals. The 'new man' also ought to be virile and highly macho. (99)

The New Man is also the theme of Ana Serra's *The "New Man" in Cuba: Culture and Identity in the Revolution* (2007) where she explores the concept of this subjectivity in novels and political discourse, arguing that the New Man archetype took on multiple forms in order to embody a particular Revolutionary campaign. By focusing solely on the "New Man," each of these studies limits our understanding of the ways in which the Cuban Revolution sought to redefine masculinity. The present thesis broadens the scope of past scholarship, arguing that from its inception, definitions of manhood – and the possibility of a new Cuban man – have been embodied and expressed from the outset in representations of its leader Fidel Castro. Drawing on theories of masculinity, I argue that representations of Fidel placed gender at the heart of Cuba's Revolutionary politics, shaping a Revolution where masculinity and political authority have become mutually reinforcing, if not synonymous.

Masculinity and politics have often been conflated, but as scholar Matthew McCormack has observed, definitions of manhood function as a tool of government:

> masculinity was not merely relevant to politics because it was usually men who happened to be doing it: rather, conceptions of masculinity were actively created and fostered through the processes of inculcating common values and behaviours, constructing power relationships or negotiating the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Masculinity, therefore, could be as much a tool of the government as a mode of self-understanding or expression. (4-5)

As we will see, masculinity was not "relevant" to Fidel simply because he was a politician, but rather because the Comandante's masculinity operated as a mechanism of control, invading the private lives of his subjects in ways that sought to shape their manhood or womanhood. In this manner, representations of Fidel's masculinity functioned similarly to other institutions that were implemented by the government in order to attempt to control its citizens. For example, the Comités de Defensa de la Revolución (CDR) were inaugurated on September 28, 1960 with the purpose of establishing vigilance to "discover and denounce counterRevolutionary behavior" and "to defend the Revolutionary from 'the enemy within'" (Fagen 71). It also functioned to "educate" Cuban citizens much like the 1961 literacy campaign and the *Anitas* program, which educated young girls in the art of sewing.[6] Moreover, as we will see, representations of Fidel's masculinity were never far from the Revolution's epic campaigns and programs, but rather helped define and direct them.

[6] These programs were designed to transform Cubans into Revolutionaries and guard against infiltration of counter-Revolutionaries. The textbooks used during the Literacy Campaign of 1961, for example, indoctrinated Cubans, teaching them to read while at the same time they learned about the new socialist government. As Richard Fagen has noted, a good revolutionary engaged in these programs: "the good citizen is defined as one who engages in activities X, Y, and Z" (14). Fagen's book is particularly helpful as well as Julia Bunck's study; both provide in-depth analysis of Revolutionary programs.

Thus this thesis proposes to look at how representations of Fidel were constructed in a variety of historical contexts. Each chapter, then, is historically contextualized and linked to an event, institution, program, or particular idea that was espoused by the Revolution, with the purpose of demonstrating the central role that representations of Fidel's masculinity played in each one.[7] The second chapter deals with the armed insurrection in the novel *Ciudad rebelde*. The third chapter on Che is also situated during the insurrection but is interpreted through the lens of the New Man ideology, since the memoir was published after the war amid discussions about the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution and its citizens. Chapters four and five address the *Anitas* and the *Federación de Mujeres Cubanas* (FMC) respectively; and the final chapter explores Cuba's relationship with the United States, which culminates with the imminent "invasión yanqui" of 1961. Through the examination of representations of Fidel within these historical contexts, this thesis reveals how the leader's masculinity was a principle instrument of his power that could be called upon during various moments and employed for different purposes. Moreover, these representations reflect how the Revolutionary gender system was structured around the one great patriarch, inevitably pointing to the failure of the Revolution's project to redefine "man."

Masculinity: Towards a Definition

In order to understand the various ways in which Fidel's masculinity has been constructed, it is necessary to first define our use of the term masculinity. This thesis is largely informed by the work of R.W. Connell, who views masculinity as both a biological

[7] Instead of giving a historical introduction here, each chapter will provide the pertinent historical information for that particular chapter.

manifestation and a social construction. In terms of the social construction, Connell sees masculinity as the product of social processes and cultural codes that better complements the everyday reality in which men conduct their lives. For Connell, male bodies "are not internal to the individual. They involve social relations and symbolism; they may well involve large-scale social institutions. Particular versions of masculinity are constituted in their circuits as meaningful bodies and embodied meanings" (64). By grounding the male body in complex social processes and historical contexts, Connell's model compels us to assess the broader exchange between masculinity and cultural discourses.

Connell's social construction model has certainly influenced subsequent scholars of gender; for example, in *The Male Body* Susan Bordo engages Connell's definition: "When we look at bodies (including our own in the mirror), we don't just see biological nature at work, but values and ideas, differences and similarities that culture has 'written,' so to speak, on those bodies" (26). In line with Bordo's conception and Connell's definition, this thesis views representations of Fidel's body as a space through which Revolutionary culture and politics were expressed. For example, the fifth chapter examines how Fidel's paternal politics lent him patriarchal power –as the nation's father— precisely by denying the "biological" dimension of his paternity. In this way, representations of Fidel's body reveal more than its biological makeup, symbolizing larger constructions of social relations at both the individual and state levels.

Notwithstanding the centrality of the social construction model, in their 2005 article "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept", Connell and Messerschmidt caution against its over-usage: "the common social scientific reading of bodies as objects of a process of construction is now widely considered to be inadequate" (851). Male bodies, they argue,

> are involved more actively, more intimately, and more intricately in social processes than theory has usually allowed. Bodies participate in social action by delineating courses of social conduct—the body is a participant in generating social practice. It is important not only that masculinities be understood as embodied but also the interweaving of embodiment and social context be addressed. (851)

Connell and Messerschmidt's article underscores the need for scholars to draw the material body back into their work. As Connell had previously acknowledged in his earlier work *Masculinities* (2002), the physical body is central to masculinity: "the physical sense of maleness and femaleness is central to the cultural interpretation of gender. Masculine gender is (among other things) a certain feel to the skin, certain muscular shapes and tensions, certain postures and ways of moving, certain possibilities in sex" (53). This thesis also takes this approach to masculinity, examining the contours, possibilities, and movements of Fidel's material body. For example, Che's memoir places Fidel's strong body at the center of his narrative, which is juxtaposed with his own crippled and asthmatic one. Moreover, Fidel's aging body – which will be discussed in the conclusion of this thesis—reminds us of the centrality of the material body in conceptions of masculinity, especially when that body can no longer perform in the way that it did in its youth.

"Fidel is macho": Rethinking the obvious

It has almost become a truism to say: "Fidel is macho." In *Machos, Maricones, and Gays* (1996) Ian Lumsden, for example, says Fidel's "public persona" is "the incarnation of machismo" (61). Cuban scholar Damián Fernández has noted: "For his fellow men Fidel and the *barbudos* epitomized manliness in a society that valued *machismo*" (75). Deutsch –

whom I cited above— considers Fidel "a model of virility" (287). These interpretations of Fidel's masculinity – along with many others—are narrow and incomplete, generally drawing their conclusions on the Cuban leader's outward appearance (his cigar, olive green fatigues, and beard) as irrevocable proof of his manliness. Ruth Behar, for instance, claims that Fidel's "warrior manhood and constant need to combat the emasculating power of U.S. imperialism is symbolized by the army fatigues he wears morning, noon, and night" (145). Scholar Norma Fuller, however, has noted that such general uses of macho stereotype exlude the "subjective dynamics, making individuals believe that men are made from a series of absolutes: they never cry, they must be the best, they must always compete, they must be strong, they must not get affectively involved, and they must never retreat" (qtd. in Vigoya 30). While the present thesis certainly engages the concept of *machismo*, it argues that representations of the Cuban leader's manhood are not only constructed in "macho" terms, but in other ways as well. If we only investigate machismo, we lose sight of the other ways in which Fidel has embodied masculinity: for example, the ways in which he tenderly shows love for his comrade Che as well as how he is affectionately called "papá" by some Cubans. Thus this thesis seeks to shed light on the various ways Fidel's masculinity has been constructed and, in doing so, it reveals some of these constructions to be more subtle—and in some ways more powerful— than the iconic olive green, beard, and cigar.

In order to tease out these other constructions, I again take my cue from Connell, who perceives masculinity less as an object and more as a relational practice:

> Rather than attempting to define masculinity as an object (a natural character type, a behavioural average, a norm), we need to focus on the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives. 'Masculinity,' to the extent

> the term can be briefly defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture. (*Masculinities* 71)

Masculinity in relation articulates the methodological approach of this thesis. Each chapter examines both imagined and real relationships between Cubans and their leader within the context of the war and specific Revolutionary programs in 1959 and the early 1960s, arguing that these encounters were decidedly gendered and played an important role in the Revolution's effort to shape Revolutionary subjects. These gendered encounters were experienced across a wide spectrum, including men, women, and children of different races and classes, and each encounter demonstrates the multiple ways in which the Comandante's masculinity figured prominently in the production of political authority.

Hegemonic Masculinity: A Theoretical Model

Fidel's masculinity has frequently been represented vis-à-vis his relationships with other men. Three chapters of this thesis (chapters 2, 4, and 6) analyze how Cuban men have encountered and related to Fidel, sometimes on a very personal and intimate level – as with Che—while in other instances male protagonists engage Fidel through his speeches or on television. To analyze these relationships among men, Connell tells us that we must recognize the presence of multiple masculinities, which are hierarchically arranged: "to recognize diversity in masculinities is not enough. We must also recognize the relations between the different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, dominance and subordination" (*Masculinities* 37). The present study examines those imbalances of power,

paying particular attention to the ways in which Fidel is situated at the top of these hierarchies in what Connell and Messerschmidt call "a pattern of hegemony" ("Hegemonic Masculinity" 846). Borrowing the term "hegemony" from Antonio Gramsci's analysis of class relations, which "refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life," Connell believes hegemony aptly describes masculinities because "at any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted" (*Masculinities* 77).[8] Research, Connell and Messerschmidt tell us in their article, certainly confirms this idea: "it is also a widespread research finding that certain masculinities are more socially central, or more associated with authority and social power, than others" ("Hegemonic Masculinities" 846).

Other studies in the field have found Connell's term particularly useful. For example, in his introduction to the volume *Changing Men and Masculinities in Latin America*, Matthew Gutmann notes: "what it means to be a man in Latin America can often best be appreciated in relationship to hegemonic masculinities in the region" (3). In a similar vein, the present study demonstrates how representations of Fidel's manhood were hegemonically configured in his relationships with other men. That Fidel's masculinity was hegemonic presumes, in Connell and Messerschmidt's terms, "the subordination of nonhegemonic masculinities" ("Hegemonic Masculinities" 846). As we will see, other versions of manhood –like those embodied by homosexual men—were subordinated in an overall framework of "dominance and subordination" within Cuba's Revolutionary gender system and, hence, could never be integrated into the Revolution. Others, however, that were once marginalized in pre-Revolutionary Cuba –specifically those linked to notions of race and class— were

[8] See Connell and Messerschmidt's article for their answer to the critiques of "hegemonic masculinity." Both authors affirm the usefulness of the term with some caveats.

symbolically integrated into Fidel's hegemonic masculinity during the early year of the Revolution (*Masculinities* 78-80).

In order to analyze representations of hegemonic masculinity and how it was best embodied by Fidel, I examine hegemony as exemplary as well as a historical process of construction and reconstruction. With respect to exemplarity, Connell and Messerschmidt tell us: "hegemony works in part through the production of exemplars of masculinity…symbols that have authority despite the fact that most men and boys do not fully live up to them" ("Hegemonic Masculinities" 846). The novel *Ciudad rebelde*, which I analyze in chapter two, centers on the protagonist Alfredo's desire to "live up to" Fidel's exemplary masculinity, which is represented as heroic. In addition, the third chapter of this study examines Che Guevara's struggles to be a Revolutionary man precisely because he cannot perform Fidel's exemplary masculinity. Both Che and Alfredo's struggles to be Revolutionaries are intimately connected to their manhood, which is confounded by their relationship with the one who exemplified true Revolutionary (and hegemonic) manhood: Fidel. Thus the examination of hegemonic masculinity makes our inquiry into representations of Fidel's masculinity in no way "subjective," for these men's encounters demonstrate the way in which men perceived Fidel's model of masculinity as the one to attain and embody.

In addition, this study approaches hegemonic masculinity as a "historical construction and reconstruction" ("Hegemonic Masculinity" 846). Masculinities, as Connell and Messerschmidt have observed, are not static: "research has fully confirmed the idea…both at a local and a broad society level, the situations in which masculinities were formed change over time" (846). In line with Connell, then, this thesis examines masculinities in Cuba as

historically contingent and dynamic, which is demonstrated by comparing pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary hegemonic masculinities. For example, chapter six of the present study examines pre-Revolutionary Cuban models of manhood and compares these to Fidel's new Revolutionary masculinity, arguing that the rebel's model of manhood played a vital role in the consolidation of his power precisely because it established hegemony. Moreover, this same chapter takes into account issues of race and class, which are central to configurations of masculinity. What before were considered marginalized masculinities- namely the poor and black populations in Cuba—were promised integration into the Revolution under Fidel.

Any examination of hegemonic masculinity is inevitably an investigation of power, which is one of the reasons that Connell's contribution to gender studies has been so groundbreaking. Connell's hierarchy of masculinities debunks the myth that all men are equally powerful. Some are more powerful than others, which is precisely one of the principal arguments of this thesis. Fidel's embodiment of hegemonic masculinity demonstrates how, in some instances, his exercise of power situated other men in subordinated and marginalized positions, and, in other instances, how men appropriated certain codes of Fidel's masculinity in order to guarantee their own access to power – whether it be over men or women. Furthermore, Connell's hegemonic masculinity model compels us to see other ways in which power operates. Rather than viewing power as simply a violent and physical force, Connell and Messerschmidt tell us: "the hierarchy of masculinities is a pattern of hegemony, not a pattern of simple domination based on force" ("Hegemonic Masculinity" 846). Thus, "it is the successful claim to authority, more than direct violence, that is the mark of hegemony" (*Masculinities* 77). By viewing power in this way, this thesis argues that Fidel's power and political authority was forged not only in the

mountains of the Sierra Maestra or even in the massive purges that took place after the war, but also through his embodiment of hegemonic masculinity in relation to other men.

Masculinity: Considering the Position of Women and Children

This thesis reveals how Fidel's gendered politics were practiced and experienced as much by women as by men, which addresses Connell and Messerschmidt's appeal to draw women into the theorizing of masculinity: "the concept of hegemonic masculinity now needs to give much closer attention to the practices of women and to the historical interplay of femininities and masculinities" ("Hegemonic Masculinities" 848). Drawing women into the theorizing of masculinity is now an accepted dimension of masculinity scholarship. For example, in the volume *Changing Men and Masculinities in Latin America* Gutmann notes:

> among the methods…in this book…is the need to include women in studies of men and masculinities. This entails examination of the relationship of women to men and masculinity, illustrating how women may be practically incorporated into research focused on men, and learning from more nuanced treatments of women to critique monochrome debates on essentialized male natures and constructions of masculinity. (6)

In light of the possibilities that research on women and masculinity offers to the field, this thesis investigates the ways in which Fidel's masculinity was constructed vis-à-vis his relationships with women in two chapters. In chapter five, I examine representations of Fidel's sexuality and compare and contrast these with hegemonic preRevolutionary masculinity, arguing that Fidel's "lonely man" model of sexuality served as a mechanism through which to control women. Along those same lines, this thesis also examines Fidel's

relationship with children, specifically female children who viewed Fidel as their "papá." By contrasting Fidel's hegemonic masculinity with the paternal model of pre-Revolutionary Cuba, I argue that his national paternity in many ways disguised patriarchal control. Both of these chapters, then, analyze Fidel's hegemonic masculinity as a legitimating feature of patriarchy.

Challenging Hegemony: Resisting Fidel

One of the key features of hegemonic masculinity is that it can be contested and challenged: "a dominant pattern of masculinity" is "open to challenge—from women's resistance to patriarchy, and from men as bearers of alternative masculinities" ("Hegemonic Masculinity" 846). This study observes Fidel's challenge to pre-Revolutionary hegemonic manhood and perceives how his resistance forged a "Revolutionary masculinity" as the dominant pattern. Other patterns of resistance against Revolutionary manhood are observed in the chapters that follow, and what is so remarkable is that all of them inevitably fail. As we will see, the novels *Los muertos andan solos* and *Dreaming in Cuban* portray men and women whose resistance to Fidel's hegemonic model of manhood ultimately leads to their demise, symbolizing their failure to integrate into the Revolution and the politicized nature of gender in Revolutionary Cuba, where political authority was deeply implicated in the policing of gender codes.

Representing Fidel: Selection of Sources

One only has to traverse the streets of Havana, take a look into a business, or even peer into an occasional Cuban home to see some type of portrait of Fidel. In an interview

with Fidel in his book *Castro's Cuba, Cuba's Castro* (1967), Lee Lockwood questioned the leader about the pervasive presence of his photo throughout Cuba:

> there is no question that you are still the Maximum Leader of this country. One simple evidence of this is that throughout Cuba one finds displayed pictures of you in some heroic pose—of yourself practically alone among living Cubans. They range from small photographs that ones sees hanging on the walls of the huts of most peasants in the mountains to gigantic images of yourself on posters and billboards that are to bee seen everywhere, sometimes in the most unlikely places. (178)

In response, Fidel told Lockwood that these photos were distributed "in an absolutely spontaneous way," underscoring the fact that following a proposal of his, one of the first laws the Revolutionary government had passed prohibited the erection of any statue of a living person or that a street or park be named after any living leader (182). Despite Fidel's denial that a cult of personality exists in Cuba, photos of Fidel make up an important part of Cuba's landscape, both in private and public spaces. Thus one goal of this thesis is to examine photographs and other works of art that directly reflect the theme of a narrative, or that are related to a specific historical moment within the chapter. These visual images broaden our knowledge of how notions of masculinity are inseparable from representations of Fidel. But despite the proliferation of visual images of the Comandante, to "represent" Fidel can be problematic and tricky. Photos that fill the public space are government-approved; and artists who have tried to represent Fidel in other ways—sometimes very subversively— have encountered problems.[9] Most of the visual images I have selected for this thesis could

[9] See Rachel Weiss' *To and from Utopia in the New Cuban Art* (2011) and Holly Block's *Art Cuba: The New Generation* (2001). Both contain works or discuss Cuban artists that have not been allowed to circulate or have been banned from exhibitions. Artists such as José Toirac, Tomás Esson, and Eduardo Ponjuan are some of the most well known. They are generally from the special period to the

circulate and have circulated in Cuba because I wanted to historically situate official representations of Fidel within the armed insurrection or Revolutionary programs and campaigns, in order to shed light on how notions of Fidel's masculinity served as an unofficial tool of the government. Other visual images included in this thesis do not form part of an official campaign or program but add depth to the analysis of a particular narrative.

To represent Fidel in narrative is also rife with challenges. When I began research for this project, it was clear that no fictional narrative published within Cuba featured Fidel as a protagonist. As one lady told me in the *Casa de las Américas*, an organization in Cuba that promotes literature and the arts, it was simply too "peligroso." The closest thing to a narrative that has been written is *En el tiempo de los cedros* (2003)—examined in chapter four— by Katiuska Blanco Castiñeira; the work narrates Fidel's childhood in third person and reads like a work of fiction. Nevertheless, what I found is that some novels—particularly those written in the early 1960s –portray a protagonist's transformation through their ability to embody Revolutionary manhood or womanhood, through a very real and personal encounter with a fictional Fidel. One novel, *Los muertos andan solos* (1962), reflects the thematic content of many Cuban novels written between 1961-1965 in its justification of Socialism and repudiation of the decadent bourgeois past.[10] Aesthetically it aligns with the Socialist realist standard, meaning that the "authors strive to be faithful to the reality of the Revolution, and they try to 'depict' it as closely and simply as possible" (Serra 13). Both the aesthetic and the thematic content of the novel are a response to Fidel's famous 1961 speech, known as the "Words to the Intellectuals" in which he pronounced the famous

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present. Andrés Oppenheimer's *Castro's Final Hour* discusses how media regulations regarding Fidel changed during the special period (see page 407).

[10] See Seymour Menton's *Prose Fiction of the Cuban Revolution* (1975) for more information on this categorization.

phrase "Within the Revolution everything, against the Revolution nothing," explicitly exhorting "Cuban intellectuals and artists to make the Revolution their central concern" (Serra 12). In this manner, the novel offers brilliant insight into our investigation of how Socialist realist novels represented Fidel's masculinity and how this model of manhood intersected with Revolutionary reforms and functioned as a mechanism through which men and women were made into Revolutionaries. *Ciudad rebelde* (1967) is thematically similar to this novel in its portrayal of a young man who is made into a Revolutionary, but the setting takes place during the armed insurrection. Aesthetically it is different as well, combining poetry with prose.[11]

Because discussion of Fidel's personal life is virtually off limits to the media and any author or artist within Cuba, I have selected two works published outside Cuba (Ana Menéndez's short story "Baseball Dreams" and Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban*) for chapters four and five respectively in order to complement my discussion.[12] These chapters, however, also draw on sources within Cuba; for example, chapter four looks at a newspaper article and a song, and chapter five analyzes a poem. Chapter three examines Che's *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria*—a war memoir— that reveals some very personal and touching moments between Fidel and Che, which is reinterpreted in Julio Cortázar's short story "Reunión" (1966), which will also be analyzed. As evidenced in this array of sources, I have drawn from different media and areas of publication, which I believe has added depth to this

[11] Menton groups *Ciudad rebelde* with Cuban novels written between 1959-1960 (even though it was written in 1967) because of the way it reflects "the tremendous and almost universal enthusiasm generated by the fall of dictator Fulgencio Batista" (1).
[12] I should note that José Soler Puig's novel *En el año de enero* (1961) would make an excellent addition to the fifth chapter, but I discovered this text too late to include it in the body of this thesis. It would be included in Menton's 1961-1965 category. See chapter five for a summary of the novel.

thesis. Nevertheless, each chapter is historically contextualized around a particular event, program or campaign in order to provide coherence.

Summary of Chapters

The armed insurrection against Batista provides the historical context for the novel *Ciudad rebelde* (1967), which is analyzed in chapter two. The novel portrays the insurrection by way of a metaphor of masculinity, shifting the war scenes from the *Sierra Maestra* to the protagonist Alfredo's inner "battle" to become a man, more specifically, a hero like Fidel. By juxtaposing Fidel's heroism with Batista's cowardice, which is symbolically warring for Alfredo's manhood, the novel reveals how Fidel fought the insurrection on the gendered terrain of male subjects as well as on the physical terrain of the Sierra Maestra. This particular gendered encounter with the *Comandante* climaxes with Fidel's trek across the entire island of Cuba in his eight-day caravan of victory, before arriving in Havana where Alfredo—on his deathbed—waits to see him on the television and then dies. As we will see, however, *Ciudad rebelde* in fact parodies Alfredo's death and in this way the novel critiques Fidel's hegemonic masculinity, which has made martyrdom a national obsession.

The third chapter examines another relationship between Fidel and Che during the armed insurrection. Guided by the concept of the New Man, whose most defining characteristic was his love for all men, I analyze "Canto a Fidel," *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria*, and Cortázar's "Reunión." These texts reveal how the New Man's expression of love for Fidel drew desire back into homosociality (non-sexual relationships between men), forging Revolutionary men whose carnal surrender to Fidel during the war

was irrevocable proof of patriotic devotion. As Che devotes himself to Fidel, he also learns to submit to him, which, as we will see, is manifested through Che's subordination to Fidel's exemplary masculinity, revealing how the *Comandante's* power was intimate and gendered. These texts ultimately reveal the paradox at the heart of Fidel and Che's relationship, one defined by both the New Man concept of love and homosocial struggle. In this way, this chapter shows the failure of the New Man project to redefine the collectivity of Cuban manhood, because love was best expressed through *Fidel*ity, unconditional love and submission to one man.

The fourth chapter leaves the armed insurrection and turns to the early 1960s, an important period during which Fidel's masculinity was defined through his paternal role as the nation's patriarch. In contrasting preRevolutionary hegemonic fatherhood with Revolutionary fatherhood, I explore how the socialist model's promise of a more egalitarian and less patriarchal family was ultimately undermined by Fidel's model of national fatherhood. I look to the Anitas program, in which young peasant girls were taken to Havana and instructed in the art of sewing, and explore how Fidel replaced the girls' biological fathers. This chapter also analyzes the short story "Baseball Dreams" by Ana Menéndez, which again illustrates the argument of this chapter. Menéndez compares Fidel's childhood with that of his daughter and reveals how the Revolution has not changed Cuba's gender order and, in fact, it suggests that it may now be worse. By casting himself as the nation's father, Fidel encountered Cuba's "children" in a very personal way, metaphorically invading the home and installing himself as patriarch.

The fifth chapter also looks at the ways in which Fidel invaded the most private of spheres, which is symbolized by the placement of his portrait inside the bedroom in Cristina

García's *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992). This novel's analysis is historically contextualized against the backdrop of the formation of the FMC (*Federación de Mujeres Cubanas*), and also considers two poems, both titled "Canto a Fidel." Both the poems and the novel demonstrate how Fidel's masculinity played a crucial role in his relationships with Cuba's women, which finds its best expression in a (con)fusion of patriotism and eroticism. As the emblem of patriotic eroticism, Fidel, I argue, constitutes a glaring paradox in the Revolution's efforts to bring sexual equality, representing the impossibility of a sexual Revolution in a Revolution where the *Comandante* has ultimate control over the female body.

The last and final chapter analyzes the novel *Los muertos andan solos* (1962) by Juan Arcocha, which portrays control over the female body against the backdrop of American imperialism. The novel highlights the fundamental role Fidel's masculinity played in defying American imperialism by metaphorically depicting one man's triumph over "America," a sexually liberated woman named Rosa. In converting to Revolutionary manhood, the character experiences freedom from American hegemony, and empowerment via Fidel's model, which compels him to embrace his fellow Cuban "*compañeros*" regardless of their race or social class. As we will see, however, this egalitarian model suppresses women's sexual freedom, conveyed through the character's triumph over Rosa/America.

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CHAPTER TWO

ANXIOUS MASCULINITIES AND THE

CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL HEROES

As Cuba entered into the Revolution, it brought with it a new set of heroes. For example, on April 15, 1961 a young man, Eduardo García Delgado, wrote Fidel's name with his own blood on the wall of a building shortly before dying.

(Figure 2.1 "Fidel" Written in Blood)

Nicolás Guillén penned the poem "La sangre numerosa" in honor of García: [13]

Cuando con sangre escribe

FIDEL este soldado que por la Patria muere,

No digáis miserere:

esa sangre es el símbolo de la Patria que vive.

[13] The poem was published shortly after his death on April 18, 1961. García was killed during a pre-invasion airstrike before the Bay of Pigs invasion. This image can be found in the volume *Cien imágenes de la Revolución Cubana: 1953-1996.*

In Guillén's poem spilled blood becomes the paradoxical means through which Revolutionary Cuba is engendered. Through violence, Guillén tells us, García also becomes immortal:

> Cuando su cuerpo baja
> exánime a la tierra que lo cubre ambiciosa,
> no digáis que reposa,
> pues por la Patria en pie resplandece y trabaja.

Because of his heroic death, García is, in fact, born again through his spilled blood. But, lest we forget, that spilled blood spells FIDEL. García's blood literally inscribes the Revolution's leader into Cuban soil, binding patriotic duty and masculinity. The purpose of this chapter is to explore those national heroes who, like García, sacrificed their lives for Fidel. Yet, unlike the hero in Guillén's poem, I investigate those heroes that never entered the pantheon of Revolutionary martyrdom. In doing so, I will reveal how men— haunted by Fidel's exemplary masculinity—anxiously desired martyrdom in order to affirm their manhood.

Just as Fidel is García's reason for being and for dying, so he is too for Alfredo Maseda, the protagonist of Spanish expatriate Luis Amado Blanco's novel *Ciudad rebelde* (1967). An author, journalist, and diplomat, Luis Amado Blanco moved from Spain and permanently established himself in Cuba after the Spanish Civil War. Among his literary production are various collections of poetry, but his best known work is *Ciudad rebelde*. Two questions powerfully permeate the novel: what kind of nation will Cuba be? And, more specifically, what kind of men will populate it? The novel dramatizes Alfredo's Revolutionary journey and the ways in which he is molded to meet the needs of the

Revolution against the backdrop of the 26th of July movement's activity in Havana. The young man spearheads a failed assassination attempt against Batista, which ultimately fails, resulting in the death of all the rebels except Alfredo. Guilt-stricken for having fled like a coward in contrast to his martyred comrades, Alfredo decides to prove himself a man. He recreates the events of the assassination attempt alone, and what ensues is a parody of a martyr's death. Alfredo is struck with a bullet and –while precariously hanging between life and death on his hospital bed— he clings to life in hopes of seeing Fidel's triumphant entry into Havana. Only after the young Revolutionary witnesses the triumphant entry on television does he finally die a "hero's" death.

In *Ciudad rebelde* Fidel's masculinity becomes so potent that the very mention of his name incites a nervous energy within the protagonist, Alfredo, which compels him to perform brave and patriotic acts in order to prove his manhood. This chapter will demonstrate how Fidel's exemplary masculinity, which is explicitly associated with bravery, self-sacrifice, and heroism, was a central feature of the armed insurrection. More specifically, I examine the ways in which exemplary masculinity elicited a passionate response from the national body, which was personified in anxious men willing to die for him and the fatherland in order to affirm their manhood. Fidel's followers, through both real and imagined relationships, helped construct his exemplary masculinity through their performance of anxious masculinities. I employ the term anxious masculinity in the sense that Mark Breitenberg has used it in his work *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England*. For Breitenberg, because "masculinity is inherently anxious," "anxiety is not simply a secondary effect of masculinity, nor simply an unpleasant aberration from what we might hypothetically understand as normative" (2). Rather, anxiety is both an effect—a signifier of

cultural tensions— as well as an instrument that is employed to produce a certain function and cultural work.

Following this framework, I will demonstrate how the protagonist Alfredo –a restless individual seeking solid grounding for a masculine identity— suffers from an inner turmoil that is best described as anxious in his drive to embody Fidel's exemplary masculinity. I will begin the chapter by briefly contextualizing the novel against the backdrop of Cuba's heroic tradition, describing how Fidel's insertion into this tradition played a definitive role in shaping representations of his masculinity. Next, I will explore Alfredo's definition of manhood, which drives the novel's action and articulates its theme. For Alfredo, to be a real man means to be a hero or a martyr like Fidel, whose efforts to overthrow Batista construct a vision of masculinity whereby exhibiting bravery in the face of death is so seamless that it appears natural. I argue that this vision of masculinity promotes a rigid binary that is manifested through two masculine archetypes, Batista and Fidel, whose battle to control the nation symbolically reflects Alfredo's inner battle to become a man. As Alfredo learns to 'defeat' Batista, he is in fact conquering the coward within himself. Lastly, I will show how Alfredo, by sacrificing his life, is re-made in the masculine image of Fidel, thus allowing him to be reconciled to the Revolution and, hence, to be a real man. But as we will see, Alfredo's nervous energy manifests his persistent fear of death. To be a man, *a la* Fidel, it turns out, is not 'natural,' and is, in fact, a social construct employed to motivate men to defend the homeland. More importantly, by parodying the protagonist's death, *Ciudad rebelde* offers a brilliant critique of Revolutionary hegemonic masculinity, which celebrated martyrdom and recast violence and hypermasculinity within the logic of warfare to define men as national heroes and Fidel as national redeemer.

Fidel and the Heroic Tradition

Ciudad rebelde takes place during the armed insurrection against Batista and makes frequent references to Fidel's heroic activities. In light of this, a brief historical framework is in order. The Revolutionary climate gained momentum on March 10, 1952 when Fulgencio Batista delivered a military coup. Fidel, who at the time was working as a lawyer, expressed his outrage at the coup in the Court of Appeals in Havana, where he presented a legal brief demanding Batista's imprisonment. The court denied the appeal, and Fidel sought other means to end Batista's regime. Having already tried to challenge the military coup within the legal system, Fidel turned to armed insurrection as the only apparent means to counter tyranny. With the help of Abel Santamaría, Fidel led a group of 165 Revolutionaries dressed as soldiers whose mission was to obtain the weapons inside the Moncada barracks and then head to the surrounding mountains to begin an armed uprising. Due to poor planning, however, the attack failed and the army captured, tortured, imprisoned, and killed most of the insurrectionists. Fidel escaped but was later caught and imprisoned. All of the prisoners were given a trial and Fidel, a lawyer by profession, delivered his own self-defense in a private trial. The defense, *La historia me absolverá*, received its title from Fidel's famous closing lines, "Condenadme, no importa, La historia me absolverá," and served as the manifesto of the movement named in honor of the Moncada attack, the 26th of July Movement; it now represents the first important text in the history of the Revolution.[14] In the defense Fidel links Cuba's national hero and founding father José Martí and Moncada in a continuum in the battle for independence, as Donald Rice has noted: "Castro's ability to

[14] See Antonio Rafael de la Cova's *The Moncada Attack: Birth of the Cuban Revolution* (2007) for an in-depth look at the attack.

define and unify diverse groups of people was, especially at these early stages, based on the presentation of a version of history that removed the years between the birth of Martí and the struggle of the 1950s. By close association of the shared memories, Castro had begun to link rhetorically his own personage with Martí's" (45). The iconic Moncada visual image—a photograph with Fidel and Martí's portrait in the background—further underscores how Martí and Fidel were intimately connected.[15]

(Figure 2.2 Fidel and Martí at Moncada)

In establishing this link, Fidel and his rebels emerged as descendants of the great Cuban hero in such a way that a new tradition was formed with Fidel as the nation's founding father. More importantly, in employing Martí as a symbol of national identity around which the national community could cohere, the defense legitimized the Moncada attack and redefined Fidel as a hero in light of the military debacle. In her study on German war heroes (2004), Karen Hagemann observes the intimate connection between heroes and "ideal-typical" masculinity:

[15] This photo was taken during Fidel's imprisonment at El Vivac in Santiago.

> Their gender played a central role here because national constructs of heroism are always based on, and at the same time fundamentally shape, hegemonic concepts of masculinity. 'Heroes' were thus presented as the manliest of men. They were supposed to act as role models for 'average men' and in that way define the norms of masculinity to which the state, the military and society aspired. Heroic masculinity is thus always ideal-typical masculinity. (117)

Thus despite the fact that Moncada was a military failure, the attack inserted Fidel into Cuba's heroic tradition, constructing an "ideal-typical" or exemplary masculinity that would come to define the leader and, as we will see, is the masculinity Alfredo encounters in the novel *Ciudad rebelde*.

Fidel's heroic tradition was further cemented after Moncada. In 1955, pressured by various groups, Batista declared amnesty for all political prisoners, including Fidel. After twenty-two months in prison, Fidel left the Isle of Pines and set out for Mexico, declaring his famous adage that is echoed in *Ciudad rebelde*: he and his men will return to Cuba as *héroes o mártires*. In Mexico the movement regrouped and underwent intense training in the basics of guerrilla warfare. Also, Fidel met a young Argentine, Ernesto Che Guevara who promptly joined the movement. On November 26, 1956, eighty-two Revolutionaries, including Fidel, boarded a yacht, *Granma*, and set out for Cuba. On December 2nd, the *Granma* ran aground approximately a mile from the originally proposed landing, and the rebels waded through a muddy swamp before finally reaching land. News of a martyred Fidel soon took root in the public imagination, but by this time, Fidel and his rebels had already taken up arms in the *Sierra Maestra*. From this location, Fidel and the rebels launched a guerrilla war that was to last twenty-five months. Hunger, thirst, fatigue, and defeat largely characterized the early

months. On December 5th, for example, the Rural Guard ambushed the rebels at Alegría de Pío and practically annihilated the rebel army. In the aftermath of the attack, only sixteen rebels remained of the original eighty-two *Granma* survivors while the others had been shot, captured and executed, or simply deserted (Szulc 416). Over the next two years Fidel's small rebel army increased and—with the help of the urban underground—eventually defeated Batista on December 31, 1958, and the rebels claimed victory on January 1, 1959.[16] As we will see, *Ciudad rebelde* employs these dates in a symbolic way, providing a definitive structure in Alfredo's inner battle to become a real man.

¡Héroes o mártires! Fidel and Exemplary Masculinity

Alfredo's perception of masculinity is revealed early in the novel during a conversation with his mother. Having already lost her husband during the Machado regime, his mother is beside herself with the possibility of losing the only other man in her life. Alfredo laughs at her insinuation that he may die and declares: "pues, si me matan, me pones en un cuadro orlado de negro, y a presumir de mártir. Creo que es mil veces mejor que ser madre de un marica" (19). Sacrifice becomes equated with manliness in such a way that a man is a sissy if he cannot muster the courage required to be a martyr. In other words, Alfredo is ultimately terrified of *not* being a man. In his case, the ultimate test to prove one's manhood is death in battle, and the inability to man up to this challenge results in the ultimate humiliation: being identified as a *marica*, a symbol of effeminacy. As Nancy Hartsock has influentially argued in her essay, "Masculinity, Heroism, and the Making of War," masculinity "has been centrally structured by a linked fear of and fascination with the

[16] Fidel has published two volumes on the war, which provide an in-depth look at each battle: *La victoria estratégica* (2010) and *La contraofensiva estratégica* (2011).

problems of death, mortality, and oblivion" (135). According to Hartsock, men's fascination with death is substantiated through heroic epics; in these accounts the hero's proclivity to go into battle despite his inevitable death evinces the fundamental role of death in the construction of masculinity. The hero "gains his power and immortality through death, and this feat cannot be matched even by the gods because they cannot die. Heroism in combat, then, gives meaning to a world profoundly structured by death" (Hartsock140). The most salient aspect of Hartsock's argument is her explanation of this fascination with heroic death. She believes that the purpose of heroic death, and hence, the reason it is so sought after, is that it denies death by "means of a second, homosocial birth, a birth that overcomes the defects of the original, heterosexual birth. Whereas the first birth, from the body of a woman, is a death sentence, the second, through the bodily might of the man himself, leads to immortality" (141). What follows, then, is a homosociality that is defined by patriarchal qualities. Woman is repudiated since she represents all that the male must deny in himself: "women, or the female…serves as a kind of symbol of being insufficiently masculine. Thus, cowards, turn into women" (142). Read through this lens, Alfredo's formula of heroic action becomes clear. As we will see, Alfredo's obsession with dying a hero's death is a central structuring feature of the novel, and this obsession drives him to suppress the feminine, or the coward within himself.

In doing so, Alfredo looks to Fidel's example of heroism. As we will see later, this ideal-typical masculinity that is embodied in Fidel is precisely what drives Alfredo's fascination with death as well as providing the foundation for the author's critique of Revolutionary masculinity. Fidel is transformed into an emblem of heroism, and the leader's words and actions give substance to Alfredo's formula. Throughout the text Alfredo

frequently repeats Fidel's famous pronouncement made during his exile in Mexico, in which he promised that he and his followers would return to Cuba as "héroes o mártires," a promise that he kept when he returned to Cuba aboard the *Granma* in 1956. Thus his phrase, which becomes a maxim in the novel, articulates a masculinity within Revolutionary rhetoric: to be a man means to risk one's life, and, in doing so, to repudiate all that is feminine. Not surprisingly, Fidel himself models this archetype of Revolutionary masculinity. During a discussion with his mentor, Dr. Aspiazo, Alfredo states that Fidel not only declared "héroes o mártires," but that he also did it "predicando con el ejemplo, que es lo más grande. A ése nadie puede decirle que embarca a la gente" (134). Alfredo keenly observes how Fidel's words are supported by his actions; as a result, the leader gives meaning to Revolutionary discourse by being its flesh and blood. Not surprisingly, Fidel makes his first appearance in the novel with a description of the assault on Moncada, the quintessential example of martyrdom:

> Iban despacio, lentamente hacia el Moncada. Aún por el filo del alba. Tensos como arcos, los ojos hacia el mañana. El sí y el no de la vida y la muerte en el alma.
>
> --¡Fidel!
>
> …lo miran para no tener sed y poder tragar gustosamente la saliva y mirar la estrella de la mañana…por el filo del alba, aquel grupo de héroes, con Fidel, en busca de la gloria. (91-92)

Fidel is clearly at the center of the heroic group, serving as the source of its inspiration, which will also serve as Alfredo's source of heroism. But it is not simply Fidel who serves as the inspiration, but rather those masculine symbols that are bound to him and employed to denote manhood. More specifically, it is the ability to conquer fear even when death seems

probable or certain, which as Goldstein keenly observes, is a bastion of warrior manhood: "the warrior enjoys a fight, is prepared to risk wounds or death, and will if necessary engage superior forces; if death is inevitable he faces it bravely and without flinching" (266). The interplay of life and death is central to understanding both the novel and Fidel's representation in it. As Fidel stands before his heroes, for instance, the text, which has a poetic style in order to differentiate historical moments from the fictitious events, says he is

> una estatua de piedra, allí entre sus hombres, los ojos de miel. El corazón por todos angustiado.
>
> Santiago.
>
> 26 de julio hoy en Santiago.
>
> ¿Era una despedida, un adiós hasta el triunfo, hasta la muerte, hasta el martirio?
>
> ¿Hasta cuándo?... Fidel hizo la señal y entraron como una avalancha. (94)

Thus despite the inevitability of never returning, Fidel is the one who gives the signal to go in to what would be, in actuality, a slaughter. In the ensuing action, the theme of life and death is reiterated: "madre no llores nunca, si te lo están matando, que morir por la patria es vivir hoy en Santiago" (94). I want to suggest that Fidel's disdain for death, which is communicated by his willingness to die for his homeland, articulates a masculinity that is interlaced with patriotic duty. Within this new Revolutionary formula, sacrifice – even death – becomes a condition for obtaining manhood. In this way, Fidel's action in Santiago guarantees his status as a real man, thus sharply drawing the difference between Fidel and a cowardly *marica*. Fidel becomes the ultimate representation of manhood as well as the perfect antithesis to femininity.[17]

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[17] An interesting contrast to this representation is the one found in several works published in the United States. In Rachel Kushner's *Telex from Cuba* (2008) Fidel lays in a very "suggestive"

As Alfredo strives to conform to the precise contours of Fidel's exemplary masculinity, we find that it is in fact only a shallow construction. Alfredo's fear of dying, coupled with his death, reveals the impossibility of embodying the leader's masculinity. In this way, Amado Blanco brilliantly exposes how representations of Fidel's masculinity have been carefully constructed as a means to motivate men to fight. As Goldstein has convincingly observed, war frequently employs gender pressures as a ruse to draw men to the front line: "Tricks to make men keep fighting depend heavily on gender. In brief, cultural norms force men to endure trauma and master fear, in order to claim the status of 'manhood'… Cultures develop concepts of masculinity that motivate men to fight" (264). In *Ciudad rebelde* these concepts of masculinity are configured around Fidel and, therefore, Alfredo must conform to Fidel's exemplary masculinity to claim the status of manhood. As we will see, however, Amado Blanco questions this version of masculinity by parodying his character's death.

Ciudad rebelde assures us that Alfredo will triumph in his personal quest to purge himself of cowardice and claim the status of manhood, by commencing with a note from its author: "Ésta es una novela de aventuras… exactamente igual que ese suspiro de epopeya que se filta por entre las rendijas de la narración intentado darnos una idea de la inmensidad patriótica en la que se desenvolvieron sus apasionados personajes." By qualifying the work as an *epopeya*, or epic, Amado Blanco suggests that the Revolution's story is of such great importance that it must be chronicled in the pages of national history. Moreover, the epic

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position with another man in the Sierra Maestra. Also, Stephen Hunter's *Havana* (2005) portrays Fidel as a cowardly individual in comparison to the American hero, Earl Swagger. In the novel Fidel's father, Angel, questions his son's sexuality by blatantly asking if he is homosexual. Moreover, he is further feminized when, during a raid, he runs out of a woman's home in her robe and slippers after making love to her. All of these representations demonstrate masculinity's work in (de)constructing Fidel's powerful image that he has cultivated on his own turf in Cuba.

points to a specific narrative structure in which the hero undergoes a journey and returns home having been transformed and embodying the virtues valued by his or her society. In our case, the hero, Alfredo, embodies bravery and sacrifice upon his return to Cuba in order to prove himself a man, thus allowing us to read *Ciudad rebelde* as an epic that marks the rise of a new breed of Cuban man, the Revolutionary. In this way, the novel affirms that manhood is neither biological nor least of all natural; rather it is constructed, as Goldstein aptly notes:

> Men are made, not born… men must take actions, undergo ordeals, or pass tests in order to become men. They are told to "be a man'…in this way, a surprising number of cultures converge in treating masculinity as something that must be created by individual and collective will against the force of instinct or 'doing what comes naturally'. Oddly, the term 'real men' refers to the aspects of masculinity that are least real biologically. (264)

Alfredo's journey, then, extracts the "biological" from masculinity and replaces it with those cultural tests that Alfredo has to pass in order to become a man. Those tests are modeled by Fidel's flirtation with danger and defiance of death, and actively guide Alfredo's journey into manhood.

At the start of the novel it is clear that Alfredo is seeking solid grounding for a masculine identity, which is symbolized by his fluctuating moments of bravery and cowardice. While attending the University of Havana as a medical student, Alfredo is secretly involved in the 26th of July's underground movement. When we first meet Alfredo, fear is consuming him as he suspects that a former friend, Gustavito, is following him. As he prepares for bed, his body physically betrays his emotions: "se le contraía el rostro, sentía un

desventurado desmadejamiento por las entrañas. Le saltó el tic aquel en el ojo izquierdo, como un golpecito de reloj descompuesto" (21). This nervous tic frequently appears throughout the novel, simultaneously exposing the protagonist's fear of death and undermining his efforts to be courageous like Fidel.

Despite the tic, Alfredo resumes his Revolutionary duties, visiting Dr. Aspiazo's dental office in order to get assignments. But when Alfredo is given a warning to stop his clandestine activities, fear overtakes his body and the dentist has to give him a sedative. Interestingly, it is only once the sedative takes effect that Alfredo can perform brave acts: "Sin duda era el calmante. Una inusitada sensación de indiferencia y también de reconcentrada agresividad dormida pero posible. Siempre se había detenido ante la posibilidad de tener que matar con su propia mano, y ahora le importaba muy poco tener que hacerlo…¡pam, pam! Si hay que matar para vivir, se mata. ¿Qué remedio?" (41). Alfredo then dares to imagine that he is one of the martyred victims, "compañeros suyos del 26 con una bomba sobre el vientre y un sueño largo de heroísmo dormido en los ojos? Una madrugada podría ser él, la novia dando gritos de desesperación y la vieja con los ojos más negros y profundos que nunca. ¡Pam, pam, pam!" (41). Clearly, Alfredo's vision is akin to child's play. In fact, he even says he imagines that the battle will be like the Western movies he has seen on television. Alfredo's fantasy about his insensitivity to danger is markedly different to his mother's and his girlfriend's reaction to his imagined death; he finds glory while they cry. Their distinct interpretation of death reveals his view of the ways in which men and women experience danger differently. In her seminal work, *Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War: The Morning After*, Cynthia Enloe argues that the perception of danger is, in fact, gendered, "In most of the societies that were drawn into the Cold War, men were

thought to be manly insofar as they did not shy away from danger and perhaps even flirted with it as they protected that nation's children and women. Women, on the other hand, were considered those most vulnerable to danger" (15). In light of Enloe's take on danger, the mother's interpretation of her son's dangerous activity illustrates how she is in tune with the cultural norms of her society. While it is deemed appropriate for a mother to steer clear of danger, the son must look it in the face and defeat it. This gendering of danger speaks to the ways in which it dictates Alfredo's and his mother's lives and prescribes their behavior.

If throughout the novel Alfredo's behavior is dictated by masculine codes, it is clear that Fidel both embodies and dictates those codes. Alfredo frequently conjures Fidel in speech but he also imagines him in his dreams. While Alfredo is at sea with Dr. Aspiazo for example, Fidel powerfully permeates Alfredo's dream, which is stylistically fragmented:

> Era como un viento.
> Como un viento pequeño.
> Todavía como un viento pequeño.
>
> Una idea vaga. Un no dormir pensando. Las manos en el lecho bajo la nuca. Una geografía en el techo blanco.
>
> Fidel, sí, Fidel.
> Barajando.
> Un caracol.
> Tan sólo una espiral de caracol.
> Lentamente girando.
>
> Durante las noches. Durante las madrugadas. Durante el dulce invierno y el ardoroso verano.
>
> (Debemos hacer algo)
> (Tengo que hacer algo.)
> Era él. Tenía que ser él.
> Él cada vez más él.
> Soñando.

Fidel's imagined presence orients Alfredo's behavior, thus firmly cementing the connection between masculine identity and a national political cause. And not surprisingly, right after the dream, Dr. Aspiazo gives Alfredo a task for this very purpose. While Alfredo executes his mission, which consists of relaying messages, the text juxtaposes the protagonist's actions in Havana with Fidel's in Moncada, alternating frequently between the two. Both men, united in purpose, endeavor to overthrow Batista, and this juxtaposition of rebellious activities points to Alfredo's future heroic transformation. To be molded into Fidel's manhood, he must assume dangerous tasks such as these. Thus as Fidel marches into the slaughtering at Moncada, the Revolutionaries in Havana kill several people, one of them being Alfredo's old school friend, Gustavo. But as Alfredo learns of the shooting, it becomes clear that the divide separating Fidel and Alfredo is more than just geographical. Unlike Fidel's heroic deeds at Moncada, the shooting unnerves Alfredo. As he leaves his girlfriend's house, he feels he is being followed: "sintió frío, calor, miedo…miró por todos lados, nada. Los nervios, sin duda los nervios" (93). Clearly, Alfredo's inability to master his fear poses a problem; for a warrior, "mastering fear is all-important" (Goldstein 267). And, not surprisingly, the text moves on to portray Fidel as the great conqueror of fear. For instead of worrying about his own fate, as Alfredo does, Fidel shows compassion for his fellow soldiers before the attack: "Pero antes, aún juntos, todos volvieron los ojos a Fidel. El los miró también a todos, uno por uno, con ternura infinita. Una estatua de piedra, allí entre sus hombres, los ojos de miel. El corazón por todos angustiado…Fidel hizo la señal y entraron como una avalancha" (93). As we will see in Che's text, Fidel is represented as loving his comrades. Fidel's display of emotion here perfectly demonstrates what Genevieve Lloyd tries to capture in her article, "war represents the ultimate mark and test of the capacity

to transcend self-interest—whether it be through the readiness to risk our own lives, or…through the readiness to sacrifice those we love. War is the ultimate offence to natural feelings of self-love and love of one's own" (65). Fidel perceives that a sacrifice is imminent, whether it is himself or his men, and, yet, he still gives the signal to commence the attack. In this way, he epitomizes the heroic soldier who, according to Lloyd, represents a real man by transcending "what femaleness, symbolically represents: attachment to private concerns, to 'mere life'. In leaving all that behind, the soldier becomes a real man" (75).

Alfredo, however, has not yet learned to embody this type of self-sacrifice, and, hence, is far from being deemed a real man. The text resumes by narrating Alfredo's restlessness and insomnia, which suggests that fear has sapped Alfredo of his masculine strength. Immediately following this episode, the novel pairs both Fidel's and Alfredo's confrontations with Batista authorities. Part of Fidel's self-defense at the Moncada trial is transcribed, and, significantly, it ends with his famous closing statement: "en cuanto a mí, sé que la cárcel será dura como no lo ha sido nunca para nadie, preñada de amenazas, de ruin y cobarde ensañamiento, pero no la temo, como no temo la furia del tirano miserable que arrancó la vida a 70 hermanos míos. Condenadme, no importa, la Historia me absolverá" (95-96). Physically and, now, figuratively, Fidel bravely and defiantly stands up to the tyrant. By declaring that he fears neither prison nor Batista, his image, as a man who conquers fear, is further solidified.

This display of bravery is sharply contrasted in the subsequent episode in which the police arrive at Alfredo's house to interrogate him about Gustavo's death. Alfredo tries to disguise his fear, but his body physically betrays him once again, "lo miró de frente, se puso de pie, pálido pero desafiante" (97). In contrast to Fidel's corporeality, which was described

as a stone statue, Alfredo's paleness hints at his inability to master fear. For Fidel, overcoming fear comes naturally, while for Alfredo, it does not. This seamless connection between bravery and Fidel is what drives Alfredo's actions throughout the rest of the novel as he tries to prove his manhood by mastering his fear. Ironically, then, the novel's main concern is not about defeating Batista, but rather about Alfredo defeating the coward within himself. In this way, Amado Blanco demonstrates that Alfredo's battle is ultimately a gendered one, thus revealing how definitions of masculinity are employed as instruments in motivating men to fight.

Without a doubt, Fidel inspires Alfredo to fight. Having been given an even more important task, one that involves storing weapons in a bookstore, Alfredo still feels that his Revolutionary effort pales in comparison to Fidel's. He reveals his concerns to Dr. Aspiazo one day in the bookstore: "No estoy haciendo nada, pintando muñequitos para la policía. Y entre tanto, Fidel con pocas armas, mientras nosotros nos cubrimos y nos cubrimos" (133). Fidel's action versus Alfredo's perceived inaction causes him great anxiety. Moreover, Alfredo believes that, were he actively fighting in the Sierra alongside Fidel, his fear would evaporate: "Cuando se actúa, se espanta el miedo, la preocupación, todo. Quieto, tengo tiempo de pensar y me asusto, me lleno por dentro de espantosas preocupaciones" (133). Upon hearing Alfredo's distress, Dr. Aspiazo recommends he visit a psychiatrist, which Alfredo vehemently refuses to do.

The significance of Alfredo's rejection of psychiatric help is revealed soon after he mentions it. Indeed, the use of psychiatry to soothe one's fears is charged with masculinist symbolism, as it is exclusively associated with cowardice, and with Batista. Batista, Fidel's nemesis and, hence, competing archetype, epitomizes cowardice in the novel. Nowhere is

this better perceived than when Fortuna, the head of Batista's secret police, pleads with Dr. Ismael Alvarez, a respected psychiatrist, to treat the "*Hombre*." Why does the strongman have to resort to therapy? The *enfermo*, the novel tells us, is suffering from a debilitating fear: "estamos en una situación difícil y extramadamente conflictiva. Lo grave es que no podemos sustraerlo a la tensa atmósfera que lo envuelve, mandarlo a descansar lejos de sus preocupaciones. En realidad tiene miedo, está empavorecido. Éste es el verdadero origen de todos sus trastornos" (152). Dr. Alvarez's diagnosis reveals the extent to which fear marks particular men in the novel as socially deviant. The display of fear is categorized as a mental illness, and this pathological construction engenders rigid definitions of masculinity. As Braudy tells us, war frequently requires "a masculinity as purified and as streamlined as a spear; deviation meant defeat" (350). Thus to deviate from Fidel's heroic model of manhood signifies defeat as well as deviance. The doctor's diagnosis, then, seals Batista's fate and assures that the nation cannot be led by this caliber of a man.

Batista's fear, just like Alfredo's, physically betrays him while attending a concert. Both men are helplessly anxious and they both fear dying. As the audience erupts in a standing ovation, Batista's abnormal behavior is observed, "el Hombre se había ido momentos antes casi sin ser notado. Iba ya por el tercer pañuelo. Los que le veían de cerca lo notaban pálido" (184). By strategically placing Batista at a concert, here Amado-Blanco constructs fear as a spectacle. Two observers, Dr. Aspiazo and a friend, jest,

> ¿Te gustó el espectáculo?
>
> Aspiazo respondió irónico.
>
> --¿Cuál?...

> --Déjate de sonseras, el del Hombre. Tenía miedo, una crisis de pánico espantoso. (185)

The spectacle of Batista, as well as his mental diagnosis, reveals how fear is gendered in the novel. By poking fun at him and categorizing him as pathological, Batista epitomizes cowardice, which ultimately feminizes him, closely echoing Alfredo's earlier definition of a *marica*. This process of feminization calls attention to the sharply drawn differences between Fidel and Batista, and reveals the ways in which gender constructs nations:

> The hierarchical nature of the relations between hegemonic masculinity and its 'others' is a helpful tool for understanding the role of masculinity in constructing the nation. It sheds light on the way masculinity is invoked to establish boundaries between national selves – and others. Whereas the feminine can be included in the national self – albeit mostly in a subordinate position – effeminacy is usually placed beyond the line separating self and other and actually helps to create that boundary. (Braudy)

The boundary separating the two national masculine archetypes, Batista and Fidel, is constructed vis- à- vis definitions of masculinity and femininity. Amada Blanco carefully juxtaposes Batista's psychiatric diagnosis with Fidel's heroic arrival aboard the *Granma*, and this structural placement is no accident. Certainly, the coupling of Fidel's landing with Batista's diagnosis in the novel is charged with masculine imagery and works to construct Fidel as a heroic warrior and Batista as a feeble coward. The *Granma* landing commences with a glimpse of the boat and the text reiterates Fidel's famous words, "o héroes, o mártires, Fidel", reminding us that he has, in fact, kept his promise to return despite the foreseeable danger (148). And it is amid danger where Fidel is increasingly defined as brave: "Llegaron.

Llegaron. Pero los estaban esperando aviones, espías. Cayeron, uno, dos, tres, no sé cuántos. Tan sólo doce para la victoria final. Doce apóstoles de la libertad. Doce titanes. Fidel sigue subiendo y avanzando…Sangre y más sangre…Fidel sigue erguido como un árbol" (151). The fact that only a small number of men survived the landing, and then continued on to win a Revolution, has become a source of Fidel's heroic fame.[18] What is more, the religious symbolism that is tied to the number twelve engenders a mythical reality. For just like Jesus and his twelve disciples, Fidel and his rebels are represented as bringing light to a darkened world. In addition, Fidel's flirtation with death, just like we observed at Moncada, further solidifies his heroism.

The young protagonist Alfredo, then, must learn to become a hero, created in the masculine image of Fidel, in order to become a man. Not only will Alfredo have to learn how to become a warrior, but he will also have to purge himself of all the traits that are associated with Batista. In times of war, Braudy tells us, the body politic must be cleansed: "long after purging blood had faded away as a medical practice, it still seemed right for the body politic. War would be not just a cleansing of bad social blood; it would affirm national vitality and individual honor" (374). Thus this battle of masculine archetypes in the novel is essential to our understanding of the novel because it reflects Alfredo's battle within himself to become a man. While the young man desires to topple Batista, this external battle mirrors a private battle in which he struggles to rid himself of the traits attached to Batista, namely cowardice and femininity. It is only once he has purged himself of these, that he can then be re-made in the masculine image of Fidel.

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[18] In fact, one of Cuba's most famous poets, Nicolás Guillén, penned the poem "Son más en una mazorca" in honor of this magic number: "Son más en una mazorca/ de maíz los prietos granos/ que Fidel Castro y sus hombres/ cuando del Granma bajaron". The poem was first published on May 17, 1964.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Alfredo spearheads an assassination attempt against the dictator. While Batista's death would certainly be an important triumph for the rebels, it would also signify a personal victory for Alfredo. Killing Batista, the very embodiment of cowardice, would symbolically reflect Alfredo's triumph over the fear that consumes him. Thus it is he who is chosen to woo María Cristina, from whose house the symbolic shot will be fired. True to Hartsock's heroic formula, women are excluded from the important action of the battle. In this case, María Cristina is used as a mere pawn in Alfredo's quest to prove himself as a man. Despite the characteristic nervous tic in his left eye, Alfredo diligently plots the attempt. When the day finally arrives, fear devours him: "Se había puesto a pasear por la habitación y la azotea, pero se le desbocaban los nervios…se tomó el pulso: cien; las manos y los pies fríos. ¿Y mañana el misterio, los llantos de la madre y de Martha juntas?" (279). Despite the sense of impending doom and the nervous anxiety that accompanies it, Alfredo fantasizes about an emotional outpouring by the women in his life who act as witnesses to male bravery. Four men undertake the assassination plot, but the plan goes awry when the police arrive at the house. Alfredo manages to escape, but immediately following the failed attempt Alfredo shows contempt for his own actions by calling himself a coward. For he understands that in the absence of heroic action, he has forfeited his right to call himself a man. The instinct to flee must be repressed, as Goldstein astutely points out: "what war requires of fighters is not blood-lust or activation of murderous impulses. Rather, war requires men to willingly undergo an extremely painful, unpleasant experience—and to hang in there over time despite every instinct to flee" (266). Unlike Fidel's heroic example at Moncada followed by *Granma*, Alfredo cannot quite gather this same courage. What is more, his feelings of inadequacy intensify when he learns the fate of

his comrades. All three of them had stayed behind to face the police, despite having previously agreed to run should trouble arise. In particular Reginito, the shooter, showed extraordinary bravery under the desperate circumstances. Determined to avenge the earlier death of his father, Reginito takes a vengeful shot that seals his fate: he is killed a second later. Yet Alfredo recognizes that Reginito met the fate that both he and his mother had desired, "Estaba claro que no quería huir, sino cazar a algunos aunque fuera a costa de su vida. Había madurado para la venganza. La madre, incluso, le hacía su diaria prédica… 'Tú tiras tan bien como tu padre y puedes ser útil. Si te mezclas en algo, no me lo digas, pero cumple con tu deber'" (293). Reginito's mother's declaration reveals one of war's contradictions: while women are excluded from combat, they are complicit in its actions. Later we will see how Alfredo's mother becomes complicit as well, a witness to her son's bravery.

Alfredo's fear continues to gnaw at him, which is physically corroborated by the persistent tic in his left eye (296). In addition to the tic, however, other signs of distress visibly surface. A doctor is brought to the safe house and injects Alfredo with medication to help him sleep. Once he feels the medicine's effects, Alfredo falls asleep "a pesar del volcán que le andaba por dentro" (297). Alfredo's symptoms— dizziness and insomnia—closely resemble those associated with shell shock. These bodily indications suggest that Alfredo's experience is not at all natural to men's lives. These physical signs are, as Elaine Showalter puts it "the body language of masculine complaint, a disguised male protest, not only against the war, but against the concept of manliness itself" (quoted in Goldstein 269). While Alfredo endeavors to uphold Fidel's masculine ideal, his body tries to physically undermine it. Yet the masculine ideal is so pervasive that it shames him, even in his dreams. On the

night he receives the tranquilizer, he dreams he is at an elaborate banquet held in his honor, but he is sorely mistaken. Just as he brings the first delectable bite to his lips, the waiters handcuff him. But when Fortuna, the head of Batista's secret police, arrives, he orders that the handcuffs be removed, much to Alfredo's astonishment. Surprised to see Fortuna, Alfredo states defiantly: "No lo esperé nunca, no se haga ilusiones. Yo soy un héroe" (299). The text then describes Fortuna's rebuttal:

> Fortuna comenzó a reírse. Primero suave y delicadamente, después a carcajada limpia, más tarde con groseras risotadas, zafándose el cuello, desabrochándose la casaca.
>
> --¿Un héroe? ¡Ha dicho un héroe! ¡Ha dicho un héroe!
>
> Los criados y los camareros coreaban con fuerza:
>
> --¡Un héroe!
>
> --¡Un héroe!
>
> --¡Ha dicho un héroe! (299)

Clearly, the dream manifests Alfredo's latent sense of shame. Shame, as Goldstein observes, is "the glue that holds the man-making process together. Males who fail tests of manhood are publicly shamed, are humiliated, and become a negative example for others…the power of shame should not be underestimated…shame centrally punishes failure in masculine war roles in particular—i.e., succumbing to fear in battle and thus proving oneself a coward" (269). Thus by succumbing to fear and running away, Alfredo fails the test of manhood as it is dictated by Fidel. As a result, he is shamed and humiliated, and his punishment is to be mocked in his dreams by Batista's minions.

This pervasive sense of shame is precisely what motivates Alfredo to plan his redemption (308). Alfredo first seeks salvation through religious means by requesting to speak with a priest. As a Catholic, Alfredo puts his faith in the priest, believing him to be divinely equipped to provide some sort of reconciliation on the path to salvation. The priest assures Alfredo that he has come "como sacerdote, como hombre y como revolucionario. Puedes escoger el que más te agrade" (328). Alfredo's desire is, of course, to speak to the man as a priest, for that is why he requested his presence. But Alfredo soon learns that the priest is not there to discuss traditional religious matters: "En realidad yo no vine pensando si eras o no católico…vine porque cuando un hombre llama a otro hombre, no se puede volver la cabeza. Además, tú lo sabes, yo soy también, aunque a mi modo, un revolucionario" (328-329). The priest's disapproval of Alfredo's original request to speak to a man of the cloth demonstrates how Revolutions discard some identities in favor of others. In this case, the priest chooses to align himself with the Revolution rather than the church, thus firmly cementing his identity as a Revolutionary. In this way, the priest's visit turns out to be a mixed blessing for Alfredo; he learns that the priest, as the traditional earthly guarantee of salvation, has symbolically traded in his all-black cloth for red and black, the colors of Fidel's 26th of July movement, and, therefore, cannot provide him any sort of spiritual salvation. Alfredo, then, must seek salvation by other means; he must repair his lost manhood by first confessing his sin, which has become recontextualized against the backdrop of war:

> Tuve miedo, padre, un miedo espantoso, un miedo terrible de mí mismo. Me sentí solo, me aterroricé varias veces de la soledad, de tener que enfrentarme de aquí en adelante con un cobarde. Se puso de pie, se llevó la mano al ojo izquierdo que

> iniciaba la dolorosa lancetada del tic…Maseda sudaba copiosamente…el padre se levantó para secarle la frente con un gran pañuelo. (329)

Alfredo's sin is like a slow attrition to his soul. His sweat, so copious that it requires a large handkerchief, recalls Batista's earlier theatrical performance. However, now Alfredo performs his very own spectacle, with fear playing the lead role. In this way, Alfredo's physical maladies expose his less masculine identity and link him to the enemy. Like Batista, Alfredo is a coward, and his inability to model Fidel's masculinity both deeply perturbs and disgusts him, leaving him faced with an anxious desire to affirm his manhood. No matter how hard he tries, he cannot get over the fact that his friends stayed behind and became martyrs while he fled like a coward: "revolucionariamente yo ya no sirvo si no para huir" (330). His cowardly action has invalidated his Revolutionary identity, and within this quasi-religious setting Alfredo anxiously seeks the priest's approval as a means to receive reconciliation and, therefore, be deemed a Revolutionary once more. Thus when he contritely asks the priest, "Dígame, ¿me cree usted un cobarde?" he reveals his desire both for atonement and for the priests approval of his manhood (329). The father's vehement negative response provides Alfredo contemporary relief, as does his closing prayer in which he absolves the youth, who, like Alfredo, fight heroically: "Perdóname, Señor, pero yo absuelvo desde el fondo de mi corazón a todos estos muchachos que luchan por liberar su tierra de estos monstruos" (331). The father's prayer fosters the notion of a holy war in which the rebels have been blessed and ordained by God, especially Fidel: "rezo todos los días por Fidel y sus hombres para que Dios los conduzca a la victoria" (331-332). Moreover, as he closes, he bestows a blessing on Alfredo, assuring the young man that he has won the heavenly father's approval and affirmed his manhood.

If, on the one hand, Alfredo has received the heavenly father's approval it is clear that, on the other hand, he doubts he can win the approval of the man who was sent to redeem the nation. For Alfredo has opted for exile in Miami, something that he views as cowardly despite the wise words of the priest: "La revolución no terminará con el triunfo. Es entonces cuando comienza de verdad. También para ese momento la revolución necesita de sus mejores hijos. Tú ya has dado a esta etapa todo lo que pudiste. Consérvate para la próxima, que será dura y peligrosa" (342). Though Alfredo heeds this advice, his shame continues to plague him: "mientras tus compañeros luchaban, huiste. Ahora, también huyes. ¿Qué clase de hombre eres tú?" (342). The juxtaposition of these contrasting interpretations of exile reveals the novel's implicit critique and articulates its theme. Alfredo's desperate quest to be made in the image of Fidel's exemplary masculinity engenders a masculinity that is combined with hypermasculine displays of violence which are then reformulated within the logic of warfare to redefine him as a national hero. As we will see, Alfredo will have to die a violent death in an artificial battle in order to restore his lost manhood. By his becoming a martyr through a pointless death, the novel underscores how hypermasculine behavior, which finds its expression in gratuitous violence, is deceptively cast as patriotic duty. What is more, Alfredo's artificial martyrdom reveals the extent to which patriotic duty is underpinned by concepts of masculinity and femininity. Upon arriving in Miami, Alfredo recalls his old saying, "'un hijo muerto es mil veces mejor que ser madre de un marica' le había dicho a la vieja para taparle las angustias de perderlo. Y ahora…ahora él estaba vivo por haberse comportado como una mujerzuela a la hora de la verdad" (350). By returning to perform his patriotic duty, therefore, Alfredo can become a real man by not being a *marica*. Moreover, his mother can be a true patriot as well. For as it now stands, she will be shamed

by the mothers of his dead comrades: "su madre lo había soportado todo porque era viuda de un héroe y tenía un hijo que luchaba contra el tirano, pero al fin habría tenido que comprender la debilidad vergonzosa del que se engallaba frente a los pequeños peligros. ¿Cómo la mirarían las madres de Madan y de Prendes?" (350). In this way, Alfredo's death will shape him to the precise contours of his masculine model, Fidel, just as it simultaneously reconfigures his mother as the ideal Revolutionary mother whose son has died a heroic death in battle.

It is no wonder, then, that his separation from Havana and its redeeming possibilities drive him into further depression. As Alfredo drinks, his hopeless situation is contrasted to that in the Sierra, making him feel even less masculine: "El whisky frente al cine, el otro en un bar cualquiera camino del hotel, el tercero en la habitación mientras se desnudaba y leía ansioso…los periódicos de Miami, y de Nueva York, con los últimos heroicos acontecimientos de la Sierra" (368). Moreover, he realizes he has fallen in love with María Cristina, the girl he used to plot the assassination attempt, and this is intensified when he learns she is pregnant with his child. In allowing himself to fall in love, Alfredo loses his desire to prove his manhood; he chooses a woman instead of the Revolution. As he becomes absorbed in his personal problems, Graciela, a woman he has befriended in Miami chides him: "¿Por qué desde que estás aquí en Miami te has olvidado tanto de la revolución? Cuando uno se entrega a una causa como la nuestra, lo personal pasa o debe pasar a un segundo plano" (382). Graciela's words erode Alfredo's indifference, but what she cannot perceive is how the Revolution has become a personal and intimate affair for Alfredo. His sense of urgency is backed by the fact that he is suffering much like a wounded war victim, "'si hay que morir, se muere, que algún día tenemos que morir. Lo terrible es vivir con una

llaga abierta, con un dolor en el costado, con una inquietud latiendo a veces en toda la sangre.'" (388). Alfredo's not so visible wounds reveal one of war's adverse psychological effects on men. The protagonist's sense of shame is comparable to that of a real battle wound, revealing the deep anxiety Alfredo feels about not being able to prove his manhood the way Fidel has.

Yet once Alfredo makes the decision to return, those characteristic signs of fear, so natural for him, begin to dissipate: "ya no sudaba angustiosamente como antes, ni le saltaba el tic, ni se ponía pálido…era una angustia nueva, controlada, que se le había refugiado en la conciencia para dirigir desde allí todos sus actos" (388). Without a doubt, this newly discovered self-control is anchored by Fidel's phrase, which Alfredo repeats to himself: "Tres o cuatro días más y en La Habana. O héroe o mártir, como dijo Fidel" (394). And as he reads and listens to the news reports, Fidel's name becomes a mantra: "Estaban empavorecidos [Batista's army], sus comunicaciones rotas…el solo nombre de Fidel valía más que todo eso. Un hermoso símbolo legendario alzado en las montañas de Cuba para ejemplo de toda América. –Fidel, Fidel, Fidel…" (395). Just as Fidel becomes the cornerstone of Cuba's redemption, he also forges a new masculinity, which finds its expression in Alfredo's desperate attempt to become a national hero. Thus Fidel's exemplary masculinity both instigates and promises Alfredo's return, which, his friend believes, is a futile death sentence. Alfredo, not surprisingly, takes his cue from Fidel in order to substantiate his decision: "Bueno, también le dijeron a Fidel que lo del Moncada era una locura y otra mayor lo del desembarco del *Granma*. Y ahí lo tienes, a pocos días vista de la victoria final" (398). Like Fidel, Alfredo survives his return, but he quickly becomes restless, as he has to hide. The constant enclosure brings out his typical physical maladies,

sweat and the recurrent tic. On December 30th Alfredo plots his final redemption, determined to recreate himself: "tengo que rehacerme, tengo que serenarme" (433). Not surprisingly, his reinvention is intertwined with Fidel's example of manhood, which he anxiously hopes to claim for himself: "Me voy para el interior y me uno a las tropas rebeldes para el asalto a La Habana. O héroe o mártir, dijo Fidel. O héroe o cadáver, digo yo ahora. Quiero verme en el espejo sin terrores ni ascos, desde la frente a los pies, sobre todo los ojos. Quiero poder escribir mi nombre con pulso seguro" (434). Thus Alfredo has come to the conclusion that death is the solution to his dilemma, for it will eliminate the coward once and for all. Thus on the thirty-first of December at 10 pm, Alfredo cleans his gun and envisions the old western movies he watched as a boy, only now it is he who will play the part of the heroic protagonist. Returning to Cristina's house, he tries to recreate the events of the fateful day when he had lost his manhood. However, he is now alone: "Nadie respondió a sus insultos. Ni un solo movimiento dejó entrever la presencia de los contrarios. Era una lucha contra los fantasmas, entre sombras, contra enemigos invisibles" (438). Finally, Alfredo hears someone walking about and fires a shot. When the neighbors arrive, Alfredo, whom they find bleeding, tells them that he believes there to be at least three men dead, probably more, and even more casualties. The neighbors, however, do not discover any dead bodies. At precisely the same time this is happening, Batista is boarding a plane to take him into exile. Ironically, then, just as Alfredo receives the shot that will take his life, the villain, Batista, flees Cuba. This timing is not coincidental. Alfredo's battle wound, paired with Batista's flight, symbolically reflects Alfredo's final triumph in his quest to be a man: the coward has finally been defeated. What is more, Alfredo's triumph symbolically coincides with Fidel's heroic journey from Santiago to Havana. Alfredo precariously clings to life for

eight days so as to witness the hero's entry, which will confirm his own heroism, symbolically releasing him of his anxiety to prove his manhood. Thus, to see Fidel becomes Alfredo's new obsession. In fact, as soon as he regains consciousness, one of the first words on his lips is Fidel, and he continues to pepper his mother with questions: "mami…¿Fidel llega pronto", "mami…¿qué dicen de Fidel?" (440-443). Finally, a television is brought to the hospital room so Alfredo can witness his idol's triumphant arrival in Havana. When he finally catches his first glimpse of Fidel, he says: "Mami, es él, ¿verdad? Está estupendo" (443). As he listens to Fidel's animated speech, Alfredo begins to fade, which does not surprise the doctor. For he is astonished that Alfredo has clung to life this long: "es incredible que haya resistido hasta aquí. Sólo una fuerza superior lo ha ido empujando" (445). Without a doubt, that force is Fidel who has the power to redeem an entire nation, which is visually reaffirmed in the photograph to the right that was taken during Fidel's first speech just after his arrival in Havana. This iconic image of Fidel captures white doves descending from the heavens, divinely appointing him Cuba's new leader.[19]

(Figure 2.3 Fidel and the Doves- Havana January 8, 1959)

[19] The movie *I Love Miami* (2006), whose plot narrates Fidel's fictitious arrival to Miami, subverts this image by having the doves defecate on the Cuban leader.

Ciudad Rebelde, however, adds another layer to Fidel's redeeming powers in such a way that Fidel restores both the nation's vitality *and* virility. Fidel's exemplary masculinity serves as the catalyst that motivates Alfredo to both redefine and redeem himself as a man. While wasting away on his hospital bed, Alfredo has a sort of imaginary reconciliation with Fidel as he watches him enter Havana, which enables him to die peacefully: "se murió así, plácidamente, sin una queja, como el peregrino que retorna a su tierra" (445). Thus, when Alfredo returns like a pilgrim, he is, in actuality, returning to the land inhabited by real men, who, in this case, are the Revolutionaries. This homosocial gathering is exactly what Nancy Hartsock considers the cornerstone of men's fascination with death and heroism. As I noted at the beginning, Hartsock observes that death by heroic action guarantees a homosocial re-birth: "the purpose of heroism is the overcoming of death and the attainment of immortality. The heroes give birth to themselves in an all-male community and do so in such a way that they will not die" (145). Thus Alfredo's obsession with death reflects his desire to restore his lost manhood, and his death confirms his immortality. Within a homosocial setting such as this, Alfredo can be assured that he is not a *marica*, but in doing so, his death solidifies the patriarchal nature of Revolutionary manhood.

Just as Alfredo's death makes him a real man, his mother is remade into the image of a true patriotic mother: "Dijo en voz alta: 'Tu padre me hizo mujer. Tú me has hecho de veras madre'" (445).[20] It is clear that she gives partial credit to Fidel for making her a true mother. As she turns off the television she declares: "¡Dios te bendiga, Fidel!" and then takes her place at her son's dead body (445). The image of the son's dead body coupled with his mother's presence reveals one of the ways in which motherhood is constructed to serve

[20] It is important to remember that Alfredo's father had fought against the Machado regime and died as well.

the needs of the nation during wartime. Genevieve Lloyd elucidates this process in her article: "In giving up their sons, women are supposed to allow them to become real men and immortal selves. Surrendering sons to significant deaths becomes a higher mode of giving birth. Socially constructed motherhood, no less than socially constructed masculinity, is at the service of an ideal citizenship that finds its fullest expression in war" (76). Thus while war excludes mothers from the battlefield, she still plays a central role in the formation of her son's masculinity. By accepting his death as something truly heroic, Alfredo's mother becomes a complicit actor in the making of her son's masculinity.

Ironically, however, Alfredo's death is not in the least heroic, since it accomplishes nothing. With a stroke of genius, Amado Blanco celebrates Alfredo's death while at the same time weaving in a harsh critique. On the one hand, Alfredo's death allows him to successfully assert himself as a man and, consequently, to insert himself into his nation's history as an active participant. His decision to be a brave patriot reconciles him to the cause of national independence, thus firmly cementing the connection between masculinity and national purpose. On the other hand, however, Alfredo's death is pointless and hardly heroic; it is a parody of the heroic tradition. Thus by constructing Alfredo's martyrdom as artificial, the novel implicitly critiques the exemplary masculinity embodied in Fidel and calls into question the validity of Fidel's masculinity as the national masculinity. In fact, Alfredo's anxiety and fear manifest the artificiality of Revolutionary manhood. Being a warrior does not come naturally to Alfredo, which, according to Goldstein is, in fact, natural: "a surprising number of cultures converge in treating masculinity as something that must be created by individual and collective will against the force of instinct or 'doing what comes naturally'" (264). By deconstructing the 'naturalness' of Fidel's Revolutionary masculinity

through Alfredo's anxious masculinity, the novel drives home its harsh critique of Revolutionary culture and masculinity. Amado Blanco exposes the national obsession with heroism and spilled blood and unearths the consequences of a Revolutionary masculinity that demanded self-sacrificing heroes. Moreover, by situating Fidel as the central figure of Revolutionary masculinity and as the driving force behind his protagonist's absurd and pointless death, the novel demonstrates the central role that Fidel's exemplary masculinity played in the production of his political legitimacy and power.

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CHAPTER THREE

FIDELITY:

NAVIGATING HOMSOCIAL ENCOUNTERS IN CHE GUEVARA'S TEXTS

In the Plaza de la Revolución oversized images of Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos, Fidel's closest compañeros, are perfectly positioned to gaze at the site where the comandante delivered numerous speeches at the base of the José Martí monument. Both their faces, coupled with Camilo's famous phrase "vas bien Fidel" seem to suggest that these now deceased rebels still support their leader even as they rest in their graves.[21]

(Figure 3.1 Camilo and Che in the Plaza de la Revolución)

Thus their physical presence in the plaza quite literally serves to reunite all three men and nostalgically transport them to the Revolutionary epoch that defined each of them as national heroes. More importantly, however, this circle of great men—manifested in those iconic faces that support and encourage Fidel in imaginary conversation ("Vas bien Fidel" and "Hasta la victoria siempre")—demonstrates how Fidel's image has been inextricably linked to those faithful comrades. Ruth Behar has observed the creation of what she terms a

[21] Camilo Cienfuegos made this famous comment to Fidel on January 8, 1959 at the rally in Havana. Fidel declared that the Columbia military barracks would be turned into a school and he then looked a Camilo and asked, "¿Voy bien, Camilo?".

"symbolic trinity" after Che's death that was composed of Che, the father, Fidel, the son, and Cuba, the "holy ghost" in "what was a clear pattern of homosocial masculine inheritance or 'immaculate conception' that established "the transmission of power along male lines" (138). The Plaza de la Revolución brilliantly symbolizes the homosocial "birth" of the Cuban Revolution as well as the male power structure that sustains it.

(Figure 3.2 "¡Seremos como el Che!")

Ernesto "Che" Guevara is Fidel's most famous comrade, and his face ubiquitously haunts Havana. Che's face is sighted on billboards and statues, as well as on t-shirts, mugs, posters, and other souvenirs that are destined to invite tourists to bring home a piece of the Cuban Revolution. As a symbol "for all the oppressed, for all the exploited" and "for all Revolutionaries", there is little wonder that Che has appealed across such broad economic, racial, and international spectrums (*Che: A Memoir* 190). But tourists are not the only consumers who seem to succumb to Che fever, for he is a cornerstone of the Revolution and his image saturates Cuba. One only has to hear the declarations of school-aged pioneers pledging to be just like Che, "Pioneros por el comunismo seremos como el Che" in order to

recognize the Argentine's overwhelming presence.[22] Indeed, since his death in 1967, Che has become an international icon as well as an invincible symbol of the Revolution. Che's cultural durability is due in large part to the ways in which his image has been symbolically encoded and in which those symbols have been deployed. Fidel, for instance, explicitly inscribes Che with the ideal tenets of Revolutionary identity:

> If we need a paradigm, a model…then people like Che are essential, men and women who imitate him, who think like him, who act like him…in his attitude…of wanting to be first at everything, the first to volunteer for the most difficult tasks; the most self-sacrificing; the individual who gives his body and soul to a cause, the individual who gives his body and soul for others, the person who displays true solidarity, the individual who never lets down a comrade. (*Che: A Memoir* 192)

Fidel celebrates Che's determination, self-sacrifice, and, above all, solidarity. For Diana Sorensen, whose book *A Turbulent Decade Remembered* investigates the Che myth as part of a larger utopian project in the sixties, these characteristics "were key to the production of self exemplified by Che, as central elements in the *hombre nuevo* to be created after the Revolution" (26). These attributes are assumed to be inherent not only to Che's character but to his biological makeup; Fidel once remarked that Che's visage had the "appearance of a symbol, the image of a symbol: his look, the frankness and strength of his look; his face, which reflects character, irrepressibly determined for action, at the same time showing great intelligence and great purity" (*Che: A Memoir* 190). Fidel's comments reveal how Che's face has become a synecdoche for the Revolution. In the equating of physical substance to

[22] Li, a Cuban sixth grader, did this drawing as a required assignment for her Spanish class in 2008. Thank you Li for letting me borrow your schoolbooks and use your beautiful picture.

these more abstract notions, we begin to perceive how Che's visage has been carefully assembled to promote the ideas and principles of the Revolution.

In the pages that follow, I explore how representations of Che and Fidel's friendship have been crucial to the maintenance of the Revolution as a symbol of both Revolutionary identity and manhood. My purpose, then, is to unearth this Revolutionary friendship and reveal its contents through an analysis of three principal texts: *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria*[23] and "Canto a Fidel" (1956), both by Che Guevara, and a short story "Reunión" (1966) by Julio Cortázar. More specifically, I wish to examine how Fidel's masculinity helped shape gendered Revolutionary citizens in forming the "New Man". Therefore, I begin by defining the New Man as he is outlined in Che's essay "El socialismo y el hombre nuevo", which sought to redefine masculinity in terms of fraternal comradeship in the new socialist state. Next, informed by Eve Sedgwick's theories on homosociality, a term employed to describe nonsexual relationships between men, I want to explore how homosocial desire was mapped onto the contours of Fidel's image and to suggest that desire was central to the establishment of the new man as long as it was carefully regulated. In "Canto a Fidel" I argue that by serving as the conduit for desire, Fidel redefines men's relationship among each other as well as with the fatherland. By loving Fidel, men demonstrate their patriotism– they acknowledge their allegiance to a man as well as to a set of ideals. Homosocial desire is reformulated in Che's texts so that the surrender of one man to another is acceptable, so long as that man is Fidel. I will then map desire in *Pasajes* and "Reunión" by locating moments of anxiety, which are manifested in a fear over losing the

[23] Che originally published these memoirs in *Verde Olivo*, the weekly publication of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias* (Revolutionary Armed Forces), between 1961-1964. According to Luis Pavón, editor of the magazine, the first articles were based on Che's diary, photographs, and memory, while those ranging from September 1957 to the last article, "A Decisive Meeting", were constructed based on Che's own recollections and those of other combatants (Mary Alice Walters 32-33).

comandante. I will conclude by exploring the fate of those men, particularly Che, who are caught in homosocial exchanges with Fidel. In his struggle to be a comandante, Che is disciplined into a man who submits to Fidel's authority, which is expressed in terms of hegemonic masculinity. Thus even though the Revolutionary New Man was defined by love, it was a love that found its best expression in "*Fidel*ity", a homosocial pact in which men expressed their love for Fidel and submitted unconditionally to his authority.

The New Man

Che was the first to coin the phrase *hombre nuevo* in a collection of essays titled *El socialismo y el hombre nuevo*, which he published in 1965 and whose contents reveal the author's belief that Cuba's future was dependent upon man's ability to reconstruct and redefine himself. Within the socialist spirit of camaraderie, Diana Sorensen believes that Che perceived how "a new masculine social identity could be worked out: less driven by the all-encompassing narratives of the American Century" (Sorensen 27). What is more, Sorensen adds, Che embodied the newness of the new man as "the subject whose self-definition rested on the politics of wrecking and building" who was "hard at work on changing the world" (27). In his essay "El Socialismo y el hombre in Cuba", Che Guevara sheds light on how the concept of the new man became the prism through which socialist rhetoric was filtered and focused. According to Che, the new man was born in the rugged terrain of the Sierra Maestra: "en la actitud de nuestros combatientes se vislumbraba al hombre del futuro" (4). The guerrillas' heroism, which was expressed through sacrifice and bravery, enabled them to meet the challenges posed by the dictator's army and eventually defeat it. One of the Revolution's primary tasks, Che believed, was to transfer this heroic

attitude from the heights of the Sierra Maestra to Cuba's streets: "encontrar la fórmula para perpetuar en la vida cotidiana esa actitud heroica" he says, "es una de nuestras tareas fundamentales desde el punto de vista ideológico" (4). Thus, playing a role akin to a chemist, Che seeks to design the perfect formula for his new man; self-sacrifice with a huge dose of solidarity produces the desired result. First, sacrifice facilitates the birth of the new man: "el individuo de nuestro país sabe que la época gloriosa que le toca vivir es de sacrificio; conoce el sacrificio. Los primeros lo conocieron en la Sierra Maestra y dondequiera que se luchó; después lo hemos conocido en toda Cuba" (15). Second, solidarity replaces individualism and produces a spirit of cooperate effort: "el individualismo… como acción única de una persona colocada sola en un medio social, debe desaparecer en Cuba" (21). Thus, in Che's formula, Revolutionary identity centered around a sense of self-sacrifice that gave way to a collective identity and displaced individual effort in favor of solidarity.

Self-sacrifice and solidarity are to a large degree rooted in a fraternal bond that reformulates traditional definitions of love. For Sorensen, the concept of love is central to understanding Che's writings, and in particular *Pasajes*, because it guides us to Che's new vision of manhood in its demonstration of "the transition from individual passions, such as love, to the collective and social dimensions of the state. A new vision of community and the bonds that link it is negotiated by Che's model, one that supersedes the earlier paradigm that rested on the bourgeois family" (27). The adoption of Che's model presupposes an increasing polarization of the bourgeois perception and practice of love:

> Love was to be located in the spirit of *compañerismo* or camaraderie vividly described, embraced, and advocated in his writings and in his life…this 'imagined

> community' is organized around a different kind of desire, no longer galvanized by the reproductive aims of the bourgeois family unit and its private values. It espouses the grammar of fraternity, apparently disavowing patriarchy while fostering the conditions for utopian growth. (27)

This newly defined sense of love, one that substituted private values for the public good and superseded the bourgeois model, was the glue that bonded the Revolutionaries together and helped foment Revolutionary love.[24]

Che's definition of love was not only Revolutionary because it displaced bourgeois notions of love, but also because it redefined masculinity. The Argentine understands that in defining the new man in terms of love he radically departs from previous notions of Cuban manhood, which is why he makes the disclaimer "at the risk of sounding ridiculous": "Déjeme decirle, a riesgo de parecer ridículo, que el revolucionario verdadero está guiado por grandes sentimientos de amor. Es imposible pensar en un revolucionario auténtico sin esta cualidad...nuestros revolucionarios de vanguardia tienen que idealizar ese amor a los pueblos, a las causas más sagradas y hacerlo único, indivisible" (15). Love was typically associated with the feminine, not the masculine. In order to understand Revolutionary love and masculinity, I turn to Ileana Rodríguez's concept of *tendresse*, which she explores in her seminal work *Women, Guerrillas, and Love: Understanding War in Central America*. In her

[24] See Brianne Orr's article "From Machista to New Man?: Omar Cabezas Negotiates Manhood from the Mountain in Nicaragua" for a further look at bourgeois masculinity and new man masculinity. While Orr conflates the terms bourgeois and machista, the article is insightful in understanding how the concept of the new man was perpetuated through a narrative of sacrifice, determination, and solidarity, which galvanized the Sandinista rebels to rally around a campaign that centered on changing the world by first changing themselves. The Sandinista's embrace of the new man reflects how socialist regimes looked to Che as an alternate source of masculinity that had the ability to convey legitimacy, authority, and hegemony in order to subvert the norms embodied in the bourgeois Somoza regime.

attempt to uncover the intricacies of gender and subjectivity in the creation and demise of Revolutionary states, Rodríguez influentially argues that we must question the 'newness' of the new man: "all evidence seems to indicate that what this new subject was separating or distinguishing himself from in order to be New was not maleness itself. The Revolutionaries deluded themselves in believing that by proposing an 'alternative maleness,' one incorporating 'female' traits such as *tendresse*, they would deliver the New Man" (33). Borrowing from Terry Eagleton, Rodríguez employs the term *tendresse* to signal a kind of sensibility, or love, that defined bourgeois Romanticism. Thus Rodríguez perceives a revival of nineteenth-century ontologies and epistemologies within twentieth-century Revolutionary subject formation: "the gendered subject constructed by Revolutionary men is not very different from that of bourgeois Romanticism. In his texts, the guerrilla recycles ideas of woman as 'the angel of hearth and home,' or 'the resting-place of the guerrilla,' the apotheosis of his desire" (33). In seeking to create a new man, Rodríguez believes Revolutionaries looked to the nineteenth-century Romanticism's notion of love and saw its redeeming possibilities:

> They believe that what the old male needs to become a New Man is *tendresse*. As such, *tendresse* is proposed as an instrumental term mending a rift. It is then on feminine bourgeois *tendresse* that, unwittingly, the guerrilla rests the metamorphosis that delivers his being as the 'new' heroic…in proving their love to the fatherland, men practice *tendresse* on their companions-in-arms—Fidel on his comrades; Carlos Fonseca on the members of the FSLN; Che on the *Guerrilleros*. (33-34)

Thus, the practice of comradeship was a hallmark of Revolutionary manhood and was aimed at cementing the bonds between the fatherland and men through their demonstration of love for one another.

In her examination of Che, Diana Sorensen is correct in observing the primordial importance the Revolutionaries placed on camaraderie, but in her analysis of Fidel she turns a blind eye to the leader's own gestures of love, viewing Fidel as one who only "performs exacerbated masculine values in his relationship with the body politic" (27). In fact, Sorensen categorically dismisses these more tender moments when she writes:

> Fidel can be seen instead as the emblem of a certain hypermasculinity performed as infallible leadership. The construction of the foundational community rests on the aura of his presence: the horizontal bonds constitute the base of a pyramid that he rules from above, charting its impulses and its path. Fidel is constructed as hero and leader through a meticulous narrative syntax in which he is the agent of verbs that denote ordering, leading, deciding, pronouncing. (40)

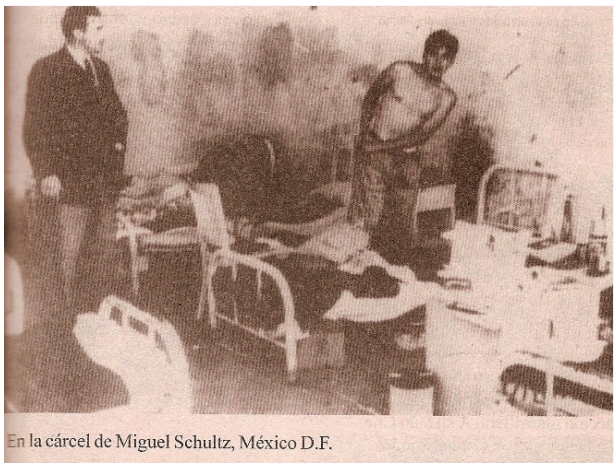
These gestures of love, however, have played a fundamental role in shaping Fidel's image among guerrillas and *compañeros* in Cuba and throughout Latin America. For instance, Tomás Borge, co-founder of the guerrilla Sandinista movement in Nicaragua, admires Fidel for his treatment of fellow comrades: "The most impressive thing about Fidel Castro is his intransigent devotion to the truth…his personal courage and the singular delicacy with which he treats his comrades in struggle" (qtd. in Rodríguez 33). My reading of Che's text offers a more complex and complete picture of Fidel by examination Revolutionary love between Fidel and Che.

Narrated in the first person by Ernesto "Che" Guevara, *Pasajes de la Guerra Revolucionaria* chronicles the Cuban Revolutionary War between the years 1956 and 1959. In the introduction Che describes his first meeting with Fidel against the backdrop of Latin American dictatorship and U.S. imperialism. Erasing geographical boundaries, Che opts to view his new comrade as a fellow American and exile with whom he perceives a deeper political connection. From the opening lines, personal experience intermingles with political thought. United by a common goal and ideology, Che and Fidel are forever united, which I argue will also ultimately transform their performance as men. Thus Che opens *Pasajes* by describing his first meeting with Fidel in terms of politics; after just a few hours of discussion Che commits to Fidel and his movement in a gesture of political solidarity. Yet, upon his subsequent imprisonment, it becomes clear that his association with Fidel is more than just political,

> Hubo quienes estuvieron en prisión cincuenta y siete días contados uno a uno, con la amenaza perenne de la extradición sobre nuestras cabezas. Pero en ningún momento perdimos nuestra confianza personal en Fidel Castro. Y es que Fidel tuvo algunos gestos que casi podríamos decir, comprometían su actitud revolucionaria en pro de la amistad. (6)

Fidel's faithfulness towards his comrades is not lost on Che, and, in fact, Fidel's *fidel*ity is celebrated time and again in Che's text. His refusal to leave Che during his imprisonment in Mexico, for example, is a case in point: "Recuerdo que le expuse específicamente mi caso: un extranjero ilegal en México, con toda una serie de cargos encima. Le dije que no debía de manera alguna pararse por mí la revolución, y que podía dejarme… También recuerdo la

respuesta tajante de Fidel: 'Yo no te abandono'" (6). The picture below, which is reproduced in a volume titled *El Che en Fidel Castro*, serves as a visual representation of Che's text.



(Figure 3.3 Fidel and Che in Mexico)

As Che dresses in prison, Fidel, fully clothed, patiently waits for his comrade. Both Fidel's look and stance indicate that he is taking Che with him, visually reinforcing his words, "no te abandono". In this way, Fidel exemplifies the spirit of camaraderie, which is central to the formation of the new man.

Fidel's fraternal commitment to Che is further solidified in the Sierra Maestra where he is afforded the opportunity to care for a sick, asthmatic Che. For instance, when Fidel leaves Che behind to await a shipment of medicine, he displays love and concern for his fellow comrade: "Fidel, en un gesto de desprendimiento, me dio un fusil Johnson de repetición, una de las joyas de nuestra guerrilla, para defendernos" (60). Ironically, what Che considers to be the "joya", the Johnson rifle, is not what Fidel considers the jewel. For Fidel, the "joya de nuestra guerrilla" is Che himself, and, in order to protect his precious "joya", Fidel bestows this lavish gift. In this manner, the traditional representation of the rifle— the very symbol of warrior virility—is turned on its head. Construed as a means of protecting a loved one, the rifle now comes to symbolize love in a surprising space, the terrain occupied

by the Revolutionary. Another generous gesture on behalf of Fidel is ironically found in the chapter titled "Adquiriendo el temple", which is translated in the English edition as "Toughening up the troops". Che tells us that the months of March and April of 1957 were primarily spent instructing new recruits on the basics of guerrilla life. Not accustomed to the harshness of this lifestyle, the recruits had to be carefully disciplined and trained. Part of that discipline, we discover, involves the guerrillas' sleeping arrangements. The hammock, Che tell us, is highly coveted in the *Sierra Maestra* and its possession is dictated by law: "la hamaca es un bien preciado que [yo] no había conseguido antes por la rigurosa ley de la guerrilla que establecía dar las de lona a los que ya se habían hecho su hamaca de saco, para combatir la haraganería. Todo el mundo podía hacerse una hamaca de saco y, el tenerla, le daba derecho a adquirir la próxima de lona que viniera" (70). Due to this rigorous law, Che explains how he could never come to possess such a hammock until Fidel breaks the law, because their interpersonal bond transcends the rules:

> sin embargo, no podía yo usar la hamaca de saco debido a mi afección alérgica; la pelusa me afectaba mucho y me veía obligado a dormir en el suelo. Al no tener la de saco, no me correspondía la de lona. Estos pequeños actos cotidianos son parte de la tragedia individual de cada guerrilla y de su uso exclusivo; pero Fidel se dio cuenta y rompió el orden para adjudicarme una hamaca. (70)

The hammock rule, which symbolizes discipline, crumbles under Fidel's loving gaze. Fidel's poignant display of affection suggests that his ever-vigilant eye is always at work, surveying and watching over his troops in an almost loving manner. This act functions here to construct Fidel as a loving comrade who is not bound by hard and fast rules, but rather as one who can break them in the name of love.

According to Che, the New Man, like Fidel, demonstrates love in concrete examples: "ese amor a la humanidad viviente se transforme en hechos concretos, en actos que sirvan de ejemplo, de movilización" (15). Undoubtedly, these acts of love unify comrades and, in Che's view, become a bastion of Fidel's power: "esas actitudes personales de Fidel con la gente que aprecia son la clave del fanatismo que crea a su alrededor, donde se suma a una adhesión de principios, una adhesión personal, que hace de este Ejército Rebelde un bloque indivisible" (6). By drawing his combatants close to him, Fidel's rebels reciprocate his love. This practice, Rodríguez suggests, constructs a homosocial bond, "he [the Revolutionary] incorporates feminine *tendresse* into self to justify male bonding in male insurgencies and governments, what I call homosociality. Tenderness is the glue keeping the insurgents together under the harsh conditions of guerrilla warfare, clandestinity, and, later on, a besieged, embargoed Revolutionary nation-state" (34).

Indeed, Fidel appealed across broad spectrums and served to unify the new Revolutionary state, as Brad Epps has pointed out:

> A sense of familiarity and accessibility, of friendly collegiality, surrounds the name 'Fidel,' just as it surrounds 'Che', and helps to assuage the rather difficult tension between the leadership and comradeship, ascendancy and equality. As Fernando Martínez Heredia puts it, 'people see in [Fidel] the dialectic of their own power and the power of the Revolution…as trustee of the spiritual unity of the country, naturally it would be Fidel who would…ensure the fraternal relations of all who support the Revolutionary cause.' Fidel, then, appears to be …the figure of fraternal unity. (247-248)

In a similar vein, Damián Fernández perceives how Fidel's connection with the people was an intimate one: "Although he was perceived as extraordinary, Fidel was not the type of leader who was distant from the people…he conducted politics with a personal touch. He was informal in his language and his behavior, and yet he was revered. Although people called him by his first name, they still saw him as superhuman, godly" (74). Fernández goes on to argue that the people's connection with Fidel even took on a familial tone:

> Cubans placed posters of Revolutionary heroes in their homes accompanied by stickers proclaiming 'Fidel, esta es tu casa'….the portraits and slogans reveal the love and familiarity the leaders of the Revolution inspired. The public persona of the leader was accepted as one would a relative; the rebels, and Fidel especially, were brought into the homes and into one's family as if they were fathers, sons, brothers, lovers. (74-75)

After reading Che's diary, it is not surprising that Fidel was welcomed with such devotion. The leader loves his comrades in a tangible and personal manner, perfectly demonstrating the kind of love that was imperative in forming the new man.

Interestingly, this love is erotic, which Che not so subtly hints at in "El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba" when he explains the role of Revolutionary leadership in communicating with the masses:[25]

> Maestro en ello es Fidel, cuyo particular modo de integración con el pueblo sólo puede apreciarse viéndolo actuar. En las grandes concentraciones públicas se observa

[25] This type of erotic attraction is also found in another novel *Los muertos andan solos* (1962), which I analyze in the last chapter of this thesis. A character goes to the Plaza de la Revolución to hear Fidel speak after the leader enters Havana on January 8, 1959. He describes the speech in the following way: "aquellas palabras venían por los altavoces como si fueran ondas de calor, y ya Luis podia predecir en qué momento iban a provocar el entusiasmo, las lágrimas, los aplausos. La tension crecía poco a poco y Luis presentía cada vez la explosión que se iba a producer poco después. Entonces era de nuevo el delirio" (95).

> algo así como el diálogo de dos diapasones cuyas vibraciones comienzan a vibrar en un diálogo de intensidad creciente hasta alcanzar el clímax en un final abrupto, coronado por nuestro grito de lucha y de victoria. (5)

The libidinal energy that explodes in Che's description—vibrating into an abrupt climax—not so subtly hints at a mutual erotic attraction between Fidel and *both* men and women. As we will see, representations of Fidel's eroticism were more sexualized with respect to women; desire, however, plays a central role in forming homosocial attachments to Fidel. Drawing on a speech Fidel gave in Pinar del Río in 1987 on the twentieth anniversary of Che's death, Ruth Behar also perceives an erotics of power:

> an interesting relation is suggested between Fidel's presence as a physical body in power and Che's absent presence as a spiritual body. It has been noted that democratic political systems lack a center of power….but in authoritarian political systems, the center is never vacant: it is filled with a body that literally and metaphorically represents the center of power. In the Cuban case, the homosocial erotic tie between Che, the supreme dead Revolutionary, and Fidel, the supreme living Revolutionary, legitimates the body politic which keeps Castro in power. (139)

This homosocial eroticism Behar keenly observes has been theorized by Eve Sedgwick, who in her groundbreaking work *Between Men: English Literature and Homosocial Desire*, explores the social construction of gender and power in male-to-male-relationships. Crucial to Sedgwick's argument is her positioning of homosociality and homosexuality on a continuum:

> to draw the homosocial back into the orbit of 'desire,' of the potentially erotic is to hypothesize the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and

> homosexual—a continuum whose visibility, for men, in our society, is radically disrupted. It will become clear…that my hypothesis of the unbrokenness of this continuum is not a *genetic* one…but rather a strategy for making generalizations about, about marking historical differences in, the structure of men's relations with other men. (1-2)

For Sedgwick, the visible rupture of the homosexual/heterosexual continuum is historically and socially contingent, enforcing upon men prescribed and acceptable codes of behavior with other men.

Sedgwick's theory proves a useful compass for navigating the terms of homosociality adopted in my textual analysis, which goes beyond Behar's initial observation that only draws on one of Fidel's speeches. Homosociality among Revolutionary men operated in tandem with the Revolution's official view of homosexuality in the 1960s. Homosexuals, it was believed, could not successfully integrate into the Revolution given their supposed bourgeois degeneracy. In 1965 Fidel explained the incompatibility between homosexuals and the Revolution in an interview with U.S. journalist Lee Lockwood:

> Nothing prevents a homosexual from professing Revolutionary ideology…and yet we would never come to believe that a homosexual could embody the conditions and requirements of conduct that would enable us to consider him a true Revolutionary, a true Communist militant. A deviation of that nature clashes with the concept we have of what a militant Communist must be. (92)

Because a homosexual's nature was seen as prohibiting him from practicing true militancy, the regime sought to rehabilitate its gay population. For example, the Military Units to Aid Production (UMAP) were established in 1965 as a sort of Revolutionary hygiene program to

rehabilitate those individuals whose attitudes and behaviors were perceived as nonRevolutionary. As Ian Lumsden writes in his book *Machos, Maricones, and Gays: Cuba and Homosexuality* (1996), these camps were not specifically designed for homosexuals, but many openly gay males, for example writer Reinaldo Arenas, were forced to attend. The camps stressed hard labor and with it came the expectation to transform non-Revolutionaries into real men (66-67). In this way, these programs inevitably sought to "sanitize" and "masculinize" the population since Cuba, as Fidel once said, "needed strong men to fight wars, sportsmen, men who had no psychological weaknesses".[26]

In enforcing masculinization as a means to cure society's "enfermos" and engender a nation of strong virile men, the Revolution espoused heterosexual masculinity.[27] Without a doubt, this process of masculinization was embodied in the Revolution's leader. Brad Epps has described Fidel's image as one that is unwaveringly heterosexual and solid. This solidity, he argues,

> signifies a body politic of a curiously sexual sort. Even as Castro has distanced himself from previous policies against homosexual 'conduct'…even as he has stated that he personally has never 'suffered' from homophobia, his own posture has been one of solid, self-sacrificing, heterosexual masculinity. Husband to no one, father to many, Castro signals a sort of abstract paternity, and hence the occasion for 'fraternal' bonding, that runs counter to the prevailing image of the homosexual. As the leader of the Revolution, he embodies a group ideal from where the homosexual subject….is hard-pressed to find himself. (254-255)

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[26] This is a quote from Carlos Franqui in Néstor Almendros' documentary *Conducta Impropia.*
[27] Teresa de la Caridad Doval's novel *A Girl Like Che Guevara* (2004) looks at compulsory heterosexuality and the New Man from a different perspective, that of women and girls. The protagonist is a young girl who goes to a camp to work in rural Cuba. She desires to become a "New Man" like Che but struggles because she finds herself sexually attracted to another girl.

As we have already seen, Che's text heightens the visibility of fraternal bonding, or to use Rodríguez's term *tendresse*, between Revolutionaries. For Epps, the military establishment represents the quintessential homosocial bond, one that links men ideally rather than carnally:

> with the military, the putative guardian and defender of the nation, so goes the nation itself: the surrender and sacrifice must be of a sublime rather than a carnal sort, a surrender not of one man to another or to others, but of man to an ideal of man. According to this quite conventional story, the group ties of the nation, duly led and defended, are those of ideal men, men who come together ideally. (251)

In both Che's poem and diary, the troops come together "ideally" and in a sublime sort of way, without any hint of carnal surrender. But more importantly, homosociality is primarily mapped on Fidel who sits at the center of Revolutionary homosocial desire. I contend that this thread of eroticism is central to understanding Fidel's professed image of camaraderie because it establishes appropriate parameters for adopting homosocial bonds. In this formula, homosociality is configured as *Fidel*ity: the giving of oneself to another man is permitted as long as that man is Fidel. Because Fidel embodies the principles of the Revolution, the surrender of oneself is really an occasion for performing patriotism. By configuring homosocial exchanges in such a way, Cuba becomes the conduit of desire through which male bonds are expressed. Within homosocial exchanges, Sedgwick argues that women often serve as the conduit of male desire, producing an erotic triangle where sometimes, she contends, the relationships between men are just as important– or even more important –than those between men and women. In my reading of Che's texts and Cortázar's

rereading of those same texts, I locate the presence of a patriotic triangle that situates Fidel and Che in a homosocial bond in their shared love for the motherland, Cuba.

Homosociality in Che's texts: The Patriotic Triangle

In his "Canto a Fidel," penned in 1956 before boarding the yacht, *Granma*, which would carry the rebels to Cuba, Che expresses his unswerving commitment to Cuba through his love for Fidel.[28] The first stanza features Fidel as prophet:

Vámonos,
ardiente profeta de la aurora,
por recónditos senderos inalámbricos
a libertar el verde caimán que tanto amas.

Akin to Moses' wandering in the desert, Fidel, as Cuba's great prophet, must lead his suffering people to freedom. What is more, the poem suggests that just as Fidel's followers are bound to him, Fidel is bound to Cuba. Desire is grafted onto Fidel through his love for the "verde caimán," a love that becomes even more intense considering Che's selection of the verb "amar" instead of the more familiar "querer." In the third stanza homosocial desire between the combatants and Fidel is directly evoked:

Cuando suene el primer disparo y se despierte
en virginal asombro la manigua entera,
allí, a tu lado, serenos combatientes,
nos tendrás.

The pairing of the words "first shot" and "virginal," which are immediately juxtaposed with Che and the other rebels' steadfast commitment to Fidel ("at your side, serene combatants,

[28] "Canto a Fidel" was written July 7, 1956 and was published in *Bohemia* on May 1, 1960 (Cairo 36).

you will have us"), hints at a libidinal energy that courses through the forest. The release of the first shot (typically Fidel fired the first shot to commence every battle) signals not only a call to battle, but also a release of sexual potency that moves these rebels from homosocial chastity to a homosocial encounter with their leader. As Ileana Rodríguez has suggested, these homosocial encounters were deemed essential for unity and survival, to face the harsh circumstances under which the rebels lived. However, Che employs homosociality as pretense for patriotic duty by remapping desire in such a way that the rebels' commitment to their leader serves as an index for measuring their devotion to the homeland. As the fourth stanza attests, Fidel's hopes for a better Cuba will come to fruition only with the help of his rebels:

> Cuando tu voz derrame hacia los cuatro vientos
> reforma agraria, justicia, pan, libertad,
> allí, a tu lado, con idénticos acentos,
> nos tendrás.

Allegiance to Fidel, then, is as necessary to bring the much-desired reforms to Cuba, as it is to overthrow the tyrant. Now united in one common language, "con idénticos acentos" as Che says, Fidel's voice becomes the rebel's voice, symbolically unifying a nation under one tongue. Thus the action of standing by Fidel is really an occasion for the rebels to exercise patriotic duty; patriotism is wedded to Fidel and the dislocation of patriotism from nation-centered to Fidel-centered sets the stage for a brilliant display of affection for the commander-in-chief.

A climax of affection, which is manifested in self-sacrifice for Fidel, is, in fact, how Che closes his poem. The homosocial dynamic that "Canto a Fidel" establishes underscores

the rebels' self-sacrifice, for their only request is for "un fusil, sus balas y una peña" and a burial shroud:

> Y si en nuestro camino se interpone el hierro,
>
> pedimos un sudario de cubanas lágrimas
>
> para que se cubran los guerrilleros huesos
>
> en el tránsito a la historia americana.
>
> Nada más.

By outlining a proper code of masculine behavior that should be established with the commander-in-chief, namely dying for him and the ideals that he embodies, Che's song communicates a patriotic masculinity that requires facing death on behalf of Fidel. As far as Che was concerned, death was nothing to be feared. The initial *Granma* expedition, as Che biographer Jon Lee Anderson has pointed out in the documentary *Chevolution*, already sets in motion the Che mythology that emphasizes Che's bravery, self-sacrifice, and disdain for death. Few, however, have considered how this myth was forged in the context of homosocial desire; the "Canto a Fidel," however, perfectly articulates how Che's heroic construction relied on his relationship with Fidel. Homosocial encounters with the commander-in-chief lead to the production of national heroes who are willing to risk their lives for the homeland through their *fidel*ity to Fidel.

Pasajes further develops this theme of self-sacrifice as Che strives to render what he deems an ideal Revolutionary companionship. In *Pasajes*, anxiety becomes the means for communicating homosocial desire between Fidel and his followers. Diana Sorensen accords this anxiety to Fidel's magical aura: "such is the power of Fidel's persona in *Pasajes* that there is a barely veiled fear of loss in the text, as if his aura rested on a certain magic

sustained by anxiety" (40). Sorensen's vague terms "aura" and "magic" cannot quite capture how Fidel's homosocial encounters render him as one that is so loved by his followers that their devotion to him hovers between anxiety and desire. In *Pasajes* self-sacrifice becomes tied to protecting Fidel at all costs. In a dramatic scene, for instance, Che relates the story of a traitor, a peasant named Eutimio Guerra, who was directed by the enemy to kill Fidel. Che weaves suspense into the narration as he describes how Eutimio is afforded the opportune moment to carry out his mission while, during a cold February night, he shares a blanket with Fidel:

> So Eutimio Guerra spent the whole night next to Fidel…he asked Universo Sánchez and me (the two of us at that time always stayed close to Fidel) about those on guard duty…we explained that three men were posted nearby; we ourselves, veterans of the Granma and Fidel's trusted men, relieved each other through the night to protect him personally. (123)

The fact that Eutimio "could not bring himself to do it," as Che later tells us, is not what makes this episode a fundamental part of the Cuban Revolution. Fidel's death could have dramatically steered the course of the Revolution, but I would submit that the homosocial desire, which is manifested in the men's vigilant protection of Fidel, drives the Revolution's course in much the same way. For one, Fidel finds a space from which to exert power in the interstices of *eros* and *polis*, and this politicized homosociality becomes a source of his authority. What is more, Che's proximity and his role as personal bodyguard for his leader reformulates homosocial desire within the context of Revolutionary rhetoric. Che's formulation approves bodily surrender to another man so long as that man was Fidel.

Che's text makes clear that Fidel orchestrates and directs the homosocial exchange. The rebels' anxiety and Fidel's disdain for danger, for example, come to a head when the troops write their leader a letter after the second battle at Pino del Agua, insisting that he be careful, but to no avail:

> Fidel was euphoric over the battle. At the same time, he was worried about the fate of our comrades, and at various times he took greater risks than he should have. As a result, days later a group of officers and I sent him the letter inserted at the end of the chapter asking him on behalf of the Revolution not to risk his life needlessly. This rather infantile letter…did not, I believe, warrant even a reading on his part, and needless to say, he did not pay the slightest attention to it. (302)

The letter, a physical symbol of Fidel's devotion to his comrades and vice versa, is key to understanding how Che constructs Fidel in his text and how that construction relies on an anxious masculine narrative. Akin to *Ciudad rebelde*, *Pasajes* constructs its own version of a heroic Fidel vis- à- vis his disdain for death, which is manifested in his willingness to die for his comrades. More importantly, however, the motivation behind the missive is as anxious as Alfredo's attempts to be a man (*a la* Fidel). The rebels understand Fidel's centrality to the Revolutionary project and their anxiety over losing him sheds light on how the construction of their rebel masculinity relies, to a great extent, on homosocial exchanges with the Comandante. As we have seen in *Ciudad rebelde*, the tension between anxiety and desire is a fruitful one because it produces national heroes who are eager to stand behind Fidel and the ideals that he embodies. The rebels' futile efforts to assuage their anxiety through the petition reveal Fidel's centrality in the Revolutionary agenda as well as demonstrating how his masculine image—as a loving and self-sacrificing comrade—helped him not only defeat

Batista, but also consolidate his power among his allies. Thus Fidel's gaining of power is grounded in his relationship with his comrades.

Both the episode with Eutimio and the letter locate Fidel in the center of a homosocial exchange that is maintained by the anxiety of losing him. The root of that anxiety, I would submit, is due, in large part, to Fidel's inimitable masculinity, as Che depicts in *Pasajes*. The two-fold nature of anxiety—of losing Fidel and trying to replace him—is later reinterpreted by Cortázar's short story "Reunión" (1966). The story relates the days following the rebels' arrival to Cuba, which by all accounts was a disaster when for several days Che, Fidel, and Raúl were separated. "Reunión" narrates those days the troops spent apart, focusing specifically on Che's inability to deal with Luis' (Fidel's fictional name) absence. Anxiety is the theme that rises to the surface in the story, drawing out what Che infers but does not explicitly say in *Pasajes*. For this reason, "Reunión" is as necessary as Che's own text for shedding light on how the construction of Fidel's masculinity relies on homosocial encounters that engender a bond so great that the Revolution's existence depends on his presence.

In fact, for Che, wandering in the forest, the only triumph imaginable at this point is finding Fidel according to Cortázar's reconstruction of the Revolution's critical phase: "porque de los planes ya no quedaba más que la meta final, llegar a la Sierra y reunirnos con Luis si también él conseguía llegar; el resto se había hecho trizas con el norte, el desembarco improvisado, los pantanos. Pero seamos juntos" (69). By reformulating the Revolution's final goal—finding Luis— Cortázar sets the stage for a homosocial reading of his text. At this point in the story, Che is haunted by the possibility of Luis/Fidel's death, but he still cannot bring himself to articulate the prospect of this reality: "nadie mencionaba a Luis, el

temor de que lo hubieran matado era el único enemigo real, porque su confirmación nos anularía mucho más que el acoso, la falta de armas o las llagas en los pies" (70). Che redefines the enemy as the likelihood of Luis/Fidel's death, which is much worse than the desperate conditions in which they find themselves. By subjecting Luis to the rigors of such a strong homosocial desire, Cortázar hints at the source of Fidel's power: Fidel is the Revolution and the Revolution is Fidel. By inviting this identification, "Reunión" brilliantly brings to light the visibility of power, which, according to Daniela Garofalo, is fundamental in the formation of leaders: "for power to be seen and felt, it must be attributed to a single individual who can represent it in his own person" (83). Moreover, Cortázar rewrites notions of national belonging so that libidinal attachment to Fidel – evoked by Che's anxiety over losing him—is as necessary to Revolutionary manhood as it is to winning the war.

Cortázar finally dares to penetrate Che's psyche by having him face the question "what if": what if Fidel has died? When Che asks the fateful question, he has a vision in which Luis/Fidel removes his face as if it was a mask and invites those around him to put on his face. All the rebels vehemently refuse to do so, and Che is left doubting the whole Revolutionary enterprise: "pero si realmente habían matado a Luis durante el desembarco, ¿quién subiría ahora a la Sierra con su cara? Todos trataríamos de subir pero nadie con la cara de Luis, nadie que pudiera o quisiera asumir la cara de Luis" (71). To be sure, Che's vision not so subtly reveals Fidel's importance in the Revolution. More importantly, however, I would submit that Che's fear of accepting the mask reveals more about the interworking of power and masculinity. Fidel's power is undergirded by the construction of an unreachable masculinity that produces an anxiety in Che to be like his leader. Thus at

stake here is not only the Revolution's triumph, but also Che's ability to mold himself to the contours of his model and assert his masculinity:

> tendríamos que ser como Luis, no ya seguirlo sino ser como él, dejar atrás inapelablemente el odio y la venganza, mirar al enemigo como lo mira Luis, con una implacable magnanimidad que tantas veces ha suscitado en mi memoria…una imagen de pantocrátor, un juez que empieza por ser el acusado y el testigo y que no juzga, que simplemente separa las tierras de las aguas para que al fin, alguna vez, nazca una patria de hombres en un amanecer tembloroso, a orillas de un tiempo más limpio. (75-76)

The employment of the term "pantocrátor" signals a matchless omnipotence that is evoked in Luis' ability to occupy two subjectivities at once: a judge who does not judge. Cortázar's image that he paints of a benevolent Fidel clearly resonates with the one Che had constructed in *Pasajes*. More importantly, however, the purpose of such power is to metaphorically give birth to a new generation of men. The violent parting of the earth and waters delivers a new man who, when washed ashore, is clean of his past impurities: "separa las tierras de las aguas para que…nazca una patria de hombres en un amanecer tembloroso, a orillas de un tiempo más limpio" (76).

In "Reunión" Che reflects on the man he once was before meeting Fidel. After being falsely told Luis has died, Che begins his reflections: "y curiosamente me dio por pensar en mi mejor amigo de otros tiempos, de antes de esa cesura en mi vida que me había arrancado a mi país para lanzarme a miles de kilómetros, a Luis, al desembarco en la isla, a esa cueva" (79). Cortázar thus divides Che's life in two distinct periods: before and after Luis. Che then hones in on his former best friend's habits and movements, all of which he adopts: "cada uno

de sus gestos me era tan familiar, y esos gestos no eran solamente los suyos sino que abarcaban todo mi mundo de entonces, a mí mismo, a mi mujer, a mi padre" (80). Che's customs are attributed to his bourgeois way of life: "defendiendo el derecho feudal a la propiedad y a la riqueza ilimitadas, él que no tenía más que su consultorio y una casa bien puesta, defendiendo los principios de la Iglesia cuando el catolocismo burgués de su mujer no había servido más que para obligarlo a buscar consuelo en las amantes" (81). Clearly, Che's eventual distance from this world coupled with his relationship with Fidel has transformed his worldview. He predicts what his old friend from Argentina would think about him and Luis (Fidel):

> Me pregunté qué estaría pensando mi amigo de todo esto, de Luis o de mí…ni siquiera hacía falta que abriera la boca para decirme yo pienso que tu revolución no es más que…no era en absoluto necesario, tenía que ser así, esas gentes no podían aceptar una mutación que ponía en descubierto las verdaderas razones de su misericordia fácil y a horario. (80)

Che's former and present friends serve as the lens through which the Argentine makes sense of the world around him. By navigating these homosocial exchanges, the reader understands that Che's break with his former best friend also connotes something much larger, for it also symbolizes a break with his past bourgeois life in exchange for a life of Revolutionary hardship and struggle with Fidel. In this way, we can begin to perceive the centrality of homosociality in the construction of Che's masculinity. His friendship with Fidel has transformed his identity from bourgeois male to rebel and, additionally, it has reshaped the contours of future homosocial exchanges. Luis, as the object of his desire, reformulates Revolutionary manhood through a politics of sexuality; within the new code of masculine

conduct, surrender—both bodily and mentally—to Fidel is not only appropriate but also required.

When Che at last sees Luis, with his "gorra de interminable visera y el cigarro en la boca," Cortázar prolongs the reunion between the two men, emphasizing Che's desire to be near his comandante: "Me costó el alma quedarme atrás, dejarlo a Pablo que corriera y se abrazara con su hermano, y entonces esperé que el Teniente y los otros fueran también y lo abrazaran, y después puse en el suelo el botiquín y el Springfield y con las manos en los bolsillos me acerqué y me quedé mirándolo" (85). Che's sheepish stance and demeanor seem to indicate his inferior position within the relationship. Moreover, Fidel sets the tone for the exchange by making a joke: "mira que usar esos anteojos—dijo Luis. –Y vos esos espejuelos—le contesté, y nos doblamos de risa" (85). The joke creates an atmosphere that masks their mutual affection, and it is only after Fidel sets the homosocial parameters for their reunion that he and Che can, at last, embrace: "y su quijada contra mi cara me hizo doler el balazo como el demonio, pero era un dolor que yo hubiera querido prolongar más allá de la vida" (85). Ironically, the long-awaited embrace is not as sweet as Che would like. Fidel's harsh jaw against his face hurts, but despite the smarting, the Argentine is willing to endure the pain for eternity. A superficial reading of this passage may suggest that their embrace symbolizes the pain and struggle of following Fidel. However, I want to suggest that Cortázar's fictional embrace serves as a metaphor for Revolutionary homosociality. Fidel's regulation of the exchange, which is manifested through his language and bodily comportment, holds in check Che's libidinal desire, promoting an appropriate relationship defined by homosociality and not its deviant other: homosexuality. In conferring manhood along homosocial lines, Revolutionary rhetoric was careful in its construction of libidinal ties

to Fidel. In the ensuing homosocial drama that unfolds, Cortázar creates an edenic space shared by Luis and Che:

> se pudo curar a los heridos, bañarse en el manantial, dormir, sobre todo dormir, hasta Pablo que tanto quería hablar con su hermano. Pero como el asma es mi amante y me ha enseñado a aprovechar la noche, me quedé con Luis, apoyado en el tronco de un árbol, fumando y mirando los dibujos de las hojas contra el cielo, y nos contamos de a ratos lo que nos había pasado desde el desembarco, pero sobre todo hablamos del futuro. (85)

The peaceful ambience suggests the power of Fidel's presence to quell Che's anxiety. The Argentine can contemplate and dream of the future, now that his homosocial bond with Luis is intact.

However, what is so ironic about Cortázar's fictitious encounter is that it is wholly at odds with Che's own text. In *Pasajes* a tone of disciplining, rather than rejoicing, taints the edenic space that was offered up in the short story:

> Nuestra pequeña tropa se presentaba sin uniformes y sin armamentos, pues las dos pistolas era todo lo que habíamos logrado salvar del desastre y la reconvención de Fidel fue muy violenta. Durante toda la campaña, y aún hoy, recordamos su admonición: 'No han pagado la falta que cometieron, porque el dejar los fusiles en estas circunstancias se paga con la vida; la única esperanza de sobrevivir que tenían en caso de que el ejército topara con ustedes eran sus armas. Dejarlas fue un crimen y una estupidez. (23)

In this instance, the act of disciplining exposes the other facet of Fidel's Revolutionary masculinity, which, as we have already seen, is partially constituted through *tendress*e. For

Ileana Rodríguez, these two attributes are requisite in birthing the New Man: "we can synthesize those two attributes in two words: discipline (masculine) and love (feminine). The guerrilla-subject moves from one series to the other in a paradoxical way, for instance, in discipline disguised as love, and in love expressed as intransigence" (44). In this manner, Fidel, as discipliner and *compañero*, folds violence into love in such a problematic way that discipline comes to signify love: Fidel acts this way because he loves Che and, ultimately, he does so because he loves Cuba. Thus, the "patriotic" homosocial triangle, which we employed in characterizing Fidel and Che's relationship, is also composed of disciplining violence.

María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo interprets Fidel's reaction to Che's small troop in just this way. In her work *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americans and the Age of Development* she observes how Fidel's disciplining act must be understood as an act of love: "in Castro's reaction, the reader recognizes the scolding but loving parent who berates a child for crossing a busy intersection without looking. It is this mixture of discipline and love that Guevara repeatedly uses to describe 'Fidel,' the indisputable commander in chief of the rebel army" (77). But more importantly, she argues, Fidel's disciplining love is imperative in the formation of the guerrilla army and, in fact, it anticipates its triumph: "in Guevara's representation, the guerrillas learn to act in unison in a matter of weeks solely because of Castro's leadership. They go on to win a series of battles against the army, detailed in the subsequent chapters, with their success attributable almost exclusively to Castro's guidance" (77). In Saldaña-Portillo's estimation, Fidel's disciplining love not only gives rise to military triumph, but also transforms Che's masculinity. Analyzing a passage in which both armies find themselves marching side by side, she asserts:

> Under the disciplining love administered by Castro, the guerrillas 'ended up on the other side of the mountain' and on a par with the army troops in strength, cunning, and speed. The passage suggests that the guerrillas achieve a full masculinity—walking parallel—through their successful confrontation with the army. Furthermore, under Castro's tender but firm hand, I would suggest, Guevara himself is reborn from the condition of compromised masculinity that shadowed him on the beach to an uncompromised masculinity achieved in the mountain. (77)

While Saldaña Portillo is correct in her observation of the interrelated nature of Fidel's disciplining love and masculinity, she fails to perceive how Che stumbles time and again with his manhood. Despite Fidel's disciplining love, I argue a stubbornly anxious masculine narrative persists as Che struggles to submit to Fidel's authority and embody Revolutionary manhood like his leader.

Diana Sorensen has also argued that Che struggles to become a man and finds its expression in his blundering efforts, which are always portrayed as less than heroic. She suggests that Che's text represents a *Bildungsroman* that is peculiarly structured by what she terms a pedagogy of mistakes: "the significance of *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria* lies in the narration of learning from mistakes, which is at the center of Che's construction of the 'new man': if this lesson is learned, the task of vigilant self-fashioning can begin again and again" (33). According to the author, the purpose of this narrative structure is two-fold, "on the one hand, it performs the learning process; on the other, it highlights Fidel's aura of infallibility and contributes to the construction of the hero" (38). Indeed, Che's humility subordinates him to the maximum leader's authority, which orchestrates Fidel's construction as a hero vis- à -vis Che's self-deconstruction. Thus, Sorensen is right in acknowledging that

Pasajes is structured around an equation that "involved a subtraction of Che's authority, the better to add to Fidel's power" (42), but I would submit that Che's struggle points to the ways in which Revolutionary homosociality was what masculinity scholar Michael Kimmel has called "a homosocial enactment" (129). For Kimmel, "masculinity is a *homosocial* enactment. We test ourselves, perform heroic feats, take enormous risks, all because we want other men to grant us our manhood" (129). As a homosocial enactment, Kimmel tells us, "masculinity…is fraught with danger, with the risk of failure, and with intense relentless competition" (129). *Pasajes* illuminates how Revolutionary masculinity was a homosocial enactment in its juxtaposition of Fidel's exemplary masculinity with Che's masculinity, which is depicted as fragile and something that is continually tested and affirmed through risk taking. In this way, Che's struggle to become a "New Man" is manifested through his navigation of homosocial encounters with his Comandante, which ultimately establish Fidel's masculinity as hegemonic and total.

Homosociality as Struggle

In the beginning of *Pasajes* Che's masculinity is expressed through his failure to assert authority, which is primarily communicated through his body's physical limitations. As an Argentine and an asthmatic, Che clearly feels that his foreign and sick body prohibits him from holding positions of authority. In one telling episode, for example, a captain, Jorge Sotús, arrives unexpectedly and takes command of Che's troops. Fidel lectures Che, telling him that he should not have allowed it: "se criticó por parte de Fidel mi actitud al no imponer la autoridad que me había sido conferida y dejarla en manos del recién llegado Sotús, contra quien no se tenía ninguna animosidad, pero cuya actitud, a juicio de Fidel, no debió haberse

permitido en aquel momento" (66). Fidel, it seems, would not have allowed Sotús's defiance. In this moment, then, Che has not yet learned to assert authority even in instances where he is rightfully in charge. Moreover, Che's asthmatic and frail body limits his participation in the rebel army; Che is either forced to stay behind to await medicine or struggling to climb the tough mountain terrain. In one chapter, for instance, titled "Una entrevista famosa," the rebel army climbed *Pico Turquino*, which is Cuba's highest point, with ABC newsman Robert Taber. There the rebel troops staged a photo and were then forced to keep moving as the dictator's forces were right on their heels. A poignant Che recalls how his asthma got the best of him that day:

> dado mi estado asmático que me obligaba a caminar a la cola de la columna y no permitía esfuerzos extra se me quitó la ametralladora que portaba, la Thompson, ya que yo no podía ir al tiroteo. Como tres días tardaron en devolvérmela y fueron de los más amargos que pasé en la Sierra, encontrándome desarmado cuando todos los días podíamos tener encuentros con los guardias. (76)

Che's asthma heightens the body's visibility, which, as Goldstein has influentially argued, is a central aspect of war because it "emphasizes not only the presence of the human body, historically male, strained to its physical limits, but also a whole complex of expectations about how that body should act" (15). The failure of Che's body to act like the others in his group forces him to march at the back of the column without a gun. In a sense, then, Che is punished because his body prohibits him from modeling Revolutionary manhood. In trying to establish itself as a hegemonic identity, Revolutionary manhood was constituted through a process of selection that made certain male bodies visible and relegated others to the

margins. In this instance, Che's asthmatic body quite literally places him on the margins: at the back of the line.

In trying to grapple with his physical limitations and inability to assert authority, Che's narrative voice portrays Fidel as the perfect embodiment of Revolutionary manhood. Where his own body fails, Fidel's never does. Instead, Fidel's body is visibly at the center of the narrative and, metaphorically, signifies that around which Revolutionary manhood is constructed. One example will suffice to demonstrate the authoritative presence of the Comandante's body. In this episode Che is thrilled by the fact that he has a war trophy, a helmet from one of Batista's army men, which he sports proudly on his head. In what transpires, however, the helmet almost provokes a fatal accident. Believing him to be one of Batista's soldiers, Camilo Cienfuegos fires on Che: "afortunadamente en ese momento se estaban limpiando las armas y solamente funcionaba el fusil de Camilo Cienfuegos que disparó sobre nosotros, aunque inmediatamente comprendió su error; el primer disparo no dio en el blanco y el fusil automático se trabó impidiéndole seguir disparando" (33). Che attributes the fact that Camilo misses to a symptom that is all too common: "este hecho demuestra el estado de tensión que teníamos todos, esperando, como una liberación, el combate. Son instantes en que hasta los más firmes de nervios sienten cierto leve temblor en las rodillas y todo el mundo ansía de una vez la llegada de ese momento estelar de la guerra, que es el combate" (33). Caught up in war's anxiety and glory, the body often betrays a man's nervous anxiety, according to the Argentine. Moreover, he says, the body does not inherently fight; in fact, men do not want to fight at all: "no era, ni con mucho, nuestro deseo el combatir; lo hicimos porque era necesario" (34). Che's comment suggests that war is not

natural, thus exposing the fact that Revolutionary manhood is not inherent, but is rather a creation.

Interestingly, though, in Che's text Fidel's body neither blunders nor suffers from anxiety, for it is as if he was born a Revolutionary. For example, Che places Fidel in a similar situation several days later (although it is still in the same chapter). The troops gaze at the enemy and it is Fidel's first shot that commences the action: "El disparo de Fidel, que abrió el fuego, lo fulminó, pues solamente alcanzó a dar un grito, algo así como '¡ay mi madre!' y cayó para no levantarse" (34). Faced with a similarly tense situation, Fidel, unlike Camilo, does not succumb to the typical anxieties of warfare. Instead, he calmly waits to identify the unknown soldiers and then coolly fires his weapon, killing the man on the first try. Juxtaposed with Camilo's typical war behavior, Fidel is instead portrayed as a natural warrior. And in this same battle, Che makes a point to say that he himself misses his target on his first try: "tiré a rumbo la primera vez y fallé: el segundo disparo dio de lleno en el pecho del hombre que cayó dejando su fusil clavado en la tierra por la bayoneta" (34). Che's body, unlike Fidel's, fails at the first attempt. Fidel's unforgiving solidity transforms him into the emblem of desire in Che's text and the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity. Thus in *Pasajes* homosocial encounters are structured vertically, situating Fidel at the apex and placing Che in an endless battle to reach his leader; he never does.

To conclude, I want to turn to Che's famous farewell letter to Fidel because it perfectly encapsulates the homosocial encounters we have discussed. Che writes: "If my final hour finds me under other skies, my last thought will be of this people and especially of you. I am grateful for your teaching and your example, to which I shall try to be faithful up

to the final consequences of my acts."[29] Che's comments reveal the letter's personal and intimate nature, which, to be sure, defines his relationship with Fidel. Curiously, though, the tone changes when Che turns apologetic: "My only serious failing was not having had more confidence in you from the first moments in the Sierra Maestra, and not having understood quickly enough your qualities as a leader and a Revolutionary." The letter suggests that homosocial exchanges forge a "New Man" who is simultaneously bound to Fidel in love but subjected to his power, which in *Pasajes* is expressed through hegemonic masculinity. Thus even though the New Man was poised to offer a new paradigm of masculinity, which was defined love – or *tendresse,* Fidel's homosocial encounters with Che demonstrate how fraternal love was ultimately jeopardized by the Comandante's exemplary masculinity, which exercised power over his subjects who faithfully followed him out of love. Love, it seems, was best expressed as *Fidel*ity.

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[29] The letter is dated April 1, 1965.

CHAPTER FOUR

FIDEL ES MI PAPÁ

Haven't you also lost something for following your father?

~Rodolfo Usigli, *El Gesticulador*

In an interview with *60 Minutes*, a young and distressed Cuban father challenged his interviewer, Dan Rather, "Why do you have to mix Fidel Castro into all of this? It's just me claiming my son. It's my son and not Fidel Castro's. It's a way of bringing in Fidel Castro and making it political" (Bardach, *Cuba Confidential* 291). That father's son, Elián González, had captured the world's attention five years earlier when armed federal agents raided a Miami home in order to find Elián and send him back to Cuba.[30] Much to the dismay of many Cuban-Americans who had fought to keep Elián in Miami, the young boy was reunited with his father, Juan Miguel, in June 2000. By placing a father's custody battle on the international stage, the Elián saga carved out a fresh space for examining the intersection of fatherhood, nation, and masculinity. More specifically, the affair raised questions about notions of biological and social fatherhood. For even though Juan Miguel adamantly declared he, and not Fidel Castro, was Elián's father it became increasingly clear as the Elián debacle unraveled that two fathers were engaged in the custody battle: Juan Miguel and Fidel Castro. Moreover, it was apparent that both parties on opposite sides of the Florida straits were intent on employing Fidel's paternal image as their principal weapon to win the Elián war. During a hearing in Miami, for example, angry Cuban-Americans charged "that all Cuban children were the property of Fidel Castro" and billboards throughout Miami echoed this sentiment (Bardach, *Cuba Confidential* 103). One, in fact,

[30] Elián's mother, Elisa, had died at sea when a group of Cuban rafters attempted to make the ninety-mile trek from Cuba to Florida. Elián was one of three survivors. See Ann Bardach's *Cuba Confidential* (2002) for a lengthy and thorough discussion of the Elián affair.

depicted a youth with a swastika, Stalin with a child, and Elián, and the lettering read, "A crime against a child is a crime against humanity" (Bardach, *Cuba Confidential* 103). By appealing to the notion that these children had been kidnapped body and soul by the dictators of their respective countries, the billboard fit squarely within the Elián debacle rhetoric that employed paternal imagery and language to define Fidel. Indeed, the idea of Fidel "fathering" Elián became a popular means for discussing the case, which was manifested in political cartoons. Similar to the billboard, one cartoon imagines Elián coming home to papa Fidel thus clearly demonstrating one of the ways in which Fidel and Elián had come to fill the popular imaginary. To be sure, the cartoon was a jest, but its implications went far beyond any pictorial representation. As the story continued to play out in Cuba, it was clear that Fidel intended to put this father trope to good use. In fact, when Elián finally did return home to "papá," the real "papá" in the Elián saga became increasingly ambiguous. Upon Elián's arrival, for example, Juan Miguel sent a Father's Day card signed by his entire family to Fidel. Over the years Fidel has attended Elián's birthday parties and graduation ceremonies. Moreover, Cuba's leader has financially supported the miracle child.[31] Elián, in turn, revealed what he thinks about his relationship with the country's leader when, in an interview with *60 Minutes*, he told reporters that he considered Fidel "not only as a friend but as a father." His father echoed this sentiment in Oliver Stone's documentary, *Comandante* (2002) when he expressed his concern over the leader's ailing health. An emotional Juan Miguel owes much of his sadness to his close relationship with his country's leader, "Fidel became a part of our family," he explains.

[31] For more information on this see Carlos Frías's book *Take Me with You* (2008) as well as Ann Louise Bardach's *Cuba Confidential* (2002). Frías travels to Elián's hometown and describes his home.

Fidel's demonstration of paternal affect begs the question, who was the "papá" in this family's drama and why did Cuba's leader insist on playing the part of patriarch? I suggest that this paternal enactment manifests one of the foremost tropes around which Fidel's identity has been configured. Thus while many analysts agreed that Fidel scored a political triumph with the Elián case, they failed to see how definitions of masculinity, specifically those of fatherhood, structured the debate. My purpose here, then, is to consider the ways in which discourses of fatherhood, nation, and masculinity all intersect in constructing Fidel as Cuba's national patriarch. For in defining himself as the nation's father, Fidel has relied on and at the same time perpetuated patriarchal ideas of masculinity, which grant him the power to govern the island much as a dominating father might control his wife and children. I begin by examining the role of paternity in constructing masculinity. More specifically, I trace the family's role in constructing the nation through its production of gendered identities, with close attention to hegemonic models of paternity before and after the Revolution. In order to facilitate this discussion, I have selected the short story "Baseball Dreams" (2001) by Ana Menéndez, because it brilliantly illuminates Fidel's pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary family by taking a poignant look at patriarchs and their enduring legacies. While many feminist critics and masculinity theorists agree—most notably Alfredo Padula and Lois Smith— that the Cuban Revolution ultimately failed to dismantle the patriarchal structure that shaped family dynamics, few have considered how Fidel's paternal image within Cuba has both maintained and exacerbated traditional forms of patriarchy. Through my analysis of Menéndez's text, as well as the examination of Fidel's participation in various campaigns, I argue that images of his paternity are related to his performance of manhood, most specifically through his public role as the nation's father, a trope designed to consolidate and

maintain his power. Moreover, I suggest that Fidel's paternal image reveals an authoritative figure whose exercise of power symbolizes the maintenance of patriarchal tradition and repressive state control. I will conclude this chapter by examining the song "Guillermo Tell" by popular Cuban artist Carlos Varela, whose theme of a son's liberation from a father represents an artistic space from which Cubans have contested Fidel's paternal role.

Cuban Paternal Codes

Numerous scholars like Matthew Gutmann (*The Meanings of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City*), Norma Fuller (*Masculinidades: Cambios y permamencias*), Benno de Keijzer ("Paternidad y transición de género") and Jorge González Pagés (*Macho, varón, masculino*) have acknowledged the critical role that paternity plays in the construction of masculinity. From a purely biological perspective, fatherhood represents the highest form of virility, as Norma Fuller observes in her salient study *Masculinidades: Cambios y permamencias* (2001):

> la paternidad es la última prueba de la virilidad de un varón porque garantiza que puede fecundar a una mujer. Mientras sus hazañas sexuales existen solo en el relato y todo hombre es sospechoso de fanfarronear al respecto, un hijo es una demostración indudable de su potencia. Por ello es la única prueba total de virilidad y quien no cumple con ella despertará dudas. (435)

For Fuller—whose study centers on Peruvian masculinities but whose insights can easily translate to Cuba—paternity is both natural and social. Virility signifies the "natural" aspects of masculinity, which, according to the author, are reified through cultural codes that emphasize a man's sexual activity and physical force. By deconstructing those "natural"

virile qualities, Fuller exposes them as cultural constructs: "este proceso supone un desarrollo de cualidades innatas pero, en la práctica, es cuidadosamente vigilado y dirigido" (28). In this way, paternity is defined as much by its social manifestations and practices as by its biological qualities. In line with these observations that paternity is not masculine simply because of its biological dimension, Colombian scholar Mara Viveros perceives how socio-cultural definitions of masculinity tangibly shape the ways in which fathers practice and perform paternity: "fatherhood is intimately linked to processes of male identity construction. Paternal meanings and practices are defined by a particular way of being and feeling masculine, of adopting some roles and rejecting others" (53). Through the appropriation of certain paternal codes, fatherhood becomes a means of conferring manhood. Which codes a father appropriates, however, is contingent on both the historical and social context in which he lives and, in addition, they may differ across economic, ethnic, and cultural lines.

Paternal codes have also drawn attention from scholars in Cuba.[32] For instance, in his pioneering work *Macho, Varón, Masculino: Estudios de Masculinidades en Cuba* (2010), Cuban masculinity scholar Julio César González Pagés examines paternal codes as an expression of hegemonic ideas of masculinity. For González Pagés, the paternal model is similar, if not identical, to the hegemonic model of masculinity in Cuba: "cuando se define al modelo hegemónico de masculinidad presente en nuestras sociedades, la paternidad se encuentra vinculada de manera directa con características como: proveer el sustento económico, ser autoritario, mostrar una personalidad fuerte, firme, racional y con una ausencia …de emociones y afectos" (84). In relating masculinity and paternity, the scholar then goes on to define a paternal archetype:

[32] In addition to González Pagés, see other Cuban studies on the family and fatherhood including Patricia Arés Muzio's *Mi familia es así: Investigación psicosocial* (1990) and *Abriendo las puertas a las familias del 2000* (2000); Lourdes Pasalodos *Díaz's En el nombre del hijo* (2009).

> Sin duda alguna, en nuestras culturas se ha perpetuado un arquetipo para ejercer la paternidad basado en el autoritarismo, el proveer y controlar el sustento económico, la determinación de la disciplina, la imposición de los castigos, la ausencia de afectos, emociones y contactos físicos, el desconocimiento o alejamiento de cuestiones referidas a la socialización de los niños/as en las escuelas o círculos infantiles, así como la vigilia extrema de la 'correcta orientación' que deben asumir los hijos/as, principalmente los varones. (85)

The conformity to this paternal archetype, which is principally configured around authoritarianism, is a guarantor of a man's power within the family. In this way, the family becomes an ideal space for examining the interplay of power and masculinity, which, as we will see later, is a guarantor of Fidel's power when his paternal role situates this power struggle on a national level. The family, as R.W. Connell writes in her book *Gender and Power*, is a gendered terrain that is organized by relationships of power: "the interior of the family is a scene of multilayered relationships folded over on each other like geological strata. In no other institution are relationships so extended in time, so intensive in contact, so dense in their interweaving of economics, emotion, power, and resistance" (121). Underpinning these multilayered relationships of power, Connell says, is a gender regime whose construction has relied on centuries of patriarchal order. In the conventional family, power is typically arranged along patriarchal codes of order, which privilege men's domination over women (122-123). For González Pagés, the archetypal paternal model adheres to a patriarchal definition of masculinity: "históricamente se ha visto el padre como la representación familiar que encarna los atributos patriarcales de la valentía, heterosexualidad, autoridad, severidad e inteligencia" (89). In Cuba, thus, the paternal code

has an operative function in maintaining a patriarchal gender order. Moreover, in keeping with this code, paternity has come to represent a repository of male power.

A father's control over his family was especially critical in pre-Revolutionary Cuba, a period during which the family figured as a dominant institution in structuring politics and economics (Smith and Padula 144). Even though the women's equality movement gained momentum in the 1920s and 30s, gaining many women access to the public sphere through the workforce and earning them the right to vote, women were far from earning complete equality. An examination of Fidel's own family reveals the fundamental role that local patriarchs played in pre-Revolutionary Cuba. Recent works published in Cuba about the leader's family, which include Katiuska Blanco Castiñeira's *Todo el tiempo de los cedros* (2003) and *Ángel: La raíz gallega de Fidel* (2008) fictionalizes Fidel's youth as well as his father's life history, working to capture the bond between these two patriarchs in its pre-Revolutionary context. Fidel's father, Ángel, was emblematic of the local patriarch whose sexual escapades and fortune helped solidify his power both inside and outside the home. Controversy has surrounded Fidel's birth because he was born out of wedlock to his father's maid. Fidel's illegitimacy can be gleaned from the narrative by comparing the dates of his birth and his parents' marriage, though Blanco emphasizes that Fidel's father was separated from his wife at the time that Ángel takes Lina as his mistress.[33] Blanco reconstructs Fidel's

[33] Ángel married María Luisa Argota in 1911 and they had two children: María Lidia and Pedro Emilio. Lina Ruz González worked on Ángel's farm in Birán and caught her master's eye. She was 19 and he was 45 years old. Soon after, she gave birth to their first child Ángela. María Luisa and Ángel were not legally divorced until 1943. After the divorce, he married Lina (Bourne 16-17). In *Ángel: La raíz gallega de Fidel* (2008) Blanco subtly hints at Fidel's illegitimacy. Though the author does not explicitly say he was born out of wedlock, the reader only has to put together the pieces to discover it. Blanco writes off Ángel's marriage to María Luisa, his first wife, as an improbable match, "Don Ángel era un hombre dispuesto a los esfuerzos y renuncias, a la sencillez. María Luisa, sin embargo, tenía ambiciones y vocación por la vida de ciudad. Muy a pesar de que don Ángel también cobijó su amor en aquella amplia casa…no fue feliz el matrimonio" (135). After explaining

parents' first encounter in a sexually charged narrative, describing it as a sexual conquest. Longing for love and a faithful companion, Ángel sees Lina, a young servant on his farm, as a perfect match despite their considerable age difference; he was forty-five and she was nineteen. He gazes at the young servant's youthful body with a lustful gaze, "clareaba cuando la vio como era en ese tiempo: una joven crecida, de esbeltez de cedro, ojos negros y energía como la de ninguna otra campesina de por todo aquello. La observó de lejos con el cuidado de no espantarla con su apariencia hosca…tenía la fusta entra las manos para aliviar su impaciencia" (140). At first, the narrator says, he feels defeated because of his age— "estaba viejo"— but only for a fleeting moment; afterwards, the text says his passion grows. The sexual energy that courses through Ángel's aging body, coupled with his concerted effort to make Lina his own, illuminates his irrepressible sexuality. On the other hand, however, the text says Lina dutifully respects him, "Lina admiraba a don Ángel. Lo respetaba con una devoción casi religiosa. Cuando lo contemplaba de lejos sentía una sensación extraña, inquietante y alegre a la vez" (141). In Blanco's account, Lina's devotion to her master is innocent and virginal and, in this way, the author succeeds in paradoxically construing Fidel's mother as a Madonna-like figure, protecting her sexual honor. For it is only Lina's friends who sexualize the master, Ángel: "las jóvenes del lugar lo reconocían atractivo con su estampa imponente, montado en el caballo, vestido de traje de dril blanco y calado el sombrero de fieltro" (141-142). Not long after their first encounter, Ángel and Lina consummate their passion and she then gives birth to their first child, the fruit of their love. The child is irrevocable proof of Ángel's virility as well as his sexual conquest of Fidel's mother, Lina. Blanco's narrative demonstrates one of the ways in which men have wielded

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why the marriage failed, she then goes on to describe Angel's attraction to Lina and the birth of their children. Later, she says they were properly married in 1943.

control within the family, by unmasking a set of codes that valorized a man's sexual conquest while conversely seeking to preserve the image of the woman's chastity.

The presence of these codes evinces Cuba's sexual and cultural climate, which grows out of Spanish traditional culture and the Catholic Church. According to Smith and Padula, the considerable influence from the Catholic Church, which "emphasized the need to contain female sexuality while encouraging the expression of male sexuality," allowed men to maintain mistresses as a socially acceptable form of sexual expression (169). Moreover, the authors observe that, prior to the Revolution, the number of mistresses a man kept and the manner in which he maintained them became a hallmark of masculinity: "according to the masculine code, a husband must avoid embarrassing his wife by flaunting his liaisons, though he would certainly share news of his conquests with his male friends to enhance his masculinity" (171). Thus, Ángel's sexual prowess and his ability to economically maintain a mistress are the means by which he confirms his manhood despite his aging years. Ángel is able to maintain both Lina and his wife (until they finally divorced in 1943), because of the considerable amount of wealth and land he had accumulated despite having arrived on Cuba's shores as a poor and illiterate Galician immigrant. At the time of his death, he employed over five hundred men to work on his plantation, which sprawled over ten thousand acres (Gimbel 45). Ángel's success story is even more notable given the fact that Galician men, in particular, were marginalized and considered inferior by their native Cuban counterparts. According to González Pagés, this marginalization visibly manifests the presence of multiple masculinities and their unequal distributions of power:

> Gallegos detentaban una masculinidad marginalizada. Esto quiere decir que a un hombre, inmigrante, proveniente de una región pobre, con una lengua diferente, en

> busca de empleos para subsistir, le era conferido social y culturalmente una posición de marginación e inferioridad con respecto al hombre nativo, solvente económicamente y por ende legitimado por la sociedad en que se encuentran interactuando, asumiendo una posición de hegemonía. (9)

In linking the native Cuban male's superiority to his wealth, González Pagés manifests one of the foremost guarantors of manhood in pre-Revolutionary Cuba: socioeconomic class. By accumulating a considerable sum of wealth, Ángel's masculinity was affirmed, which, as we will see in the last chapter of the present study, was also affirmed by his race. His position in his community is emblematic of the local patriarch who reigned in the Cuban countryside alongside U.S.-owned companies. His wealth and prosperity are key features of his power, along with his sexual prowess and conquests, which help solidify his power within both of his families. Blanco's narratives thus shed light on the internal workings of power within the Castro clan, revealing the family to be a gendered arena that legitimized and sustained patriarchal power.

If in pre-Revolutionary Cuba a man's power was connected to his economic position within his community and family, the Revolution worked considerable changes to this institution as it sought to eliminate influential men like Fidel's father whose power represented a threat to the emerging Marxist ideology. In doing so, it nationalized private property and sought to bring sexual equality into the home, which, as González Pagés notes in his study, is central in socialist discourse. The paternal model proposed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, González tells us, espoused equality: "centraron su discurso a favor de la igualdad de géneros al interior de la familia…están a favor de legitimar las relaciones de poder de un sexo con respecto a otro. Por tanto, no otorgan al hombre ese derecho divino de

gobernabilidad absoluta sobre el resto de los miembros de la familia" (91). In light of Marx and Engels' theories on the family, there is little wonder that many hoped the Cuban Revolution would usher in much-needed change to traditional models of paternity and maternity.[34] A new socialist family would bring equality, which, according to feminist Margaret Randall, "would make property ownership, inheritance, families and patriarchs irrelevant," while still other feminists hoped Cuba "would realize the new kind of family Engels dreamed of, a socialist family united not by blood, but by affection, friendship, and convenience" (qtd. in Smith and Padula 145). Despite the socialist nature of the Revolution, the Cuban Revolution did not fully adapt this latter goal, but rather upheld the notion of a traditional family, which consisted of a father, mother, and offspring. For example, in 1989 FMC president Vilma Espín stressed the importance of having a man in the family to ensure its balanced social development (Smith and Padula 161). Espín, however, made sure to define the man's presence within the family; she says that the "unfair and degrading concept of the father as a simple inseminator…should be replaced with the role of active educator and participant in all family activities" (161). Throughout Espín's speech we can discern the ways in which the Revolution sought to neutralize the internal balance of power in families, by encouraging women's employment and passing laws to ensure sexual equality. Women's increased presence in the workforce has had a significant impact in shaping family dynamics, as González Pagés argues: "este hecho [la Revolución] impactó en la familia cubana y provocó alteraciones en su tradicional modo de vida. El acceso masivo de los miembros de la familia a la educación y la incorporación de la mujer en muchos de los sectores productos

[34] Smith and Padula note that it was primarily foreigners who advocated changes to the family in the 1960s. It was not until the 1970s that Cubans themselves began to address the issues of inequality that plagued the family (145).

de la sociedad que significó que el hombre dejara ser el único contribuyente económico al sustento del hogar" (93).

While women found themselves increasingly visible in the public sphere, men were asked to invest more time and effort in the private sphere with the passing of the Family Code, which sought to bring gender equality by obliging husbands to share in household chores. As a result of the government's attempts to tackle gender inequality, however, men often complained that they felt their masculinity compromised: "many men were uneasy with this new responsibility and feared being ridiculed by their male peers. Cubans joked that a man might do the laundry but he would not hang it to dry, where he might be seen by his pals" (Smith and Padula 147). This remark manifests the extent to which meanings of manhood are socially scripted and constructed. Moreover, it attests to the endurance of patriarchy for prescribing appropriate masculine behavior in the face of growing pressure to achieve gender equality. Thus, despite the Family Code's endeavor to reformulate meanings of manhood by exhorting men to perform tasks traditionally assigned to women, men continued to perform what they considered to be socially acceptable forms of masculinity. As González Pagés has influentially argued in his study, reform measures in the private sphere will only work so long as there is a profound change in mentality:

> De todos modos, es erróneo considerar los indicadores como causantes de que desaparecieran las dificultades en el ámbito familiar y en lo concerniente a la paternidad. Sabemos que modificaron en cierto grado esta problemática, pero desmontar toda una estructura familiar patriarcal establecida desde la colonia y afianzada durante más de cuatro siglos en nuestro país, es realmente imposible.

> Intentar cambiar la mentalidad, los principios y valores de millones de individuos, plagados de prejuicios y estereotipos…no es cosa fácil. (94)

Smith and Padula corroborate González Pagés' observations in the conclusion of their chapter on the family. In evaluating the failure of the Revolution to bring equality within the family, they compare the power within the family to that of the state:

> Collectivism and cooperation rather than hierarchical authoritarianism were identified as the ideal expression of authority within the family. Thus the state was asking something of the family that the state itself was not willing to provide: democratic decision-making. This disharmony between social and political institutions—that the family should and to some extent did become more egalitarian and democratic while the state became more patriarchal and less democratic—constituted a glaring paradox in the life of the Revolution. (166)

I would like to explore this "glaring paradox" as it is tied to discourses of paternity, which work to construct Fidel as the nation's patriarch. His role as patriarch has led to the creation of what many have labeled a paternalistic government.[35] Indeed, as Ann Louise Bardach has observed: "Castro sees himself as the absolute patriarch not only of his family but also of his country" (37). This fact is not lost on the Comandante either. When Bardach asked him in a personal interview in 1993 what his greatest mistake was, he responded: "we may have been guilty of excessive paternalism" (*Without Fidel* 36-37). It is in this juncture of government and paternity, I argue, that we begin to perceive the critical role that masculinity plays in

[35] For example, in her blog Yoani Sánchez frequently refers to the Cuban government as a "Daddy-State". In her entry "I Collect Denials" from Sept. 24, 2008 she describes how she has repeatedly been denied from leaving the country. Frustrated, she asks: "Won't the Daddy-State learn how irritating children become when they rarely leave the house?". Other entries where Yoani refers to the "Daddy-State" are "The Shredder" from March 20, 2009, "Correctives" from May 20, 2011, and "The Cuban Intelligentsia: Debate or Hide" from May 26, 2012.

structuring Fidel's domestic politics. For as father, Fidel is defined by one of the utmost important guarantors of manhood, which, as we will see, is intimately tied to and in collaboration with a patriarchal structure that helps maintain his power over the most private of issues: those inside the domestic space.

Becoming the Nation's Father

A photo from January 1959 captures a young boy surrounded by a group of victorious rebels. Camilo Cienfuegos looks on as both Che Guevara and Fidel embrace the young Fidelito Castro, Fidel's only publicly acknowledged child. [36]

(Figure 4.1 Fidel's "New" Family- Caravan of Victory Havana, January 8, 1959)

The assemblage of a rebel father with his young son in a celebratory embrace prompts us to envision a new family prototype. Surrounded by rebels in olive-green fatigues, this new

[36] Fidelito's mother is Mirta Díaz-Balart, a socialite whom Fidel divorced just two years after marriage. There is little published inside Cuba about Fidel and his son's relationship, and much of what has been released corresponds to the period of Fidel's imprisonment on the Isle of Pines after his attack on Moncada. During this time Fidel engaged in a custody battle with Mirta. Ann Louise Bardach explains the battle in detail in her book *Cuba Confidential* (2002). According to Bardach's research, Mirta requested a divorce in July 1954. She eventually obtained custody and took Fidelito to the United States. Fidel still tried to regain custody rights while in Mexico and even had Fidelito kidnapped, though eventually the child returned to his mother. It was not until after the triumph of the Revolution that Fidel reversed the custody order and took control of Fidelito, ordering that the boy remain in Cuba (37-50).

family is Revolutionary, masculine, and responds to one authority: Fidel Castro. In many ways, the photo is emblematic of the new Revolutionary family, particularly Fidel's, which would be subsumed by the Revolution. In his essay, "El socialismo y el hombre nuevo," Ernesto "Che" Guevara speaks candidly about this familial transformation:

> Los dirigentes de la revolución tienen hijos que en sus primeros balbuceos no aprenden a nombrar al padre; mujeres…deben ser parte del sacrificio general de su vida para llevar la revolución a su destino…[E]l marco de los amigos responde estrictamente al marco de los compañeros de revolución. No hay vida fuera de ella. (15)

By defining the New Man in terms of his relationships with his family of compatriots, Che also defines Revolutionary fatherhood. In Che's formulation, a good father is one who places the Revolution's needs above those of his own children. In this way, the family becomes a dual space for expressing Revolutionary zeal as well as a means of conferring Revolutionary manhood, thus demonstrating the Revolution's totalitizing discourse that sought to hegemonize all aspects of masculinity, including the most intimate one: fatherhood.

Keeping in line with Che's dictum, Fidel's "family" underwent a radical transformation. Shortly after the celebratory embrace between the rebel father and his son, Fidelito disappears to make way for Fidel's new national family.[37] And despite the fact that Fidel has fathered many biological children, including Fidelito— his only child that is

[37] Indeed, Fidelito is rarely photographed with his father and Fidel rarely discusses his son in interviews; Fidelito does not hold leadership positions within the government and has never been in the running as his father's successor. In fact, his father even fired him from his job, once remarking in an interview that we do not have a monarchy here. What has most come to light concerning Fidelito is Fidel's custody battle with his ex-wife Mirta, which is found in his prison letters whose contents shed light on Fidel's paternal role before the Revolution. In one letter, for instance, Fidel writes to his sister Lidia, "No presumo que ignoren que para quitarme ese niño tendrán que matarme" (*Cartas del presidio* 65-66). As Bardach notes, these letters "leave no doubt that he was and is a scorched-earth warrior" (*Cuba Confidential* 46).

publicly acknowledged— as well as numerous other children— five of whom are with Dalia de Soto, his companion since the 1960s—the manner in which Fidel has been represented to the Cuban people has been that of the lonely man. In her article, author Sandra McGee Deutsch has argued that more research is needed on Fidel's image to ascertain how it has played a role in shaping Revolutionary masculinity. In her view, Revolutionary discourse "virtually ignores paternity for men" and Fidel does not portray himself as a father (287). Clearly, Fidel has not portrayed himself as a father to his biological children, and the state is prohibited from discussing the exact number of offspring the *Comandante* has sired. Deutsch, however, fails to perceive how Fidel's metaphorical romance with the Revolution has been a fruitful and paternalistic one. With Cuba as his bride, Fidel's children include all of Cuba's children, as Brad Epps has correctly observed: "Husband to no one, father to many, Castro signals a sort of abstract paternity" (254-255). Indeed, Revolutionary discourse has promoted a specific version of Fidel's paternity, which, as we will see, has not been so abstract in some instances. Fidel's family was transposed onto the national stage with the aim of promoting a national union that binds Cuba's leader to its people. Cuban exile Mirta Ojito's memoir *Finding Mañana: A Memoir of a Cuban Exodus* (2005) sheds light on the ways in which Fidel's national paternity was constructed when she describes how she was made to memorize slogans such as 'Fidel es mi papá y Cuba es mi mamá' in school (21).[38] Moreover, the 1961 Literacy Campaign further demonstrates how Revolutionary discourse constructed Fidel as the nation's father. As discussed in chapter three of the present study the literacy campaign sought to eradicate illiteracy throughout the island, sending out young

[38] Moreover, in her anthropological study *Inside the Revolution: Everyday Life in Socialist Cuba* (1997), Mona Rosendahl notes that one of the ways in which Fidel is addressed is as *nuestro papá* (88). Carrie Hamilton also notes in her anthropological work *Sexual Revolutions in Cuba* (2012) that "Castro as a father figure is a common feature in the interviews" (65).

volunteers to instruct the poor in rural areas. After having undergone instruction, the student's final "exam" was to write a letter to the *Comandante*.[39] In many of these letters, Fidel is referred to as "papá". For example, in her letter to Fidel on July 26, 1961, Juana E. Torres writes, "Dr. Fidel: Puedo llamarle mi segundo padre y sólo deseo que cada día avance más Nuestra Revolución Socialista. Ahora que he aprendido a leer y a escribir me decido a coger el lápiz para decirle, por medio de esta carta, que aunque soy casi una niña, estoy dispuesta a morir por defender Nuestra Revolución Socialista" (Núñez Machín 249). By rendering Fidel a second father, the young girl's letter constructs a discursive space on which Fidel's paternity is written. Moreover, the text reveals how notions of fatherhood hinged on patriotism in the new Revolutionary family; for she says that "aunque soy casi una niña," she is ready to die for the socialist Revolution. In other words, her love for her father, Fidel, and his Revolution is so great that she is capably of dying for it in the way that father has asked many of his other national offspring. Another student, Belisi Escalona, addresses Fidel in a similar way, pledging allegiance to her father and his Revolution: "Mi querido papá Fidel" she writes, "Gracias a la Revolución Socialista que fue la que nos trajo. Ayudaré bastante a muchos campesinos que no tuvieron la oportunidad de aprender" (Núñez Machín 254). Just like the earlier letter-writer, Belisi pledges to do her duty for the Revolution, helping peasants learn how to read and write. Both letters underscore how the literacy campaign espoused a discourse that emphasized a new Revolutionary family with Fidel at the head. Within this family, complying with one's duty was central to the maintenance of the Revolution and Fidel's power. The chanting of slogans and the writing of letters are mechanisms of discursive power, which produce a particular image of Fidel. As Hannah Arendt points out, power relies not just on the individual, but also on the group's ability to empower another:

[39] There is a museum in Camagüey, which houses all of these letters.

> power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together. When we say of somebody that he is 'in power' we actually refer to his being empowered by a certain umber of people to act in their name. The moment the group, from which the power originated to begin with…disappears, 'his power' also vanishes. (137)

By naming Fidel as father, the people of Cuba are symbolically related to their leader in a personal and intimate way, uniting Cuba in a close bond through which Fidel's power is consolidated. As we will see, his role as family patriarch is central to conceiving how the Cuban leader appropriated masculinist sources of power after the Revolution's triumph. While the Revolution espoused sexual equality in the private sphere, Fidel ruled over his national family like a traditional patriarch, refusing to relinquish control of his offspring. I argue that representations of Fidel's paternity represents a discursive strategy employed by the state as a mechanism of control, which sought to regulate the family in the same way that the FMC did alongside other official discourses like the 1975 Family Code.

As we have already observed, the Revolution sought to transform the family. Nowhere was this most clearly perceived than in a program led by the FMC (*Federación de Mujeres Cubanas*) called the Ana Betancourt Schools for Peasant Women. Inaugurated in 1960 by Fidel Castro, these schools brought young peasant women, principally from the Escambray mountains in central Cuba, to Havana with the aim of teaching them the art of sewing (Smith and Padula 37-39). The fact that the *Anitas*, as the young women were called, were primarily from the Escambray mountains is no coincidence since a peasant counterRevolution was brewing in that region and, as Smith and Padula astutely point out,

"peasants would think twice about making trouble while their daughters were in the Revolution's grasp in Havana" (38). And in spite of the fact that "many fathers were reluctant to let their daughters go to Havana, thinking they would become maids or prostitutes," "the FMC assured them that their daughters would be safe." With that in mind, hundreds of young girls were transported to the big city in order to become *Anitas* (Smith and Padula 38). In celebration of the FMC's twenty -fifth anniversary, Elsa Gutiérrez, the school's first director, explained to *Bohemia* about those first recruits' fear of traveling far from home:

> Los padres con miedo pero confiados, las mandaban a La Habana a superarse, a estudiar, a aprender a coser. Ellas con miedo pero felices, se enfrentaban a vivir estas nuevas experiencias y nosostros trabajábamos mucho pero conocíamos cuán infinitamente cambian las personas cuando el medio es favorable. Y aquellas muchachas con olor a monte se transformaban. (Bulit 56)

The plucking of the Anitas from both their homes and their fathers exemplifies the state's policy towards the family. Whereas, prior to the Revolution, the family "dominated the political, economic, and social life of the nation", afterwards the family was considerably weakened and decentered (Smith and Padula 144). Clearly, the socialist nature of the Revolution had profound economic implications for small family businesses and farms as the state sought to transfer economic power from the family to the state. However, Smith and Padula submit that it also sought to "transform the internal life of the family. A key concern was the shaping of young minds. The government was suspicious of parental influence and abilities. It wanted to be 'the primary, if not only, agency of socialization'" (146). In doing so, they note: "new educational opportunities and the lure of work and social activities

outside the home were challenging fathers' control of daughters" (147). By removing the Anitas from their homes despite the concerns expressed by the girls' fathers, the state invaded the home and took control of the family. It also socialized the girls by submitting them to practices that would ensure a physical and mental transformation. Promptly upon their arrival, for example, the young women were examined by doctors and then given instruction in hygiene and first aid, among other topics. Later, they received political indoctrination by studying Fidel's speeches and learning how to dispel rumors about the regime. In this way, the state fashioned itself into a sort of abstract family member through assuming the role of these young women's guardians and caretakers.

In their investigative report, Smith and Padula duly note the state's appropriation of the family through external and internal means. However, they elide the ways in which Fidel's presence— more specifically his paternal presence—facilitated this appropriation. For as Gutiérrez goes on to explain in her interview with *Bohemia*, Fidel's personal commitment to the Anitas was quite impressive. She says, "Fidel atendía el plan personalmente" and "seguía de cerca el plan" (Bulit 56). One day, she tells the readers, Fidel "se apareció," and, in spite of the fact that the director "quería demostrarle…que había disciplina, que las muchachas se mantenían en orden," she says "no había Dios que les aguantara cuando él llegaba" (Bulit 56). Bursting with excitement, the Anitas called Fidel "papá" and hugged him, "Le decían papá a Fidel, lo abrazaban. Le decían sus impresiones, lo que comían, si aprendían. Yo nadaba a mares. Fidel me decía que no me preocupara tanto, que las dejara un poquito. Aquellos diáologos entre él y ellas eran realmente fantásticos. Él, un poco como padre, ellas como hijas" (Bulit 56). In naming Fidel as father, the idea of the state becoming a member of the family is no longer an abstract one, but a real

and tangible one embodied in the *Comandante*. For these Anitas, Fidel assumed the role of the fathers that the young girls had left behind in the countryside, thus cementing the state's control of the family.

In assuming the role of daughter in their new Revolutionary family, the Anitas were under Fidel's control. This control reshaped the girls not only psychologically by physically; when the girls are allowed to return home for a visit, they are described as changed: "cambiadas…gorditas, bonitas. Con un juego de blusa y pantalón que ellas mismas lo habían confeccionado" (Bulit 56). This process illustrates clearly the state's production of gendered citizens. For by taking the role of father, Fidel helped transform these girls into the ideal picture of Cuban womanhood, which was insistent on physical attractiveness. The girls were so physically transformed, Gutiérrez says, that their mothers scarcely recognized them at a ceremony for Mother's Day. They were at the age, she says, when adolescents change anyway; their bodies had changed, but also their teeth had been fixed, which was personally overseen by Fidel himself who gave Gutiérrez money to take the girls to the dentist. At this critical time of adolescence transformation, Fidel stepped in as a father and molded these young women into Cuban Revolutionary women. In addition to the girls' physical attractiveness, the article tells of another way in which Fidel influenced these girls' lives. During the Playa Girón invasion, Fidel sent some of his young soldiers to the school and, in spite of the director's efforts to keep them apart, love flourished between the soldiers and the Anitas. Some of the couples, she says, even married.

Patriarchy, feminist Adrienne Rich has observed, "is the power of the fathers: a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men –by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of

labour—determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male" (57). Fidel's paternal enactment with the Anitas institutionalizes patriarchy on a national scale. The *Comandante*, as father, determined how the Anitas should act, dress, and, to a certain extent, the men with whom they should associate. As masculinity scholar Michael Kaufman has noted, men's power is not abstract, but rather a bodily engagement with those institutions, like the family, which give men power:

> [W]e learn to experience our power as a capacity to exercise control. Men learn to accept and exercise power this way because it gives us privileges and advantages that women or children do not usually enjoy. The source of this power is in the society around us, but we learn to exercise it as our own. This a discourse of social power, but the collective power of men rests not simply on transgenerational and abstract institutions and structures of power but on the ways we internalize, individualize, and come to embody and reproduce these institutions, structures, and conceptualizations of men's power. (146)

By casting himself as the Anitas' father, as well as the entire nation's father, Fidel metaphorically installed himself in the private sphere of the family, facilitating the means by which he could control "his family." The Revolution's policies towards the family ineluctably placed that institution in a vicious cycle. While it tried to stamp out its patriarchs through avenues of officialdom, like the implementation of the Family Code, it nonetheless perpetuated and profited by the image of the patriarch who wielded absolute power.

The Cuban-American writer Ana Menéndez offers a brilliant look into the Cuban family in her short story "Baseball Dreams" (2001), which poignantly traces the enduring

legacy of patriarchs in Revolutionary Cuba through an unexpected metaphor: baseball. "Baseball Dreams" is one of eleven well-crafted stories in Menéndez's *In Cuba I Was a German Shepherd*. All of the stories in the collection center on Cuba's exile community, and at the heart of "Baseball Dreams" is a young woman who finds herself emotionally alienated from her father as well as geographically removed from her homeland. A fictitious voice, arguably that of Fidel's daughter,[40] narrates the story, which is divided into two sections. The first, "The boy," takes place in 1935 while the second, "The girl," takes place after the Revolution. From the opening lines, which read: "I have a portrait of my father from before Cuba knew him," the reader intuits that the narrator is referring to Fidel Castro (127). This is made all the more obvious as the story continues; the boy lives in Birán and is later referred to as "El Líder." Any researcher of Fidel Castro would recognize his identity before the narrator reveals these later clues. Fidel's daughter the narrator, however, places a peculiar and foreign object in her version of her father's photo: "Behind him, to his left and propped against a coconut tree, is a baseball bat. It's shiny and smooth like a new idea" (127). The bat introduces the story's major motif: baseball thematically connects the protagonists and their childhood stories. What is more, as we will see, the sport serves as the lens through which Menéndez analyzes masculinity and through which she carefully crafts her critique of the Revolution's guise of gender equality.

After describing the photo, the narrator contextualizes the story she wishes to tell about her father. She imagines him at his home during the summer, and she intuits the verbal taunting he received: "he wasn't baptized," she explains, "and they called him The Jew, and he thought of the black-beaked birds that came to his window to shake off the rain. He

[40] Alina Fernández Revuelta is Fidel's most famous illegitimate daughter with former lover Naty Revuelta and, more than likely, it is she who is Menéndez's subject. At one point the story observes that the protagonist now lives in Miami and Alina, coincidentally, lives there now.

imagined himself flying over the battlefields of Troy, the blood running like veins down the hills as he soared above the dead" (127-28).[41] The purpose of revealing Fidel's parental heritage is two-fold. On the one hand, in referring to Fidel's illegitimacy, the narrator sets the tone for the story, which oscilates between nostalgia, loss, and reconciliation. As an illegitimate child herself, the narrator recognizes the common past that she and her father share, and this identification aids in her quest to make sense of her past as well as her father's. On the other hand, the narrator privileges the family as the lens through which she will creatively reconstruct her father's past. Her father's family as well as her own are stained by illegitimacy. The intermingling of sexual conquests, wives, and mistresses produced the sexual landscape on which she and her father were forced to navigate. "Baseball Dreams" tries to capture both her and Fidel's navigation of their fathers' sexual legacy.

As we have already seen, Fidel's nickname "The Jew" marginalized him among his peers. Smith and Padula attribute this marginalization to Cuba having been "a family-oriented and lineage-conscious nation" prior to the Revolution (171). Despite the fact that Ángel Castro successfully navigated the power structures in his community, solidifying his position as Birán's patriarch, his son struggled to find a stable masculine identity. The baseball field, the narrator says in "Baseball Dreams," represented the space through which Fidel sought this identity, "I can understand all it meant to my father, a bastard, an immigrant's son. In the straight old lines of the game, he found a dynasty of players to belong to. Baseball gave him rules to master, a history to memorize. On his mound, facing the dark Sierras, my father could be anybody, do anything" (131). Certainly, Fidel's favorite

[41] In an interview with Frei Betto, Fidel describes "I remember that those who weren't baptized were called Jews…I couldn't understand what the term Jew meant—I'm referring to the time when I was four or five years old. I knew it was a very noisy, dark-colored bird, and every time somebody said, 'He's a Jew,' I thought they were talking about that bird" (43).

childhood pastime is not out of the ordinary, since many young Western boys love the game of baseball; but in Menéndez's story the significance of the game is not so simple as it may seem. Behind the façade of Cuba's national sport, the narrator lays bare a tangled web of assumptions about the nature of masculinity. Menéndez challenges these assumptions by presenting masculinity as a construction rather than an inherent or biological trait. As R.W. Connell points out, sports like baseball play a central role in a young boy's construction of masculinity,

> In Western countries…images of ideal masculinity are constructed and promoted most systematically through competitive sport. Though adults are spectators more often than participants, schoolchildren do play sport a great deal and are taught to regard sporting success as a matter of deep importance. The combination of force and skill that is involved in playing well at games like football, cricket and baseball…becomes a strongly cathected aspect of an adolescent boy's life…[F]or most it becomes a model of bodily action that has much wider relevance than the particular game. Prowess of this kind becomes a means of judging one's degree of masculinity. (*Masculinities* 85)

The contours of Fidel's fast pitch and the speed at which his opponent scrambles around the bases represent scripted bodily movements that have been codified with definitions of masculinity. Thus, it stands to reason that a young boy's performance on the playing field is a solid measure of his masculinity, and Fidel's proclivity for baseball, therefore, should not surprise us. By mastering the fast-pitch, Fidel is also learning how to perform as a man. Hence, when the narrator says: "On his mound, facing the dark Sierras, my father could be anybody, do anything," she is, in fact, hinting at this performance (131). The so-called "rules

to master" are really codes of masculinity which Fidel must learn to appropriate, and their successful appropriation ensures that he can "be anybody," or, in other words, be a man. Because definitions of masculinity are configured around the game of baseball in Menéndez's story, Fidel's aspiration to join the majors is most predictable: "he wanted, more than anything, to be a baseball player. To be a baseball player! Like Ty Cobb or the man DiMaggio…my father thought he would make a fine Yankee" (128). In aspiring to be like those baseball icons, Fidel aspired to conform to their masculine model, which, in the context of "Baseball Dreams," represents the desired hegemonic masculinity. For this reason, Fidel practiced his pitch relentlessly: "he hurled himself into the clean physics of his dream…the first time he missed, he missed he stomped his feet in anger and walked away. But the next day, he came back and crawled under the house through the slop…he missed and missed. But he was destined to be a pitcher and not even an erratic arm would stop him" (128). The persistence with which Fidel practices his pitch becomes an obsession, and it is through this obsession that Menéndez critiques the masculine codes that dictate Fidel's behavior. Michael Kimmel compares the relentless pursuit of masculinity to sports, "Masculinity must be proved, and no sooner is it proved that it is again questioned and must be proved again—constant, relentless, unachievable, and ultimately the quest for proof becomes so meaningless than it takes on the characteristics… of a sport" (122). Fidel's determination to correct the erratic curve of his pitch, then, becomes symbolic of a man's need to prove his masculinity.

When at last Fidel is afforded the opportunity to prove that his pitches are the fastest and the curviest, his first throw is a disappointment: the umpire rules it a ball. After his next two pitches are decreed balls as well, the narrator notes the other players' reaction: "My father caught Manuel glancing at the catcher. It was a quick look, a flutter of the eyes

underneath the baseball cap. The boy at bat looked back at his teammates sitting now cross-legged behind home. A few of them laughed and touched the tips of their baseball caps to pull them down over their faces" (129-130). The boys' laughter exposes the inevitable repercussions of employing the body as a means to constitute masculinity. A man's masculinity is placed in doubt, Connell tells us, when a man's body cannot sustain the required hegemonic performance (54). Thus Fidel's unpredictable arm becomes a brilliant metaphor for illuminating the instability of gender. Any slight deviation in the ball's trajectory places it outside of the strike zone, and the umpire calls it a "ball." In much the same way, cultural norms map their own trajectories of gender and institute umpires to vigilantly watch for the slightest deviation. In the case of "Baseball Dreams," Menéndez deftly employs Fidel's friends as gender mediators by having them snicker at anybody who fails to pass their test of manhood.

The boys' ridicule abruptly ceases, however, when Fidel rekindles his forces and commences to pitch the game of his life: "he dazzled the boys with fastballs that seemed to trail in vacuums. Then, just as quickly, the ball left his hand and hurtled toward third base" (132). Fidel's stunning pitches, in this instance, are charged with gendered meanings. According to Connell, when a man's body fails to perform, he must "redouble efforts to meet the hegemonic standards" (55). Despite having met the standard by proving he can pitch, Fidel, realizes that his team will never win, abruptly leaves the field whilst a boy shoves him from behind, calling him a "cobarde" and a "cabrón" (132). The boy's words lay bare the short story's theme, inviting the reader to privilege a gendered reading of the text. When the boys label him a coward, Fidel's masculinity is called into question, thus placing Cuba's future leader in a precarious position. As Kimmell has observed, this is commonplace in

adolescence: "as young men we are constantly riding those gender boundaries, checking the fences we have constructed on the perimeter, making sure that nothing even remotely feminine might show through. The possibilities of being unmasked are everywhere" (132). Fearing he has been "unmasked" as something less than a man, Fidel resorts to violence: "my father said nothing. He turned to walk. Then spun back and punched the boy in the jaw, quick as a breath. The boy fell onto the long grass. My father kept walking south, the Sierras dark and beautiful where they rose from the savanna" (133).[42] The lopsided score of the baseball game was too unforgiving and Fidel, knowing defeat is certain, settles the score with his fists. In doing so, Fidel inscribes himself in a long tradition of employing violence as a means of asserting manhood, and it is through this apt medium that the narrator chronologically links her father's past and his present. As she describes her father walking, the setting metamorphoses into a battlefield: "Judío! Judío! My father walking. Judío! My father walking south, listening to his steps crack the tall grass. Then the fire through his arms, the black-beaked wonder of him soaring, rising, watching the lengths of grass retreat and reappear in bright squares of red and green. The battlefields below, the little men" (133). If violence settled the score for the young man that day, the narrator seems to say, it was also fundamental in determining Fidel's victory in the Sierra Maestra. In inviting the connection between past and present, the narrator brings to light one of the story's major theme: masculine power is constituted through violence.

[42] In his biography on Fidel, Peter Bourne points out the following, "It is not surprising that from the earliest years Fidel was in constant fights with other children and viewed the world as an inherently hostile environment. Unable to change the facts or the stigma society imposed, he had only his fists with which to defend himself" (17). Bourne also goes on to say, "When he was thirteen, Fidel experienced what must have been a deeply traumatic event. A soap opera was broadcast on the radio about a fictional family in the village of Birán that bore sufficient resemblance to the Castro family that people who knew them identify it as such. In it a point was made of describing the children's illegitimacy" (25).

At this point in the narration, then, Fidel's daughter now looks at her present situation through the lens of her father's past. Speaking in a woeful tone, she confesses to the reader how she longs to rewrite her father's past: "If only…That's how I always start the story. If only baseball had held him like a tender parent. How different it all would be. He would have come to see me on the beach that day. He would have married my mother. I am the little girl who wants a life of baseball rules: nine innings, pads on the catcher, may the best team win" (133). In trying to grapple with her own illegitimacy and abandonment, Fidel's daughter blames baseball for her grief. But, as I have already demonstrated, the culprit is not only the game but the gender codes that it reflects and polices. Behind the façade of baseball, then, the narrator is in fact criticizing the masculine codes that shaped her father into the man he is today. These codes, she bemoans, left her fatherless on the beach that day, ironically placing her in a similar situation as her father: an illegitimate child desiring to play a game structured by fair and just rules.

What is more, and perhaps more importantly, the daughter observes a game of catch while she waits for Fidel's visit. The fact that baseball appears in both sections is no accident; it not only thematically links the sections but it also serves to further link its two protagonists. As she watches two boys, one considerably smaller and darker than the other, the reader is privy to their conversations: "You'll never play in the grandes ligas'" the bigger boy says to the little one, to which he responds, "You haven't seen my curveball.'" Still unconvinced that his partner can throw well, the bigger boy questions the smaller boy's masculinity: "The only other man I saw with an arm like that was a maricón.'" (136). Having had his masculinity compromised, the small boy attacks his taunter, leaving the bigger boy lying "face-up in the sand, a tickle of blood flowing out of his left nostril" (138).

In the same way that Fidel had resorted to his fists as a means to compensate for his loss on that hot summer day in Birán, the smaller and darker boy also is driven to violence; but this time, the blow is even more dangerous. The boy's mother approaches, frantically screaming, "he's killed him! He's killed him!" and for a moment, the reader thinks, could he possibly have killed him from a punch? (138). Injury and even death, as Kimmell has noted, are real consequences when one's manhood is called into question: "The stakes of perceived sissydom are enormous—sometimes matters of life and death. We take enormous risks to prove our manhood" (133). In this case, however, the boy does not die. A crowd whisks the boy off: "The crowd moved as one with the boy, a screaming, gesticulating mass. And then the whole thing disappeared into one of the round wood houses behind them and the shore was quiet again and all of it had happened so fast wondered if she had dreamed it also until she saw the smaller boy in the distance, walking west along the shore" (139). This scene that mixes sports with violence skillfully references Fidel's past, and the theme of masculinity comes full circle. The story drives home the message that men will not and cannot change until there is a profound reformulation of masculinity. Menéndez suggests that the Revolutionary Cuban family looks strikingly similar to its preRevolutionary predecessor, despite the Revolution's efforts to solve Cuba's problem of sexual inequality through the transformation of one of its most important institutions. But the story is even more pessimistic in its evaluation of the Revolutionary family. For if boys can at least prove their manhood through baseball and violence, girls do not have the chance of even getting into the game: "Can girls be baseball players?" Mirta asked. After a moment, hearing nothing from her mother, Mirta stopped walking and looked up at her" (140). Her mother's silent response conveys her negative answer; for the mother knows, just as surely as she and her daughter

were left on the beach that day, that the rules have not really changed. Her daughter's only consolation is that she gets to keep the photo of her father with the baseball bat: "Can I have the photo really?" she asks her mother (140). Mirta's relationship to her father is constituted through a photograph, a poignant symbol of her powerlessness. Though she has the photo, her father is absent and despite the fact that the written law assures her equality, she still has no real power. Thus Menéndez's text unearths the Revolution's enduring legacy of patriarchal power in its critique of a gender code that continues to value sexual conquest. By explicitly linking the performance of manhood in two different epochs through baseball, the story gloomily suggests that little boys, like Fidel, continue to grow up being just like their fathers.[43]

To conclude this chapter, I will briefly look at the song "Guillermo Tell" by popular Cuban *trovador*, Carlos Varela. The song exploits those discourses of masculinity, particularly regarding paternity, that have shaped Fidel. As we will see, it dares to contest and challenge them, creating a new counter-discourse that was to define Cuba during the 1990s. The song was released on Varela's 1989 album *Jalisco Park*, and at the time of the album's release Cuba was on the brink of the Special Period, a term first coined by Fidel in a speech on January 29, 1990. The leader, who foresaw the inevitable repercussions of the demise of the Soviet Union, called for a "special period in times of peace." As Robert Nasatir notes in his article, Cuban artists were given more artistic liberty during the Special Period: "within limits, Cuban artists were more critical than ever before, and these criticisms were often packaged as critiques of a past that had failed to bring about the desired future"

[43] See Alina Fernández's memoir *Castro's Daughter* to see how her relationship with her father changed. While Fidel was visibly absent throughout most of her childhood, as she got older she realized he was never really "absent". His people, such as chief intelligence officer José Abrantes, were constantly watching Alina.

(45-46). "Guillermo Tell" is a clear example of the kind of artistic expression that flourished during the Special Period. The song is Varela's most famous and its popularity is due, in large part, to its "thinly veiled protest" which is presented through an "unflattering parable about Fidel" (Bardach, *Without Fidel* 259).[44] Guillermo Tell is based on the Swiss mythical hero, William Tell, who was forced to shoot an apple off of his son's head. Tell, an excellent marksman, successfully shot the apple, sparing his son's life. Varela deftly employs the myth of William Tell to symbolize Fidel's relationship with the Cuban people. In Varela's version of this domestic metaphor, William Tell is Fidel and his son is Cuba. As Nasatir has influentially argued, the notion of the family situated on a national scale is commonplace in Varela's *oeuvre*:

> His most enduring metaphor, one that he approaches from different angles throughout his canon, namely, the family as surrogate for the Revolution. Simply put, in his most important songs, Carlos Varela makes sense of the Revolution and his relationship to it in the Special Period through similes drawn from domestic life: the Revolution as lover, mother, and father. (49-50)

Nasatir believes that the song's protagonist Guillermo Tell is representative of the older generation of Cubans, while his son represents the younger generation who desires a break with the past. This interpretation is naïve and other scholars, including Bardach, believe that the song more directly references Fidel, which would explain why Varela is often denied permits to perform and would also explain the song's popularity: "It there is one song for which Carlos Varela will be remembered, it is "Guillermo Tell." That is not to say that it is his best song…rather, "Guillermo Tell" is the song that connected with his public in a way that none of his other songs did before or have since" (Nasitir 57). Nasatir argues that Varela

[44] In fact, he re-released a live version of the song on his album *Los hijos de Guillermo Tell* in 2004.

rewrites the William Tell myth, seeking to make sense of a now fragile Revolution through a father and son's relationship. In Varela's song, however, the myth is turned on its head; it is the son's turn, the song says, to demonstrate his skill and courage by shooting the apple off the father's head:

> Guillermo Tell no comprendió a su hijo
> que un día se aburrió de la manzana en la cabeza
> y echó a correr y el padre lo maldijo
> pues cómo entonces iba a probar su destreza.
> Guillermo Tell, tu hijo creció
> quiere tirar la flecha,
> le toca a él probar su valor
> usando tu ballesta.

The first verse emphasizes brokenness. Fidel, the father, does not understand his son, the Cuban people who are tired of playing the same old game. In fact, the song says, some have chosen to even run away, which hints at the thousands of Cubans who took to the waters in the 1990s in hopes of reaching U.S. soil. These children are cursed, and so are those that remain behind, because Fidel is unwilling to trade places with his son. In other words, Fidel desires to continue ruling Cuba the same way that he always has, in spite of the fact that his way may not have succeeded. The song likens Fidel to an authoritative father who has complete control over his child and is unwilling to give him the slightest amount of freedom. Fidel's power hinges on the exploitation of this power and he fears losing it. For how else, the song says, will he be able to prove his skill and valor? But that child has grown up and, as Nasatir notes, he now wants to seize "the source of his father's strength, his power, and

turn it against him. It also implies that he wants to disarm –that is, emasculate—the father" (56). In my reading of the song, the emasculation of the father is even bolder given the fact that Guillermo Tell is Fidel. In the disarmament of the father, the song signals a loss of power, exposing the way in which Fidel's power rests on a Revolutionary discourse that employs notions of masculinity in its construction of the leader. Those discourses of paternity, symbolized by Guillermo Tell shooting the apple off his son's head, work to maintain Fidel's power by legitimizing his right to govern and discipline the nation like a father who knows best. The song, however, boldly challenges Fidel's paternal rights, and by extension his masculinity, demanding a new set of rights for his children.

The second and third verses continue to portray this symbolic battle for power between father and son. The second verse continues with the theme of misunderstanding. It is unclear to Guillermo Tell who would be the target of his son's arrow:

Guillermo Tell no comprendió el empeño
pues quién se iba a arriesgar al tiro de esa flecha
y se asustó cuando dijo el pequeño
ahora le toca al padre la manzana en la cabeza.

The son's answer scares his father. As Nasatir notes, this verse is received with great enthusiasm by the audience: "the identification with this song on the part of young Cubans is underscored by the audience's reaction to these lines on the live recording. When Varela arrives at the words, 'Ahora le toca al padre la manzana en la cabeza,' the audience spontaneously sings along with him and then bursts into cheers and applause" (57). The identification is clear: the audience recognizes that they are the son and Fidel is their father, in this domestic metaphor that has gone on too long. If Varela's second verse is rebellious

and dares to question authority, the third verse returns to the status quo; the father will remain in control:

> A Guillermo Tell no le gustó la idea
> y se negó a ponerse la manzana en la cabeza
> diciendo que no era que no creyera
> pero qué iba a pasar si sale mal la flecha.

By refusing to place the apple on his head, the father exposes himself as a coward, unable to do that which he has repeatedly asked of his son. Thus, even though Guillermo Tell refuses to give his son the bow, Varela's song still takes a jab at Fidel by questioning his masculinity. Fidel, the song suggests, rules Cuba like an authoritarian father controls his family, because he is ultimately afraid of what his children might do if given the opportunity to wield the bow.

To be sure these texts and images of Fidel's paternity offer diverging perceptions, but all are remarkably consistent in signaling the centrality of fatherhood in the Cuban leader's representation and suggest that the notions of fathering and nationhood were never truly separate. Rather, these texts, photos, and song demonstrate how notions of masculinity—specifically paternity— have been inextricably linked to the construction of Fidel's role as national patriarch. As this chapter has demonstrated, these representations of paternity have been central to the maintenance of Fidel's power, for by installing himself as patriarch, the Cuban leader gained access to the most private and intimate of spheres: the home.

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CHAPTER FIVE

STOKING THE FLAMES OF NATIONAL DESIRE:

IRRESISTIBLE ROMANCE AND THE LONELY MAN

"In a sense…what happened to me, the falling in love with Fidel, was the experience of my entire generation. Remember his triumphant arrival in Havana, the crowds cheering? Weren't most of us in love with Fidel?"[45]
~Naty Revuelta, Fidel's former lover

In honor of the Federation of Cuban Women's fiftieth anniversary (*Federación de las Mujeres Cubanas*, referred to as FMC hereafter), women marched to the beat of their patriarchs, literally.[46]

(Figure 5.1 Unidas por la patria)

As the poster from the event demonstrates, women held up photos of Raúl and Fidel, boldly declaring they were "united for the homeland." In juxtaposing Cuba's two patriarchs with their female patriots, the poster leads us to question the manner in which these women are

[45] In *Havana Dreams* by Wendy Gimbel (48).
[46] This poster was a fixture during the anniversary, which was celebrated on August 23, 2011. During the ceremony it was draped prominently on the stage. For more information and to see the stage and image see Luis Digna's article "Aniversario 50 de la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas: ¡Seguiremos adelante!" on the *Mujeres* website.

"united." For whom are they united? The patria, or the Castro brothers? Commenting on the FMC's fiftieth anniversary, Maria Salome Campanioni from Radio Cubana brings us closer to answering this question when she writes in her article "Mujeres cubanas" (2010): "Esas son nuestras mujeres cubanas, grandes damas que con su enorme sonrisa han llevado en su mochila medio siglo de amor y entrega a Fidel, a la Revolución, y a la Patria." In formulating Cuban women's love and surrender first to Fidel, then to the Revolution, and lastly to the homeland, the author, like the poster, demonstrates the ways in which the Cuban Revolution inserted its patriarch into the public space of patriotic duty as well as into the private space of passion, by mapping patriotic desire on Fidel's body.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to explore the ways in which women engaged the Revolution and helped construct it through their expression of patriotism, which, as we shall see, was a profoundly gendered process configured around the ideas of passion and sexuality. I begin by historically contextualizing feminine desire and sexuality in preRevolutionary and Revolutionary Cuba and note that the Revolution's efforts to eliminate sexual inequality were for the most part unsuccessful. While critics like Alfred Padula and Lois Smith have recognized the fact that Fidel's control over institutions like the FMC has actively thwarted these efforts that the Revolution pretended to espouse, no one has yet considered the role that representations of Fidel's masculinity – in particular his sexuality – has played in failing to Revolutionize images of female sexuality. Central to this argument is the intersection of *eros* and *polis*, which has been neatly folded into a mythical Revolutionary romance between Fidel and Cuba. Despite the fact that the *Comandante* has been in a relationship since the 1960s with one woman— Dalia del Soto, with whom he has five sons— Fidel continues to play the role of Cuba's irrevocable "lonely man," to quote one of his children, Alina

Fernández Revuelta.[47] Indeed, since the beginning of the Revolution, Fidel has symbolically been "wed" to Cuba in an exclusive and fruitful romance.[48] Cuban exile Mirta Ojito's 2005 memoir *Finding Mañana* sheds light on this romance when she relates, "In the Cuba of the 1970s, even children knew that no loyalty was more important than that owed to Fidel Castro and the Revolution. Before I learned my multiplication tables, I had memorized Che's final letter to Castro…. [I]n school we were made to memorize slogans such as 'Fidel es mi papá y Cuba es mi mamá'" (21). Ojito's chant symbolically weds Fidel to Cuba through a chaste set of nuptials signaling the creation of Cuba's new foundational narrative. If, as Doris Sommer has influentially argued, Cuba's nineteenth-century foundational fictions sought to metaphorically unify the nation through their romance of star-crossed lovers, the Cuban Revolution rewrites that romances by bringing the nation together under Fidel, who emerges as the national patriarch bound to Cuba. As the instrument of national amalgamation, Fidel's role as patriarch has been central to the construction of his masculinity as well as to the consolidation of his power. Through my examination of two poems identically titled "Canto a Fidel" by Pura del Prado (1957) and Carilda Oliver Labra (1957), I argue that, in subsuming his sexuality to the Revolution, Fidel models a new and chaste sexuality, which metaphorically combines private passion and patriotic duty. It is in this (con)fusion that Fidel ultimately emerges as the object of feminine desire in Oliver Labra's poem, and later in Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992).[49] Portrayed as an alluring and seductive

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[47] Personal interview with the author.

[48] No other woman, besides perhaps his aide and confidante, Celia Sánchez who died in 1980, has come close to securing the position of Cuba's first lady, but even then, Fidel and Celia's relationship was officially seen as platonic, a love consummated out of Revolutionary fervor. Some have said that Fidel and Celia were romantically involved, but these are unofficial rumors.

[49] The Cuban novel *En el año de enero* (1963) by José Soler Puig is similar to *Dreaming in Cuban* in its portrayal of gendered encounters between a fictional Fidel and women. However, I discovered this text too late to be included in this study. Like the women of *Dreaming in Cuban*, Niní has an erotic

presence, Fidel, thus imagined, invites a patriotic embrace that is markedly eroticized. By blending private passion with patriotic duty, these works hint at the fate of those women who may have been caught in both erotic and patriotic exchanges with the *Comandante*. In giving themselves to the Revolution, they ultimately gave themselves to the great patriarch whose simultaneous insertion into the private space of passion and the public space of duty stands as a bold metaphor for the Revolution's totalizing control over the female body.

Cuban Sexual Politics

In pre-Revolutionary Cuba— as in many other historically Catholic Latin-American countries— socio-political control over the female body relied on the perpetuation of two long-standing feminine archetypes: the virgin and the prostitute. In their salient work *Sex and Revolution: Women in Socialist Cuba* (1996), Lois Smith and Alfred Padula allude to this when they pose the question, "what was the situation of Cuban women before 1959?". To be sure, the question they posed was complex—appropriately so, given the wide range of answers they discovered— but interestingly, the responses reflected the feminine paradigm to which I just alluded. For example, Batista's ex-foreign minister once commented that he had been brought up "to revere women" because "she was a sacred creature and it was her right to have precedence in all things" while the Revolution's leading journalist, Mirta Rodríguez Calderón, believed that the poor prostitute from the countryside best embodied the pre-

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attraction to Fidel. She obsessively watches him on television, which ultimately affects her sexual relations with her lover, Felipe Montemayor, a wealthy man who is against the Revolution. In what plays out in the novel, Niní falls for a *barbudo*, transferring her attachment from Fidel to the rebel soldier (even though she is ultimately disappointed that even he is not quite like Fidel). She helps the rebel soldier conspire in a plot against Felipe; when she is discovered, Niní cries for help screaming "¡Fidel!". In the end, it is clear that Niní's future with the rebels is not much different than her life with Felipe. Like *Dreaming in Cuban*, the novel suggests that the Revolution has not brought sexual equality

Revolutionary Cuban woman in need of state-sponsored redemption (7-8). Clearly, both remarks underscore the fundamental role that socioeconomic status played in constructing useful archetypes of womanhood. As we will see, the image of the prostitute was a central feature in Revolutionary rhetoric, which employed her in its allegory of the nation, casting pre-Revolutionary Cuba as the decadent whore and Fidel as the pure and redeeming hero; but these competing images of the revered woman and prostitute adhere to a common paradigm in Latin America where the Catholic Church has heavily influenced conceptions of femininity. As Smith and Padula observe, this was the case in Cuba, particularly among the white middle and upper socioeconomic classes. As the embodiment of the sexual ideal, the Catholic Madonna represented the desired hegemonic model for womanhood: "the Virgin Mary was the ostensible role model for Cuban women…Mary the mother, Mary the powerless, Mary without sexual instincts, the servant of men" (8). In constructing codes of femininity that perfectly conflated notions of sexual purity and motherhood, the image of the Virgin Mary left little room for sexual behavior. Mary's containment of sexual desire thus suggests the anxiety around which perceptions of female sexuality were formed. Unbridled female sexuality was perceived as a threat and, in an effort to contain that threat, the prostitute served as an apt representation for those fallen women whose uncontrollable sexuality had led them astray. Undoubtedly, the construction of these two feminine archetypes placed women in a rigid paradigm akin to a gendered straitjacket that served to define and restrain female libido.

In contrast to these prevailing images of womanhood, an ideal man was defined by his sexual prowess. Smith and Padula observe this marked distinction: "men were perceived as impulsive and dominated by sexual drives, and it was women's duty to accept and forgive

this moral weakness. Men were sexual, women spiritual" (8). Indeed, sexuality played a key part in conceiving masculinity, specifically Cuban masculinity, as Aloyma Ravelo has observed in her study: "El hombre cubano es, desde niño, socializado para demostrar su hombría y poder sexual, a partir de sus dimensiones penianas" (240). Given that Cuban masculinity was configured around the size of a man's sexual organ, as Ravelo has suggested, there is little wonder that a myth of Cuban male sexuality was cultivated. According to González Pagés, this myth presents Cuban males as extraordinary sexual partners whose sexual organs are imagined as epic: "Nosotros tenemos toda una mítica vinculada con la sexualidad y el supuesto extraordinario comportamiento de los hombres cubanos, fomentando con imaginarios que le dan atributos de excepcionalidad a sus penes" (65). This myth of Cuban male hypersexuality encouraged men to freely express their sexual desire. In fact, Smith and Padula note that men "were pressed by their peers and the song of the heroic culture to make conquests, to raid the nests of others, seducing women as a proof of virility, as a natural expression of their irrepressible sexuality" (169). In referring to Cuba's "heroic culture," Smith and Padula define Cuba's sexual landscape by likening it to conquest. In a culture whose definitions of heroism and sexuality are closely bound, the male hero's feats are waged in the bedroom just as they are on the battlefield.

But while men were encouraged to heroically conquer women, their masculine honor was also dependent upon their ability to protect the sexual purity of female relatives (Smith and Padula 169). For González Pagés, this display of masculine honor is intimately related to machismo. The roots of the macho's identity, he tells us, are found in the juxtaposition of conquest and purity: "se asocia a la imagen de 'macho', el cual tiene muchas mujeres, protege su 'honra' y llega a vivir situaciones de violencia a través de peleas o duelos con sus

enemigos. De ahí que, bajo la óptica del machismo, los hombres son 'depredadores sexuales' y las mujeres 'puras' e 'inocentes'" (39). In this upholding of the machista cultural tradition of honor, González Pagés influentially argues that the line distinguishing the private from the public sphere became acute. The home, he says, was a woman's space while men filled the public sphere:

> De acuerdo con la cultura machista, el comportamiento adecuado de una mujer es quedarse en la casa, mientras que el hombre demuestra su virilidad conquistando a otras mujeres—la mayor cantidad que pueda—y teniendo muchos hijos. Así, para el machismo, 'el hombre de verdad' es aquel que defiende la 'honra' de las mujeres de su familia, su esposa, sus hermanas y su madre. Ellas deben ser 'puras'. (39)

Machismo, then, had an operative function in establishing a politics of sexuality that organized a hierarchy of power along patriarchal lines. In confining women to the private sphere, men exercised power over women and, as a result, ensured the maintenance of patriarchal tradition.

From the early days of the Revolution, it was clear that its leaders claimed to attach great importance to women's roles, but their sexual politics were ambiguous at best. The Revolution sought to transform Cuba's sexual landscape, challenging traditional notions of sexuality. In shaping a new Revolutionary sexuality, the regime legalized abortion, encouraged birth control, and, through sexual education materials, it promoted the idea that women were sexual beings. As Smith and Padula duly note, these efforts undermined notions of patriarchal sexuality: "The new socialist code called for an elimination of the sexual double standard, the establishment of monogamy, and sincere attempts at mutual sexual satisfaction, all anathema to patriarchal traditionalism" (175). In advocating for

women's sexual rights, the Revolution ultimately undermined traditional female archetypes, the virgin and whore, whose existence had helped maintain patriarchal ideas of sexuality. Those feminine archetypes, however, continued to persist in spite of the Revolution's zeal for reform, as Smith and Padula observe: "Castro would attempt to mold sexuality to serve the Revolution, but it would not be easy to 'constructively' remodel this most personal of all activities" (169). The Catholic code continued to influence women's sexuality since women were still judged according to "traditional concepts of appropriate behavior" (177). While the FMC's president Vilma Espín, Raúl Castro's wife, was outspoken regarding this double standard, arguing that "the idea that men should have sexual experiences before marriage but women shouldn't presented a 'mathematical problem' and was 'totally absurd,'" Espín was not in a position to establish a feminist organization whose purpose would be to bring true gender equality. Indeed, the FMC, which was inaugurated on August 23, 1960 at the request of Fidel himself, was not a feminist organization, but rather played an important role in harnessing women's Revolutionary zeal shortly after the war. The year 1960 saw the creation of various organizations such as the FMC whose purpose was to integrate more Cubans into the Revolution. Thus, as Smith and Padula note, the FMC's task was two-fold: at the same time that it addressed sexual discrimination, it was also "designed to mobilize and monitor an important sector of society" (36). A woman's participation in the FMC was indicative of her incorporation into the Revolution, which was an important factor in determining if she was worthy to receive the state's help on issues such as housing or landing a promotion at work. While the FMC also helped women in other ways, such as developing a national day care system, Smith and Padula are correct in their observation that the Federation's primary goal was to mobilize women and shape their political consciousness. In

addition, and perhaps more importantly, they note that the Revolution's campaign for sexual equality ultimately failed because its male- dominated leadership was unable to distribute power (182). More specifically, they say, power was embodied in one central figure, Fidel Castro:

> the reins of power in Revolutionary Cuba were not only male dominated, they were in the hands of one man, Fidel Castro. Without the establishment of autonomous institutions, socialism in Cuba became a camouflage to legitimize the lifelong reign of the caudillo. In such a system women remain effectively minors, beneficiaries of the goodwill and interest of the patriarch. (182-183)

Thus in trying to stave off patriarchy's yoke, the Revolution installed its very own patriarch, which reinforced disparate preRevolutionary power structures between men and women. In this glaring paradox, Fidel, Cuba's leading 'feminist', championed sexual equality, declaring that women's changing role in Cuba was a "Revolution within a Revolution!".[50] Indeed, it was Fidel, more than any other figurehead, who defined the contours of the nation's new feminist politics, as Smith and Padula observe:

> To a large degree women in Cuba were lucky in that women's advancement was of interest to the patriarch. Thus from the beginning were encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities that established new, more independent, and more militant images of womanhood. Fidel Castro was an attentive participant in national

[50] Fidel declared this famous phrase on December 9, 1966 upon closing a meeting of the FMC: "Este fenómeno de las mujeres en la revolución es una revolución dentro de otra revolución. Si nos preguntaran qué es lo más revolucionario que está haciendo la revolución, responderíamos que es precisamente esto: ¡la revolución que está teniendo lugar en las mujeres de nuestro país!". See the book *Las mujeres en Cuba: Haciendo una revolución dentro de la revolución, de Santiago de Cuba y el Ejército Rebelde a la creación de la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas* by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, and Yolanda Ferrer for more information.

> gatherings on women's status. Consequently, Cuban laws and policies advanced beyond what might be called minimum ideological requirements. (183)

Playing the part of Cuba's feminist patriarch offered Fidel an ideal way to configure his masculinity. In this context, feminist rhetoric glossed over patriarchal power, which stymied any real hope for redefining traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. In their groundbreaking research, then, Smith and Padula are left to conclude:

> Cuban women were isolated by the very ideology that purported to liberate them. All ideas that did not encourage women to march as commanded by the great patriarch, the *comandante*, were deemed 'diversionary,' enemy propaganda. The Revolution presented women as a group united in purpose and belief, infinitely loyal to Castro…[T]his monolithic image of Cuban women was far from the case, however. (183)

In what follows, I would like to further Smith and Padula's observations in examining the way in which the Revolution presented women's embrace of Fidel, and I will suggest that this was a profoundly gendered process that hinged on reconfiguring meanings of masculinity, patriotism, and eroticism. Some scholars have noted an erotic element to Fidel's power.[51] For example, Damián Fernández has observed how "for women, the revolutionaries incited romantic feelings" (75). For her part, Ruth Behar has also noted how the FMC's Vilma Espín "has spoken of the relation between Fidel and Cuban women in highly erotic terms" (141). Behar goes on to quote Espín: "As for the affection our people have for Fidel, it is something intimate. And the women know how to express it so well!...what excited happiness there is when Fidel arrives! Each one wants to kiss him, hold his hand" (qtd. in

[51] Carrie Hamilton also perceives a "romantic" element in her anthropological study *Sexual Revolutions in Cuba*, where she observes that many of the people she interviewed spoke "of the 'love' for the man whom they typically call 'Fidel'" (66).

Behar 141-142). While these scholars have pointed to this important aspect of Fidel's power, they have failed to elaborate on it and comment on its implications. Thus in this chapter I want to extend these initial reflections. In Revolutionary Cuba, I argue, patriotism was at the forefront in defining both the patriarch's and his followers' sexuality, which, as we will see, led to the (con)fusion of private passion and patriotic duty, forging deep attachments between Fidel, Cuba, and female compatriots through the eroticization of patriotism.

Patriotic Eroticism

One of the ways in which Revolutionary discourse has configured Fidel's sexuality is through a narrative project whose aim is to revise Cuba's foundational narrative by inscribing the young rebel hero into the nation through his demonstration of patriotic love. Central to this narrative is its national allegory that pits Batista's moral degeneracy against Fidel's moral purity. In this narrative, pre-Revolutionary Cuba symbolically emerges as a prostitute, having whored herself out to Americans who have reduced her to a playground of brothels, casinos, and gangsters.[52] Through the analysis of Pura del Prado's "Canto a Fidel," we will see how this exchange of degeneracy and purity is configured around notions of sexuality in its employment of a metaphor that compares Cuba's corruption to a woman's stained sexual honor. Within this metaphor, Fidel's redemption of Cuba's violated body transposes the individual *machista* code of honor onto a national scale, working to cement Fidel's role as national patriarch whose creation signals the preservation of a patriarchal gender order. Moreover, through his rescue, Fidel becomes symbolically bonded to Cuba in an eternal love affair, and, as a result, lays the groundwork for Cuba's new foundational narrative through its allegory of patriotic love. Through the analysis of a second poem, Oliver Labra's "Canto a

[52] The Revolution has long insisted on this interpretation of the Batista regime.

Fidel," we will see how this national allegory inscribed a Revolutionary sexuality on Fidel, which, in its union of eroticism and patriotism, created a channel of desire between Fidel and his female followers. As the emblem of patriotic desire, Fidel reigned as the national patriarch, consolidating his power through a sexually charged circuit.

Pura del Prado's "Canto a Fidel Castro," which was penned on May 20, 1957, sheds light on this national allegory in plotting Fidel's Revolution as a progression towards Cuba's moral restoration.[53] Del Prado was a famous Cuban poet who spent a little more than half of her life in exile because of her Revolutionary activities in the 26th of July movement during the 1950s. The poem's first eight stanzas contain an alternating rhyme scheme with four lines each, while the remainder of the poem is made up of 10-line stanzas. The first two stanzas describe Fidel's childhood, and the poet postulates a deep connection between the young boy and his environment,

> Palmas al sol, campiñas y montes orientales,
> te hicieron puro y claro como el agua encendida.
> Tienes no sé qué cosa de ceiba y maniguales
> donde la catarata suena a limpio y a vida.

The purity with which del Prado paints Fidel's childhood environment is of a virginal quality; it is a clean, innocent, and untouched land. In this way, the poet establishes an indissoluble bond linking Fidel with that same virginal quality. Fidel, like the nature that formed him, is pure. The next stanza synthesizes the theme of nature as virile:

> Tienes hasta las uñas de varón y hasta el trueno
> sobre la árida tierra se parece a tu hombría.

[53] "Canto a Fidel Castro" was later published in *Patria*, one of the movement's publications in New York, on October 25, 1957. The poem can also be found in a recent Cuban publication honoring Fidel's life, *Viaje a los frutos* (2006).

Ya nos cambias los gustos hasta en el pan moreno

porque todas las cosas saben a tu hidalguía.

In evoking the part of the body that evidences manual labor—his *uñas* or fingernails— the poem figuratively maps masculinity on Fidel's body, paving a ubiquitous trajectory that extends into nature's landscape. The direct appeal to Fidel's masculinity articulates the gendered approach in which the poem interprets the Cuban Revolution. In this interpretation, Fidel's masculinity emerges as central in the nation's new founding narrative because it has pervaded Cuba's landscape, literally in the form of roaring thunder (*el trueno*) as well as gastronomically, celebrating Cuba's rustic culinary habits (*hasta en el pan moreno*). A "taste" of Fidel's masculinity transforms the palate, in other words, to crave new meanings of manhood. Thus, in giving masculinity a new flavor, Fidel becomes Cuba's new craving, modeling a different way of being a man. Against this backdrop, Batista's Cuba is configured as a loose or "stained" woman prostituted to the sugar industry:

Viste un pueblo desolado

una caña de amargura, como de mujer impura

el patrio vientre manchado

te indignó de lado a lado

su mejilla de dolor

de frente a su abusador

Here the poem gives way to sexual metaphor in its substitution of a woman's impurity for national impurity. In syncretically joining the sweetness of sugar to bitterness, the poem critiques the Batista regime, which has permitted and encouraged American domination of Cuba's sugar industry, metaphorically raping and exploiting Cuba's body. In this

exploitation, Cuba's womb is symbolically stained, reducing her to a barren and abused woman at the hands of a merciless and greedy pimp, embodied in Batista's close association with the United States. Within this context rife with sexual metaphor, Fidel, outraged by the abuse, sees Cuba and rescues her. The poet makes clear that Fidel is Cuba's savior, a guardian of her honor. Due to his goodness and purity, he is chosen to remove her stain of dishonor:

> En la fila de ladrones
> tú no has formado jamás,
> Ni te compran los doblones
> Ni tienes un mal pasado,
> un pueblo desalentado
> se esperanza en que eres puro.
> De ti depende el futuro
> de nuestra fe, ten cuidado.

In the poet's declaration that Fidel is neither a thief (*en la fila de los ladrones, no te has formado nunca*) nor a criminal (*Ni tienes un mal pasado*), the rebel hero and his enemy, Batista, are increasingly polarized, suggesting that Fidel, unlike Batista, will not offer Cuba's body to the Americans whose exploitation of her natural resources is akin to rape. In interpreting Cuba's present crisis through the lens of sexual metaphor, the poem becomes associated with a much broader project of redefining masculinity. Cuba's violated body becomes the means through which the poet critiques the Batista regime's performance of manhood, which is perceived as sexually and morally corrupt. This sexual metaphor legitimizes Fidel's honorable masculinity and that of his bearded rebels. Moreover, Cuba's

violated body becomes an ideal space for writing Fidel into a new foundational narrative. By becoming a surface of meaning on which competing definitions of masculinity are inscribed, the nation's feminized body is attached to Fidel in a way that carries deep national meaning. Paradoxically, however, the new Revolutionary manhood is combined with a mainstay of Cuban masculinity, the *machista* cultural tradition of honor in which a man's masculine honor is dependent on female sexual purity. Ultimately, then, in trying to harness the "newness" of Fidel's masculinity, the poem's vocabulary recycles a familiar patriarchal discourse in its female allegory of a loose woman whose restoration of honor is dependent on a male hero. In teasing out the foundations of Cuba's new Revolutionary narrative, we can begin to perceive how its construction relied on a patriarchal gender order in its maintenance of masculine codes of honor, legitimizing a "new" masculinity, while carefully preserving vestiges of an old patriarchal order.

Nevertheless, the poem underscores how Fidel's conformity to that masculine code of honor is a central facet to his consolidation of power, serving as a powerful social cement that unites him and the Cuban people in a foundational romance,

> Me gusta saber que andando
> el tiempo tú subirás
> y no te corromperás
> porque crecerán tus hombros
> no para llevar escombros sino el amor de los más.

Because Fidel carries the weight of the peoples' love on his shoulders, his body acts a channel through which the Cuban people are united with him in an embrace that is filled with love and patriotism. In this way, the poem evokes the patriotic eroticism that is fundamental

to Fidel's construction of sexuality, and whose flammable concoction of private passion and public duty ignites an irresistible desire between him and his female compatriots. This exchange of patriotism and sexuality is clearly echoed in Carilda Oliver Labra's 1957 poem *Canto a Fidel*, which she penned after reading Herbert Matthews' article sometime around late February or early March of that year (Cairo 39). This particular *Canto a Fidel* played a greater role throughout the Revolution than did Pura del Prado's poem of the same year. It received immediate praise from Fidel and his guerrillas when the manuscript was carried to the Sierra Maestra in 1957. The guerrillas read the poem at the inauguration of the Tercer Frente Oriental Mario Muñoz of the *Radio Rebelde* on September 3, 1957 and later it was published in the newspaper *El Imparcial* on January 7, 1959. In 1997 Fidel surprised the author by greeting her at a homage celebrating the poem's forty-year anniversary; and the work has since then been interpreted by Cuban singer Miriela Mijares in 2006 and even recited in Venezuela's Teresa Carreño's theater in 2009 (Cairo 39). Written in the form of the décima, the poem foregrounds Fidel's sexuality, claiming it as a space through which female citizens exercise patriotism. In forging this link, the poem first connects Cuba to Fidel in a simple equation— Cuba is Fidel and Fidel is Cuba—in the opening stanza:

No voy a nombrar a Oriente,
no voy a nombrar la Sierra,
no voy a nombrar la guerra
--penosa luz diferente--,
no voy a nombrar la frente,
la frente sin un cordel,
la frente para el laurel,

a frente de plomo y uva:

voy a nombrar toda Cuba:

voy a nombrar a Fidel.

In employing terms that indicate Fidel's physical location—*oriente*, *sierra*, *guerra*, and *frente*—the poem suggests that the rebel leader does not symbolize a physical space, but rather a national space on which new meanings of nationhood are drawn. In this way, Cuba and Fidel become mutually dependent, laying the foundation for a new national romance. The poem promotes that patriotic romance by intimately linking Fidel's personal suffering to the present national crisis:

Por su insomnio y sus pesares

por su puño que no veis,

por su amor al veintiséis,

por todos sus malestares,

por su paso entre espinares

de tarde y de madrugada,

por la sangre del Moncada

y por la lágrima aquella

que habrá dejado una estrella

en su pupila guardada.

Like any star-crossed lover, Fidel fights for his beloved, the twenty-sixth of July rebel movement, despite the ineluctable peril that has left its mark on his body, signaled by blood (*la sangre del Moncada*) and tears (*la lágrima aquella*). Tied up in this new Revolutionary romance, however, is another one, which binds Fidel to his female followers through their

mutual code of honor. In the third stanza, every honorable girl claims Fidel as her boyfriend:

Ese Fidel insurrecto

respetado por las piñas,

novio de todas las niñas

que tienen el sueño recto.

This implosion of honor and subtle eroticism rewrites ideas of female and male sexuality. Because Fidel can only be bound to those women "que tienen el sueño recto," both the women and Fidel are redefined by their sexual honor and patriotism. Thus the poem begins to introduce its theme of patriotic eroticism. The notion of sexual honor reappears later in the poem:

Por el botón sin coser

que le falta sobre el pecho,

por su barba, por su lecho

sin sábana ni mujer

y hasta por su amanecer

con gallos tibios de horror

The bed "sin sábana ni mujer" reinforces the idea of sexual honor, which is then connected to patriotism:

yo empuño también mi honor

y le sigo a la batalla

en este verso que estalla

como granada de amor.

The practice of honor explodes in an orgasmic gesture of love. Through this combination of emotions, patriotism is eroticized and redefined as love for Fidel. In other words, one performs patriotism through loving Fidel, which here is represented as the tangible task of taking up arms and following him into battle. The poet closes by thanking Fidel for his honorable deeds, which have become conflated with conceptions of manhood:

> Gracias por ser de verdad,
>
> gracias por hacernos hombres…
>
> Gracias por tu dignidad,
>
> gracias por tu rifle fiel,
>
> por tu pluma y tu papel,
>
> por tu ingle de varón.

By invoking Fidel as the one who engenders real men, the rebel leader becomes the new symbolic center of Cuban national identity. Fidel, as the embodiment of this new identity, is defined by his dignity, which ultimately guides him in battles of traditional combat as well as those fought through pen and paper. By linking these honorable deeds with his "ingle de varón," a powerful image of male sexuality, the poem channels sexual energy behind a façade of patriotism. Fidel's embrace of the Revolution is decidedly gendered, rewriting a romance that is predicated on a politics of masculinity whose combination of private passion and patriotic duty has played a fundamental role in engaging women in the Revolution. Women are presented as intimately bound to their leader through a sexualized practice of patriotism that was erotically mapped on his body, while Fidel's own sexuality was totally subsumed to Cuba.

While this is the official Revolutionary myth regarding Fidel's sexuality, I would like to point out that behind this mark of officialdom lies another myth: the leader's larger-than-life sexual organs. Part of that myth, I submit, lies in his widely used nickname, *el caballo*. While it is unknown exactly how Fidel acquired this nickname, it is clear that the connotation of a horse—its strength and the size of its genitals—has become affixed to the leader.[54] For example, in his poem "Fidel" (*Gotán* 1962), Argentine Juan Gelman employs the nickname to connote strength: "dirán exactamente de fidel/ gran conductor el que incendió la historia etc./ pero el pueblo lo llama el caballo y es cierto/ fidel montó sobre fidel un día." For Gelman, Fidel the supernaturally strong spirit-demon took possession of the ordinary man Fidel's body: "fidel montó sobre fidel un día." Throughout the rest of the poem, Gelman exalts the Cuban leader's strength. Despite the fact that "el caballo" had this positive connotation, it is clear that the regime had a problem with the nickname. As Georgina M. Dopico Black notes in her article on Cuban censorship, Virgilio Piñera's poem "Paseo del Caballo" was censored in the early 1960s (even though it was written in 1943) because Fidel has become "disrespectfully known as 'el caballo'" (120). For example, in her memoir, *Blessed by Thunder*, Flor Fernández Barrios recalls how as a young girl she had speculated about Fidel's nickname, "el Caballo":

> I asked my mother if Fidel Castro had a large penis like Ernest's, since Fidel was referred to as 'el Caballo.' The answer my mother gave did not clear up my confusion, but a few days later, while I waited in line to buy milk, I overhead a conversation between two women. One of them whispered, 'Fidel has a big pinga.' The other woman turned to her friend and said, 'I heard he's twelve inches.' I

[54] Some believe it has to do with the fact that the horse was the symbol accompanying the number one on the Cuban lottery ticket, while others propose that the association has to do with Santería practice, wherein the person possessed by a spirit demon was called the "caballo" of that spirit.

> imagined his pinga, a slang word for penis, the length of my school ruler with disbelief. How could he possibly keep a big rabo like that inside his pants. (79)

Flor's childlike wonder at the size of Fidel's penis as well as the "rumors" hints at the erotic dimension of the leader's sexuality, which has circulated quietly but pervasively through the public sector.

Interestingly, however, the mention of Fidel's "cojones" are openly permitted and exalted in military marches. For instance, in her blog Cuban Yoani Sánchez posts a video of a military squad marching and chanting the following:

> Los yanquis tienen sayas,
> nosotros pantalones
> y tenemos un comandante
> que le roncan los cojones.[55]

In their feminizing the opposition (the United States) and hyper-masculinizing the Cuban leader, the martial song is a striking example of one of the ways in which Fidel's sexuality has been acceptably promoted. Unlike the horse connation, which implies penetration and insemination, the "cojones" song connotes bravery, buttressing his warrior persona as well as cementing his sexuality to patriotic devotion.

In her novel *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992), Cuban-American writer Cristina García boldly incorporates both of these aspects of Fidel's sexuality by portraying steamy erotic encounters with the *Comandante* that are interlaced with patriotic duty. With its own unique blend of magical realism and surrealism, García's novel sets out to narrate the lives of three generations of Cuban women: the matriarch Celia del Pino, her daughter Lourdes, and Lourdes's daughter Pilar. At the core of each woman's story looms the Cuban Revolution,

[55] This entry is dated April 13, 2011 and can be found on Yoani's blog.

an event that profoundly marks and radically shapes each generation. While Celia adheres to the principles of the Revolution, Lourdes leaves for New York with her husband and infant daughter, Pilar, soon after Fidel comes to power. The younger generation's move to the north manifests one of the novel's major themes: the fate of those families whose political allegiances are divided. Indeed, politics in large part structure the family's polemic in the novel by creating ideological divisions that aggravate the women's relationships with one another. Thus García employs the matriarchal lineage to explore the ways in which women engage the Cuban Revolution, which is ultimately structured by their relationship with the *Comandante*.

From the start of *Dreaming in Cuban*, Fidel's presence ubiquitously maps the landscape through which all three generations of women must navigate. Hence, their trajectories inevitably bring them face to face with the *Comandante*, and their encounters, as we will see, are decidedly erotic. The opening lines portray Celia as a dutiful Revolutionary enamored of patriotic duty:

> Celia de Pino, equipped with binoculars and wearing her best housedress and drop pearl earrings, sits in her wicker swing guarding the north coast of Cuba…Celia is honored. The neighborhood committee has voted her little brick-and cement house by the sea as the primary lookout for Santa Teresa del Mar. From her porch, Celia could spot another Bay of Pigs invasion before it happened. She would be feted at the palace, serenaded by a brass orchestra, seduced by El Líder himself on a red divan. (3)

As suggested by this passage, Celia's devotion to duty is really an occasion for imagined erotic encounters with El Líder. As she dons her best dress and pearl earrings, she is

primping for such an encounter as this. Thus, Fidel's presence is not only ubiquitous, but also erotic, saturating the landscape with sexual innuendo. It is within this context that Fidel, the figure whose presence courses invisibly throughout the novel's pages, speaks the first words in the novel. Fidel's voice fills the silence, giving meaning to Celia's actions. He urges his fellow comrades to defend their country against the Yankees: "Eleven years ago tonight, *compañeros*, you defended our country against American aggressors. Now each and every one of you must guard our future again. Without your support, *compañeros*, without your sacrifices, there can be no Revolution" (4). His words reveal one of the novel's major motifs: the patriotism that structures the del Pino family dynamic, dividing them into Fidelistas and non-Fidelistas. Just after hearing the *Comandante* on the radio, Celia primps again, "Celia reaches into her straw handbag for more red lipstick, then darkens the mole on her left cheek with a black eyebrow pencil…she wears leather pumps and her bright housedress" (4). This practice of patriotism redefines female sexuality in a way that bridges the public and private spheres. Celia's fetish of patriotism is only accentuated by the fact that she cannot hear the ghost of Jorge, her dead husband, who emerges from the shore, mouthing mute words. In the couple's inability to communicate with one another, we can discern the Revolution's destabilizing effect on the family. Indeed, Celia, the text says, is not even sad to learn of her husband's death, but rather is troubled by his past political infidelity to the homeland: "Celia grieves for her husband, not for his death, not yet, but for his mixed-up allegiances" (6). Jorge had left Cuba to live with his daughter, Lourdes, in New York, which is where he died while Celia remained in Cuba, unswerving in her faithfulness to Fidel.

The juxtaposition of Jorge's mute words with Fidel's patriotic rallying cry brilliantly frames the novel and articulates its theme of gendered and conflicted patriotism. In presenting these two men, one pre-Revolutionary and the other Revolutionary, the text evokes two masculine archetypes that ultimately control and shape Celia's life. Laura Alonso has influentially argued that conceptions of masculinity underwrite all of the relationships in the novel, arranging men and women in hierarchies of power. Those that have power, she argues, perform masculinity according to a specific or "macho" code, which she defines as "la expresión de la sexualidad; el control, la invulnerabilidad y la tendencia a ejecutar más que a comunicar, es decir, preferir la acción más a las palabras; la agresividad, que incluye la venganza y la violencia" (175). This code reveals a gender regime that breathes life into each relationship, shaping its contours and organizing patriarchal power, especially in relation to sexuality. Within this system, as Alonso correctly observes, women's identity is categorically configured around two archetypes, the honorable virgin and the loose whore:

> se cree que el gusto por el sexo no es femenino o cae en la categoría de prostitución. Aquella mujer que adopta un comportamiento sexual similar al del hombre, viola las leyes de la feminidad aceptada por la sociedad y pasa a ser una mujer de un rango inferior, de escaso valor; por el contrario, en el hombre tal comportamiento sigue apreciándose como meritorio y valioso. (181)

These two feminine archetypes figure prominently in García's text, constructing a sexual code through which the female protagonists navigate. Celia's navigation bridges the pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary settings that chronologically frame the novel. Thus the manner in which the first-generation matriarch expresses her sexuality with both Jorge and

Fidel becomes a brilliant comparative lens for analyzing conceptions of pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary patriotic sexuality within the framework of masculinity.

Prior to the Revolution, Celia had defied the patriarchal gender regime when she met Gustavo, a married man from Spain, and engaged in pre-marital sex. For Celia, her transgressive affair with Gustavo was marked by passion, during a period in which she freely expressed her sexuality. Thus just as García's text constructs gender boundaries, her feminine protagonists actively deconstruct them. According to Alonso, García's women are indecent, resisting the cultural codes placed before them: "transgresoras de su papel social, las coloca al nivel del varón: pierden su virginidad antes del matrimonio, disfrutan de su sexualidad sin remilgos" (181). Indeed, Celia and her daughters are all transgressors. Lourdes, for instance, has an insatiable sexual desire, the enactment of which her daughter, Pilar, overhears through the walls: "I hear her jumping my father night after night until he begs her to leave him alone. You never would have guessed it by looking at her"; Celia's second daughter Felicia, on the other hand, challenges her husband's authority in all three of her marriages (27). Felicia marries her first husband, Hugo, while she is pregnant with his twin daughters, and later, after having contracted syphilis from him, she burns his face and hands and tells him never to return. Her second husband, Ernesto, is a virgin until Felicia coaxes him into the backseat of a car where she actively initiates intercourse. Finally, she pushes her third husband to his death atop a roller coaster while performing oral sex. All three generations of women undermine the rigid sexual politics that shape their lives by playing the role of sexual predator. But while Felicia and Lourdes' obsession with sex helps them break free from social norms, we will see how Celia's practice of eroticized patriotism

with Fidel actually limited her sexual freedom despite the Revolution's espousal of sexual equality.

After Celia's marriage, however, her resistance evolves into a different, subtler defense in which she painstakingly tries to hold on to her passionate memories of Gustavo. After she has grieved over Gustavo's absence for an extensive period of time, Jorge invites Celia to write her lover a letter, and in the event Gustavo does not answer, he proposes that he and Celia marry. Before the wedding, Celia confesses to her future husband her deep passion for Gustavo, which we learn about in her letter to the Spaniard, to whom she secretly continues writing for twenty-five years on the eleventh day of every month: "I've told him about you, about our meetings in the Hotel Inglaterra. He tells me to forget you…I'm a prisoner on this island, Gustavo, and I cannot sleep" (49). Gustavo's departure also symbolically charts Celia's loss of sexual freedom, and, as a result, the young woman feels trapped, a prisoner bound by the sexual codes that society has inflicted on her. As a symbol for Celia's unrepressed sexual desire, Gustavo represents a threat to Jorge's ability to control Celia's sexuality. Jorge attempts to erase Gustavo from Celia's mind, or to shatter her past, as Celia puts it:

> Celia imagines her dead husband staring up at the shuttered windows, carrying a late-model electric broom. He studies the ornate balconies like a burglar, gazes through the blue panes of stained glass until he spots her with the Spaniard, naked and sharing a cigarette. She imagines him swinging the broom round and round in a quickening circle…swinging and swinging, then releasing the broom until it flies high above him, crashing through the window and shattering her past. (43)

Clearly, Celia's unrestrained fantasies about her lover unnerve her husband, even if they are imagined. In Jorge's effort to purge her memories of Gustavo, Celia writes that on their honeymoon "he kisses my eyes and ears, sealing them from you. He brushes my forehead with moist petals to wipe away memory" (49-50). Jorge's efforts represent a mechanism of control through which he attempts to regain control of his wife's body and, as discussed earlier in this chapter, uphold the *machista* notion of honor in which men defend the honor of their female relatives. In attempting to do so, Jorge places Celia in the home of his mother and sister who verbally abuse and mistreat his new bride until she eventually loses her mind, being forced into an asylum. In the asylum, the doctors exercise control over her body, probing her brain with instruments: "They burn my skull with procedures" she tells Gustavo, and "they tell me I'm improving" (51). At its birth at the end of the eighteenth century, the asylum, according to Michel Foucault in *Madness and Civilization*, represented an architecture of power that housed an intricate network of discipline and surveillance whose purpose was to morally rectify the madman. As an instrument of moral uniformity, "the asylum is a religious domain without religion, a domain of pure morality, of ethical uniformity…the great continuity of social morality" (148). In trying to mold the behavior of its madmen, the asylum "judged immediately, and without appeal. It possessed its own instruments of punishment, and used them as it saw fit" (155). *Dreaming in Cuban* employs the asylum as a brilliant metaphor of a gender code whose aim is to dictate Celia's sexual behavior, and, as society's moral keeper, Celia's entry into the asylum signals her violation of the code. Later, when Celia is a devoted Revolutionary, the "asylum" is disguised as Revolutionary devotion and is metaphorically installed in her bedroom in the form of Fidel's portrait, which surveillances her sexual activity. In pre-Revolutionary Cuba, however, Celia

must devote herself to her husband, Jorge, who is charged with keeping her sexually faithful. In an attempt to rectify her unrequited passion for Gustavo, Jorge first places her under his mother's care and then in the asylum where she undergoes shock therapy treatment. Celia's "madness," then, is undoubtedly gendered, structuring the asylum as a symbol of patriarchal power. This symbol is further evinced in Celia's friend's death. Felicia, Celia writes Gustavo, murdered her husband and later dies in the asylum: "I've made a friend here, Felicia Gutiérrez. She killed her husband. Doused him with gasoline. Lit a match. She is unrepentant. We're planning to escape…They killed Felicia. She burned in her bed. They say it was a cigarette but none of the guards will admit to giving her one" (51). Within this architectural metaphor for patriarchy, the asylum eliminates those women, like Felicia, whom it perceives as most threatening. In just the same way that her husband died, Felicia burns to death, symbolically extinguishing Celia's desire to escape. Thus Celia remains in the asylum, subjected to a treatment that is sure to set her on the path to model femininity.

Ultimately, however, the asylum fails in erasing Gustavo from Celia's memory, and, as a result, she continues writing him, signaling a form of resistance in which she privately engages her former lover with passion while withdrawing from her husband. Celia's resistance manifests her ability to navigate those structures of power that control her life, which, in this case, is Jorge. Moreover, she defies her maternal role by refusing to mother her first child, Lourdes, and Jorge takes to playing the role of mother to his daughter. In doing so, Celia—as well as her daughters with their respective husbands—enacts a masculine script, which, according to Alonso, simultaneously masculinizes them and feminizes their partners: "mientras que estas aparecen las más de las veces 'masculinizadas', asumiendo peculiaridades o comportamientos propios del hombre, los hombres de García son

rechazados, abandonados e incluso simbólicamente castrados por la mujer" (175). In symbolically castrating the men in their lives, García's female protagonists turn the gender regime on its head. In doing so, as Alonso observes, these women undermine traditional images of Cuban womanhood: "García desafía así la construcción femenina que caracteriza a la hembra como mansa y dócil, esa mujer cubana abnegada y olvidada de sí misma" (186). Indeed, Celia's affair and revenge on Jorge, coupled with her daughters' masculinized role in their relationships, certainly dismantle hegemonic conceptions of preRevolutionary femininity, which as we have seen, reinforced the age-old virgin/whore binary.

But Alonso's argument is only partially correct because she fails to take into consideration Fidel's relationships with the women on the island, specifically Celia and Felicia whose erotic encounters with El Líder reshape their practice of patriotism and sexuality in such a way that they find themselves powerless, unable to challenge the Revolution's newly constructed patriarchal regime that centered all of its power into the one great patriarch, Fidel. The Revolution forged its own brand of sexual politics, which was intimately connected to the *Comandante* whose embodiment of Revolutionary masculinity signaled the insertion of patriotism into the sexual sphere. In binding public duty to this most intimate and private setting, García's image of the *Comandante* brilliantly brings to light the Revolution's consolidation of power, which aimed to control every aspect of Cubans' lives, even the most private ones. Within this newly fashioned architecture of interwoven public and private space, which folded eroticism into patriotic practice, we can begin to discern the Revolution's discourse of sexual equality through its patriarchal embodiment in the person of Fidel, and we can better understand the resilience of patriarchal gender regimes.

From the beginning of the novel, the text closely links patriotism and sexuality. As we have already seen, for example, Celia imagines being seduced by her leader while guarding the coast. This link, however, can be traced to the novel's preRevolutionary setting before Celia ever envisions an erotic encounter with her *Comandante*. Indeed, the text initially forges this connection with Gustavo, Celia's lover, whose gifts physically symbolize both his love and his patriotic fervor: "He brought her butterfly jasmine, the symbol of patriotism and purity, and told her that Cuba, too, would one day be free of bloodsuckers" (36). Gustavo's choice of Cuba's national flower, the butterfly jasmine, is associated with Cuba's earlier wars for independence during which women, sympathetic to the rebel cause, had adorned their hair with the flower, allowing them to conceal and transport messages. Thus the butterfly jasmine's deep whiteness came to signify purity, and the women's practice endowed it with patriotic significance (Henken 21). In this way, Gustavo's flower lays the groundwork for Celia's simultaneous sexual and political awakening. If on the one hand he sparks Celia's passion by sexually initiating her on the other hand, he represents her political consciousness, guiding her in the ways of patriotism. Gustavo's political guidance can be gleaned from another one of Celia's letters, which she writes just after Batista takes power: "that bastard Batista stole the country from us just when it seemed things could finally change. The U.S. wants him in the palace. How else could he have pulled this off? I fear for my son, learning to be a man from such men. You'd be proud of me, *mi amor*. Last month I campaigned for the Orthodox Party" (162). Celia's letter, rife with political rebelliousness, resounds with the same gender-infused national sentiment that characterized the butterfly jasmine. It is in supporting the Orthodox Party, then, that Celia takes her first patriotic step, which is sure to make her politically conscious lover proud, and will inevitably

drive her to the arms of Fidel in a sultry patriotic embrace. For Fidel played an important role in the Orthodox party, whose members considered the Batista coup a preservation of the American influence in Cuba that prohibited the island from exercising true economic independence and political freedom. The novel thus views U.S. influence in Cuba through a gendered lens, employing definitions of masculinity in order to define independence and freedom.

Celia's husband, Jorge, dedicated his career to proving that his Cuban manhood was equal to that of an American man:

> For many years before the Revolution, Jorge had traveled five weeks out of six, selling electric brooms and portable fans for an American firm. He'd wanted to be a model Cuban, to prove to his gringo boss that they were cut from the same cloth. Jorge wore his suit on the hottest days of the year, even in remote villages where the people thought he was crazy. He put on his boater with its wide black band before a mirror, to keep the angle just shy of jaunty. (6)

Parallel to Cuba's political and economic dependence on North America, pre-Revolutionary Cuban masculinity also drew heavily on the North American presence, constructing a masculinity that was considerably compromised. Celia clearly intuits America's influence in shaping the Cuban masculinity of the Batista era when she voices to Gustavo her fears of raising her son under these men in power. In this way, Celia's political preoccupations become inextricably linked to definitions of masculinity. Her political endeavors are shaped by her need to find the right man to facilitate change— in short, a man strong enough to stave off American aggressors.

The novel manifests Celia's search for this man through its motif of waiting. Celia, it says, has spent most of her life waiting: "The waiting began in 1934, the summer before she married Jorge del Pino… it seems to her that she has spent her entire life waiting for others, for something or other to happen. Waiting for her lover to return from Spain. Waiting for the summer rains to end. Waiting for her husband to leave on his business trips so she could play Debussy on the piano" (35). 1934 marks the year that Gustavo left for Spain, leaving Celia heart-broken and devoid of passion. Thus, her waiting symbolizes an intense longing to return to the man with whom she had experienced unbridled sexual freedom. This motif of waiting is further demonstrated in the figure of Cuba's first woman governor, Doña Inés Bobadilla, whom Celia passes one night on her way to the Hotel Inglaterra where she and Gustavo had made love on multiple occasions. The novel recuperates the legend of Doña Inés who, it is believed, "was frequently seen staring out to sea, searching the horizon for her husband. But de Soto died on the banks of the Mississippi River without ever seeing his wife again" (43). In the same way that Cuba's governor looks out to sea for her husband, Celia wanders the streets of Havana, directionless, waiting for a passion that she once possessed and a man with whom she can possess it. And it is Fidel, more than any other man, who is poised to fill the space left by Gustavo, a space which, as we have seen, combines eroticism with patriotism. For Celia, Fidel is comparable to Gustavo: "their leader is a young lawyer, like you were once, Gustavo, idealistic and self-assured" (163). Moreover, Celia imagines him to be virile enough to thwart off American control forever: "The rebels attacked again, this time in Oriente. They're hiding in the Sierra Maestra. People say the rebel leader sleeps in his uniform and olive cap, that his hair and beard are one, like a bear's, and his eyes are just as fearless" (208). Fidel's iconic green fatigues and beard, coupled with his mystifying

strength, point to the formation of Cuba's new emerging Revolutionary masculinity. The masculinity that was forged in the mountains by the guerrillas was no longer a compromised one, like that of Jorge, but rather emerged as independent and uncompromising in its negotiations with the U.S.

With Fidel emerging as the new gendered model of national subjectivity, the Revolution carved out a fresh space for redefining conceptions of Cuban manhood as well as womanhood. Celia is enthusiastic about this political—as well as gendered—change that has occurred in her country. No longer fearful for her son growing up under Cuba's new men, she dresses him in the Pioneers uniform with pride, and envisions him as the masculine version of herself: "Celia rummages through her nightstand drawer for her favorite photograph of her son. He is tall and pale as she is, with a mole on his left cheek identical to hers. Javier is wearing his Pioneers uniform, bright and new as the Revolution, as his optimistic face" (118). Celia's and her son's support for the Revolution produces friction between them and Jorge: "Those first years were difficult, not because of the hardships or the rationing that Celia knew were necessary to redistribute the country's wealth, but because Celia and Javier had to mute their enthusiasm for El Líder. Her husband would not tolerate praise of the Revolution in his home" (118). Jorge's controlling presence prevents Celia from openly supporting El Líder within or beyond the domestic sphere, and it is only once he dies that she can give herself to the Revolution. Indeed, after his death, Celia does just this:

> Celia hitchhikes to the Plaza de la Revolución, where El Líder, wearing his customary fatigues, is making a speech…Celia makes a decision. Ten years or twenty, whatever she has left, she will devote to El Líder, give herself to his Revolution. Now that

> Jorge is dead, she will volunteer for every project—vaccination campaigns, tutoring, the microbrigades. (44)

In dedicating herself to the Revolution, Celia ultimately gives herself to Fidel, symbolizing the end of her waiting. No longer the directionless weathervane, she stands firmly devoted and pointed toward Fidel. Within her newly forged patriotism, Celia also forges a new womanhood, one that situates her in a position of power within her community: "since her husband's death, Celia has devoted herself completely to the Revolution. Celia del Pino settles on a folding chair behind a card table facing the audience. It is her third year as a civilian judge. Celia is pleased. What she decides makes a difference in others' lives, and she feels part of a great historical unfolding" (111). As a judge, Celia wields influence over her community by shaping men and women into model Revolutionaries. In one particular case this extends into the very private sphere of sexuality, when one wife accuses another woman of seducing her husband. During the trial the wife calls the other woman a *puta*, or whore, echoing the familiar preRevolutionary virgin/whore binary; but Celia, knowing the man to be a regular Don Juan, demands that the seducer come forth and confess, which he does. Celia's judgment displaces preRevolutionary notions of male sexuality by laying blame on the seducer for his conquest and removing the *puta* label from the falsely accused woman. Moreover, Celia's punitive sentence subverts traditional images of manhood by forcing the accused man to work with babies: "you will be the first man to ever work there, *compañero*" Celia tells him, "and I will be checking up to see that your behavior is one of a model Socialist man in all respects" (116). Celia's trial is infused with gendered discourse, mapping the contours for Cuba's new Socialist man and woman whose sexuality was now held in check by the state. The new sexual landscape in which Celia navigates is more

appealing to the matriarch, in comparison to that of preRevolutionary Cuba: "what would have been expected of her twenty years ago?... to baby-sit her grandchildren and wait for death? She remembers the gloomy letters she used to write to Gustavo before the Revolution, and thinks of how different the letter would be if she were writing today" (111). Without a doubt the matriarch of the del Pino family acknowledges and embraces her newly forged Revolutionary womanhood in her performance of patriotism, and, as a result, she no longer pines for her long-lost lover. The Revolution sustains her passion.

At the center of Celia's Revolutionary passion looms Fidel, who beckons her to set aside her needs and follow him. In her devotion, she complies with his demands: "when El Líder needed volunteers to build nurseries in Villa Clara province, Celia joined a microbrigade…when he launched a crusade against an outbreak of malaria, Celia inoculated schoolchildren. And every harvest, Celia cut the sugarcane that El Líder promised would bring prosperity" (111). Her patriotic compliance is also tinged with eroticism. For as she gazes at the coastline, she imagines Fidel, a seducer, bringing her to her knees in patriotic submission: "Three nights per month, too, Celia continues to protect her stretch of shore from foreign invaders. She still dresses up for these all-night vigils, putting on red lipstick and darkening the mole on her cheek, and imagines that El Líder is watching her, whispering in her ear with his warm cigar breath. She would gladly do anything he asked" (111-112). The soft tickle of Fidel's whisper pulses through Celia, invading her body and restoring her sexual passion. Their erotic relationship is not lost on Celia's daughter, Felicia, who finds her mother's devotion to Fidel strange:

> Now they fight constantly, especially about El Líder. How her mother worships him! She keeps a framed photograph of him by her bed, where her husband's picture used

> to be… in fact, Felicia can't help feeling that there is something unnatural in her mother's attraction to him, something sexual. She has heard of women offering themselves to El Líder, drawn by his power, by his unfathomable eyes, and it is said he has fathered many children on the island. (110)

Fidel's photo in Celia's bedroom, which replaces her dead husband's, physically manifests the way in which patriotic practice inserts itself into the sexual sphere, demanding loyalty akin to that of a monogamous marriage. In the symbolic interplay of patriotism and marriage, Celia's new love is defined in Revolutionary terms; she is wedded to the Revolution and bound to Fidel in an irresistible romance. In this way, Fidel spreads his seed literally, through his affairs, and symbolically, invading women's bodies with patriotic and erotic satisfaction. Interestingly, the intermingling of patriotism and sexuality is most clearly evinced in Felicia who, after pondering her mother's strange attraction to the *Comandante*, finds herself caught in a similar erotic exchange:

> Still, Felicia muses, what would he be like in bed? Would he remove his cap and boots? Leave his pistol on the table? Would guards wait outside the door, listening for the sharp pleasure that signaled his departure? What would his hands be like? His mouth, the hardness between his thighs? Would he churn inside her slowly as she liked? Trail his tongue along her belly and lick her *there*? (110-111)

While Felicia contemplates Fidel making love to her, she masturbates, still thinking about what El Líder would do to her: "Felicia slips her hand down the front of her army fatigue pants. She feels his tongue moving faster, his beard against her thighs. 'We need you, Compañera del Pino,' she hears him murmur sternly as she comes" (111). While Celia imagines Fidel whispering in her ear, urging her to support the Revolution, Felicia's more

openly erotic encounter is carnal and tinged with patriotic sentiment. It is no coincidence that, at the same time that Felicia masturbates to the *Comandante*, she is engaged in a Revolutionary rehabilitation program whose purpose is to mold her into a "New Socialist Woman" (107). Felicia, like her namesake (Celia's friend from the asylum) was admitted to a psychiatric hospital after she attempted to kill herself and her son Ivanito, and after her release Celia convinces her to "give the Revolution another try" (107). Thus Felicia finds herself in the Sierra Maestra, marching like a guerrilla in her olive green uniform, volunteering for night duty like her mother, and experiencing patriotism in a similar way. Thus desire and patriotism are mapped on Fidel in such a way that it creates intense forms of attachment between him, his *compañeras*, and the fatherland, suggesting the central role that sexuality played in the construction of Fidel's power.

Despite their embrace of patriotism, however, both Felicia and Celia find themselves increasingly disillusioned with the Revolution. Felicia refuses to give herself wholly to the Revolution and, in fact, she turns against it, blaming Fidel for the death of her second husband, Ernesto: "Felicia writes a letter of protest to El Líder, demanding a full investigation into her husband's death. When she doesn't hear back from him, she becomes certain…that El Líder is to blame. Yes, he must have ordered her husband's murder personally" (150). Far from the projection of the seductive lover, Fidel's presence now becomes menacing; Felicia believes he is watching her through government spies that wear his iconic square glasses, which is why she burns her client's heads in the beauty shop where she works:

> Felicia knows that Graciela Moreira is one of their spies…she, too, wears the glasses…Felicia will trap her into a confession…she mixes lye with her own

> menstrual blood into a caustic brown paste, then thickly coats Graciela's head…Graciela cries out and pulls the cap, hardened now like a helmet, but Felicia clamps it in place with her fists. 'You lying bitch! You killed him, didn't you?' Felicia shouts and knocks Graciela's glasses from her face. That is the last thing Felicia remembers for many months. (151)

The square glasses, which persistently haunt Felicia, symbolize the Revolution's totalizing control or gaze over society, which functions as a regulating mechanism, aiming to monitor every aspect of Felicia's life. In fact, Felicia bemoans this fact to her mother when at one point she exclaims, "we're *dying* of security" (117). Thus the regime's protective measures are two-fold; while Celia helps maintain the national border on her night duty, Fidel's gaze – signaled by his eyeglasses – symbolizes control within the nation's boundaries. This constant surveillance is akin to the watchful gaze of the doctors in the asylum who, like the eyeglasses, monitor women's bodies, hoping to mold them to their needs. In my reading of the text, then, the asylum, which represented an architectural structure of patriarchal power in preRevolutionary Cuba, takes another form in Revolutionary Cuba, embodied in the nation's patriarch, Fidel. This is further cemented by the fact that the eyeglasses produce another psychotic break in Felicia. I suggest that like the Felicia in the asylum, this Felicia represents a dangerous threat in Revolutionary Cuba as she begins to question its cause and its leader. As she pulls away from the Revolutionary woman model, Fidel's gaze intensifies, driving Felicia further into paranoia. As she nears the end of her life, Felicia turns to *Santería*, Cuba's African-influenced religion, in a desperate attempt to save herself, but she, just like her earlier namesake from the asylum, dies. In the same way that Celia's friend's death symbolized patriarchy's crippling control over women's bodies, Felicia's death reveals the

continuation of that patriarchal power, embodied in one centralized figure. The madness of both Felicias constitutes an interrogation into whether the Revolution brought any change in patriarchal control, despite its rhetoric wrapped neatly around ideas of sexual equality.

While Celia's experience of disillusionment with the Revolution is much different than that of her daughters, in the end she dies as well, but her death is a symbolic one, signaled by the release of Gustavo's drop-pearl earrings into the ocean, which forever extinguishes the flame of her sexual passion. Thus despite her position of civic power as a community judge, Celia realizes that, in having shaped herself to the contours of ideal Revolutionary womanhood, she has become sexually repressed. Her realization comes when her son, Javier, returns from Europe, devastated because his wife has left him. Just as she had reacted when Gustavo left her, Javier is inconsolable and physically sick, becoming a mirror in which Celia sees herself: "when she hold her son's face in her hands, Celia sees only an opaque resentment. Is it his, she wonders, or her own" (159). In this instance, Celia begins to acknowledge her resentment of her Revolutionary life, which metaphorically links passion to disease: "is passion indiscriminate," Celia is forced to ask herself, "incubating haphazardly like a cancer?" (157). Indeed, passion physically inscribes itself on both Celia's and Javier's bodies in the form of tumors. Celia is the first to discover it on Javier: "Celia ponders the lump on her son's neck and the curious scar on his back, a pulpy line just below his left shoulder blade" (156). Not much later, Celia discovers a similar lump on herself, and when the doctors remove it, "they leave a pink pulpy scar like the one she'd discovered on her son's back" (160). Felicia's diseased body, much the same as Felicia's diseased mind, further respresents the stifling control that the Revolution exercises over the body. Within the Revolution's sexualized politics, passion becomes a repository of patriotic practice,

reserved solely for the Revolution and its leader, but ultimately damaging its followers. Felicia is astute in her observation that Fidel's public sexuality adheres to this same principle. After his divorce she says, "There's been another woman in his life since his day in these very mountains, but everyone know she's only a companion—a mother, a sister, not a true lover. El Líder, it seems, saves his most ardent passions for the Revolution" (110). As the lonely man, Fidel engages in a platonic love that does not threaten Cuba's new foundational narrative. Within this founding narrative, Cuba is wedded to its patriarch, Fidel, signifying the birth of a nation whose creation was the result of a patriotic love affair.

Celia's love affair with Fidel and his Revolution, however, loses its passion upon Javier's return. Her patriotic fervor diminishes as she pulls back from her Revolutionary activities in order to care for her son: "Celia's life resumes a stale, familiar air. She no longer volunteers for the microbrigades, and only guards her stretch of shore one night per month" (159). Even though Celia divorces herself from the Revolution, it is clear that she cannot withdraw from it completely. For the Revolution has conditioned her to a routine from which she cannot break free; she still guards the coast and keeps Fidel framed in a photo beside her bed. Moreover, when Pilar, her artist granddaughter, asks Celia if she can paint anything she wants in Cuba, Celia formulaically responds with Fidel's famous phrase: "within the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, nothing" (235). According to Foucault, this type of conditioning is central to the interworking of power; power, he explains, "reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives" (*Power/Knowledge* 39). Clearly, Celia is subjected to a patriarchal power structure that now extends beyond the boundaries of an asylum. It invades her home and is personified in

Fidel's photo, in her monotonous enactment of patriotism, and in the Revolution's discourse, which has now become her own. At the end of the novel, Celia comes to the realization that neither Fidel nor the Revolution has kept their implicit promises to fulfill her; and in this way, the text suggests that Fidel's Revolution has ultimately failed to Revolutionize definitions of male and female sexuality. As Felicia's *santera* friend Herminia declares: "One thing hasn't changed: the men are still in charge. Fixing that is going to take a lot longer than twenty years" (185). For this reason, Celia looks to a different future, entrusting Pilar to keep the family history, and thus to protect the personal sphere against the individual subsuming that the Revolution had demanded of its adherents. In fact, on the day of Pilar's birth, January 11, 1959, Celia stops writing to Gustavo, telling him that there is no more need for letters because now "she [Pilar] will remember everything" (245). Now that Pilar is the guardian of her family's history, Celia gives her granddaughter the box of Gustavo's letters, which she had never sent, and Pilar paints Celia's portrait in the way that her grandmother wants to be remembered, "in a flared red skirt like the flamenco dancers wear" (232). In this way, Pilar's inheritance is filled with gendered meanings. As Celia's heir, she is responsible for documenting the memory of her grandmother's sexual rebellion, a period representing Celia's freedom from the patriarchal institutions embodied by the asylum and Fidel's photo. Understanding that she is ensnared by the Revolution's totalizing grip on her life and her sexuality, Celia now steps into the ocean, and removes Gustavo's drop-pearl earrings, which she has only removed nine times since 1934 and then only to clean them, "Celia reaches up to her left earlobe and releases her drop pearl earring to the sea. She feels its absence between her thumb and forefinger. Then she unfastens the tiny clasp in her right ear and surrenders the other pearl. Celia closes her eyes and imagines it drifting as a firefly through

the darkened seas, imagines its slow extinguishing" (244). If Gustavo had represented Celia's sexual passion, her release of his drop-pearl earrings symbolizes the death of their passion, which is physically extinguished by the sea and metaphorically smothered by Fidel's Revolution. In this way, *Dreaming in Cuban* drives home its critique of Revolutionary masculinity, which masked patriarchal power through its rhetoric of sexual equality and patriotic loyalty. Endowed with public significance, Celia emerges as a patriotic Revolutionary joined to Cuba's irrevocable lonely man and patriarch, Fidel, in an irresistible romance. But in serving her *patria*, Celia was ultimately caught in an erotic exchange with her patriarch, reconfiguring notions of sexuality in a way that (con)fused national public duty and private passion. Thus the novel employs this union as a brilliant metaphor for the Revolution's control over the female body, which like Fidel's photo that seeps into the bedroom, demands personal devotion and surrender to a degree that ultimately proves destructive.

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CHAPTER SIX:

US IMPERIALISM AND THE POLITICS

OF RE-CUBANIZING MASCULINITY

I went to Havana to look at the natives,
To study their customs, their picturesque ways,
In searching for some local color,
I ran across a Cuban gent, and he was such a big sensation,
I forgot about the population.
He showed me the city, he taught me the customs;
My trip to Havana was quite a success.[56]

On January 1, 1960 the *Charleston News and Courier* published an editorial cartoon depicting Fidel as a child in a playpen, with a caption that read, "Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child". The cartoon suggests the ways in which the American imagination perceived Fidel as an unruly, emotional, and immature child.

(Figure 6. 1 Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child)

[56] These lyrics are from American jazz singer Mildred Bailey's song "The Week-End of a Private Secretary". It was recorded in New York in 1938.

As Louis A. Pérez Jr. has noted in his work *Cuba in the American Imagination: Cuba and the Imperial Ethos* (2008), North Americans deployed this metaphor of Cubans as children as a "discursive strategy of domination" that "propounded the notion of a relationship in which the United Sates had the duty to protect and nurture Cuba" (113). In his discussion, Pérez proves that this metaphor "insinuated itself deeply into realms of the North American imagination" with the war of 1898 up until Fidel Castro came to power. North Americans were surprised, then, when Fidel refused to follow their parental advice and, instead, challenged U.S. hegemony in Cuba. The North Americans, as Pérez tells us, were baffled and humiliated (248-249). Their metaphor did not make sense in the new Cuba and, as a result, "never again would Fidel Castro be characterized as a child" (Pérez 249).

To be sure, the child metaphor drove home the U.S.'s perceived moral imperative to help civilize and govern Cuba, but North America's infantilizing gaze was also decidedly gendered. For example, Pérez points out that in 1902, Massachusetts senator George Hoar referred to the Cuban situation in the following way: "these people are given to us as children, to lead them out of their childhood into manhood" (115). Another North American man, Colonel Robert L. Bullard, who was stationed in Cuba, also characterizes Cubans as male children:

> [It] is the fault of the Cuban's raising and training his children from birth to manhood to know not discipline—to know not what it is to restrain one's desires, control one's self…it is the lack of this training that makes difference between a child and a man, not in body, but in character…it is because of the lack of that which the Cuban is not taught, that, with the body of a man, he appears so much in the character of a child.

> This accounts for the Cuban emotionality and impracticability…it keeps them children. (119)

By viewing the Cuban as a child in a man's body, North Americans placed masculinity at the center of its imperialist discourse, revitalizing North American masculinity while emasculating the Cuban man-child. Thus placing Fidel in a playpen suggested that the young rebel leader was not fit to run Cuba because he was not a mature man. When Fidel refused to conform to North American metaphor, he challenged North American presence in Cuba as well as assumptions about masculinity. Not surprisingly, Cubans perceived Fidel's refusal of North American hegemony on the island in gendered terms. For example, in Juan Arcocha's novel *Los muertos andan solos* (1962) a character observes that Fidel is an "hombre de verdad": "cuando se puso a 'echarles,' aquello le había gustado, porque al fin había en Cuba un hombre de verdad que se parara bonito y les hablara fuerte a los americanos" (109). The comment brilliantly reveals the way in which North American imperialism relied on notions of masculinity to promote its presence and extend its power on the island. Furthermore, by challenging North America's power to emasculate Cuba, the novel demonstrates how Fidel posed a direct threat to North American masculinity.

The purpose of the present chapter is to examine the role that Fidel's Revolutionary masculinity played in defeating US imperialism, through the analysis of Arcocha's novel. More specifically, it explores the ways in which representations of Fidel's masculinity helped re-Cubanize Cuban men, offering them empowerment through a model of Cuban masculinity that no longer experienced the emasculating effects of the colonizer's feminizing gaze. Because notions of race and class are deeply embedded in discussions of US imperialism in Cuba, I will begin by discussing their intersection with masculinity. Next,

I will explore how discourses of race, class, and masculinity were employed to solidify US hegemony through its production of North American hegemonic manhood on the island, which celebrated the elite white male's power over the colonized and feminized Cuban body and served as a lens through which the Cuban male viewed and compared himself. In my analysis of the novel *Los muertos andan solos* I will show how Luis defies US imperialism by displacing his obsession with Rosa –a Cuban woman whose profound masculinization confirms her role as the archetypal North American male –for Fidel. As Luis embraces Fidel's new model of Cuban manhood he is freed from the colonizer's feminizing gaze, and, fully transformed and disciplined into a Revolutionary, he returns home to his submissive Cuban wife. In transferring his attachment from Rosa to Fidel, the novel compels us to consider the implications of the leader's new paradigm of masculinity in the construction of state power, which ultimately reconfigured the legitimization of patriarchy in its anti-US rhetoric, implicitly suggesting that Cuban men, not North American men, controlled the female Cuban body.

Race, class, and masculinity in pre-Revolutionary Cuba

Born in Santiago in 1927, Juan Arcocha studied law, languages, and journalism and later used his language skills to serve as an interpreter in Europe. After the Revolution, he served as a correspondent in Moscow for Cuba's daily newspaper, *Revolución*, and while there he wrote his first novel, *Los muertos andan solos* (1962). When he became disillusioned with the Cuban Revolution, Fidel granted Arcocha permission to go into exile. In 1964 he defected to Paris, where he lived as a writer (Menton 133). His later works have a definitive anti-Revolutionary character, unlike his earlier novel *Los muertos andan solos*,

which is an important landmark in Cuban Revolutionary literature because it captures the transition from pre-Revolutionary Cuba—a country dominated by North Americans and plagued by economic and racial inequality— to a radically different and Revolutionary Cuba that rejected old paradigms of U.S. dominance and inequality.

Set in Havana and Varadero beach shortly before New Year's Day of 1959, the novel focuses on a group of young adults, all of whom are white and are identified as "'walking corpses' because of their lack of idealism" (Menton 20). The group includes Rosa (a rich young woman who has an excessive sexual appetite), her lover Rogelio (a poor young man desperately seeking the approval of his new rich friends), and Luis (a young lawyer who is also in love with Rosa but recently married to Esperanza). Other members of the group are Rosa's brother Jorge who experiences an incestuous love for his sister; Carmen, another rich woman who defects to America; and Emilio, a young doctor who is in a relationship with an older and very rich woman named Silvia whose parents do not accept their relationship. The group passes their weekdays idly, engaged in drinking and dancing at the country club, and on the weekends they travel to Varadero where they lounge by the beach by day and throw wild parties at Rosa's apartment by night. Most of the characters are profoundly Americanized; they drink Coca-Cola, listen to rock-and-roll, and frequently insert English into their conversation. When the Revolution happens most of the group members remain unaffected, especially Rosa, Carmen, Silvia, and Jorge—all of whom belong to Cuba's highest social class and are the most Americanized. Instead of following Fidel's apparently colorblind and classless politics, which threatens their lifestyle, they remain steeped in racial stereotypes and refuse to acknowledge the abject poverty that surrounds them, choosing instead to live in a world guided by their North American tastes, which has now become a

vestige of the past. Rogelio, who closely follows Fidel on television for hours at a time, fails to be fully transformed into a Revolutionary because of his inability to let go of his obsession with Rosa –who serves as a metaphor for the US's imperializing project – and at the conclusion of the novel Rogelio, fully humiliated and emasculated at the hands of Rosa, kills himself. Luis, in constrast, is disciplined into a true Revolutionary by coming to emulate Fidel's model of masculinity. In the end, he is able to relinquish his obsession with Rosa, signifying his rejection of North American models of manhood and his freedom from US imperialism. In one of novel's concluding scenes Luis embraces a true Revolutionary masculinity when he, emulating Fidel, considers a poor mulatto peasant soldier his equal.

Because *Los muertos andan solos*, in Seymour Menton's words, "actively denounces racial prejudice and shows real concern for the lower classes" against the backdrop of Luis's transformation into Revolutionary manhood (20), it is useful to examine the link between masculinity and race and class. In her work on masculinities, Norma Fuller affirms that masculinity is shaped by a variety of factors, including race and class: "Gender identity is constituted within a multiplicity of differences of age, class, ethnicity and other factors. A man's experience of gender is not only determined by his sex but also by the place he occupies within racial, ethnic, class, regional, institutional, and other categories in the society in which he lives" (136). Because of the various racial or socioeconomic positions men can potentially occupy in any given society, as Fuller goes on to note, "we cannot speak of one masculinity but must recognize the existence of multiple masculinities defined contextually" (136). As mentioned in chapter one of the present study, R.W. Connell also speaks of the relational aspect of multiple masculinities: "The interplay of gender with other structures such as class and race creates further relationships between masculinities" (*Masculinities* 80).

For Connell, these relationships create unequal distributions of power, establishing hegemonic and marginalized masculinities. Connell uses the term "marginalization to refer to the relations between the masculinities in the dominant and subordinated classes or ethnic groups" (*Masculinities* 80). In particular, Connell sees "race relations as "an integral part of the dynamic between masculinities", arguing that "hegemonic masculinity among whites sustains the institutional oppression and physical terror that have framed the making of masculinities in black communities" (*Masculinities* 80). Similarly, masculinity scholar David Morgan has influentially argued that discussions of class have typically been masculinized because of the "strong connections between property and occupation, and masculinities" (168). Since socioeconomic class has been gendered in this way, Morgan argues the investigation of class points to "different ways of being men, different ways of being constituted as effective social actors" (170). Masculinity, then, must be examined as it intersects with race and class because gender, as Connell has influentially argued, "is a way of structuring social practice in general, not a special type of practice" and as such "is unavoidably involved with other social structures" (*Masculinities* 75). In Connell's words, "gender 'intersects' – better, interacts – with race and class" (*Masculinities* 75).

Thus it is only through the analysis of the intersection of race, class, and masculinity that we can discern the various masculinities that populate Arcocha's novel. Observing the presence of multiple historically coded masculinities is particularly pertinent in the Latin American context, because of its wide range of social classes and complex, racial makeup. Indeed, as scholar Mara Viveros Vigoya has observed, it is a central aspect in the shaping of Latin American masculinities: "in Latin American societies—multicultural with a broad array of social classes—it has become necessary to think about the various ways in which

masculine identities are constructed in various social sectors, ethnic groups, and sociocultural contexts" (35). This is certainly true for Cuba. As Louis Pérez has observed: "people of color made up 27 percent of the total population" in 1953 and generally "occupied the lower end of the socio-economic order" (*Between Reform and Revolution* 232). Moreover, Afro-Cubans "suffered greater job insecurity, more unemployment/ underemployment, poorer health care, and constituted a proportionally large part of the prison population", and, as a result, "they generally earned lower wages than whites, even in the same industries" and "were subjected to systematic discrimination, barred from hotels, resorts, clubs, and restaurants. (*Between Reform and Revolution* 233). Racial prejudice, then, was an inescapable aspect of pre-Revolutionary society, shaping a culture of inequality between blacks and whites.

Moreover, pre-Revolutionary prejudice bore witness to the presence of racialized masculinities that had become endemic to Cuban society. As Cuban scholar Esteban Morales notes, racialized masculinities reflected a hierarchal power structure: "El llamado blanco se identificó siempre con la riqueza, el control de la economía, la cultura dominante, el poder. El negro y el mestizo, por su parte, se identificó, con la pobreza, el desamparo, junto con la ausencia de todo privilegio, las culturas sojuzgadas, discriminadas y la ausencia de poder" (11). To a large degree race determined a man's access to power, hegemonic culture, and wealth. Given the marginalized and inferior position of the black male in pre-Revolutionary Cuban society, race obviously structured a hegemonic masculinity that was "representada por los hombres blancos" (González Pagés 6). *Los muertos andan solos* offers brilliant insight into how black Cuban men were situated outside this hegemonic masculinity and how the

Revolution tried to incorporate them into a masculinity ostensibly dictated by a politics of colorblindness.

If race determined a man's access to power, so too did class. Socioeconomic class had powerfully shaped a wide array of masculinities in pre-Revolutionary Cuba, where the gap between rich and poor had become increasingly disproportionate. In fact, the economy was a principal source of contention during the 1950s: "the Cuban crisis during the 1950s went far beyond a conflict between Batista and his political opponents… Cuban discontent during the decade was as much a function of deepening socio-economic frustration as it was the result of growing political grievances" (Pérez, *Between Reform and Revolution* 224). In larger cities like Havana urban slums were growing, the middle class complained about the lack of access to basic survival goods, and "unemployment and underemployment continued to cast a dark shadow over the entire Cuban working class" (Pérez, *Between Reform and Revolution* 227-230). Rural Cubans fared even worse than their urban counterparts, suffering from abject poverty and with limited access to amenities such as running water, electricity, and health and dental care. In contrast to this poverty, many landowners—who had long been identified as the source of socioeconomic inequality—were rich given the fact that "vast areas of rural Cuba were held in latifundia form" and "almost three-quarters of all land in production was held by only 8 percent of the farms" (Pérez, *Between Reform and Revolution* 229). In the city wealthy Cubans frequented country clubs and other high society functions. As we will see, *Los muertos andan solos* documents this gamut of socioeconomic classes in pre-Revolutionary Cuba by closely linking it to ways of being a man. Rogelio desires to embody the dominant paradigm of masculinity, which was guided by principles of

wealth and social distinction in pre-Revolutionary Cuba, while Fidel's model of economic justice disciplines Luis into a different kind of man.

At the novel's outset, both Rogelio and Luis's models of manhood are largely informed by North American imperialism in Cuba, which exacerbated racial prejudice and helped to shape the upper socioeconomic class in Cuba, all of which had an emasculating effect on the Cuban male. The interplay between nations and gender is not at all uncommon; for in Connell's estimation masculinity "constantly interacts with nationality or position in the world order" (*Masculinities* 75). Because North American influence is so pervasive in the novel, it is necessary to historically contextualize it. Since the war of 1898, North American presence in Cuba had played a large role in shaping definitions of hegemonic masculinity, because many wealthy landowners or businessmen were either North American or had aligned themselves with US companies. Their wealth and high social standing pointed not only to the US, but also to ways of being a man since, as David Morgan has argued, upper social classes are linked to both power and masculinity: "such a class is both constructed by and has a major role in constructing dominant or hegemonic notions of masculinity to do with control, the exercise of power, rationality, and so on" (171). Thus North American men represented the model that was to be emulated— so much so that Cuban models of manhood became inextricably linked to American ones. In one telling example from 1910, writer Jesús Castellanos laments the rise of the *hombre práctico*, "a type he identified as the Cuban counterpart of the North American self-made man" and defined as one "who specializes in a form of productive work" and represents "the machine to make money without concern for society" (qtd. in Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban* 145).[57] Thus North

[57] See Michael Kimmel's article "The Birth of the Self-made Man" in *The Masculinity Studies Reader*.

American capitalist manhood had deeply embedded itself into Cuba's gender system, working to construct a masculinity built on the pillars of hard work, success, and money. Cuban men who did not aspire to or attain this role were considered failures, as Cuban journalist Rubén Ortiz Lamadrid noted in 1956: "Americans", he wrote, "have passed so much time…pounding into the public mind that 'anyone can be a Henry Ford if he as the resolve'" that "the man on the street, if he does not reach those exceptional summits of wealth and power, considers himself a failure" (qtd in Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban* 458).

The desire to earn money and power fueled a corresponding hunger to consume North American products. In his well documented study *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture*, Cuban historian Louis Pérez demonstrates how the United States established cultural hegemony on the island through the marketing of its products. Cuba, he argues, became a consumer society:

> It was virtually impossible to distinguish the Cuban market from its counterpart in the North, for in almost every sense the former was an extension of the latter…North American products dominated the Cuban market…Cubans shaved with Gillette, took pictures with Kodak, shampooed with Lustre-Creme, smoked Camel cigarettes, and enjoyed JELL-O for dessert. (459)

The flooding of Cuba's markets with these products helped establish American hegemony and also communicated ways of being a man. Coca-Cola, for example, frequently employed ads featuring men enjoying both the soft drink and the company of an attractive young woman. In one, which was featured in the popular magazine *Bohemia*, a man wearing scuba gear toasts a beautiful blond woman with his Coca-Cola and below the picture are the words:

"Tras la emoción de la caza submarina".[58] Because the woman is the implied prize of the "underwater hunt", the ad suggests that men who drink Coca-Cola can experience similar conquests. Thus, because Cuban masculinity had become so intertwined with the North American market, Cuban men consumed US products, which symbolized manhood in addition to wealth. In this way, US hegemony infiltrated meanings of masculinity vis-à -vis the market. Hegemony, Connell tells us, "relates to cultural dominance in the society as a whole" and also interacts with masculinity: "within that overall framework there are specific gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men" (*Masculinities* 78). In pre-Revolutionary Cuba, North American men served as the standard against which Cuban men measured themselves as represented in the novel through the character Rogelio. And despite the fact that Cuban men like Rogelio might emulate North American men, the copy never perfectly matched the model from which it had originated.

Often Cuban men like Rogelio served as feminized and emasculated subjects for the US's imperialist project. Cynthia Enloe points out this gendered aspect of imperialism in her highly regarded study *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (1989):

> The year was 1898. The US government was extending its imperial reach. American men were exerting their manliness in defeating Spanish, Cuban and Filipino troops. They were proving in the process that industrialization and the rise of urban middle-class lifestyles were not, as some had feared, weakening white American manhood. (26-27)

While imperialism revitalized North American masculinity, it thus feminized and emasculated all masculine foils, including Cuban men. In fact, after the war of 1898 several

[58] This ad can be found in *Bohemia* from August 1959.

US writers described Cuban men as effeminate, weak and vacillating who were sorely lacking qualities inherent in American men like virility, will-power, and tenacity (Pérez, *Cuba in the American Imagination* 85). The US's cultural politics on the island further weakened Cuban men's ability to lay claim to a masculinity on par with North Americans. North Americans came to Cuba with the purpose of "civilizing" it, building "tourists hotels, beach resorts and casinos to lure American pleasure-seekers" (Enloe 27). Cuba became an exoticized and adventurous space in the North American imagination, a place of brothels, casinos, cabarets, and vacations. Indeed, advertisements in the 1950s enticed North American men to travel to Cuba and enjoy "her", where "her" was more often than not an exotic and sexy dark-skinned Cuban woman.[59] Sex, as Enloe has noted, is often at the heart of the colonizer's relationship with the colonized: "colonized women", she says, "have served as sex objects for foreign men" (44). Ernest Heminway's *Islands in the Stream* (1970) perfectly echoes this sentiment when Willie, visiting Havana in the 1940s, proclaims: "We want whores. Nice, clean, attractive, interesting, inexpensive whores" (269). In many ways, then, Cuba represented a whored body on which notions of US hegemonic masculinity was written, confirming the North American male's power over the dark-skinned colonized body.

Just as men came to Cuba in search of exoticized women, so too did North American women come to Havana in search of a Cuban lover. In her song "The Week-End of a Private Secretary", jazz sensation Mildred Bailey contrasts the mundane working girl's world with the exciting allure of Cuban men on a weekend trip to Havana:

I went to Havana to look at the natives,

[59] See Vicki Gold Levi and Steven Heller's *Cuba Style: Graphics from the Golden Age of Design* for examples of these traveling advertisements.

To study their customs, their picturesque ways,

In searching for some local color,

I ran across a Cuban gent, and he was such a big sensation,

I forgot about the population.

He showed me the city, he taught me the customs;

My trip to Havana was quite a success.

Bailey's song exposes how Cuban men—as well as Cuban women— were also "sex objects", and *Los muertos andan solos* furthers this theme in its characterization of Cuban men like Rogelio whose bodies are objectified by North American women. As the object of woman's sexual fantasy, this reversal of traditional roles feminized the Cuban male, which is manifested in the novel through Rosa and Rogelio's relationship.

Although the US also employed other metaphors –such as the parent/child metaphor—in their attempt to describe their relationship with Cuba, it was always on gendered terms and done in a way that either feminized or subordinated Cuban men to their American counterparts. Desi Arnaz's character Ricky Ricardo on the hit television series *I Love Lucy* epitomizes the way in which North Americans had come to view Cuban men:

> Acculturated imperfectly and oblivious to the imperfections, one who mispronounced English and used idioms incorrectly…Ricky could hold his own only by reverting to Spanish: a defense of self-esteem expressed in forms beyond the understanding of Lucy and the viewing audience, but at a considerable cost—he is wholly incomprehensible and hence ineffective…Ricky is an outsider. (Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban* 493-494)

In constructing Ricky this way, *I Love Lucy* reveals how North America employed masculinity in its imperialist project. Ricky is viewed through the colonizer's gaze, which portrays him as foreign and the object of laughter. In short, he is a man who is not to be taken seriously; he is powerless like Arcocha's character Rogelio whose humiliation and emasculation at the hands of Rosa—a symbol of US imperialism and dominance—ultimately leads to his demise.

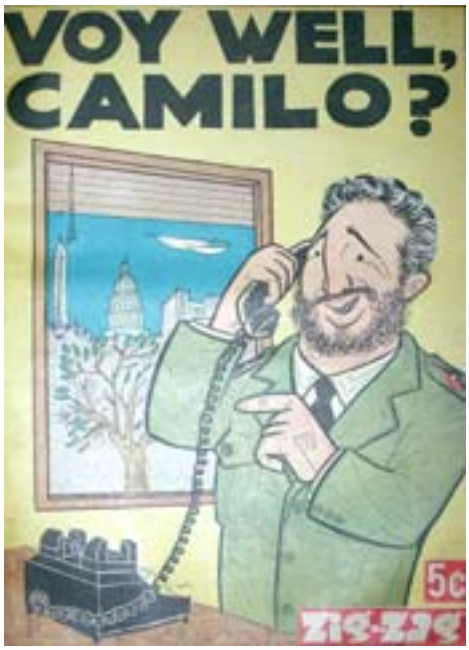
Re-Cubanizing Masculinity

When Fidel Castro came to power, North Americans attempted to define him à la Ricky Ricardo. Fidel's personality was reserved in English, they claimed, but wild in Spanish, and he had a fiery temper (Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban* 494). Along those same lines, Fidel was also infantilized, portrayed as a child who did not know his place in the grown-up men's world of politics. However, Fidel broke the mold of Cuban manhood that the US had manufactured, because he did not aspire to those markers of North American material wealth that had been a trademark of former presidents. Batista, for example, had frequented the country club and owned a large estate outside of Havana. The magazine *Gente de la semana* featured a large story on Batista in January of 1958. Various photos picture him engaged in shuffleboard, a game that had become wildly popular in the US in the 1950s, and the front cover portrays a serious and clean-shaven Batista taking notes, sporting US-style dress slacks and a tie while holding sunglasses. Batista was supported by the US and he desired to keep it close, which he did, in part, by aspiring to its model of manhood. Moreover, despite the fact that he had mulatto ancestry, Batista's ability to maneuver these social skills allowed him to "pass" as white and gain entrance into high society, which was a

common practice as Mirta Mulhare notes: "it is more important to 'pass' the social test in terms of symbolic manipulation than to 'pass' in terms of physical appearance" (65).[60] In contrast, Fidel, a *barbudo*, was careful to identify himself as distinct from US-styles, and thus was never seen in anything other than his fatigues and beard. To be sure, Fidel was not the "product" Americans had wanted and, not surprisingly, Fidel's rejection of American manhood was filtered through the lens of a new guerrilla masculinity. Upon the US's severing of diplomatic relations with Cuba, writer Thomas Freeman wrote: "At first a foster child, Cuba was at the last a kept woman…The United States never understood her, nor did she understand the U.S. But perhaps, had the U.S. been a bit more *hombre*, and not been afraid to take the stick to her now and then, she might have hated Uncle Sam just as much, but not have taken another nation's bread and board" (qtd. in Pérez, *Cuba in the American Imagination* 263). Cuba became incomprehensible precisely because Fidel refused to conform to the contours of an American/Cuban scripted masculinity. In fact, on April 25, 1959 the Cuban magazine *Zig-Zag*, which was known for its humor and sarcasm, published a picture of an Americanized Fidel on its cover. The caption reads "Voy well, Camilo?", which was an obvious play on words of Fidel's famous question ("¿Voy bien, Camilo") that he posed to Camilo Cienfuegos during his first speech in Havana on January 8, 1959. The artist changed the Spanish word *bien* for well and put a tie and olive green sport coat on him as he stands in the confines of an office overlooking capital buildings. The artist Luaces had made a joke that spoke to the gendered and nationalist terms through which North Americans were trying to make sense of Fidel and Cuba. *Los muertos andan solos* captures this challenge Fidel posed to US hegemony by portraying discussions in which the characters

[60] In spite of these attriubutes of status, however, Batista was denied entrance into Havana's famous Yacht Club (Fontova 87).

also try to make sense of Fidel; they comment on his rugged appearance and lack of "class', pointing out that it sharply contrasts with Batista.



(Figure 6.2 Voy well, Camilo?)

Fidel's outward appearance was symbolic of the way in which definitions of hegemonic masculinity were changing in Cuba. Fidel embodied a type of egalitarian masculinity that promised to make all Cuban men equal, which empowered them to defy US hegemonic masculinity and its emasculating effects. Fidel and the Revolutionary government did this by creating policies to foster racial and socioeconomic equality and outlawing prostitution. In encouraging Cubans to create a "colorblind" society, the government carried out a number of reforms in 1959 that "abolished legal discrimination, and scores of hotels, beaches, night clubs, resorts, and restaurants were opened to blacks" (*Between Reform and Revolution* 243).[61] These policies promised to not only abolish racial discrimination, but also those racialized masculinities that had hierarchically divided Cuban

[61] See Alejandro de la Fuente's *A Nation for All* (2001) for an excellent and in-depth look at race and inequality in twentieth-century Cuba.

men from their North American white counterpart. Moreover, the Revolutionary movement promoted socioeconomic equality by putting into motion a large number of reforms, which totaled "an estimated 1,500 decrees, laws, and edicts" in the first nine months of 1959 (Pérez, *Between Reform and Revolution* 242).[62] US companies were nationalized and the Agrarian Reform expropriated privately owned land and redistributed it to the poor. In doing so, Fidel and the Revolutionary government threatened US hegemony on the island precisely by threatening the North American male's hegemonic position. What is more, Law 993 of 1961 "outlawed any form of prostitution and stipulated that anyone associated with it could be identified as socially dangerous" (Smith and Padula 40). The government established programs to rehabilitate prostitutes, and pimps were sent to prison or to work farms. The law ultimately allowed the Cuban government to take control of the prostituted female body, symbolically pointing to the Cuban male's reclaiming control of Cuba itself, which had been portrayed as the promiscuous prostitute controlled by the North American male in pre-Revolutionary Cuba.

These policies demonstrate the ways in which Fidel re-Cubanized masculinity, offering Cuban men a way to be real men without emulating North American codes of masculinity. And, not surprisingly, this was sometimes communicated through the marketing of Cuban products. Fidel, for example, was pictured consuming Cuban products. In one

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[62] In *Between Reform and Revolution* Pérez summarizes these laws as follows: "the government intervened in the telephone company and reduced its rates. Electricity rates were cut drastically. Virtually all labor contracts were renegotiated and wages raised. Cane cutters' wages were increased by a flat 15 percent. Health reforms, educational reforms, and unemployment relief followed in quick order. Property owned by all past government officials, senior army officers, mayors and governors, and member of both houses of congress during 1954-58 was seized. The government restricted the importation of more than two hundred luxury items through higher sales taxes and special licensing requirement. It was a symbolic gesture, certainly, but also substantive, for in one year, Cuba saved as much as $70 million in foreign exchange. Television imports decreased…automobile imports fell" (243). Of course, the Agrarian Reform Law of May 1959 was the most sweeping measure. See Pérez's book for the terms of the new reform.

advertisement he is smoking an H. Upmann cigar that is toted as "orgullo nuestro". The advertisement implies that just as the cigar is Cuba's pride, so too is the man smoking it. Fidel was becoming a household name with a stamp of Cuban authenticity, legitimizing his claim to take back Cuban manhood, which had been emasculated by North Americans. Famous Cuban cartoonist Conrado Massaguer brilliantly demonstrates how Fidel further challenged North American hegemony with his cartoon from 1959 that depicts the leader in the television set with a caption that reads: "Compre ese regalito en La Casa Quintana".[63] The name of the product is "el hombre previsor".

(Figure 6.3 El hombre previsor)

One logical interpretation of the cartoon is that Massaguer mocks the fact that Fidel's speeches—which lasted for hours and hours at a time –were always televised. But because so many Cubans had television sets and "television provided another point of entrée of North American cultural forms", the cartoon also suggests one way in which Fidel challenged US hegemony (Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban* 334). Instead of viewing US programs and

[63] Both this advertisement as well as the cigar one can be seen in Ana Cairo's *Viaje a los frutos* (2006) in the illustrations section.

advertisements, Fidel is the new center of Cuban viewing entertainment and culture. Moreover, the word "previsor"—an obvious play on the word *televisor*—as well as the exhortation to buy "ese regalito" demonstrate how Fidel too was offered up as a national product that competed with and soon beat out its American competitor. And because North American products had deeply infiltrated how Cubans thought about masculinity, Fidel was becoming the new product on which definitions of masculinity hinged. In short, Cuban men needed Fidel in order to become real men, exposing how hegemony shifted from the US to Fidel, who was becoming the object of men's attraction. In *Los muertos andan solos* both Rogelio and Luis engage Fidel's model of masculinity, which is metaphorically represented as a battle between Rosa and the Revolutionary leader vying for their attention. As we will see, Rogelio's insistence in pursuing America (symbolized by Rosa) leads to his death despite watching Fidel on television for hours. Luis, however, embraces Fidel's principles of masculinity and symbolically defeats Rosa/America, emerging as a man who no longer experiences emasculation, but is rather empowered to take control of both his country's destiny and his wife. The novel, then, compels us to consider how national politics translated to the personal and domestic sphere.

US Imperialism and Masculinity in Los muertos andan solos

Because North American presence structures and pervades the novel, it is important to examine how Arcocha presents the influence of Cuba's neighbor to the north, and then explore how Fidel challenged it. For it is only through examining North America's gendered practice of imperialism on the island that we can better understand how Fidel's masculinity helped shape Revolutionary men who were capable of defeating North America by rejecting

hegemonic models of American/Cuban manhood that had ultimately left them feminized in comparison to their North American counterparts. Arcocha presents North American dominance in large part through his character Rosa, a thoroughly Americanized Cuban girl who prefers US customs to Cuban ones. Rosa owes her Americanization in large part to her father, a very wealthy businessman who established close relations with American companies, which was not uncommon after the war of 1898 when "economic linkage produced a bond…between the Cuban white elite and the American business community" (Leonard 5). As we have seen, North American models of manhood deeply influenced how Cubans viewed masculinity, producing such men as the *hombre práctico*. It is no surprise, then, that both Rosa's father and her grandfather were products of this system. In a conversation with Luis, Rosa's brother explains the origins of his family's wealth, which according to Jorge, was the result of his grandfather's hard work and success: "Llegó a Cuba en alpargatas y cuando empezó no era más rico que esos guajiros...¡si se hubiera dedicado a dormir la siesta y a tener muchos hijos, como ellos, hoy eataríamos nosotros en las mismas condiciones" (173). Rosa's father is now a millionaire and, like his father before him, works tirelessly at his job (130). Due to their hard work, their family now belongs to the most prestigious and respected social class—the "gente de la sociedad". Members of this class were generally white—or able to pass as white— and were considered the "bearers of the most desirable social labels" (Mulhare 60). In the novel these social labels were to large degree associated with the fact that Rosa's father was an *hombre práctico*, worked closely with North Americans, and had two fully Americanized Cuban children. In inserting itself into Cuba's socioeconomic structure in such a way, we observe how America inevitably played a role in shaping a very powerful type of Cuban man who was white, rich, and aspired

to North American ideals of manhood. In addition to having a father who is closely linked to America, the novel tells us that Rosa spent two years studying "el High School" in the US where she lived in her own apartment in New York (79). Rosa's trip to America is a formative aspect of her Americanization. As Pérez has shown, Cubans journeyed there because it was a place "to be formed, to mature, and to learn how to negotiate encounters with a world dominated by paradigms of the North" (*On Becoming Cuban* 415). Rosa, therefore, is closely identified with the US through her family as well as her studies.

Rosa also possesses intimate knowledge of the north, which is revealed through her desire to consume American products. As the novel opens, Rosa orders "un Tom Collins" even though she "sabía que en aquel lugar resultaba poco probable que tuvieran ginebra, que era un café poco frecuentado por americanos y que el muchacho del bar tendría que preguntarle el dueño qué era un Tom Collins" (15). The fact that the Cuban waiter does not know how to make a Tom Collins—a North American drink— demonstrates how Rosa, unlike him, has appropriated a North American palate. As we have seen, Americans had established cultural hegemony, in part, through the pervasive presence of its products. Again, the author employs an American product, a cigarette lighter, to cement Rosa's association with the US:

> Encendedor, uno de ésos que habían puesto de moda los soldados americanos y que no se apagan aunque haya mucho viento. Le gustaba por eso, que lo hacía tan útil en Varadero donde siempre sopla la tapa. Rosa la empujaba de modo enérgico, con el pulgar de la misma mano con que sostenía el encendedor. Resultaba un gesto altanero, pero en ella era mecánico. Por primera vez tuvo conciencia de él. (21)

The advantage of using the American lighter over a Cuban one lies not only in the fact that the flame does not blow out, but because Rosa's mastery of North American products has allowed her to dominate Cuban men like her lover, Rogelio, who accuses her of acting like a "macho" (78). Rogelio grew up in a poor and humble neighborhood in Varadero and is unable to navigate US codes in the same way as Rosa. Again, the narrator uses a North American product, the lighter, to reveal his inability to do so: "Recordó que Rogelio lo hacía con gran cuidado y con otra mano, evitando hacer ruido" (21). Unlike Rosa, Rogelio does not handle the lighter arrogantly or mechanically, but rather cautiously, which gives Rosa claim to control him. In fact, all men who do not possess the ability to appropriate North American products with ease are subordinated to Rosa. Rosa orders the Tom Collins, for example, in order to prove her superiority and control over the waiter: "Resultaba un poco monótono eso de estarse probando una y otra vez su dominio sobre los hombres. Sus amigos se reían de ella y la acusaban de snob" (16). Rosa's control over men, then, is connected to her ability to appropriate North American symbols and codes, revealing how North American presence in Cuba was scripted not only in economic terms, but in gendered ones as well. Americanization conferred a type of masculinity on Rosa, one that empowered her to subordinate the less masculine Cuban male. In this gendered reversal, Rosa represents the emasculating US imperialist presence.

Throughout the novel Rosa makes a game out of emasculating Rogelio who is obsessed with Rosa, which is expressed through his desire to align himself with North American paradigms of masculinity. He, therefore, desperately desires to become a part of Rosa's Americanized group and, as the novel tells us, Rogelio has wanted to be included in such a group for many years: "desde muy niño, había aspirado a vivir como los otros" (158).

"Los otros" are rich men whom he observes at the Club Náutico: "allí era donde estaba la gente rica…era aquél un mundo distinto y maravilloso" as well as tourists: "venían turistas, se les veía por la playa…observaba sus costumbres, veía cómo gastaban dinero y lo bien que se vestían. Les admiraba y envidiaba" (158). Because Rogelio envies their money and luxurious lifestyles, the novel shows how tourism transformed Cuba's landscape in a decidedly gendered way by designing and selling masculinity paradigms.

Rogelio desires to be this different kind of man – to leave his thoroughly Cuban upbringing behind and integrate into one defined by American tourists: "quería llegar hasta ellos. Una barrera infranqueable parecía separar los dos mundos" (158). Rogelio had tried unsuccessfully to immerse himself in this world until he met Rosa who "le abrió las puertas del aquel mundo en el cual había querido entrar durante tanto años" (160). Rogelio tries to fit in by consuming, which is driven by his desire to please Rosa, buying clothes that he knows she likes on his body. In fact, he spends all of his money buying tight pants: "se gastaba todo su dinero comprándose pantalones apretados, sin pliegues. Sabía que a Rosa le gustaba como se veía con ellos (20). Moreover, when he buys a gold bracelet without Rosa's approval, she mocks him and he sells it, suggesting that Cuban products are inferior to American ones (162). For it is only through Rosa (America) that Rogelio seems able to acquire products that are in good taste; she has bought him a watch, the furniture for his Havana apartment, and has even given him the money to start his own business, which, not surprisingly, is a store. Rogelio thus acquires identifiable markers of North American manhood, but only through the help of the Rosa/America paradigm upon which he has become totally dependent.

Rogelio is so desperate to become Americanized that he – and his friends in Varadero–has gone so far as to sell his body. Rogelio remembers how lucky he was to link up with Rosa: "Rosa no solo era rica, sino además joven y bonita. Allí el que más y el que menos había tenido su aventurita con alguna Americana o con alguna vieja rica, cuando aventuras mucho más sórdidas, con hombres. Habían sacado de aquellos encuentros un reloj de pulsera, una sortija de oro o hasta un viaje a La Habana o a Miami. Las cosas no pasaban de ahí" (155). When Rosa meets Rogelio for the first time, they sleep together that same night and she offers to pay him, thus confirming her role as the archetypal North American male in the relationship. He is tempted to accept it but in the end refuses, though he leaves feeling humiliated (160). Rosa enjoys having sex with Rogelio, whom she views as a sex object: "Lo suyo con Rogelio solo tenía que ver con los sentidos y con el acto de hacer el amor" (100). And even thought Rogelio acts like a real macho in the bed, he is still nothing but a body to her: "no es él quien me domina, sino su cuerpo. O, en última instancia, el mío, que lo necesita" (100). Because Rosa is a metaphor for North American imperialism, the way in which she sees Rogelio symbolizes the masculine colonizer's gaze over the female colonized body. Indeed, Rosa is always watchful and her gaze extends to all potential lovers around her, especially *negros* with whom she likes to make love but keeps secret because of the social stigma surrounding a woman of her class having relations with a black man. Again this represents a reversal of the gendered paradigm of the white North American man chasing and co-opting the exoticized body of his darker-skinned Cuban lover. At the beginning of the novel, for example, Rosa sees a mulatto at the beach and as he climbs over a wall she gazes over his entire body: "estaba a contraluz y Rosa podía ver, como si estuviera desnudo, los muslos y las piernas (24). Later that evening Rosa sees the same unnamed man at the bar,

and they sleep together. When he leaves she pays the mulatto, leaving him humiliated and her extremely satisfied. For Rosa, he was nothing but a "macho magnífico que ella había poseído" (49). Rosa's conquest of the mulatto—as well as Rogelio— drives home the novel's theme of American imperialism's role in feminizing and emasculating Cuban men. Moreover, the fact that the mulatto remains nameless – and is literally another body that finds its way to Rosa's bed—further articulates the novel's theme of colonial racial inequality: Rosa's white body has even greater power over a black (and thus subordinate) male body.

Rosa's masculinized domination is conveyed through sex, which is not surprising because North American tourism in countries like Cuba was shaped around a culture of sex. In *Los muertos andan solos* Cuba is portrayed in such a way: "su propaganda en Miami a base de los maravilloso que era pasar un week-end en La Habana, 'Land of the beautiful Señoritas!', Las Vegas del Caribe" (54). Thus American men had come to view Cuba by way of metaphor wherein the Cuban woman's body served as a symbol on which American men drew meanings of manhood. Cuba was the female to be conquered, which had obvious – and feminizing-implications for Cuban men. Moreover, the novel posits a woman—Rosa— as the colonizer. This makes her presence all the more threatening for Cuban men because she turns this metaphor on its head, by offering Cuban men as the objects of American tourism and Cuba's sex industry. By inscribing Cuba as a whored *male* body, Rosa symbolizes a dangerous threat to Cuban masculinity. Hence, much of the plot in the second half of the novel revolves around Luis desperately trying to rid himself of his obsession with Rosa. In this way, the novel emphasizes the urgent need to do away with her and restore Cuban men's masculinity. Luis accomplishes this through embracing Fidel's model of Revolutionary masculinity, which was tied to changing discourses of race and class.

Before Fidel's triumph, the group employs a familiar discourse –class and social rank— to debate his appeal and that of his movement. In a heated conversation with Jorge, for example, Rogelio defends the Revolution, claiming that "un amigo suyo se había ido para la Sierra y que era muy buena gente" (32). Because of Rogelio's humble origins, Jorge challenges his assertion that his friends are "buena gente": "a la verdad, con esos amigo que tú te gastas, me imagino la buena gente que debe estar en la Sierra" (32). In this way, Jorge subordinates both Rogelio and his friend – and by extension all of the rebels— by way of social class. Moreover, Jorge views the Revolutionary movement and Fidel as an economic disaster. His father, who has had to receive bonds instead of cash from rebels, has the most to lose: "papá está desesperado. ¡Me gustaría verte en su lugar, con todos los negocios que tiene y con lo mala que está poniendo la situación por culpa de todos esos revolucionarios! El día menos pensado los americanos se van a cansar de todos estos líos" (33). Jorge considers Fidel and his movement as a threat to his father's empire, which he fears will collapse if the North Americans remove the sugar quota. Fidel, then, serves as a foil to Jorge's wealthy father and, hence, US hegemony. Rogelio, disgusted with Jorge, declares that "¡Fidel no es ningún bandolero!" and tries again to use social class to prove the value of Fidel's character: "¿y tú no decías el otro día que era de buena familia"? (34). As Mirta de la Torre Mulhare observes in her study on pre-Revolutionary sexual ideology, "la gente de buena familia" meant "belonging to a family of sound reputation and respectability…whose male members have engaged in highly respected occupations, not manual or menial, servile labor…whose females behave within the proper bounds of respect and decency…and whose children usually attend a private Catholic school, or attend school in the United States" (59). Even though Fidel's family was, in fact, "buena familia"— his father was a wealthy landowner in

Oriente, and he and his siblings were educated in Cuba's finest private Catholic schools—the fact that Rogelio mentions this points to the novel's larger theme of Cuba transitioning between two worlds. Rogelio relies on the traditional Cuban social class structure to defend Fidel, a structure that Fidel himself tries to dismantle. And while Jorge does concede that Fidel might be from "buena familia," he similarly relies on these structures to support his anti-Fidel argument: "Lo que pasa con todos ellos es que son unos fracasados, que saben que no pueden llegar a ninguna parte y la única solución que encuentran es alzarse para tratar de hacerse de un nombrecito" (34). Jorge's logic is dictated by the principles of the North American *hombre práctico*. Thus both Rogelio and Jorge's characterizations of Fidel propound the oft-used discourses of class and social rank, which were bastions of preRevolutionary manhood.

Fidel, however, challenged this rationale of manhood and in doing so created a new discourse around which Cubans could redefine masculinity. When Fidel comes to Havana, Luis, Rogelio, and Carmen attend the rally, and the novel frames this experience by presenting Luis's first encounter with a "new" discourse:

> Luis seguía el hilo del discurso, buscando en él el secreto de aquella cosa nueva que descubría a su alrededor. No podía encontrarlo. Era un discurso también nuevo. Eran palabras que no se habían oído antes, o que antes querían decir otra cosa. Luis estaba fascinado por aquel diálogo, porque no era otra cosa que un diálogo, entre Fidel y toda aquella gente. (95)

Fidel's speeches play an important role in the novel, not only here but also elsewhere. And although the novel does not transcribe any of Fidel's speeches verbatim, it does give contextual clues as to their content by pairing Fidel with a new social and economic reality

that is closely tied to masculinity. Carmen, for example, listens to Fidel discuss the Agrarian Reform: "la idea de la Reforma Agraria le había parecido muy bonita cuando Fidel la explicó por televisión. Había pensado que era justo que les dieran tierras a los pobres guajiros, que pasaban tanta hambre" (136). The Agrarian Reform was designed to level the hierarchy dividing the poor peasant and the rich landowner, and thus threatened the social and economic landscape on which Cuban men had previously drawn definitions of manhood. Not surprisingly, Carmen does not approve of the reform when it affects her uncle, who flees for Miami, a place where he can better maintain his status: "la finca de su tío la habían intervenido y hacía unos días que él había venido de Camaguey, preparando su viaje a Miami" (136). Thus Fidel's discourse introduced a new vocabulary—Agrarian reform and equality— and tried to dismantle old terminologies of power and manhood linked to the *patrón* and *hacendado*. Fidel's discourse also worked quite literally, aiming to purge Cuba of its elitist vocabulary and replace it with a Revolutionary and egalitarian one. In discussing the "crónica social," for example, Silvia is outraged that the government has decided to put a tax on each adjective that is published: "el gobierno actuó muy mal en eso. Era una burla, eso de poner un impuesto a cada adjetivo que se publicara en una crónica. Eso fue una falta de respeto a la gente de sociedad, una cosa muy chabacana y muy vulgar" (127). In putting a tax on adjectives that describe the weddings and birthdays of the "gente de sociedad," the government was slowly trying to erode Cuba's preRevolutionary rhetoric, which was tied to class distinction and social discrimination. Thus, as with the example of Carmen's uncle, Fidel's Revolutionary discourse effected profound changes in the economic and social classification system, which had clear implications for its gender regime. Men were being

told that they could find economic and social equality in Fidel's Revolution, rather than climbing a complicated and fickle social ladder in the society pages.

Fidel's bodily performance –which is guided by his refusal to appropriate certain codes, specifically those social skills related to Cuba's high society – further solidifies how Revolutionary discourse is shaped by notions of masculinity, class and, as we will see, race. In Jorge's opinion, the problem with Fidel is that he lacks "class": "todo lo que está pasando se debe únicamente a que a Fidel le falta 'clase'. Para gobernar a un país no basta con pasarse cinco horas hablando por televisión. Hay que tener clase, para que la gente lo respete a uno" (128). Jorge views Fidel through a lens that refracts pre-Revolutionary social structures. Because Fidel lacks "class," he cannot be respected, according to the North American value system. Fidel falls outside this system because he refuses to navigate specific social codes, which are compulsory for respectable and high-society men, especially those in government positions. For instance, when Jorge's uncle is asked what he thinks about the "situation" in Cuba, he jokes: "¿qué se puede esperar de un gobierno cuyo primer ministro asiste a un banquete en el Hotel Hilton y se sienta a la mesa con el cuello de la camisa abierto, la gorra puesta y un tabaco en la boca?" (128). In pre-Revolutionary Cuba, North American social skills were tantamount to social placement, and one's ability to maneuver them meant climbing the social ladder and, hence, one's claim to North American hegemonic models of masculinity.

In this same conversation, Jorge contrasts Fidel with Batista who –despite his poor background and mulatto ancestry–polished himself into a refined "gentleman" due to his ability to perform these social skills: "Fijate en Batista, cómo se pulió durante todos esos años. Hoy es todo un 'gentleman'. Y ni hablar de Elisa, su antigua mujer, que era lavandera

y se ha convertido en una señora de lo más elegante. ¿Te acuerdas…del papelazo que hicieron aquella vez que estaban en New York and Batista fue al teatro de frac y corbatica negra? ¡La Habana entera se estuvo riendo de ellos durante una semana! (128). The fact that Jorge uses the English word "gentleman" to describe Batista points to the interaction between North American models of manhood and Cuban ones. Although Batista stumbles in appropriating those codes—for example by wearing the wrong suit to the theater in New York—he is admired for his effort.

Fidel, however, does not look to the US to define manhood, but rather to Cuba and its men. Jorge interprets Fidel's refusal to follow these same codes as the destruction of Cuba's social hierarchy: "Ese es el problema. Si Fidel se pone con esa chusmería, lo lógico es que la chusma piense que ha llegado su hora. ¡Esto se está poniendo que dentro de poco aquí no se va a poder vivir!" (128). Jorge's employment of the term "la gente chusma" is important to understanding social discriminatory practices of pre-Revolutionary Cuba. According to Mirta Mulhare, "chusma" was a term used to describe people

> whose entire social demeanor…lacks any label of respectability whatsoever, among them: streetwalkers; procurers; beggars; coarse, vulgar people; the hardcore poor of shanty towns; unclean people; and *gente de solar*, people in cheap tenement houses most of whom, the respectable Cubans believe, lead an immoral and vulgar existence…a chuzma can be either black or white, but the 'chuzma' is visualized by Cubans as mostly black. (69-70)

La chusma was distinguished from *la gente respetable* or *gente decente* and Cubans employed these two categories more frequently than English-language descriptors of "upper" and "lower" class. As Mulhare observes, this division "is more meaningful to the Cuban

who is engaged in social discrimination" and "is one that cleaves people much more profoundly than the social scientist's divisions of upper and lower" (57-58).

Jorge perceives Fidel's embodiment of Revolutionary manhood—which wishes to remove old social classification systems –in these terms; now that Fidel has risen to power, Cuba has become a place where the "chusma" will reign: "Cuba se ha convertido en el reino de la gente chusma" (127). Instead of aspiring to be a North American "gentleman" and hiding Cuban blackness as Batista had, Fidel rejects the North American "gentleman" and celebrates Cuban men. As a result, Fidel puts into motion a process of recubanizing Cuban men, and in doing so both "la chusma" and Fidel begin insinuating themselves the group's world. Silvia, for example, is outraged when a "negro" attempts to enter the Tropicana because she fears American tourists will stop frequenting the cabaret. In addition, while Carmen is on a bus ride to *El Encanto*—Havana's most popular department store —she complains that the bus is filled with Revolutionaries. Their problem, she says, is that their "chusmería" has made it so that "ya las personas decentes no podían salir a la calle" (138). Moreover, when Carmen enters *El Encanto*—which had been known for its plethora of US products—she instead encounters products of the Revolution: "se exhibían uniformes de rebeldes para niños y retratos de Fidel, Camilio [*sic*], Raúl y el Che" (140). By placing Fidel and Revolutionary "chusma" in spaces that had been known for their connection to North America, the novel reveals how the Revolution sought purposefully to break down those barriers separating North American systems of value from the newly reasserted model of Cuban manhood. Those guerilla uniforms replaced the Anglo gentleman's suit and tie, and, in fact, as Pérez has noted, wearing a suit and tie became anonymous with counter-Revolutionary activity (*On Becoming Cuban* 484).

Fidel's Revolutionary discourse infiltrated meanings of masculinity, race, and class, but it was dependent upon a process of disciplining men in the proper ways of Revolutionary manhood. Arcocha presents this process of disciplining through Rogelio and Luis, which is significant because both men have deep attachments to Rosa who, as we have already seen, is a metaphor for US imperialism. The disciplining process is similar for each man: both listen to Fidel's Revolutionary discourse, which, as we have seen, is inextricably tied to notions of masculinity and its intersection with race, class, and North American imperialism. While both Rogelio and Luis have similar disciplining processes, Rogelio resists conforming to Fidel's Revolutionary masculinity while Luis embraces it.

After the Revolution, Rogelio spends hours in front of the television watching Fidel. In fact, the group almost leaves him before they head out of town: "resultó que se había quedado viendo a Fidel por televisión hasta la madrugada y luego no había forma de despertarlo" (107). Rogelio's "Fidel fixation" is maddening to Rosa: "ahora, para colmo, a Rogelio también le había dado por la revolución. Había cogido la manía de ver a Fidel por la televisión" (168). Rosa does not like that Rogelio watches Fidel because she sees that he is weakening the bonds of the group and her own control over its dynamics: "ya no se podía hablar de nada interesante: como quiera que empezase la conversación, terminaba siempre discutiendo a Fidel y a la Reforma Agraria. No había manera de escapar de aquello, era como una obsesión que le hubiese reblandecido el cerebro a todo el mundo" (167). In many ways, Rogelio's obsession with Fidel points to the way in which the rebel leader's masculine force trumps Rosa's, replacing her as the object of men's attraction. Yet, despite after spending countless hours in front of the television, Rogelio is incapable of being fully disciplined into Revolutionary manhood because he still practices discrimination and desires

to attain symbols of US materialism and wealth. For example, when he returns to his parent's humble home in Varadero, Rogelio wants to burst the door open and run to his mother. However, he is unable to enter: "aquella era su casa, su familia, su mundo. Aquélla era su vida. En aquella vida no había lugar para Rosa" (163). The novel uses space—his family's home— to convey that Rogelio is no longer able to move within this poorer sector of Cuban society. He now belongs to Rosa's world and "se había quedado en él" (155). His new position in the Anglophile society—a position which he owes to Rosa— now gives him privilege, and he looks down on women from humble origins like his own: "Rogelio se decía que sus gustos debían hacer cambiado. Ya las muchachas de Varadero le parecían guajiritas, mal vestidas y mal arregladas" (154). Rogelio's "taste" in women—from Varadero *guajiras* to Americanized Cuban women— is symbolic of his changing models of masculinity; he aspires to be a Cuban man, but to be guided by North American codes of masculinity. Thus, Rosa remains Rogelio's obsession despite his brief fixation with Fidel.

It is not surprising, then, that the best moments of Rosa and Rogelio's relationship are spent in New York (167). Unlike in Rogelio's house, both he and Rosa belong in this space that is one hundred percent US. Thus when they return Cuba, their relationship suffers, symbolizing how the US was losing its hegemony in Revolutionary Cuba. The power play between Rosa and Rogelio comes to a head when Rosa perceives that Rogelio has now become stronger than her. Rosa, who according to Rogelio is different from other girls because she is "muy dominante", struggles to control Rogelio throughout the novel; Rogelio does likewise and has learned to endure her humiliations up until Rosa's very last trick when she invites another poor man, Roberto, to her house in her attempt to humiliate Rogelio: "se acostaría con todos hasta encontrar uno que la librase de Rogelio. A todos los vencería"

(212). Roberto is pleased at the prospect of sleeping with Rosa, for he knows she has a reputation as a grand "puta" and Rosa does not let him down (210). She performs a scandalous strip tease in front of Roberto while Rogelio watches; it ends with Rogelio screaming "puta" at Rosa, and later we learn that he commits suicide. Rogelio's death suggests that he failed to assimilate the new model of Cuban masculinity, which would have freed him fromhis humiliating infatuation with Rosa and North America; he instead remains powerless and emasculated in his battle with Rosa, a woman who he allowed control him because he desperately wanted to belong to her world. On a metaphorical level, then, Rogelio's death symbolizes his humiliation and symbolic emasculation at Rosa's hands as a result of his inability to embrace Fidel's model of masculinity. Rogelio's dead body is a vestige of the Revolution's struggle for the male body, which was a terrain for transitioning ideals of manhood and which ultimately excluded those Cuban bodies –like Rogelio's – that had become foreign and feminized in their native Cuba.

The novel contrasts Rogelio's encounter with Fidel with that of Luis. Both men are similar, however, in that they have formed deep attachments to Rosa. And even though Luis is married to Esperanza, his connection with Rosa remains strong: "ni su noviazgo con Esperanza ni su matrimonio cambiaron en nada aquella relación íntima sin la cual a él le parecía que no podría vivir" (185). Moreover, both men feel inferior in Rosa's circle of friends. When Luis is first introduced into the group, for example, Arcocha presents his inferiority much the same way as he does with Rogelio, vis-à- vis a North American product: "sacó de su bolsillo su caja de cigarros. No se atrevió a brindar porque eran cubanos y veía que los otros habían puesto sobre la mesa sus paquetes de cigarrillos americanos" (177). The novel pairs Luis with a purely Cuban product—a cigar— and he feels embarrassed by the

presence of American cigarettes. Much to his surprise, however, Rosa wants one of his cigars: "Le pareció extraño que una muchacha fumara cigarrillos fuertes" (177). Rosa's ability to smoke strong Cuban cigars is analogous to her treatment of Cuban men; they may be fine "machos" like Rogelio, but she always prove to be stronger. Her appropriation of the cigar also reinforces her symbolic position as the masculine and colonizing presence, analogous to the Anglo men who enjoy a good Cuban cigar in an exoticizing fashion. Not surprisingly, Luis feels feminized in this situation, especially because he—like Rogelio—is wearing the new Anglo pant style that hugs his body tightly: "no le gustaba aquella nueva moda de pantalones sin pliegues, que le parecían un poco afeminados" (177). In addition, he is bothered when she offers to light his cigar: "Rosa le ofrecía fuego, con una expresión autoritaria que no le había gustado…Luis se había sentido molesto. Nunca había visto que una mujer le ofreciera fuego a un hombre en lugar de esperar a que él lo hiciera" (177). As in her relationship with Rogelio, Rosa proves to be the authoritative one, which is employed as a brilliant metaphor for North America's gendered practice of imperialism: Cuban men are feminized in the presence of the US.

Luis's encounter with Fidel ultimately leads him to end his relationship with Rosa. At the rally Luis has a transformative experience, which indicates his initiation into Revolutionary disciplining: "ya no podía pensar. Ya no era una persona, sólo un objeto a la merced de aquellos elementos desencadenados. ..él sintió una gran paz, mezclada de una inmensa fatiga…se sentía como un autómata, incapaz de moverse ni de razonar" (94). Luis's body is a surface onto which power is grafted and exercised, and the source of this power is Fidel: "luego Fidel empezó a hablar…experimentaba una sensación extraña. De pronto su cerebro había empezado a funcionar como si fuese un ser independiente y Luis se

pensaba a sí mismo como se tratase de otra persona" (94). Fidel's discourse exercises power on Luis, disciplining his mind to think like another man who no longer knows his old self. Furthermore, when Luis leaves the rally, the narrator tells us that he does not even recognize Carmen and Rogelio: "él los miraba como si no los conociera" (95). When he leaves the rally he begins thinking like a Revolutionary, but he does not yet practice the principles of Revolutionary masculinity because he is still infatuated with Rosa.

Fidel's discourses, which as we have seen link masculinity to race, class, and US imperialism, gradually become part of Luis's own discourse. For example, Luis defends a black man's right to enter the Tropicana: "Tropicana es un lugar público y está mal que se les niegue la entrada…¿los negros no tienen derecho a bailar ni a divertirse?" (125). And when confronted about the possibility of North Americans leaving the Tropicana because of black Cubans, he responds: "si eso no les gusta a los americanos, ya tú sabes para dónde se pueden ir" (125). Thus Luis adopts Fidel's Revolutionary discourse as his own and, in doing so, he challenges the codes of social hierarchy that have divided different classes and races of Cuban men. Furthermore, he challenges Jorge's assertion that Fidel does not have class: "¿qué importa si Fidel ande sin corbata al lado de la Reforma agraria?," Luis asks Jorge (172). Luis espouses the appropriate Revolutionary rhetoric and, as a result, he demonstrates how he has been disciplined by Fidel's example of masculinity.

Nevertheless, Luis hesitates to embody that masculinity, as long as he remains attached to Rosa. While on a trip to Matanzas, for example, Jorge laments the fact that the new government plans to tear down the huts and build modern homes for the poor; Luis counters Jorge's comment and tells the group that he supports the Fidel's initiative: "ve y pregúntales a los guajiros si prefieren seguir viviendo en esos bohíos tan 'pintorescos', con

piso de tierra y sin baño, electricidad ni agua corriente" (117). However, just moments later when the group is confronted with a poor pregnant guajira begging for money, Luis remains inexplicably silent while Silvia is the one who helps the poor girl. Luis's silence is indicative of his inability to act out those codes of masculinity, which he so easily talks about.

The juxtaposition of Rogelio's humiliation and suicide with Luis's Revolutionary fervor – and eventual transformation—is not accidental, but rather articulates the novel's major theme of the Revolution redefining Cuban masculinity. After Rogelio's suicide, the group is completely dismantled and Luis "no había vuelto a ver a sus antiguos amigos" (233). Instead of spending time with the group, Luis works tirelessly for the Revolutionary effort in anticipation of a Yankee attack: "meses de trabajo agotador, entregado en cuerpo y alma a la Revolución" (231). The novel once again frames Luis's dedication to the Revolution in gendered terms. For example, Luis desires to go to the trenches, but he must stay behind at the office where he is left feeling less of a man: "Ahora que la Revolución le brindaba la oportunidad inesperada de convertirse en un hombre cabal, alquien le decía que 'se tenía que quedar en su trinchera'. Hasta la revolución lo dejaba solo" (233). Luis's disappointment in not going to the trenches and sacrificing his life for the cause reveals how the Revolution has changed definitions of manhood, by inspiring men to become part of the pantheon of martyred national heroes. As we will see, however, Luis's battleground is defined not by heroism but by acting out Revolutionary principles of equality. Ultimately, Luis views his old friends' love of US in an explicitly feminizing manner: "les han dado las nalgas a los yanquis. Debían estar todos allá, esperando a que viniera la invasion para regresar detrás de los 'marines' con todos los traidores, para pegarse de nuevo al jamón. Para montar de nuevo en Cadillac y bañarse en un Yacht Club donde no hubiese negros" (233-234). The act of

"dando las nalgas" has clear homosexual undertones and, therefore, feminizes those counter-Revolutionary Cubans who desire their previous lifestyle.

Luis, then, finally appears to be fully disciplined in Revolutionary discourse and manhood, except for one last obstacle: Rosa. Despite Luis's obvious disgust for his former friends, he still visits Rosa while he is staying in Varadero, which hints at the fact that he still has feelings for her. Upon visiting her, though, he is shocked to see that she lives enclosed in her own small world while "un país nuevo…surge": "¿Tú crees" he asks her "acaso que puedes vivir fuera del mundo que te rodea?" (241). Rosa responds that she does not want him indoctrinating her. The Revolution is incapable of changing her, which is evidenced in the fact that she is still conquering and humiliating poor men. She is now sleeping with the husband of her housemaid, and when Luis learns this he realizes that his attachment and obsession with her is over: "todo había terminado. No volvería a ver a Rosa. Comprendió que la había querido mucho, desde hacía mucho tiempo. Había representado para él algo muy bello, inalcanzable al alcance de su mano. Un sueño" (245). Luis has now come face-to-face with the real Rosa, and, as a result, part of Luis dies: "algo había muerto también en él" (245). Because Rosa is a metaphor for North American imperialism, Luis's "death" symbolizes his disillusionment and ultimate rejection of the Rosa/America paradigm, which had shaped generations of Cuban men who had come to depend on this model for manhood. Thus the novel makes clear that the Yankee threat was not just fought on the battlefield, but was also fought on a gendered terrain. Cuban men like Luis had to symbolically fight an inner battle –represented by the Rosa/America paradigm – in order to become true Revolutionaries. In doing so, they ultimately rejected North American hegemony and looked

instead to their leader Fidel as their model, which restored masculinity on a national level and worked to re-Cubanize Cuban men.

It is no coincidence that, once Luis successfully does this, he can then perform true Revolutionary manhood. Having just left Rosa's house, he encounters a poor peasant soldier who is both a mestizo and mulatto: "era muy moreno, de ojos achinados y pelo muy negro y liso. Se veía a la legua que era campesino. De Oriente, probablemente. Tenía ese tipo de medio mulato, medio indio" (248). Unlike during his previous encounter with the poor *guajira* in the restaurant, Luis now acts the part of a true Revolutionary when he decides to help the young soldier with his car. After he does, the soldier thanks him and calls him a "compañero" which has a profound impact on Luis: "aquella palabra lo azotó como un latigazo. La había oído pronuncia mil veces sin concederle la menor importancia. Era una simple fórmula que reemplazaba al 'señor' y al 'doctor' para distinguir a los revolucionarios de los que no lo eran. Nunca pensó que significase nada más que una convención" (249-250). Revolutionary discourse has worked to cut across lines of racial and social class, removing terminologies that would have separated men like Luis from the soldier in preRevolutionary Cuba. Now the word "compañero" fully penetrates Luis's being and connects him to his fellow countrymen in a moment of Revolutionary epiphany: "entre él y aquel guajiro que venía sabe Dios de dónde, quedaba establecido un contacto estrecho y sin barreras que nada podía romper" (250). In embracing the *guajiro* in such a way, Luis is restored, no longer needing to be in the trenches to prove his manhood: "sabía que era su hermano. Ambos luchaban por lo mismo. Tal vez algún día se encontrarían juntos en la misma trinchera. Una trinchera de verdad, en la que sus sangres llegarían quizás a correr juntos" (250). Luis has fully embodied Revolutionary manhood in calling the young man his

brother, for he realizes that social justice and equality define the real "trenches." Luis is now exhilarated that the racial and social class barriers have finally crumbled: "ahora todo era posible. Había tratado a aquel guajiro con una condescendencia estúpida, tratando sin saberlo de mantener levantadas las barreras que los separaban desde los siglos. Detrás de aquella barrera estaba la vida" (250). Thus in accepting the soldier as his equal, Luis finds life and proves himself as a real man in the new Cuba that was forged by his model, Fidel.

Yet the novel does not close with Luis's realization of Revolutionary brotherhood moment. Instead, Luis returns home to his wife Esperanza with whom he is determined to start things anew. Having freed himself from his obsession with Rosa/America, Luis can now dutifully perform Revolutionary efforts with his wife by his side. Esperanza is a foil for Rosa; she is child-like and simple, passive, and was a virgin on her wedding night. And although Esperanza always felt uncomfortable with her husband's infatuation with Rosa, she never dared say anything to Luis. When Luis returns home, Esperanza is waiting to serve him coffee and, upon seeing, her Luis thinks to himself:

> Esperanza también necesitaba cariño, mucho más que él. El era fuerte y ella tenía miedo. La ayudaría a perderlo. Le haría sentir que siempre estaría a su lado para protegerla contra todo. Ella también le ayudaría. El viejo mundo se derrumbaba a su alrededor y tenían que apoyarse el uno en el otro para mantenerse firmes. Emprenderían juntos el camino. La haría comprender todo, la convencería de que ella tampoco debía mirar hacia atrás. (251)

Luis's projected future in his home, I would argue, is what Connell terms "complicit masculinity." In his words, "marriage, fatherhood and community life often involve extensive compromises with women rather than naked domination or an uncontested display

of authority" (79). Luis does not openly seek to dominate his wife, but rather disguises his patriarchal role beneath Revolutionary lingo, implicitly revealing that in order to forget Cuba's decadent, bourgeoise past and forge a new society, he will be leading this process on a public level as well as in his home. Thus, assuming the strong masculine role, he frames his responsibility to protect his wife and mold her into a Revolutionary, in his own iage, within the context of patriotic duty. Thus, interestingly, *Los muertos andan solos* concludes by rendering Revolutionary masculinity as one that is also complicit and guided by patriarchal principles, which are ultimately disguised behind the façade of equality. In *Los muertos andan solos*, patriarchal power has become invisible behind the nation's patriarch Fidel and his rhetoric of egalitarian masculinity, which, in the end, reinforces traditional notions of masculinity.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

REMEMBERING FIDEL

"As men, the carry a hegemonic position.
As elders, they are subject to ageism".
~Gabriela Spector –Mersel

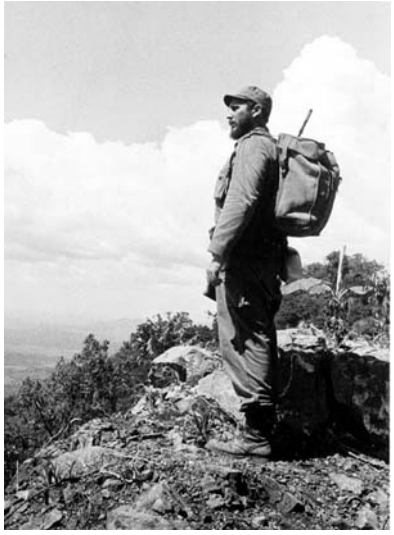
Representations portraying Fidel Castro in the late 1950s and early 1960s reflect how power and political authority operated in conjunction with gender, founding a Revolution through a politics of masculinity. As we have seen, the construction and forging of Fidel's masculinity were central to the Revolution's most foundational moments—from the armed insurrection to its epic campaigns or programs—and were articulated through relationships – both real and imagined – between Revolutionary men and women and their *Comandante*. In revealing Fidel's masculinity to be hegemonic and a legitimating feature of patriarchal control, these encounters demonstrate how the leader's power was experienced in a decidedly gendered way, functioning as a mechanism of control in the Revolution's hegemonizing project to forge Revolutionary citizens.

By theorizing Fidel's power in gendered terms, more specifically, in terms of masculinity as both a social construction and material body, this dissertation has problematized —as masculinity scholar Harry Brod tells us— the ways in which men and masculinity "may be conventionally and unproblematically at the center of discourse, often as explicit or implicit, transcendent subjects, explanations, or foundations" (98). According to Brod, one of the principal goals of studies on masculinity is to "*name* men and masculinity" and "to make those categories visible and to recognize their power; and to *deconstruct* them, to undermine, subvert, and dismantle them" (98). This study ultimately

deconstructs Cuba's Revolutionary icon by viewing Fidel's power as a gendered social construction whose maintenance depends on the body's ability to conform to hegemonic definitions of masculinity, all of which is a sobering reminder for a nation's aging *Comandante* who is not the man he once was. Indeed, in lieu of portraying an elderly Fidel, Cuban media has resurfaced younger versions of Fidel, which correspond to the time period analyzed in this thesis. In many ways, then, this thesis compels us to look to the present and examine an aging Fidel who is approaching his eighty-sixth birthday.[64]

Given that the underpinning of Fidel's power and political authority, as this study has argued, was his ability to embody hegemonic masculinity, how has the Cuban leader maintained the "status quo," so to speak, in light of his old age? Aging and masculinity, as Gabriela Spector-Mersel points out in her article "Never-aging Stories: Western Hegemonic Masculinity Scripts", are difficult to reconcile: "In terms of the lifespan time, the hegemonic gender scripts are severely interrupted. While in relation to younger phases of life they provide clear recipes of how to be a 'true man'…the fundamental contrast between old age and Western ideals does not allow for the elaboration of such formulas for later life" (75). The documentary *Kordavision* (2005) brilliantly captures the lack of "clear recipes of how to be a 'true man'" in old age by contrasting a young Fidel with an elderly Fidel. The documentary takes as its starting point the photo to the left, which was shot by Alberto Korda in the early sixties and pictures Fidel at the top of Cuba's highest point, *Pico Turquino*. As the elderly Fidel contemplates the photo, he jokes that climbing stairs is now the equivalent to climbing that mountain. In doing so, the documentary highlights the lack of a "formula," in Spector-Mersel's terminology, for an elderly Fidel to be masculine. The feeble Fidel who gazes at the photo is clearly denied that opportunity.

[64] Fidel was born in Birán on August 13, 1926.



(Figure 7.1 Fidel at *Pico Turquino*)

To be sure, Fidel has struggled to embody the paradoxical conundrum of a real/old man at least since the time he fainted and fell during a speech in 2004, underwent surgery for intestinal complications in 2006, and –amid rumors and predictions about his imminent death— finally transferred power to his brother Raúl in 2008. This type of paradox, Spector-Mersel says, is central to our understanding of old age and masculinity: "images of old men as an invisible, unmasculine, and paradoxical social category, make it culturally unfeasible to be a 'true' man and an old person" (78). In many ways, an aging Fidel has become "invisible" in Cuba, signaled by his withdrawal from the public spotlight. The disappearing of Fidel's body points to the way in which aging can undermine his authority, a power that now symbolically stands on two frail and weak legs that can no longer climb the *Pico Turquino*. His physical withdrawal, however, has coincided with a replacement by younger versions of himself, which have cropped up across the city landscape and in the media. On my first research trip to Cuba in 2008, for example, I found the newly produced poster "Cuba Postcastro" whose portrayal of Fidel in the *Sierra Maestra* represents a symbolic journey into a heroic past that was defined by exemplary masculinity. Thus the act of remembering

Fidel—as this poster suggests— is tied to a bodily remembrance, which quite literally serves to remember an aging body by replacing it with a young one. At the same time, this poster postulates that the young and masculine Fidel lives on and is reproduced in the new generations of Cuba's men, forever young.

(Figure 7.2 Cuba Postcastro)

Because the young body, as Spector-Mersel tells us, "is a central definer of the ideal person" whereas "the aged body symbolizes the unwanted and turns into a subject of collective stigma", the act of remembering Fidel remasculinizes the leader whose power has been jeopardized by his own body's betrayal (74).[65]

During my second research trip to Cuba I was privy to witness the resurrection of Fidel. In the summer of 2010 a rejuvenated and healthier Fidel stepped back into the public,

[65] While the Comandante's disappearance has been mostly physical, however, he still engages the Cuban people through essays almost daily in the state press. Whether or not Fidel actually writes these essays is not the point. Rather, as Julia Sweig points out, they "allow him to continue shaping his legacy. Moreover, his presence as great sage in chief compels the new government to modulate its moves within a policy framework that will not excessively offend Fidel's sensibilities" (*Cuba: What Everyone Needs to Know* 227).

making nightly television appearances in his customary olive green fatigues. While some celebrated his return, others, including the internationally famous blogger Yoani Sánchez, bemoaned his resurrection in her blog entry from August 18, 2010. Yoani placed two photos of Fidel—one young and one old— side by side (see to the right), which perfectly articulates the theme of the entry.

(Figure 7.3 Young Fidel and old Fidel: A comparison)

The *Comandante*, Yoani says, is clearly diminished, in a physical sense:

> The stuttering old man with quivering hands was a shadow of the Greek-profiled military leader who, while a million voices chanted his name in the plaza, pardoned lives, announced executions, proclaimed laws that no one had been consulted on and declared the right of Revolutionaries to make Revolution. Although he has once again donned his olive-green military shirt, little is left of the man who used to dominate television programming for endless hours, keeping people in suspense from the other side of the screen.

Fidel emerges as a quivering ghost of his former self, enfeebled despite his efforts at making a "comeback". Fidel, Yoani says, will never come back: "In recent weeks, he who was once called The One, the Horse or simply He, has been presented to us stripped of his captivating

charisma. Although he is once again in the news, it has been confirmed: Fidel Castro, fortunately, will never return". Yoani's blog points to the way in which she –and others— now take the upper hand in confronting an aging man who is no longer *el Comandante*, but rather *el Coma-andante*, as some have nicknamed him.[66]

The Fidel Castro who "will never return" –in Yoani's words— was a *Comandante* whose construction of masculinity was represented in a variety of contexts through Revolutionary campaigns and events and was encountered by his subjects in multiple ways. In many instances, the Fidel these fictional characters encounter is not the Fidel espoused by official Revolutionary discourse, for disguised behind these constructions of masculinity are definitions of manhood and womanhood that advocate violence, compulsory heterosexuality, legitimate patriarchy, and the right of the powerful to rule over the week. And all of them support the dominance of one man: Fidel Castro. As Chapter Two of this study has shown, in the novel *Ciudad rebelde* Alfredo views Fidel as a hero who is sent to deliver the nation from Batista's tyranny. Yet his death –a parody of martyrdom –undermines Fidel's heroic tradition, suggesting that Fidel's power, which is embodied in exemplary masculinity, is just as repressive and violent as the regime it replaces. Similarly, as we saw in Chapter Three, Che's "New Man" ideology, which sought to Revolutionize manhood within the context of Socialist Cuba, was ultimately subverted by Fidel's model of masculinity. Underneath Fidel's acts of love for Che lies a relationship that is marked by homosocial struggle, which is manifested in Che's struggle to submit to Fidel's authority. In other contexts, submission to the leader's authority was embedded in representations of Fidel as the nation's patriarch and "lonely man," as demonstrated in Chapters Four and Five of this study respectively.

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[66] This is taken from a song "El Coma-andante" by the Cuban musical group Porno para Ricardo. There is a video on Youtube of the song, but they are not allowed to perform this song in Cuba.

Though these representations gave the appearance of espousing sexual equality in both the domestic and public sphere by portraying Fidel as Cuba's leading feminist, they too ultimately disguised patriarchal control by allowing Fidel to penetrate the lives of female subjects in the most private and intimate of ways. In a similar vein, as we saw in Chapter Six, Fidel's egalitarian model of masculinity, which served to Cubanize Cuban men who had experienced emasculation at the hands of U.S. imperialism, paradoxically worked to legitimate patriarchy within the domestic sphere, unintentionally underscoring the way in which the Revolution—as embodied in Fidel—failed to bring equality to the sexes. These representations of Fidel's masculinity expose the paradox in the foundations of a Revolution whose promise to redefine manhood and womanhood was ultimately limited by its leader, a man whose power was in many ways more subtle than the olive green, beard, and cigar, a power that was disguised behind a hero, friend, father, feminist, and the victor against U.S. imperialism.

Undoubtedly, Fidel has left an indelible mark on Cuba, but as he fades from the locus of power, it is clear that Cubans are embracing possibilities for new expressions of masculinity and femininity. The fact that Cuba has a strong LGBT movement, of which Raúl Castro's daughter Mariela Castro is an activist, is a sign that definitions of masculinity are changing far beyond Fidel's definitions of manhood. Moreover, Mariela's proposed measure to allow sex-change operations was passed as a law in 2008. Of interest too, is the emergence of studies on masculinities— led by scholar Jorge González Pagés—that seem to point to a crisis of Cuban masculinity and the need for change. Within Cuba, González Pagés conducts educational workshops to help educate men and women on a variety of masculinist issues such as violence, machismo, and fatherhood. As Cuba transitions towards

a Post-Fidel Cuba, the theoretical paradigms proposed in Connell's work and the representations examined in this thesis will be useful in tracing the legacy of Fidel and his role in shaping Cuba's gender system, for in many ways this legacy will outlive Fidel himself, and Cubans will have to grapple with the question of masculine identity without the iconic Revolutionary figure.

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2009 "Male-on-the-Hyphen: Negotiating Masculinity in Cristina García's *A Handbook to Luck*." UCLA Department of Spanish and Portuguese Graduate Student Conference: Dislocated Writing: Luso-Hispanic Literature Beyond Borders. UCLA, Los Angeles, CA.

2007 "¿Puedo ser mestizo? La política de higiene y la negociación de casta en *El lazarillo de ciegos caminantes*." Southern Atlantic Modern Language Association. Atlanta, GA.

2006 "Embodied Hopelessness: The Depressed Corpus of the Nation in Manuel Zeno Gandía's *La charca*." Latin American Literatures and Cultures Conference. Colorado, Springs, CO.

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PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

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