The Inappropriate/D Fantastic: A Proposal Beyond Feminism

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Teresa López-Pellisa,

"The *Inappropriate/d Fantastic*: A Proposal Beyond Feminism"

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Abstract: Teresa López-Pellisa's article "*The Inappropriate/d Fantastic: A Proposal Beyond Feminism*" discusses a type of narration that goes beyond the feminist fantastic. These are fantastic texts permeated not only by a feminist discourse, but by intersectionality, transfeminism, ecofeminism, cyberfeminism, post-humanism, xenofeminism and/or necropolitics as well. Borrowing the term *inappropriate/d others* from Donna Haraway (*The Promises of Monsters*), who in turn takes it from the feminist theorist Trinh Minh-ha, we can analyze those fantastic stories that call into question the categories of gender, class, race and sexuality established by Western enlightened humanism. These types of non-mimetic narrations have a clear subversive component and are led by dissident beings and attitudes presented from that "other space" or from beyond. In using this concept, this paper refers to those manifestations of the fantastic that serve as allegories or symbols of non-normative individuals who contravene the patriarchal hegemonic and heteronormative humanist system, using the subject matter of narration, the space recreated in the text or its characters.

Teresa LÓPEZ-PELLISA

The *Inappropriate/D Fantastic*: A Proposal Beyond Feminism

We say: Long live the monster!

Long live its ability to dissolve any idea or project of capitalist development, and the order (old or new) that organizes it!

Antonio Negri, "El monstruo político. Vida desnuda y potencia"¹

Non-mimetic literature has existed throughout the course of human history and women have always written literature. While it is true that non-mimetic genres and works written by women have always had a conflictive relationship with the canon, it is safe to say that in the twenty-first century, together with the advent of the fourth wave of feminism, there has been a paradigm shift, as the presence of the fantastic,² science fiction and the works belonging to these genres and signed by women writers has grown in the media, as in television series, film and literature. However, the truth is that until this paradigm shift took place (especially within the Hispanic sphere), the presence of women writers had been characterized by two forms of the same phenomenon that seem fundamental to me: *silencing* and *invisibilization*. These two concepts can be illustrated through two Greco-Latin mythological references: Penelope and Metis. Thus, in *Women and Power: A Manifesto* Mary Beard suggests that the Western literary tradition begins with a text in which a man tells a woman to shut up, alluding to the episode of the *Odyssey* in which Telemachus asks his mother Penelope to retire to her quarters while the men are left to tell stories in the living room: "Mother of mine—he replied—go inside the house and take care of your own labors, of the loom and the spinning wheel... The story will be under the care of men, and above all, mine. So, the government of the house is mine" (qtd Beard 16).³ In this way, the British researcher draws a parallel between Homer's classic text and the silencing that women have been subjected to throughout history within the public sphere and within culture. Women, as subaltern individuals, have had no voice, and this has been one of the demands of feminism throughout history. Like Penelope, women have been relegated to domestic chores while men have been responsible for creating discourse and history, without allowing women to contribute with their experience and point of view.⁴

On the other hand, *invisibilization* can be exemplified by the little-known goddess Metis, the first wife of Zeus, who was swallowed by him while pregnant with Athena. The Catalan poet Maria Mercè Marçal compares the birth of the goddess Athena, through the head of Zeus and dressed and armed without knowing her mother, with the experience of the writer: "literally daughter of the Father, of His law, of His culture - the great male birth against Nature; of the Father who, in any case, has swallowed and used female force and made it invisible. There is no maternal female reference: there is no female genealogy of culture" (Marçal 69).⁵ We all know the father and daughter but, in an act of inexplicable anthropophagic complicity, we have ended up erasing the titanide Metis from our collective memory. Metis has disappeared from Western culture. She is the great unknown of classical mythology and represents the invisibilization of reproductive work, both creatively and physically (see López-Pellisa 2017).

Athena is therefore born without a mother, without any female reference, and can only contemplate herself in the paternal projection that she has, having been born with the image that Zeus has created in her mind about how her body and attributes should be. With this metaphor, the necessity of liberating Metis is raised; that is, to vindicate the history of literature written by women in

¹ "Decimos: ¡viva el monstruo! ¡Viva su capacidad de disolver toda idea o proyecto de desarrollo capitalista, y del orden (viejo o nuevo) que lo organiza!". All quotations in the original version of this article are translations. The original Spanish will be included as footnotes throughout.

² In this article I understand the concept of the fantastic as established by David Roas (2018).

³ "Madre mía –replica–, vete adentro de la casa y ocúpate de tus labores propias, del telar y de la rueca... El relato estará al cuidado de los hombres, y sobre todo al mío. Mío es, pues, el gobierno de la casa."

⁴ Donna Haraway also explains how this silencing has occurred in the construction of scientific discourse in "Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium" and in "Teddy Bear Patriarchy" (in *The Promises of Monsters*, 2019), and Susan Harding in *The Science Question in Feminism* (1986).

⁵ "Literalmente hija del Padre, de Su ley, de Su cultura –el gran parto masculino contra-Natura; del Padre que, en todo caso, ha deglutido y utilizado la fuerza femenina y la ha hecho invisible. No hay ningún referente femenino materno: no hay genealogía femenina de la cultura."

the West, and in the particular case that we are concerned with here, to build a female literary genealogy of the unusual within the Hispanic sphere. The history of humanity is full of characters like Metis and Penelope, which is why the terms *invisibilization* and *silencing* are an act of historical memory. When feminism claims a space and denounces the *silencing* and *invisibilization* of women, it is not adopting a victim's position, it is claiming a historical right and making a position of subordination and oppression visible. Releasing Metis facilitates the visibility of female authors in literary history, and hence claims the importance of academic work in the field of gynocriticism.

In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir considered the "woman" category to be a hetero-designation, an identity attributed from the patriarchal hegemonic power. In this way, a normative femininity is imposed on the basis of a series of characteristics and attributes that come from outside. When criticism refers to narratives of the fantastic by female authors, the term *fantastique féminin* is commonly used. Anne Richter coined this term in 1977 to refer to a type of narrative written by women in which characteristic elements of "the feminine" predominated. These include mythology, madness, motherhood, the inner world, the irrational or a fusion with the natural surroundings. I strongly dissociate myself from such conceptions, since the very categories of the feminine and the masculine should be questioned in the first place. They are based on essentialist presuppositions that I do not share, and 'the feminine', after all, is also a category that comes from hetero-designation (see López-Pellisa and Ruiz Garzón). The binomials reason/madness, rationality/irrationality, nature/city, man/woman respond to essentialist categories generated by patriarchal androcentric and anthropocentric humanist knowledge (see Haraway 1991; and Braidotti 2015), and accordingly, terms such as "the masculine" and "the feminine" are concepts constructed from practices of exclusion and discrimination that the nineteenth century does not cease to question. As Meri Torras reminds us

all too often the erasure of gender-sexual difference in approaching some themes and aspects has led to an allegedly universal discourse that, nevertheless, has repeatedly ignored women and other subaltern groups equally excluded from the hegemonic discourse. When those groups have been included, it has been to demonstrate a subsidiary fruit of their material difference, that is to say, of their body. (16)⁶

If gender is performative, as Judith Butler states, the combinatory possibilities of that which is considered masculine and female can be interchangeable. The fact that an author writes a literary text does not render that artistic work as female, and therefore, neither is it feminist since women are not necessarily obliged or inclined to write feminist literature and criticism just because they are women.

As I have stated previously, I reject both the term feminine fantastic and the term feminine literature. What interests me is the feminist fantastic and feminist literature because of the subversive possibilities they raise against the patriarchal order. The fantastic allows us to question a symbolic order based on transgression, whether it be of language or cultural conventions, and this exercise of subversion against the normative is disturbing and revolutionary, and this is why feminism is a cultural weapon of great interest. In *Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion*, Rosemary Jackson states that fantastic literature shows that which should remain unseen, so that its sinister effects are revealed from the dark areas hidden in our everyday life. What I find most interesting is that the fantastic unmasks the relative and arbitrary nature of the social system, opposes the institutional order and expresses the impulses that should be repressed from the perspective of the normative, so it may be logical for women, as unprivileged identities, to find a space of freedom in non-mimetic narratives (whether the fantastic, the marvelous or science fiction) and in their ability to reflect the tensions between ideology and human and non-human subjectivities.

Inappropriate/D Others

Donna Haraway borrows the term *inappropriate/d others* from the feminist theorist and filmmaker Trinh Minh-hà⁷ to reflect on the possibility of creating a more habitable world, an "other space" from which to live critically based on new relationships of kinship between diversity and human, sexual, genetic, animal, vegetable, technological, material and ecological differences. The American theorist maintains that being an "inappropriate/able other" means being in a critical, deconstructive

⁶ "demasiado a menudo el borrado de la diferencia genérico-sexual en la aproximación de algunos temas y aspectos ha desembocado en un discurso presuntamente universal que, no obstante, ha ignorado una y otra vez a las mujeres y a otros grupos subalternos igualmente excluidos del discurso hegemónico, y cuando las ha incluido ha sido para terminar evidenciando una subsidiariedad fruto de su diferencia material, es decir, de su cuerpo."

⁷ With *inappropriate/d others* Trinh Minh-hà explores the issue of gender, ethnic origin and sexuality that are outside the normative to refer to subjectivities that are not appropriate and that we cannot appropriate, so we are disturbed by an origin that we cannot apprehend.

relationality; a diffractive rather than reflexive r(el)ationality, as a way of establishing powerful connections that exceed domination" (*The Promises of Monsters* 46).⁸ With this concept she refers to all identities, individuals and subjectivities that do not fit into the dominant modern Western narrative; to all the displaced. The most interesting aspect about her proposal, that with the term *inappropriate/able* she is not seeking to generate another difference, but to extend it to all human and non-human beings in order to establish *monstrous* relations and kinship in this habitable reality from the other-place, thereby opening up the possibility of reconsidering the relations of difference outside the hierarchical domination of the binary oppositions that rule in Western culture.

A thing that is *inappropriate* does not fit the conditions or needs of someone or something, which is why it is out of place; and what is *inappropriable* indicates that it cannot be appropriated, therefore its essence is based on a difference that cannot (and should not) be absorbed by the system since it would disappear as soon as that integration/appropriation takes place; this is where its political strength lies. The existence of *inappropriate/d others* allows us to deconstruct the universal and show the existence of other reality(ies). Trinh Minh-ha refers to the "historical positioning of those who could not adopt the mask of the 'I' or the 'other' provided by modern Western narratives" (Haraway, *The Promises of Monsters* 46), and Haraway starts from this concept to consider other figures outside the narratives and language of Western humanism who resist representation, inhabiting from the exclusion of universality and the human ("Ecce Homo").⁹

Donna Haraway argues that "if the patriarchal narratives of the West have said that the physical body is the consequence of the first birth, while man is the product of the second heliotropic birth, perhaps a differential and diffractive feminist allegory can be useful for *inappropriate/d others* to emerge in a third birth" (*The Promises of Monsters* 47) within an "other space," which the narratives of the fantastic might be able to offer.¹⁰ Thus, a diffractive pattern does not mark the place where differences arise (belonging to or relative to the difference), but rather it marks a place where the effects of difference make their appearance. The fantastic, because of the possibility that it offers in terms of generating possible worlds and destabilizing the limits of reality, deals with the boundaries between problematic and unexpected subjectivities and identities, and for Haraway, the emerging social beings called *inappropriate/d others* would inhabit this type of world in which the presence of their difference is allowed. In this way, we could affirm that the *inappropriate/able* is a subjectivity that naturally inhabits the narratives of the fantastic.

Borrowing the concept *inappropriate/d others* from Haraway (*The Promises of Monsters*), with the term *fantastic inappropriate/able* I want to refer to a type of narration that goes beyond the feminist fantastic. These are fantastic texts permeated not only by feminist discourse, but also by intersectionality, transfeminism¹¹, ecofeminism¹², cyberfeminism¹³, post-humanism, xenofeminism¹⁴

⁸ The diffractive alludes to the deviation of a wave by hitting the edge of an opaque body (which would serve as an analogy of the normative system). So diffractive opens a new opening and offers another possible path within the cognitive framework of reality established by hegemonic power. The interesting thing about diffraction is that it does not produce a reflection rather than interferential patterns.

⁹ With this proposal Donna Haraway places herself in the post-humanist discourse, like Braidotti, considering an anti-humanism that allows us to establish bridges and lines of connection with *inappropriate/d others* who have not been included in the universal humanist that has been established since modernity with the Renaissance and the Enlightenment: "Humanity is a modernist figure; and this humanity has a generic face, a universal shape. Humanity's face has been the face of man. Feminist humanity must have another shape, other gestures; but, I believe, we must have feminist figures of humanity. They cannot be man or woman; they cannot be the human as historical narrative has staged that generic universal. Feminist figures cannot, finally, have a name; they cannot be native. Feminist humanity must, somehow, both resist representation, resist literal figuration, and still erupt in powerful new tropes, new figures of speech, new turns of historical possibility" ("Ecce homo" 86).

¹⁰ "Si las narrativas patriarcales de Occidente han dicho que el cuerpo físico es la consecuencia del primer nacimiento, mientras que el hombre constituye el producto del segundo nacimiento heliotrópico, tal vez una alegoría feminista diferencial y difractiva pueda servir para que los *inappropriate/d others* emerjan en un tercer nacimiento."

¹¹ "El transfeminismo podría definirse como aquel movimiento revolucionario, aunque pacífico, que, procedente de la alianza de las luchas históricas antipatriarcales del feminismo, y de las luchas recientes por la desmedicalización y despatologización de los movimientos trans, intersexuales y de la discapacidad (*handiqueer*), entiende la abolición del sistema binario sexo-género, y de sus inscripciones institucionales y administrativas (desde la asignación de sexo in útero o en el momento del nacimiento) como condición de posibilidad de una profunda transformación política que conduzca al reconocimiento de la irreductible multiplicidad del viviente y del respeto a su integridad física": "Transfeminism could be defined as that revolutionary movement, albeit peaceful, that comes from an alliance of the historical anti-patriarchal struggles of feminism, and the recent struggles for the de-medicalization and depathologization of trans, intersex and disability movements (*handiqueer*), sees the abolition

and/or necropolitics.¹⁵ The *inappropriate/able fantastic* sees nature as a technology built from social praxis and therefore it is necessary to be critical and creative in the face of the dominant patterns of thought and knowledge, and manifest dissent and destabilize the normative through those places-others that the fantastic environment favors.

The *inappropriate/able fantastic* does not only take into account the category "Woman," because it is inscribed in transfeminism and xenofeminism, but it also does not take the "human" only category into account either, since it is permeated by different currents of thought and socio-political artistic productions that consider a network of interrelations between human and non-human beings, which are, therefore, positioned from critical post-humanism. If we want to overcome the binary categories that have shaped Western metaphysics, as well as notions of gender and sexuality, we have to call into question the ideas that we have held until now about what the human species is. Rosi Braidotti is sensitive to the consequences and effects of the Anthropocene era in which we live, where the activity of humanity on Earth has been very significant, and that is why she sees critical post-humanism as an alternative to humanism since, as Tony Davies states, "all humanisms up to now have been imperialist. They speak of humans in the terms and in the interests of a class, a sex, a race and a genome. Their pressure suffocates those they ignore. It is almost impossible to think of a crime that has not been committed in the name of humanity" (Braidotti 27-28).¹⁶ That is why it is considered anti-humanist, with anti-humanism being understood as the possibility to be more inclusive with emerging identities to undermine the Eurocentric imperialist tendency that allows us to generate a new idea of humanity, which in this case would be crystallized in the concept of the post-human where anthropolatry is no longer valid and to rethink both the relations between humans and those between humans and other living beings.

Post-humanist transfeminism is revolutionary because it fights for rights in certain spaces, and it also integrates mobility between genders, physicalities, sexualities, humans and non-humans of *inappropriate/able* multitudes that seek to displace the categories of femininity and masculinity that characterize Western humanism. Sayak Valencia argues that this would require a discursive reconstruction for "the construction of new subjectivities for both women and men - including in these new categorizations bio-women, bio-men as well as techno-women, techno-men and all those who are critically uninscribed in the dichotomies of gender," and that "would suppose an epistemological and discursive change without precedent" (Valencia 181).¹⁷ In this context, Sayak Valencia argues that it is necessary to review the demands of hegemonic masculinity transmitted by the systems of domination that Bourdieu describes as symbolic violence and which she analyses with great success in her essay *La dominación masculina* (2000). This is because "it is not possible to forge a real resistance to the economic system in which we live, which bases its power on exacerbated violence, without

of the binary sex-gender system, and of its institutional and administrative inscriptions (from the assignment of sex in utero or at the moment of birth) as a condition for a profound political transformation leading to the recognition of the irreducible multiplicity of the living being and respect for his physical integrity" (Preciado 274).

¹² Ecofeminism is a current of thought and a social movement that combines ecocriticism with feminism (see Mies and Shiva).

¹³ Cyberfeminism is an artistic, philosophical and political movement that explores the social construction of sexuality and identity in the era of cyberculture and vindicates the presence of women in technological production (see Zafra and López-Pellisa).

¹⁴ Xenofeminist theories are based on cyberfeminism, post-humanism and accelerationism, as well as other currents of contemporary thought. Helen Hester defines xenofeminism (XF) as "a technomaterialist, unnaturalist and gender abolitionist feminism" (19).

¹⁵ "la necropolítica podría definirse como una suerte de contrabiopoder ligado, sin duda, al concepto de necrocapitalismo, tal y como lo entiende Sayak Valencia en su ensayo *Capitalismo gore*; es decir, al capitalismo contemporáneo, que organiza sus formas de acumulación de capital como un fin absoluto que prevalece por encima de cualquier otra lógica o metanarrativa": "necropolitics could be defined as a kind of counterbiopower linked, without a doubt, to the concept of necrocapitalism as understood by Sayak Valencia in her essay *Gore Capitalism*; in other words, to a contemporary capitalism that organizes its forms of capital accumulation as an absolute end that prevails over any other logic or meta-narrative" (Falomir Archambault 15).

¹⁶ "todos los humanismos hasta ahora han sido imperialistas. Éstos hablan de los humanos en los términos y en los intereses de una clase, un sexo, una raza y un genoma. Su presión sofoca a aquellos que ignora. Es casi imposible pensar en un crimen que no se haya cometido en nombre de la humanidad."

¹⁷ "la construcción de nuevas subjetividades tanto para las mujeres como para los varones -incluyéndose en estas nuevas categorizaciones tanto a las bio-mujeres, bio-hombres así como a las tecno-mujeres, tecno-hombres y a tod@s aquell@s que se desinscriben críticamente en las dicotomías de género."

questioning masculinity" (Valencia, 182)¹⁸ as this violence is also inflicted on the bodies of men. For all this, Valencia also vouches for the creation of new political subjects so that feminism can allow us to form alliances with other subjectivities outside the modern male/ female categories, and hence the importance of combining hegemonic discourses along the skein of the *inappropriate/able* in order to establish connections between beings that have seemed to inhabit parallel worlds until now.

The Inappropriate/D Fantastic

In this way, the *inappropriate/able fantastic* would refer to a type of non-mimetic narrative characterized by a clear subversive component as opposed to the androcentric and capitalist heteropatriarchal system. The characters and problems reflected in these texts would present monsters and other inappropriate/able beings that wander like ghosts between the loopholes of a heteronormative reality and a system that has expelled and marginalized them. These beings can only be presented as dissident identities and attitudes from the Other Side, from the Beyond, from the abjection of the monstrous or from the fracture of the norms of the Western scientific and metaphysical system. Accordingly with this concept, I am referring only to those manifestations of the fantastic that serve as an allegory or symbol of the dissident entities that contravene the humanist hegemonic system through the theme of narration, the space recreated in the text or its characters.

That being said, it is important to state that non-mimetic narratives, simply because of their lack of realism, do not have to pose a dissident point of view or present themselves as a subversive element, although indeed the rational order of the world is destabilized through the fantastic and reality is transgressed in the text and, somehow, the fantastic is perceived as a door to disorder. Alfons Gregori recalls that

Campra speaks of the "rational scandal" that occurs in fantastic texts, which is caused by the coming together of two incompatible orders, in other words, she believes that the superposition or intercrossing of the orders represents an absolute transgression, which results in the absolute *subversion* of the concept of reality. (Gregori 90)¹⁹

Therefore, the fantastic is presented as a scandal, an unusual irruption, a rupture of the established order, and that is why Alfons Gregori believes that this rupture of order has an ideological interpretation and a position in the text, because, as Irene Bessière states, "any rupture requires a point of reference in the codifications of the normal and abnormal" (qtd Gregori 103).²⁰ The *inappropriate/able fantastic* should include this component of criticism of the system in order to challenge *authority*. Donna Haraway reminds us that the word *demonstrate* and the term monster have the same etymology, so the monster embodies the perfect figure of otherness and the impossibility of appropriating the other, thus demonstrating that something is not working.

The ghost is an *inappropriate/able* being who opposes the human, but it has a part of humanity (it once belonged to this category). At the same time, the existence of the ghost prevents the definitive disappearance, and, therefore, it reminds the human that although his presence is other, he still is part of his world. In the work of the Argentinean writer Mariana Enríquez, the motif of the monster as a revenant ghost returning from the beyond is disturbing because its social, historical and territorial dimension shows obsolescence of the category of the human/humanity that we handle in our world. In Mariana Enríquez's story "Chicos que faltan" ("Missing Children," in *Los peligros de fumar en la cama*, 2009), the protagonist, Vanadis, is a girl who is kidnapped and subjected to sexual exploitation by human traffickers. The story highlights the failure of institutions and the social system:

most of the missing kids were teenage girls who had gone out with an older guy and who got scared by a pregnancy. They had run away from a drunk father, a stepfather who raped them at dawn, a brother who masturbated on their backs at night. [...] And the ones they took, the kidnapped ones were lost in

¹⁸ "No es posible fraguar una resistencia real ante el sistema económico en el que vivimos, que basa su poder en la violencia exacerbada, sin cuestionar la masculinidad"

¹⁹ "Campra habla de 'escándalo racional' que tiene lugar en los textos fantásticos, que se produce por la coincidencia de dos órdenes incompatibles, es decir, a su entender la superposición o entrecruzamiento de los órdenes representa una transgresión absoluta, el resultado de la cual es la *subversión* absoluta del concepto de realidad."

²⁰ "toda ruptura exige punto de referencia en las codificaciones de lo normal y anormal"

prostitution networks, to disappear forever or to turn up dead, or appear as the murderers of their captors, or as suicides on the Paraguayan border, or dismembered in a hotel in Mar del Plata. (156)²¹

The vulnerability of female bodies becomes the central axis of a social problem that has naturalized the loss of certain lives until the disappeared children resurrect and begin to populate the city of Buenos Aires. If the State could exercise its biopolitical power by making people die or letting them live, in these fictions it is attributed with a new possibility that Foucault had not contemplated for it, and that is the possibility of revival/resuscitation, since the ghosts of these disappeared children return to the space from which they were expelled. Foucault speaks of biopolitics as a technology of power that controls births and deaths, as well as longevity, to which we should add resurrections, which in turn would also be governed by the same eugenic and class practices, since the normalization and regulation of the human being as a species and as a population responds to a series of economic and productive interests that do not favor all individuals in society (*Society Must Be Defended*; and *History of Sexuality* Volume 1); and in this account, neither families nor the State accept the ghosts that have returned from the other side. The political strength of the presence of the ghosts lies in the fact that they escape the control of the State as it does not have any control and regulation mechanisms for these impossible beings; they are in that "other space," and so, they are *inappropriate/able*.

Antonio Negri tells us that the biopolitical monster condenses the power of the living from creative work and cooperation because it resists the will to dominate. Therefore, it would be a collective body that alters the eugenic principles on which the West has defined the human, and with their presence, these biopolitical ghosts/monsters transgress that will to dominate. What is interesting about the text is that the reappearance of disappeared children becomes a systemic disorder that destabilizes the population: transgression did not occur when these people disappeared, but when they returned. The missing children in this story, together with those in the stories "La Rambla triste" ("The Sad Rambla"), "Bajo las aguas negras" ("Under Black Waters"), and "El chico sucio" ("The Dirty Boy") by Mariana Enríquez, demonstrate that there are people who have been expelled from the welfare state, invisible beings who do not inhabit any places and who live in absolute precariousness. Hence Mbembe sees necropower as the biopolitics of death. The survivor is the witness of the horror while his body and his presence are proof of the crime, and in this case, the other *inappropriate/able* is the ghost/monster that resurrects as the testimony of the horror.

In these stories, mothers sell their children, and the commodification of the bodies turns lives into something disposable that annihilates the morals of society. Human beings are no longer irreplaceable, but rather they are part of an overproduction that must be turned into something profitable, although in "Chicos que faltan" all the dead bodies return as ghosts to become visible as a community of resurrected people who claim their place in the world (other). These would be the biopolitical monsters of Negri, the cooperation between all those who have been expelled and displaced due to their monstrosity and they would be placed at the center of the new post-humanist system that has the capacity to expose the inhumanity of Western humanism. These children have never had a home and they have never belonged to a community or to a welfare state that they could access. Therefore, both when they were alive and when they came back as ghosts, their presences show that the idea of community is an unstable one and that not everyone has the privilege of belonging to it. "The perception of the existence of the Other as an attack on my own life, like a mortal threat or an absolute danger whose biophysical elimination would reinforce my potential for life and security" (Mbembe 25) makes families and the community in which dead children reappear feel threatened, since these beings have no space in that world, they are *inappropriate/able* others.²²

Antonio Negri maintains that classical rationality dominates the monster in order to exclude it, but that when it manifests itself (from the fantastic in the case we are concerned with here), it is no longer possible to subjugate it because "[s]ince for more than a century we have been accustomed to assuming in our perception of life not only the violent experience of the relations of capitalist production (and of the consequent relation with the State), but also the singular sufferings of the

²¹ "la mayoría de los chicos que faltaban eran chicas adolescentes. Que iban con un tipo mayor, que se asustaban por un embarazo. Que huían de un padre borracho, de un padrastro que las violaba de madrugada, de un hermano que se les masturbaba en la espalda de noche. [...] Y las que se llevaban, las secuestradas que se perdían en redes de prostitución para no aparecer jamás, o aparecer muertas, o aparecer como asesinas de sus captores, o suicidas en la frontera de Paraguay, o descuartizadas en un hotel de Mar del Plata."

²² "La percepción de la existencia del Otro como un atentado a mi propia vida, como una amenaza mortal o un peligro absoluto cuya eliminación biofísica reforzaría mi potencial de vida y de seguridad."

individuals who bear them. We identify less with the 'rationality' of power than with the 'monstrosity' of suffering" (Negri 102).²³ In this way only the monster, only the *inappropriate/able* ones put up resistance to the capitalist relations of production and the system of knowledge established by Renaissance humanism, modernity and Enlightenment, and here lies the subversive force of the monster as a non-normative being, as Donna Haraway also puts it, because "the biopolitical monster is a positive ghost, an opposition or, more precisely, an ontological alternative against the eugenic pretension of power" (Negri 107).²⁴

Only a monster obstructs the logic of monarchic, aristocratic, populist, always eugenic power; the one who rejects violence and expresses insubordination; the one who hates merchandise and expands in living labor... We begin to read history from the point of view of the monster, as the product and threshold of those struggles that have liberated us from slavery through escape, from capitalist domination through sabotage and, always, through revolt and struggle (Negri 103).

"El balneario" ("The Spa") is a story by the Spanish writer Pilar Pedraza (*Necrópolis*, 1985). The narration focuses on a female character who tells us her life story from the formaldehyde pool in which she is floating (hence the irony of the story's title). This ghost is found in a morgue used by medical students who practice with the bodies that no one claims. Although her body is inert and does not react to the violence of society (as it did when she was alive), her conscience speaks to us from the testimony of a specter that has been waiting for two years to be buried.²⁵ The students mistreat her dead body and insult her ("fat" and "sebum ball"), just as her parents and classmates had insulted her. She narrates how she had been repeatedly raped and how she became pregnant at the age of 15, and how she worked for some time as a cleaner in a nun's home where she was abused before going on to live in a suburb as an alcoholic, until a group of young people beat her to death. The narrator describes herself as "fat and clumsy"²⁶;

I was a normal fat girl and I was born without any gifts and not very clever, although I wasn't silly, not at all. At least, I think I wasn't stupid, although even my mother told me I was; and my siblings too, why can I say (...) My teachers would pull my hair, and my classmates would say that I smelled badly. And they were spot on. (...) Since we didn't have a bathroom, I could hardly get a bath except during summer, in the river of the village. (143)²⁷

The narrator offers us an abject self-portrait, she has pimples and she is crossed-eyed, she is constantly ignored and beaten, so she embodies the paradigm of vulnerability and suffering: "I was given to thinking that not even in death they did treat me like others,"²⁸ so her body shows that *some lives are worthwhile while others are not*, since there are "forms of distribution of vulnerability, differential forms of distribution that make some populations more exposed than others to arbitrary violence" (Butler, *Precaious Life* 14).²⁹ The female protagonist of the story is discriminated by gender, social class and body. From a xenofeminist perspective, Pilar Pedraza's story shows us an unnatural body because it is not normative, and besides it is not alive, it is a monster in all senses, since her body was considered abject when she lived among humans, and now that double abjection is intensified when she becomes a ghost, so we would be talking about an *inappropriate/able* identity that would fall within the categories claimed by xenofeminism.

²³ "Ya que desde hace más de un siglo estamos habituados a asumir en nuestra percepción de la vida no sólo la experiencia violenta de las relaciones de producción capitalista (y de la consecuente relación con el Estado), sino también los sufrimientos singulares de los sujetos que las sobrellevan. Nosotros nos identificamos menos con la 'racionalidad' del poder que con la 'monstruosidad' del sufrimiento."

²⁴ "el monstruo biopolítico es un fantasma positivo, una oposición o, mejor dicho, una alternativa ontológica contra la pretensión eugenésica del poder."

²⁵ In the story we are informed about how they bury the bodies of the deposit, except that of the main character, so that the text also lends itself to an interpretation from the tragic iusnaturalism reflected in Sophocles' *Antigone*.

²⁶ "Gorda y torpona."

²⁷ "Yo era una gorda normal y nací sin ningún don y con poco seso, aunque sin ser tonta, eso no. Al menos, yo creo que no era tonta, aunque la verdad es que hasta mi madre me lo decía; y mis hermanos, para qué le voy a contar (...) Mis maestras me tiraban del pelo, y las compañeras decían que olía mal. Y tenían más razón que un santo. (...) Como no teníamos cuarto de baño, apenas podía bañarme salvo en el verano, en el río del pueblo."

²⁸ "Me dio por pensar que ni en la muerte me trataban como a los demás."

²⁹ "formas de distribución de la vulnerabilidad, formas diferenciales de reparto que hacen que algunas poblaciones estén más expuestas que otras a una violencia arbitraria."

Anyone who has considered himself "unnatural" under the prevailing biological norms, anyone who has experienced injustices in the name of the natural order, will understand that the glorification of the "natural" has nothing to offer us - to the queers and trans people among us, to the people with functional diversity, as well as to those who have suffered discrimination because of pregnancy or child-raising tasks. XF is vehemently unnaturalist. (Cuboniks 1)³⁰

In this case, the subaltern individual (Spivak), this woman abandoned by her family and by the social rule of law that does not protect her, only gets a voice after her death. A female protagonist whose body is outside the canon of western beauty and who is an invisible character who is living on the margin of society, now manages to be heard thanks to her becoming a ghost, since the voice that the real world has not given her is given by the Beyond, that "other space" inhabited by the beings of the fantastic. This story would fall within the category of the postmodern fantastic (see Roas); it uses the parody of the motif of the ghost from the modern fantastic to give it another meaning. Linda Hutcheon maintains that "the parody works to put the politics of representation in the foreground" (2),³¹ and in this story, the use of irony (from the title) and humor serves to subvert and denaturalize the taboo of the ghost, the appeared or the spirit from the Beyond: there is a real twist as it is the living not the dead that we have to fear. Evil is embodied by reality and not by that "other space" from which the impossible voice of the ghost speaks.

As a form of ironic representation, parody is double codified in political terms: it both legitimates and subverts what it parodies. This kind of "authorized transgression" (Hutcheon 1985) is what makes it a convenient vehicle for the political contradictions of postmodernism in general. Parody can be employed as a self-reflective technique that draws attention to art as art, but also to art as a phenomenon unavoidably linked to its aesthetic and even social past. (Hutcheon 8)³²

In "Yo, cocodrilo" (*El Diablo sabe mi nombre*, 2008) by the Salvadoran writer Jacinta Escudos, the protagonist is a girl who does not want to undergo the ritual of having her clitoris removed as practiced on the women of her village. She knows of the legend that warns that girls who do not undergo the ritual become crocodiles, and in this case, as an *inappropriate/able other*, she does not fit into the tradition of a community that practices the ablation of its women in order to homogenize and dominate female sexuality before marriage. The fantastic motif of the metamorphosis allows her to become a crocodile³³: "On hot afternoons I become a crocodile (....) I have scales on my hands and a new long nose that spreads and sticks in my mouth, full of sharp, pointed teeth" (Escudos 355).³⁴ She integrates herself into the animal world to oppose the normativity of the human, and in this way, she demonstrates the inhumanity that governs the category of the feminine imposed by the heteropatriarchy that governs in her village. The protagonist does not fit into the woman category or the feminine category of her village; she resists domination and the norm, and becomes an inappropriate and *indomitable* being, who is repudiated by her family and society. She resists the annulment of the pleasure and sexuality of her body, showing how the reproduction of the patriarchal

³⁰ "Cualquiera que se haya considerado 'no-natural' bajo las normas biológicas reinantes, cualquiera que haya experimentado injusticias en nombre del orden natural, comprenderá que la glorificación de 'lo natural' no tiene nada que ofrecernos -a lxs queer y trans entre nosotrxs, a las personas con diversidad funcional, como tampoco a quienes han sufrido discriminación debido al embarazo o a las tareas ligadas a la crianza. XF es vehementemente anti-naturalista."

³¹ "La parodia trabaja para poner en primer plano la política de la representación."

³² "Como forma de representación irónica, la parodia está doblemente codificada en términos políticos: legitima y subvierte a la vez lo que ella parodia. Esta especie de 'trasgresión autorizada' es lo que hace de ella un vehículo listo para las contradicciones políticas del postmodernismo en general. La parodia puede ser empleada como una técnica autorreflexiva que llama la atención hacia el arte como arte, pero también hacia el arte como fenómeno ineludiblemente ligado a su pasado estético e incluso social."

³³ Noël Carroll establishes different categories on the typologies of the monster that can generate the idea of terror art based on the biologies that can be created by the monstrous bodies of non-mimetic narratives. The protagonist of Jacinta Escudos's story would fall into the category of *fission*, since two types of elements (human and animal) overlap in an identity that changes throughout time and space. In this case, it would be two identities that inhabit the same body but in different times changing from person to crocodile. What is interesting about this story is that in the end the fantastic biology of the protagonist undergoes another transformation that allows her to move to the category of *fusion* (since her animal and human nature are combined in a homogeneous way at the same time). She ends up accepting her new post-human identity with an animal form that integrates her consciousness and human identity.

³⁴ "En las tardes de calor me convierto en cocodrilo (....) Tengo escamas en mis manos y una nueva y larga nariz que se extiende y se pega en mi boca, llena de dientes filosos y puntiagudos."

forces of domination also has a matrilineal origin, since in this village, the ones in charge of mutilation and the training of patriarchal femininity are women³⁵: "And the girls did not take concoctions or powders to alleviate their pain, they were only held by their own mother, or by their older sister, while another one cut off their parts and sewed them with hems and needles from the plant with thorns" (Escudos 358).³⁶ The naturalization, internalization and reproduction of the norms of social oppression in the constitution of female subjectivity are reproduced by the ideological apparatuses of the State (Althusser) and the patriarchal biopolitical practices (Foucault) in which women also participate. MacKinnon argues that

a woman's sexual desire, at least in this culture, is socially constructed, as something that makes us want our own annihilation. That is to say that our subordination is eroticized as feminine... this is our place in the system, which does not interest us, which is killing us. I am saying that femininity, as we know it, is defined by the fact of wanting masculine dominance, which does not correspond to our interests. (qtd Lauretis "Sujetos excéntricos" 7)³⁷

The protagonist of the story undergoes a transformation in order to open another way to a *female other* that does not imply being absorbed by her masculine opposite, but turns towards a hybrid and crossbreed body, a woman with a tail (this goes beyond the feminine and the masculine, since it integrates with the non-human) through resistance with binary identification "that is transformed into a feminine subjectivity which surpasses the phallic definition" (8). For the theorist Teresa de Lauretis that subjectivity or feminist consciousness could be that of the *eccentric individual* that would be defined by exceeding the gender categories, a being that becomes conscious beyond the male/female category, an *eccentric individual* constituted by the interpretation and rewriting of one's own self, "a space in which the 'inappropriate/able other', as Trinh T Minh-ha imagines, moves around with at least two or three gestures: that of affirming 'I am like you', but pointing insistently to the difference; that of remembering 'I am different' while fixing every reached definition of the other" (qtd Lauretis "Sujetos excéntricos" 19).³⁸

The protagonist of Jacinta Escudos' story is a monster which, because of her new nature (she is an animal and a person), of being human and not human, becomes another (post-human) being who no longer wants to return to an origin that she never belonged to: "I no longer try to become human. I prefer to be like this, a crocodile with a long snake growing between his legs" (Escudos 359),³⁹ an *inappropriate/able other* or eccentric individual constituted from "practices of political and personal displacement across the limits of socio-sexual identities and communities, between bodies and discourses" (Lauretis, "Sujetos excéntricos" 20).⁴⁰

In the micro-story "Fantasma" (2009) by the Spanish writer Patricia Esteban Erlés we find a great diversity of possible readings and interpretations from the position of the inappropriate/able fantastic: "The man I loved has become a ghost. I like to put a lot of softener on him, steam him and use him as a bed sheet on nights I have a promising date"⁴¹ (Esteban Erlés 201).⁴² On the one hand, we could

³⁵ "A los únicos seres que despedazamos fue a las mujeres de la aldea (...) Pero los hombres no nos interesaban. Eran ellas las que hacían todo. Las que cortaban, obligaban, mantenían las piernas abiertas": "The only beings we tore apart were the women of the village. But we weren't interested in men. Women were the ones who did everything. Those who cut, forced, kept their legs open" (Escudos 358).

³⁶ "Y las niñas no tomaban brebajes ni polvos para aliviar sus dolores, nada más eran sujetadas por su propia madre, por su hermana mayor, mientras otra les cortaba las partes y la cosían con cáñamos y agujas de la planta de las espinas."

³⁷ "el deseo sexual de una mujer, al menos en esta cultura, está construido socialmente, como algo que nos hace querer nuestra propia aniquilación. Es decir que nuestra subordinación es erotizada como femenina...este es nuestro lugar en el sistema, que no nos interesa, que nos está matando. Estoy diciendo que la femineidad, tal como la conocemos, se define por el hecho de querer el dominio masculino, que no corresponde a nuestros intereses."

³⁸ "un espacio en el que el 'inapropiado/able otro', como lo imagina Trinh T. Minh-ha, se mueva alrededor con dos o tres gestos al menos: el de afirmar 'soy como vos', pero apuntando insistentemente sobre la diferencia; el de recordar 'soy diferente' mientras fija cada definición del otro a la que llega."

³⁹ "Ya no trato de convertirme en humana. Prefiero ser así, un cocodrilo con una larga serpiente que le crece entre las piernas."

⁴⁰ "prácticas de desplazamiento político y personal a través de los límites de las identidades sociosexuales y de las comunidades, entre los cuerpos y los discursos."

⁴¹ "El hombre que amé se ha convertido en fantasma. Me gusta ponerle mucho suavizante, plancharlo al vapor y usarlo como sábana bajera las noches que tengo una cita prometedora."

interpret it from the inversion of gender roles, since here man is represented as an object (a sheet), invisible (a ghost), voiceless (he says nothing) and passive (he is at the mercy of the narrative voice). We can read the text thinking that the narrative voice is female or we can read the text outside the obligatory heterosexuality (Rich, Wittig). In the first case, the narrator discusses the domestic tasks established by the heteropatriarchal tradition to be performed by women. The irony and humor emanating from the text subvert the roles of the two heterosexual characters and shows that "postmodern parody strategies are often used by feminist artists to draw attention to the history and historical power of these cultural representations, while contextualizing both in a way that deconstructs them" (Hutcheon 9).⁴³

However, at no time is it made explicit that the narrative voice of the text is feminine or female. We know that the ghost is a man but we have no information about the gender of the narrative voice. One of the premises with which xenofeminism works is the abolition of gender, since it tries to eliminate the binary gender system starting from the idea that sex and gender are not something natural, so we would be talking about a critical transfeminist cyborg post-humanism (of individuals and *inappropriate/able* subjectivities) that would facilitate identification with the narrative enunciator from any generic and sexual position.⁴⁴ The social, conceptual, theoretical and media revolution that the abolition of gender in our cultural systems would entail would be the most important change in recent years insofar as it would provide us with a system in which the heterosexual division of labor and the naturalization of femininity would disappear because "genital differences between human beings should become culturally neutral" (Hester 38).⁴⁵ In the *inappropriate/able fantastic* we can find ambiguous narrations without gender or any sexuality marks and which will imply reading complicity when playing at identifying narrative voices and characters.

The abolition of gender would suppress other naturalized structures that are oppressive and generate inequality. Certain characteristics associated with gender, race, class and physical capacity have social stigmas and they generate inequality, so the aim is to dismantle identity markers so that a world of multiple genders can emerge in which sexual diversity prevails beyond any binary conception. In its manifesto, Laboria Cuboniks claims: "Let a hundred sexes bloom! Gender' Abolitionism" and this is a way of expressing the ambition to build a society where the characteristics currently assembled under the rubric of gender no longer build a network for the asymmetrical operation of power" (6). Paul Preciado sees gender as a set of sexopolitical devices that must be reappropriated by sexual minorities, intersexes, homosexuals, transsexuals, post-colonial, abnormal, feminists, Chicanas, the *inappropriate/able others* of which Donna Haraway speaks, for whom "the sexual monster named multitude becomes *queer*" (Preciado 160).⁴⁶

Inappropriate/able is defined as one that does not adapt or agree to certain conditions or circumstances; but who decides what those circumstances are? The narratives that manifest themselves outside the category of the real and the norm are relegated to the realm of the fantastic, they favor the emergence of a place from which to give voice to beings who have been expelled from the normative, and this allows for the construction of spaces, relationships, bodies, genders, sexualities, patterns and models that do not adapt to the conditions and circumstances of a contemporary reader's conventions. The female and feminized political subjects of these narratives call the categories of gender, class, race, and sexuality into question. Based on Donna Haraway's

⁴² This micro-story is a tribute to Juan José Arreola's "Horror Story": "La mujer que amé se ha convertido en fantasma. Yo soy el lugar de sus apariciones" [The woman I loved has become a ghost. I am the place of her apparitions].

⁴³ "las estrategias paródicas postmodernas a menudo son empleadas por artistas feministas para llamar la atención hacia la historia y el poder histórico de esas representaciones culturales, mientras contextualizan a ambos de manera que los deconstruya."

⁴⁴ Teresa de Lauretis proposed her concept of "gender technology" in the 1980s to answer the question of how gender is socio-culturally constructed. Based on the difference between the sex-gender system, she was concerned with deciphering how we internalize and integrate our gender identity, since she conceives gender as a semiotic construction that depends on the effects of discursive and visual representations, family, religion, medicine, law, etc.: "We could say then that, like sexuality, gender is not a property of bodies or something originally existing in human beings, but the set of effects produced in bodies, behaviors and social relations, in Foucault's words, by the deployment of a complex political technology" ("La tecnología del género" 8). Therefore, before J. Butler published *Gender Trouble* (1990), Lauretis conceived gender as a representation: "it can be affirmed that all Western art and culture is the carving of the history of that construction" ("La tecnología del género" 9).

⁴⁵ "las diferencias genitales entre los seres humanos deberían pasar a ser culturalmente neutras."

⁴⁶ "Qué cientos de sexos nazcan! 'Abolir el género' es una manera de enunciar la ambición de construir una sociedad donde las características ensambladas actualmente bajo la rúbrica del género ya no construyan una red para la asimétrica operación del poder."

concept of *inappropriate/able others*, the *inappropriate/able fantastic* can only be read from a perspective of postmodernity, poststructuralism, deconstruction and critical posthumanism, so it represents textualities that go beyond feminism because it allows the inclusion of human and non-human identities that contemplates xenofeminism, transfeminism, cyberfeminism and ecofeminism, where the frontiers between culture and nature are dissolved and the abject manifests itself by lurking from the beyond that inhabits that "other space."

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