

Cabezas's Descent from the Mountain

And a little on martyrs (in/and) Nicaraguan Music!

Through the paths of the field/pasture
you walk, carrying your sorrow
your sorrow of love and crying
in your womb of clay and dirt
your little round jar
that you fill up, year by year
with the seed that is planted
by the farmer in his poverty
today I want to sing for you, Rural María
oh, mother of the field
unmatched mother
today I want to sing
about your poor children
your sad dispossession
maternal pain
malnutrition and poverty
is what surrounds you
silent straw hut
just the whisper of the jungle
your hands are of cedar
your eyes are sad twilights
your tears are mud
what you spill in the sierras

For this reason now
I want to sing to your heart
today I want to tell you I'm sorry
for this much poverty and desolation
through the prairies and rivers
the farmer mother walks
feeling the cold of the winter
and his terrible destiny
through the paths of the field
you walk, carrying your sorrow
your sorrow of love and crying
in your womb of clay and dirt
today I want to sing for you, Rural María
oh, mother of the field
unmatched mother
today I want to sing
about your poor children
your sad disposition
maternal pain



While you wait...
Remembering “Rural María”

1. What is this song about? Who is it dedicated to?
2. Do you see any intersections with themes from *Fire from the Mountain*?
3. Does this song relate to any other songs we have studied from other movements (the corrido, the Nova Trova)?



Arlen Siu

(a lesser known martyr)

Who was she?

Chinese-Nicaraguan revolutionary

What is her story?

Joined the revolution at 18 (1973), died in 1975 in battle
One of the first (if not the first) females to be killed in the revolution

Engaged Marxist-Feminist

Author, artist, and singer-song-writer dedicated to the cause of the peasants (and, in particular, the peasant mothers)

What song did we hear as we came in today?

“María Rural,” an anthem of praise to the peasant and indigenous women of her country and revolution

What do they mean for Cabezas?

- **The Mountain**
- **Mud**
- **Quixote**
- **Sickness**
- **Martyrdom (i.e., Tello's death)**
- **The *New Man***

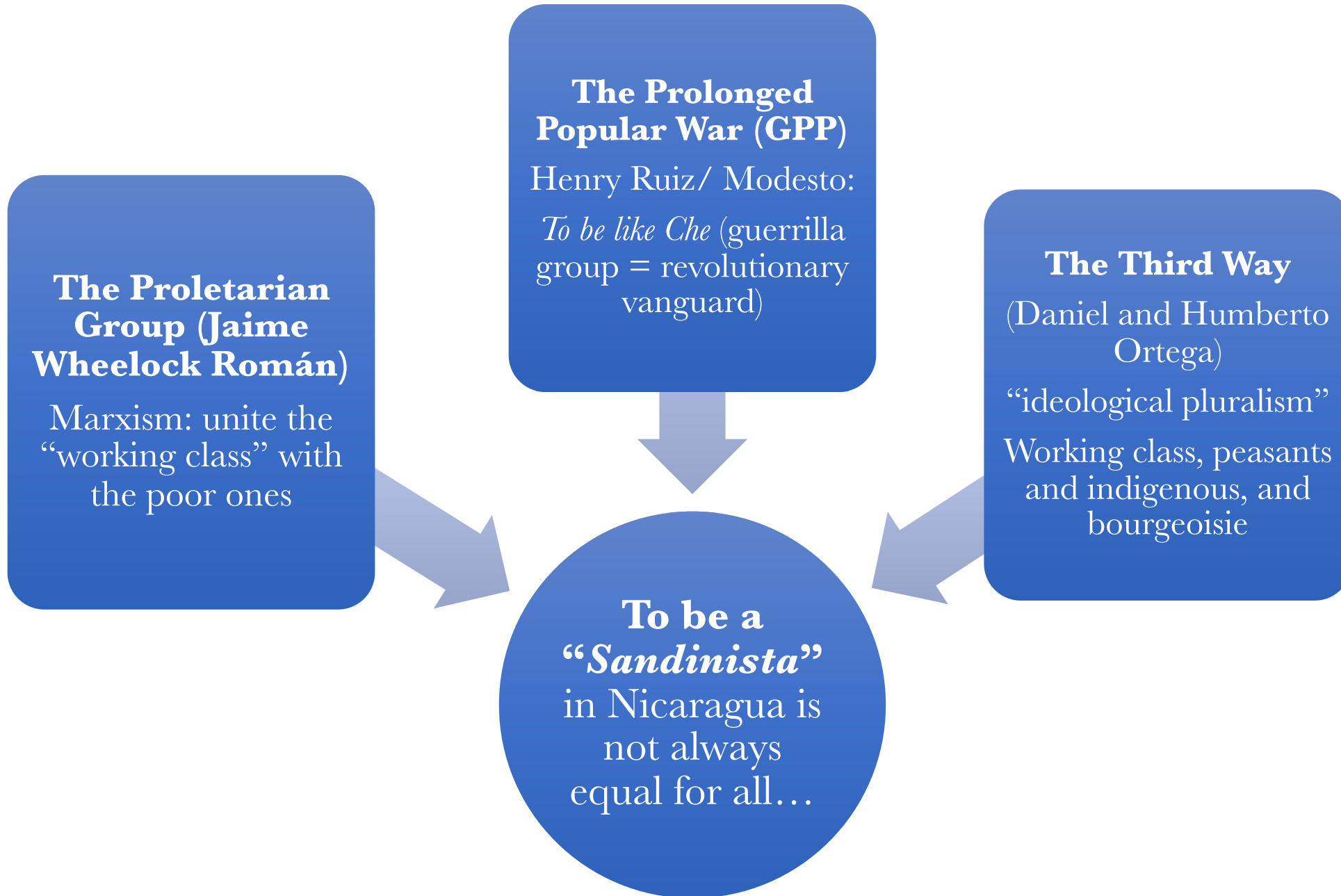
Mud

“I tramped through the mud, I was glutted with mud, spattered with mud; I shat in mud, cried in mud, sloshed through mud, sunk my head in mud; there was mud in every crevice of my body [...] but I had something with me in the mountains that I never talked about, nobody knew about. I think I only confessed it once to a compañero over some drinks, but that was later, in 1978, I kept that secret and held it tight for four years. You see, I wanted to live, because I went into the mountains with a fistful of ideals in my hand; I never let go of them or got them dirty; and if I fell flat in the mud, when I pulled out my hand, there, tight in my fist, were those ideals” (121).

The *New Man*

- **Che Guevara:** “In this period of the building up of socialism, we can see the birth of the *new man*. His image is not yet finished; it could never be as the process goes hand in hand with the development of new economic structures ... the important thing is that men [...] view their importance and necessity as the impetus for change [in the new socialist society]”.
- **Omar Cabezas:** “The *new man* began to be born with fungal infections and with his feet oozing worms; the *new man* began to be born with loneliness and eaten alive by mosquitoes; he began to be born stinking. That’s the outer part, because inside, by dint of violent shocks day after day, the *new man* was being born with the freshness of the mountains. A man – it might seem incredible – but an open un-egotistical man, no longer petty – a tender man who sacrificed himself for others, who suffers when others suffer and who also laughs when others laugh”. (*Fire from the Mountain*)
- **Carlos Fonseca:** “The Sandinista is the most noble, generous, and sacrificial human being, the most likely to seek out difficult or impossible tasks [...] as the vanguard, he aspires to political and military perfection, which inspires him to carry out the most delicate missions because his triumphs will be destined to benefit only and exclusively, the people [...] The Sandinista is a revolutionary with great human morale; the most dedicated to the just cause of the people, his generosity is infinite; and above his individual interests, we find the collective interests represented by the vanguard and his political and military activity is guided by his political and ideological principles” (*What is a Sandinista?*, 1980).

Nicaraguan Revolutionary Factions



Connecting the dots:

Think about these questions as you consider Cabezas's descent from the mountain!

- How does Cabezas describe his re-encounter with the university, city (León), after coming down from the mountain?
- Who is Claudia? What does she mean for Cabezas? Do his feelings for her change? Why or why not?
- How does Cabezas continue to connect nature with his narrative in the final chapters for the week?
- Why does Cabezas say he feels “naked” (p.148) as he reemerges in the city? What is missing, for him? How does he describe, once back in the city, what the mountain means for him (p. 201)?
- How is Cabezas's re-encounter with his family and house?

What about women in the Sandinista Revolution?

Women suffered more than any other group during the Somoza Regime (1934-1979) (Randall 8).

For this reason, women took it upon themselves to participate in the revolution and re-structure society post-revolution.

Women made up 30% of the combatants in the Sandinista Revolution.

60% of the volunteers in the literacy campaigns (during/post-revolution) were (bourgeois) women.

Would you like to read more:

Sandino's Daughters (Margaret Randall, 1995)

The Country Under My Skin (Gioconda Belli, 2001)

What's on for next week?

Monday, April 1

No class! (Easter Monday)

Wednesday, April 3

VI. Arielismo today!

Occupy and Spain's *new day*!: “‘Young People Took to the Streets and all of a Sudden all of the Political Parties Got Old’: The 15M Movement of Spain” (Neil Hughes)

Friday, April 5

From Marcos to #YoSoy132: “Between the Light and the Shadow” (Marcos) and “Redrawing Power: YoSoy132 and Overflowing insurgencies” (Mariana Favela)