

TRANSOCEANIC STUDIES

Ileana Rodríguez, Series Editor

Neoliberal Bonds

*Undoing Memory in
Chilean Art and Literature*

Fernando A. Blanco



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Introduction

WHEN I BEGAN this investigation of the dissolution and reconfiguration of the social fabric in the Chile of the past twenty years, the tone of my interest was marked by two themes that had caught my attention. One of these was memory narratives—their historical politicization and later legal exhumation; the other was the change in individual and collective subjectivity, expressed in a state of media exaltation of the intimate. It was curious that the most notable events, those that appeared in the press and that are the object of debate for Chileans, kept a relation with these two topics, seen through the prism of the moral-sexual behavior of Chile's citizens. I use the term *moral-sexual* to emphasize that a part of the Chilean societal paradigm is the regulation of practices and pleasures linked to the exercise of sexuality. I also say that it is that of the normalizing sanction and judicialization of the memory of the collective state violence. All of these facts, observed in the context of a peculiar strategy of exhibition of the intimate propelled by the media, made me suspect that a new domestication of “impulses” was taking place. The two vital energies through which it was possible to arrange the modern state found themselves in a moment of regulation.

Some of the examples that illustrate these cases of violation in the moral-sexual modern state do not carry the mark of genocide of opponents of the prior regime. Rather, they represent the judgment of individuals (pedophiles, rapists, pederasts, abusers) belonging to the ruling strata (businessmen, politicians, military, religious) whose behavior damages the restoration of insti-

tutionalism, since they are perceived by the social imaginary as a threat to the recovery of these traditionally hegemonic classes in Chile.

This work begins with the contributions of queer theory to the discussion and redefinition of the dominant understandings of culture, subject, sexuality, and social relations in the West. This political response to the heterosexual hegemonic cultural template can be applied to the Latin American political and cultural context. In particular I work with Foucault's idea of examining in the present the circumstantial and provisional cultural narrative available to form certain specific forms of subjectivity. These discursive formations would influence the way in which a subject is constructed and made accountable for a specific discipline of institution. For instance, in the Chilean case, we find the impact of transnational neoliberal narratives on the formation of the individual while interacting with the newly democratic political cultures of memory in Chile. Over the past twenty years, social theory and change have occurred in the notion of the social framework, prefiguring the multicultural and globalized scene in which the ideas of subject and its ways of connecting, and therefore of being articulated in the whole of the society and in intellectual reflection, have been redefined. The instability of the modes of production and organization that individuals have developed in recent times is explained in this work as a result of the change in the cultural offers available for the elaboration and construction of the subject. Grouped around a liberal postmodernity, distinguished for an unblemished index of individuation, these offers enter the scene to combine with other factors present in the period in question. This time is known as "the Transition," and it was ruled by the Coalition of Political Parties for Democracy, known as the Concertación, from 1990 to 2010. The dissolution of the historical narratives (socialism as utopia), the change in the statute of memory (judicialization and mediatization of human rights memory accounts¹), the media coverage of the public sphere (confluence of the political and media spheres), the alteration of the symbolic consistency of the point of subjectivation, and the loss of consistency of the imaginary institutionalization of the state and its institutions translate into the weakening of the social bond, with the ensuing risk of social anomie. The space to elaborate the ideal subject, in agreement with my proposal, is going to be located in the phantasmatic distance that results from the effect of its retraction from the sphere of the symbolic. Memory and morality are going to be the discourses that are most affected by this phenomenon. Both had, in the previous period, the task of

1. The TV series *The Cardinal Archives* led the Chilean ratings in 2011. The show takes place in the '70s and early '80s under Pinochet's dictatorship and is based on twelve emblematic cases of violations to human rights.

restoring ties, either in the charge of a collective history or in that of the moral and symbolic fabric. This was the case with the discourses of the military nation during the dictatorship, and with the global nation in democracy.

In particular, in this book I am interested in exploring the figure of the perverse understood as a fantasy formation/metaphor that offers a narrative frame for the changes experienced by the subject in the process of social rearticulation after the authoritarian military regime and the subsequent imposition of the neoliberal politics. I maintain that its symbolic and material presence in public and cultural texts exhibits the preestablished modes of enjoyment for the contemporary subject. As Jodi Dean has pointed out, following Žižek's thought, "the present unfolding of freedom in the world is tied to the expansion of global capital, [and] relies on enjoyment and thus reintroduces sites and objects of fixity."² These contemporary *dicta* of freedom paradoxically produce radical sadomasochistic bonds as a response to the excess of freedom under the illusion provided by the market where the subjects can go to help themselves to support their consistency by consumption. Thus, the domination and submission attachments constitute an alternate social contract for the subject to relieve the individual from the anxiety created by the imperative to sustain freedom by capitalist narratives. This neoliberal economic narratives dictum can be characterized as a mandate that demands the subject be self-oriented, socially disengaged, and highly productive; it goes in the opposite direction of the neoliberal political narratives that stand for equality, mutual respect, inclusion, and generosity. Within this particular dynamic, the subject reacts against the compulsive self-oriented reflexivity, liberating its impulses and renouncing their control over a phantasmatic sadomasochist bond, which confirms the unstable, contradictory, and inconstant nature of the *jouissance* and the variability of the social bond.

I am working with the narratives of Pedro Lemebel (1954–2015), Jorge Ramírez (1954–), and Mauricio Wacquez (1939–2000) and the visual work of the artists Bernardo Oyarzún (1963–), Voluspa Jarpa (1971–), and José Pedro Godoy (1985–). I understand these Chilean artists as secondary witnesses who re-elaborate the past in a different context and whose work is defined by the presence of this "perverse" plot.³ In the face of the fall of the symbolic supports of social law, imaginary law emerges as a guide for subjective configuration. The variety of behaviors and modes of constructing the social bond arising from this dynamic are evident in the contemporary post-Fordist societies, permitting with their analysis to understand the changes that occurred

2. "Why Žižek for Political Theory?" *International Journal of Žižek Studies*. 1.1 (2007): 18–32.

3. See Apel.

in the tension between repressive normalization and imaginary subjectification of individuals after the fall of symbolic law.

The works that have thought about sexuality and its relationships with culture cover an extensive network of interests and approaches. Among them, the most obvious are related to the change in the notion of sexuality that has developed with the evolution of thought in the West. The political and social bodies organized around sexuality are also important, as are the subjective manifestations of different individuals and the reflection carried out by diverse epistemologies and ontologies. However, sexuality's critical and primary theoretical moment is organized around the discussions brought forth by the distinct feminisms and gay and lesbian studies, from which it was attempted to trace a hermeneutical homology of sociosexual and cultural difference. In other words, this is the form in which a culture regulates the organization of sexuality, regimenting individuals according to the practices in which they are involved, the objects that they choose for those activities, and the ends that they pursue. The overlapping of the discursive levels of culture, with the material forms by which individuals become part of it, highlights the discussion about representation and the paradigms for producing a functional political subject in the prevailing neoliberal social matrix. I ask—and I think this is what is interesting in the discussion—about sexual normativity and to what degree is it possible to conceive of sexuality and the experiences associated with it as a central factor for the processes of individuation, whose psychic replica is able to mediate between the self and the social world in multiple and diverse ways. All of this figures into the composition of the perverse shape.

Faced with the loss of symbolic meaning of the law and its discourses by its capitalization, Chilean society was going through an open process of reinscription of its imaginary systems. The processes of mediatization of the intimate and the privatization of the public propelled by a progressive hegemony of market neoliberal narratives in a society characterized by the military regime as a “society of choice,” combined with a public policy of reconciliation, generated a contradictory narrative that is impossible to resolve. This sociopolitical impasse can be solved only if we focus on the role played by fantasies and enjoyment in the construction of a nonpolitical subject, as Žižek has pointed out, looking into the narratives available that characterized the neoliberal social fabric by a decline in its symbolic function. In this juncture the subject is forced to complete the task of fantasizing about its own new possibilities to will. Hence the importance of the figure of the perverse, since it would explain the presence of a series of overlapping and recurring events that include identitary and sexual vectors as their

principal signs. It is not just a renegotiated social regulation between state and church through the mutual transfer of duties and obligations that one or the other no longer meets alone, but rather it is the violent and systematic emergence of alternative modes of societal linking that show the immense variability of the articulation of the social bond. Hence, for me, as for the social scientists with a Lacanian orientation, the concepts of perversion and queerness—strangeness—stop being behavioral descriptions and begin to form part of individuals' psychic structures. From this perspective, questioning the discursiveness of law leads me to posit the yields of this analysis for thinking about the failure of totality and identity on top of which thought and culture have been built.

Reading Lacan's *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis (Book XVII)*, we see that there is another way to occupy the space prior to the discursive formation of the subject. I am referring to the concept of shame, as understood by Lacan in his definition of *hontologie*, the establishment of a relationship with the subject at a point preceding its doubly articulated expression (self-reflexiveness). It is a space that provokes at the same time that it produces a suspension prior to culture. Together with this space of discursive prefiguration of the subject, the notion of subjectivity emerges, understood as the drift of being before its symbolization. Thus, because of his conceptualization of the subject conceived not as a starting point for Cartesian teleology, but on the contrary, as a response to the capture of the "living" by the chain of signifiers, Lacan becomes a discursive and epistemic axis to which this work is indebted.

The main interest of my reflection is constituted by those narratives in which perverse figures permit us to reflect on the changes of the normal processes of structuring the social bond. Perversion is not understood here as an alteration of conduct, but rather as a state in the process of psychic maturation. This is the only process capable of producing both in and for the subject a place of identification with the principles of symbolic structuring of the world. I understood perversion and its possibilities as a privileged signifier of social analysis against the historic discourse/episteme. Just as hysteria or paranoia was a privileged signifier for the discussion of culture in past societies, today it is the figure of perversion in transitional Chile. Through an examination of specific works by the selected authors, I hope to demonstrate how each of the works elaborates on an imaginary position for the subjectivity of each, mediated by the structure-figure of perversion as we also see how these narratives form a field.

Let us situate ourselves in the primary scene of queer studies in order to understand that the hermeneutic models of cultural interpretation, political action, and social analysis, supported by those who radicalize the fight for

the right to intimacy, extend it to the fight for the right to a new sociability. Cultural studies and queer studies focus on both “elite and popular and mass media cultural expressions, and its underlying political objectives” to challenge heterodox narratives (McKee Irwin 291) We now speak of having a new space in society that does not depend on the attributive components or the constructivism of sexual difference for citizenship, that which sees homosexuality as perversion, but rather depends on the discursive articulation that enables the subject to position him- or herself according to the variability of cultural change in a determined historical moment. It is here where the discussion of the “social bond” waits to be integrated in this horizon where social theory, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and postmodern thought coincide.

In this work, I study the last two decades of the past century, in which a series of recurring phenomena were manifested with specific differences in Chilean society. It would seem that the society and the state were given the task of constructing a new morality for the modern nation. Their political articulation, in a public, media space, allowed them to administer the differences produced in social life. They regulated the multiculturalism, memory politics, and expansive power of the neoliberal project and its insertion into the consensual political framework of the transition.

There are two reasons for my interest in the time period. The first is that it marks the three first governments of the postauthoritarian transition, with a reconsideration of the institutional and socio-imaginary foundations of society. Looking at the fifteen years of political-institutional reconversion of the nation also tells us about the subjectivities that accompanied them. The second takes note of the role played by the new economic, technological, and cultural conditions in the modulation of intersubjective relationships and the production of subjects.



The study is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1, “The History of a State of Things,” addresses the historical revision of the changes in the notion of culture and subject and, therefore, of the narrations supported within it. The change from an authoritarian government to a democratic one brought with it the necessity to produce a political grounding to consummate the transition between both models of development. The hypothesis of the chapter is to show how the change in the historical processes, from the collective emphasis to the individual, will result in a readjustment of the subjective ideals offered to the individual by the combination of the realms of technology, economy, the free market, and cultural neodevelopment. In particular, I discuss the

partial inclusion of those minority subjects in memory narratives, those of violence, transaction, and consensus. Their lack of ideological and cultural identification with the hegemony prevented them from being recognized as collective social agents. The consequence of this exclusion, in combination with the progressive privatization of public and private imaginaries, leaves that which was streamlined by the market as a privileged offer for identification. The failure of memory as a privileged symbolic support prevents the anchoring of subjects in the social. The progressive thinning of the ideology of the welfare state as an imaginary referent is intensified, and the same happens with the strengthening of a public media sphere of highly epistemic transience. The neodevelopmentalist privatization not only heightens the individualism of the subjects, a modern liberal remnant, but it also maximizes the need for interpellation. Launched into the vacuum of the screen or to the accommodating space of the market's libidinal economy, the subjects opt for imaginary retraction. The interpellation occurs now on the interior of a space formed by the distance that mediates between the imaginary and the narrative absences in which it is possible to restate oneself. The chapter, then, reviews the changes in the historical material context and analyzes the cultural proposals and the mode in which the subject selects and manipulates the social ideas that these offer.

In chapter 2, "Perversion and Subjectivity: The Possible Worlds," I explore constructions of subjectivity throughout the perverse social bond depicted in the literary and visual works presented in the last four democratic governments in Chile. The contemporary experiences with sexuality have demonstrated that, contrary to the opinions of theorists of sexuality difference who thought that it was situated in the paradigm of concealment, sexuality has been displaced toward the very center of hegemony. Now, the visibility is the principal means of its social inscription. Science, hand in hand with communicative technologies, has produced a narrative of sexuality that, independent of the object of enjoyment, is presented to us as a liberated and resolved paradigm in which there is no longer space for the revolt caused by the confrontation of the subject with consumption and statistics. This is why, in my own reflection on the relationships between sexuality and culture, first by an intuitive reading of the cultural field and later by having reflected on it and discussed it with other colleagues, this should be directed toward those subjectivities that could hold some emancipatory remains inside the grid of cultural normalization. I should clarify that the starting point is the recognition of a generation that was around eight or nine years old during the coup. It is precisely this generation in the process of formation that will be the privileged object for new subjectivation alternatives. Having an emaciated

ideology, fantasy will work as the privileged mode of access to individuation. I am referring to the presence of a social imaginary neocolonized by the media and also a way of processing the experiences distant from the social body and intensified in the individual. The children of the period and all of childhood as a narrative privileged by military conservatism are in the background of this proposal for cultural interpretation. This is the reason I have decided to explore the figure of the perverse and the dynamic of perversion in current times. I believe that from its problematization, we can observe and interpret new modes of social bonding. In them, the figure of perversion allows us to understand, as an element of methodological analysis, radical differences in the social organization and hegemonic strategies for the regulation of individuals. That is, we can understand, or at least visualize, how certain forms of subjective production insist on resisting cultural normalization. How this operation tells us about the form in which the modes of domination of the historical regimes, in their discursive or material variants, is also a part of this investigation.

My primary interest is to observe the process of regulation of sexual and state morality in transitional Chile as a mode of producing the symbolic conditions necessary that assure the institutional grounding for the administration of differences. The axis of relevance is given by the binary criminal/citizen. The law will once again produce deviant subjects in its eagerness to prescribe and restrict private domains, now a privileged space for politics. Nevertheless, the metaphor could be thought of in the opposite direction and suggest how the perverse (criminal) figure can produce the necessary borders for maintaining the social bond. I am not referring to its criminal inscription in the civil or penal procedural manuals but to its contradictory capacity that simultaneously denies and produces the field of law. In this way, the perverse operates as a construct that enables support of the social by denouncing the modes of enjoyment of each and every subject, whenever a real bond with the other passes for the indissolubility of enjoyment with the presymbolic, psychic apparatus.

Chapter 3, "Chilean Visual Arts: From the Perversion of History to the Hysteria of Childhood," opens with a revision of the recent history of visual arts in the country. The intrinsic relationship between aesthetic and political discourses has been highlighted since the first historical vanguard. This relationship of solidarity reached its historical peak in the '60s and '70s. The rupture of institutional continuity was not that of art. Protected by a tight theoretical support and with the language of the vanguard, art and political discourses compensated for the historical defeat of the socialist revolution.

They did so by visually legitimating the documentation of state-military violence, a discourse with which they preserved, reproduced, and projected the fabric of memory toward a utopian future.

The analysis of the work of the three painters whom I am identifying as secondary witnesses follows another course. In their works it is possible to observe the change in subjective modulation, a product of the particular elaboration that they make of the offers for the social ideal. Upon the failure and the disappearance of the revolutionary-subject-worker, the works of Bernardo Oyarzún, Voluspa Jarpa, and José Pedro Godoy oppose the physiognomies of three subjects in which the figure of perversion allows us to observe the construction of imaginary positions for their subjectivity that delegitimize the previous ideals and denounce the self ideals devastated by the material and discursive conditions of the neoliberal Chilean hegemony. In the case of Oyarzún, we find ourselves with a subjectivity expressed in his visual work that takes up the disputed traits to the offer of heterosexual, white, and territorial subjective hegemony imposed by the Chilean state on the Mapuche community. His case is not only about considering the symbolic, historic, or political disjunction for the splitting of the subject. The hegemonic vectors of the proletarianization and racialization of homosexuality, present with the politicization of the territory, demonstrate a peculiar consistency for its self: “the masochism of the first person.” The subjective declinations present in his work are those of the testimonial-continental-subject and those of the popular-artist-subject.

In turn, the work of Voluspa Jarpa raises other questions in relation to the circulation of power and the loss of sociosymbolic referents. Jarpa manifests a different path than Oyarzún. Comfortably identified with the ideals of French northern Europe, Jarpa takes up the offer of intellectual modernity. Her version of the intellectual-worker-artist marks continuity with the generation of “La Escena de Avanzada.” The democratic intellectual of the vanguard clears up art’s democratizing ideal with the gesture of an Enlightenment pedagogy. Nonetheless, we see with her how the material conditions begin to affect her modulations. Having undergone the first three transitional governments, the homogeneity of the local-global liberal discourse begins to take its toll on her work, in particular in regard to the emancipatory capacity of certain subjectivities (the feminine) in response to a determined social organization. With the previous subjective positions discredited, those with which the subject negotiated his or her gender inscription in the culture, the radical nature of the feminine subject’s experience makes her turn toward a disquieting offer for a social ideal. The subject will begin to represent herself as a victim of

symbolic precariousness. Jarpa, rehumanized by the narrative precariousness in which she is immersed, declines the liberal feminine gender in favor of a bioethics of collective terror.

Finally, there is the youngest of the three, José Pedro Godoy; this modern artist displays and chooses his production, no longer identifying himself with his national-local circumstances but rather sliding his preferences to the virtual global scope. He is one more of those avid consumers of subjective material produced by internet exchanges. The images circulating in virtual circuits represent, for him, the inevitable presence of a cosmopolitan, accessible modernity, which redefines his relationship with the country and with the technical notion of landscape. Distinguishing himself from the previous two artists as a painter-witness, he denies his bonds with recent historical memory because this is no longer viable as an imaginary option for identification. Instead, he articulates himself as an operator-spectator artist of the landscape-world-screen. He detaches the past from biological or political memory and displaces it with an artificial memory. This way, he creates a digitalized image that makes remembering irrelevant. The cultural exhibition of the ways to produce erotic intimacy in electronic circuits territorialized by groups and individuals is the body landscape chosen by this artist. What directs his project is an interest not only in visual culture but also in the reprogramming of the traditional genres of painting as well as modes of individuation. The urban landscape as a thematic for the twentieth century is followed by the digital landscape. Shutter, digital camera, and cyberspace are the mechanical elements that have moved the cultural behaviors of individuals who are regulated by the absolute freedom to choose the system of signs for self-production from the public sphere to the so-called porno-sphere. If in the baroque landscape the staging denounced the mental process projected in the painting, in the liberal landscape it is the sensuality detached from the eye in front of the screen that is put on display.

Chapter 4, “Literature and Homoscapes: Changes in the Status of Subjectivity,” addresses the production of homoerotic narratives in the period. I feature three authors whose works dramatize subjective modulations that speak to the changes that I want to note. The models of sadomasochism and sadism allow for a revision of the limits and psychic and bodily contracts through which the individuated law of liberalism is activated, while also allowing an escape from the social constrictions of the normalization of the subject. Jorge Ramírez, Pedro Lemebel, and Mauricio Wacquez’s narratives object that the ideals offered for constructing a functional self in the contemporary liberalism project are organized largely around the idea of sovereign self-determination, *in extremis* from the passions. Curiously, reason acquires the

masquerade of the sadomasochist contract, but it is expressed in the deregulated exercise of the impulses. The encounter of the principles of reality and pleasure in the market is equal to that of the administration of the modalities acquired by the erotic, contemporary offer in the sadomasochist contract, particularly obvious in the works of Lemebel and Wacquez. In other words, it is the integration of the forms of enjoyment with the rules of exchange proper to the sadomasochistic sexual contract. In other words, it is to suggest that the condition of the contemporary, liberal subject is that of responding to a command that interpellates his or her enjoyment, not from a lack but rather from an informative adequacy. This means that the majority of the discourses-offers to which the subject has access for producing his or her self requires equating the modes of consumption to the modes of enjoyment (as is noticeable in prostitution).

My point of intervention in this book is to highlight the tension between facts, history, and memory narratives pointed out by American, French, and German theoreticians LaCapra, Hirsch, Apel, and Assman. I engage the north/south axis by studying the relationship between posttraumatic narratives and culture in Latin America, specifically focusing on Chile. My work brings into dialogue European Shoa discussions on memory accounts with Peruvian sociology of individualism and Argentinean and Chilean sociology of culture (Araujo, *Dignos de su Arte*; Jelin; Martuccelli; Moulián). As in the case of the Shoa, my text pays particular attention to the instrumentalization of memory narratives by politics and problematizes the reconstitution of social bond in postdictatorship Chilean society. My main claim is that the reconstitution of the social bond in postdictatorial societies is no longer predicated on cohesion, as the pastoral narratives of consensus of European humanist narratives will have. Rather, the social bond is now constituted through the overruling of such narratives and by the substitution of narratives of intimacy predicated on pleasure. These narratives, in turn, generate sets of “perverted” social bonds that underscore the mandates set forth by postdictatorial neoliberal market politics and policies. As I have said before, my corpus is constituted by literary and visual objects whose critical experimentation render these perverse bonds visible.

1

The History of a State of Things

THE FIRST CHAPTER serves as a historical introduction to the general theme of the book. In it, I revisit the events that have occurred in Chile in the last twenty years, the changes in the notion of culture and their effects on the production of social imaginaries in the urban centers. The idea of the chapter is to reflect on the paradigmatic shift: from that of human rights to that of civil rights—citizenships. I show the impact that this has on the instrumentalization of the state and collective historical memory and its yields in structuring a dominant narrative of sociocultural interpretation. This story is initially shaped by the trauma of the coup and is now redefined by the discourse of the liberal economy and its consequences for social actors. The aim of the chapter is to demonstrate the fluidity of the historical, discursive processes and the change that these cause for the subjective configuration of the individual. That is, I note the change from the offers made for collective identity narratives in the past—ideological and institutional—toward the more contemporary modulation of the same, by way of individual and subjective definitions offered by the technological sphere, the free-market economical discourses, and the articulations of culture and neodevelopment politics of the postauthoritarian governments.



The recent history of Chile has not been completely told. Or perhaps if it has been, it would be a narrative coming from the silence of its sophistry. It is an important story for the continent, as well as for the country's national destiny, since Chile has emerged as a global model of at least two political-institutional attempts to overcome underdevelopment during Latin America's twentieth century.

Three successive models of state intervention involved in three different types of developmentalist revolution followed one another in a period of thirty years, as the Chilean historian Gabriel Salazar has pointed out. The government of the Christian Democracy Party, which drove the Agrarian Reform from 1964 to 1970, hoped to become an alternative to Fidel Castro's Cuban revolutionary model. In this stage, Chileans lived their first "revolution in freedom."¹ The emblematic *Marcha de la Patria Joven* (March of the Young Motherland) advocated not only a large civic inclusion in the public sphere but also the abolition of the semifeudal privileges of the large landholders in favor of joint ownership of the national capital in copper companies with North American coadministration and the implementation of the liberal Christian philosophy's initiatives for social change.² This political change served as a social platform for the arrival of the Popular Unity coalition.

The second development model was marked by the presence of the country's historical Left. Between 1970 and 1973, the plan of the Popular Unity, headed by Salvador Allende, was to radicalize previous processes: the agrarian expropriation and the nationalization of foreign capital, the recovery of the national industry, the attempt at a joint government of the working proletariat, and the ideological leadership of the Left. The socialization of the economy, proposed by a democratically elected president and a confirmed Marxist-Leninist, was miscalculated and would be stopped by the dynamics of the international market, controlled by the Nixon-Kissinger team, along with the military coup of 1973.

The third of the models wanted, by way of the military intervention and a brutal suppression of the intellectual and militant Left, to put an end to the

1. This comes from Eduardo Frei's political slogan that summarizes his five-points political program: economic development, education and technical training, solidarity and social justice, political participation, and people's sovereignty.

2. The so-called March of the Young Motherland was performed during the presidential campaign of Eduardo Frei Montalva in 1964. According to the authors of *Historia del Siglo Veinte Chileno (History of the Chilean 20th Century)*, "Five columns of young people coming from all over the country, after a months-long trek to carry the candidate's message to the most isolated parts of Chile, converged in June of 1964 in the then-called Cousiño Park." The presidential candidate rallied his supporters, recognizing them as those who had converted into the "Motherland itself." See Correa et al. 243 and on.

socialist plan by opening the financial and economic system to orthodox neo-liberal politics. Just as historian Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt Letelier proposes, “It is not surprising, therefore, that during the last thirty-five years Chile has been perceived in the international eyesight as a *test case* for three socio-political experiments designed to liberate once and for all a Latin American society from its atavistic underdevelopment” (34).³ The same author maintains that the importance of the Chilean case is in part due to the fact that it projectively shares the major ideological paradigms of the Catholic West. That is, these ideal narratives correspond to the three traditional political forces in Chile: primarily, the Left, composed of workers, students, peasants, and intellectuals, was interpellated by the Italian and French Communist Party narratives; the center, constituted by the middle-upper class, acknowledged and participated in the presence of the ecclesiastical doctrine that emanated from the Second Vatican Council; and most recently, the Right, formed by the traditional upper class and the new neoliberal Right or the new rich, ascribed to the cultural offer provided by the Chicago Boys, channeled by the Thatcherist/Reaganist economical policies of the ’80s. One factor that may explain these three contradictory cultural “ideals” is the assimilation of the Catholic baroque version of the modernity project, acting as a cultural horizon for the country, as sociologist Jorge Larraín claims (196).

The history of Chile in these last years is incomplete, then, because the social actors privileged by the versions made by official historiography, both legal and academic, exceedingly emphasized those who actively participated in the Popular Unity’s project. Upon revealing these actors and the effects that this repression had for civil society, the revelation of the actors and the effects materially and symbolically annihilated the government of the Popular Unity. The refounding narrative of the country, from Pinochetist inspiration, also located the figure of the dictator in the center, resymbolized as savior, just as the Popular Unity had done. The result left aside a substantive number of ideologically unaligned subjectivities.

As we all know, the Chilean path to socialism as a historiographical narrative had reached the exclusivist status of a myth, with Allende at the center of the heroic epic. La Moneda was in flames after a bombing that was carefully executed in order to maintain the façade and the betrayal of Allende’s military aide de camp, and a young Augusto Pinochet, concealed behind a pair of dark glasses, invested the tragedy with the coldness of a strategist trained

3. Translated from the following: “Nada de extraño, por tanto, que Chile durante estos últimos treinta y cinco años haya estado en la mira internacional siendo percibido como un *caso de prueba* de tres experimentos sociopolíticos encaminados a liberar de una vez por todas a una sociedad latinoamericana de su subdesarrollo atávico.”

in necro-war tactics. There was no rhapsody for this shattered saga. Thousands of Chileans who shared the same historical time and space are excluded. While even the alleged “disappeared” under the military rule were accounted for as “enemies” of the state as a metonymy for the Left as a whole by the official accounts, other subjects, such as sexual minorities, women, indigenous people, and children, were left out of the Rettig (1991) and Valech (2004–2011) reports.⁴ The official narratives—from the Commission of Truth and Reconciliation and the Commission on Political Torture and Detention—place them in an ideological limbo, completely indifferent to their personal biographies. An example of this is made up of the elite large-estate owners and the conservative upper-middle class, after the fall of the agro-rural Right, a product of the agrarian reform and industrial and agricultural nationalization of the Eduardo Frei Montalva and Salvador Allende governments, respectively. These groups also lived their own authoritarian process, the traces of which have remained in records deprived of a memory that has struggled to enter the public sphere while refraining from becoming rhetorically obstinate. The persecution of homosexuals or the indigenous is also not considered in the constitution of the state’s memory archives, and even less so are those who were no more than eight years old at this time. Elizabeth Jelin has highlighted the necessity to revisit the conception of the human rights discourse within the field of memory studies in order to understand the changes that occurred after the transitional justice period ended.⁵ It is precisely this last generation, that of the people born in the ’60s, which emerged being declared *a posteriori* as those who lost by their elders: an adaptable epitaph for the future of adolescents whose nationalized names indicate the muteness of their account of the social disintegration produced by the capitalistic refoundation. Some of these voices would be represented later in the narrations of the ’90s. They were the ones who demanded the country lost in their infancy and adolescence. Andrea Maturana, Lina Meruane, Andrea Jeftanovic, Beatriz García-Huidobro, Nona Fernández, and even some who are older, like Pedro Lemebel, Jorge Ramírez, and Mauricio Wacquez, talked of ways of overcoming the sequestering of the childhood of those who were the moral reserve for the Right’s future. This is the generation that I am identifying as the artist as secondary witness, as Dora Apel elaborates the concept in her book *Memory Effects: The Holocaust and the Art of Secondary Witnessing*.

4. Review Hillary Hiner. “Voces Soterradas, Violencias Ignoradas: discurso, violencia política y género en los informes Rettig y Valech.” *Latin American Research Review* 44.3 (2009): 50–74.

5. <<http://memoria.ides.org.ar/publicacionespublicacion-de-actividades-realizadasrevisitando-el-campo-de-las-memorias-un-nuevo-prologo>>.

The most exemplary cultural artifact representing this era, the movie *Tony Manero* (2008), by Pablo Larraín, depicts as a background some of the worst years of the military state's violence.⁶ The movie belongs to a saga that has been called "the Trilogy of Chile."⁷ It reflects, as do I in this work, on the "ideological limbo." In this movie, the main character is a dancer in a cabaret who is obsessed with the popular figure of Tony Manero in *Saturday Night Fever*. Absorbed in his world, without any political affiliation and lacking any ideological or valoric recognition whatsoever that could inscribe him in the competing, dominant imaginaries of that time, Raúl is the perfect representative of subjects with no access to these discourses. In psychoanalytic terms, the main character eludes the symbolic, regulatory support of reality in order to leave us faced with the fiction of his own desire, his own "unconscious passionate attachments" (Žižek 359), which constitutes the phantasmatic framework (series of scenarios) that structures his life. As a symptom of this, the protagonist becomes a serial killer whose only impetus is obtaining the material elements that allow him to insert his fantasy into historical reality. Therefore, he performatively attempts to win the competition of a television program that is looking for his North American counterpart. Triggered by his not winning the contest, Raúl remains embedded in his own phantasmatic world. Because of this, his imaginary is not transferrable to symbolic law, even though he still perceives the law agency emanating from his fantasies; *Tony Manero* produces its own reflexive interpellation, exposing a conscience colonized/commoditized by the means of capital. Raúl's (psychotic) mind shows us how reality in itself is nothing more than the illusory support of the subject's desire. His world completely transcends reality, provoking the perverse effect that Slavoj Žižek defines for cinema as art. Žižek explains that "cinema is the ultimate pervert art. It doesn't give you what you desire—it tells you how to desire."⁸

I am not talking about a simple semiotic saturation or a regimen of symbols as a repertoire of identification, but rather of a more radical condition. The subject and its imaginary have been completely privatized. Once alienated, the split subject's body is transformed into an unoccupied space, as in the first murder scene in which an automaton slaps to death the old woman Raúl had just saved a few moments before. The impossibility of access to these worlds for Raúl makes him an individual-victim expelled from the symbolic

6. Just a few movies depicting the political past of Pinochet's dictatorship were produced during this decade. See Carolina Urrutia's book *Un Cine centrifugo: Ficciones chilenas 2005-2010*. Santiago de Chile: Cuarto Propio, 2013.

7. The other two movies are *Post Mortem* (2010) and the Oscar-nominated *No* (2012).

8. Slavoj Žižek. *A Pervert's Guide for Cinema*. Part 1. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch>>.

domain. As I just said, this is a gesture that takes us to the possibility of perceiving what is disturbing about a reality once we have discovered its illusory support. The perverse subject tries to restore the symbolic law by any means possible so as to reestablish the lost order, to dispel the idea that its desire can become infinite and impossible. Without ideology, without history, without the market, Raúl himself, invested in the process of his imaginary transformation as Tony Manero, hopes, by way of the television show, to be able to locate himself within some social bond that binds him to reality. The same constituent illusion of reality is reintroduced as a failure, since it becomes the Lacanian *objet petit a* (which triggers desire); failure is now the never-ending source and unachievable object of his enjoyment.



It was at the beginning of the '90s that the redimensioning of the public sphere was produced, due to the replacement of the authoritarian modes of regulation provided by two pairs of agents of social change. On the one hand, there is a radical alteration in the relationship between politics and culture; on the other hand, a change is observed in the position of subjects with respect to identity discourses. It is not strange, then, that in this movement, memory had the role that it did. Its task was that of sustaining the symbolic and legal amalgam necessary in order to balance the obvious social anomaly. Memory accounts acted as links for the social bond for the subjects disconnected from the assistance networks and that did not fit in either the state discourse or its institutions. Memory becomes the best defense against the market. If the information society advocated the promise of realizing a “remote control” with the implicit paradox of an increased proximity and control of the formation of the social bond, what happened is exactly the opposite. Exclusion was increasing, not only because of the growing social inequality, but also because of the impossibility for the subject to think of himself outside of the cultural modern narratives administered by the media. It is clear, then, that memory was to function—and functions today—as a privileged space for the imaginary reconstruction of the social bond; hence its importance for the democratic, transitional political parties. Nonetheless, another series of elements would be articulated in the social world, as we knew it. The changes that the '80s brought with them entailed a subjective design for individuals. This design consisted in combining together the characteristics of global economic and cultural processes with the proper ways of connecting in a computerized society. Memory first served to articulate the subject as well

as its historical and social context. The dismantled and disposable subject made sense only in an imagined past. But as media society was putting the distance between today and yesterday into service, the subject began plunging into an absolute symbolic vacuum. How, then, should democracy be valued in the way that Martín Hopenhayn argues? The transitional governments will be the first to develop a strategic policy that relocates culture as the only normative system capable of assuring a social-psychic investment for politics and its subjects. This will mostly be only tactical; that is to say, culture is used in a superficial sense to performatively achieve democracy. According to the analysis of Hopenhayn, “the cultural conflicts become more political because they actually become more stark and violent; for the same reason, they force the intervention of local power . . . that finds in the market of cultural demands a suitable place to continue in competition” (18). This way, since the end of the ’80s, governments devoted themselves to the task of assuring a place for local identification for what Hopenhayn calls “a certain nomadic identity” (17). The solution to the problem of ideological limbo for the transitional governments lies in the politicization of the cultural fields. Thus, the compensatory figure of a culture consumer and performer arises as a vicarious agent of politics. This will make it infinitely easier to propose solutions on a pseudo-collective, cultural screen rather than through “social distribution” (18). A clear example of this is the many public festivals created by these governments. In these uses of public spaces, citizens saw themselves exercising their civic rights and identities simply by occupying the public space in a festive way according to the state cultural policy. This is what I would call “bread and circuses” citizens, remembering what Roman emperors used to do to keep the population peaceful and give them the option to express themselves in these places of performance.

I do not want to say, however, that there has been a falsification of the facts in the testimonies of the detained, tortured, and exiled during the military government’s regime of terror. Rather, I want to say that the events that occurred after the coup of 1973, recounted in the manner of those who were encoded into the judicial and heroic registries, become the compulsory collective memory. The testimonials were supplications of a contrite citizenship for recognition, faced with the hegemony of the revolutionary epic and the success of the free market. This hagiographic apologetic of the fallen, sustained by the transitional governments, operated as a reconciliatory master narrative. The same narrative is expressed today under the symbol of market contradictions, in particular in relation to unequal economical compensations for the victims’ relatives. It is a silence blocked by the narrative saturation of

commemorative rhetoric. All of the narratives that appeared in the sphere of media during the past twenty years share the same trace of being composed in a weakened social fabric. While the union workers' network, the plotting of the factory, and the professional guilds are diverted more and more as sources of integration and support of the social bond, the market quietly murmurs the biographies created for the consumption of these subjects. All the narratives of this era tend to replace personal experience, to hide the actors and their demands behind the mask of an objective truth in the technical reports of disappearance.

Seen from another angle, the political, statistical data presuppose a sort of accounting that presents the state as a debtor; it is the repayment to the Chilean people for the military coup, to the popular democracy program, an indemnity that goes out under the name of human rights. In all of these transactions, the illustration of the loss of value of life had little success, even though *testimonio* as a test genre and as a will to survive intended, with its state interpellations, to realign the civil and military responsibilities in ethical frameworks. This impulse was able to resolve only a political escape from the theme of human rights violations. So, the historical debt was adapted to the dominant, instrumental morality during the transition, dictated by the consensus of capital. To repair (without compromise) by means of monetary compensation was the maxim of the transitional governments. Prevented from acting against the military, the governments complied with consensual ruling. They were forced to completely reject their ideological project in order to embrace the free market laws of the updated, technocratic, capitalist order. This political solution demanded profoundly antidemocratic concessions and capitulations in the legal realm as well as ethical consequences for the common citizen. For example, this is what is happening with the payments made to the family members of the politically detained and executed. These were often settled in a differentiated manner, establishing a hierarchy between the dead and the missing of first and second degrees or "special cases."

Two representative cases are those of the payments of over 1 million dollars in indemnities to the family of Spanish citizen Carmelo Soria and the roughly 1.8 million dollars paid to the bereaved of the four communist professionals killed in retaliation for the military victims of the failed attack on Pinochet in September of 1986.⁹ This policy of compensations frequently

9. Collection carried out by lawyer Marcelo Elissalde Martel from Open Source, *El Mercurio Newspaper*, Cuerpo C, August 23 and 30, 2007. Column by Hermógenes Pérez de Arce, September 12, 2007. *El Periodista Magazine*, n. 136, September 14, 2007 (www.elperiodista.cl). For a comparison with sources from leftist organizations, see the website <http://www.memoria-viva.com/>. José Carrasco Tapia and three other members of the Communist Party were killed after Pinochet's assassination attempt.

included the risk of mistakes or exploitation. The falsification of identity of the missing that show up twenty years later, or the erroneous exhumations of corpses, as had happened with the much-talked-about case of *Patio 29*, take even more away from the credibility of the system.¹⁰ The public feeling of distrust toward the neoliberal developmentalism that is lived today grows with these differential payments. It is known that one of the most deteriorated social worlds is that of the working class, if it is still possible to refer to these both economically and physically violently impoverished communities this way. These communities share several characteristics that result from the current conditions of collective and intersubjective social organization that takes place within the liberal-economic and political formations in Latin America. Chile is not the exception. Subjects plundered by transnational labor, minority identities stigmatized by the oppression of the patriarchal state, and citizens massacred by governmental necro-terrorism are all faced with the logic of violent exclusion that contemporary forms of production carry with them every day. These minimal subjects—the Colombian hit men, the women killed and raped in the *maquilas* in Ciudad Juárez, the young graffiti artists of Los Angeles, the teenage gangs or *maras* in El Salvador, the suburban *péndex* (twinks) of Lemebel, and the workers of Eltit—begin and end with the requirement to order their own extermination. They are registered postmortem in the popular media forms of autopsy: the crime pages of the newspapers, the police reports on television, obituaries in headlines on the second and third pages to be condemned by the social Darwinism of readers and editors who see the trajectories of these pariahs as the foreshadowing of their own death as a species. It is a cruel paradox faced with the vitality of the opposite sign that animates the capitalist modernity project in the Latin American West. Just as Jesús Martín Barbero and Ana María Ochoa argue, cited by Hopenhayn, “the erosion on the ideological maps institutionalized by modernity has provoked the collapse of the hitherto existing interpretative categories, resulting in a dual vision according to which identity constructions arise as either a factor of development or as a factor of anti-modernity” (19). Cruelty settled in on the change of the notion of sovereignty and its exercise over the bodies where, as Achilles Mbembe reminds us, “to exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power” (12). All of this indicates how and why the subject might find the ideological limbo to be appealing.

10. See an example in the documentary *Fernando Ha Vuelto* (1998), by Silvio Caiozzi.

Market and Subjectivities

The first consequence that we can find from this analysis is that the combined creation by the state and the market of these legal and institutional systems denounces the collapse of the figure of law as an element of cohesion and subjective organization for the individual. Collective imaginaries disappear and in their place emerge alienated imaginaries and self-references. These are nourished by the feelings that consumers construct in their material and symbolic exchanges. Supplementary modes of socialization, such as family and school in the realm of the working class or of higher education for the middle and upper classes, have lost their sense of commonality. Faced with the absence of solidarity previously provided by these networks and in the midst of the advance of hypercapitalism, individuals become more and more self-oriented subjects without material bases to symbolically inscribe themselves into the social world. Free to float between a past dissolved by contemporary obsessions with the present and a future with no set end, work and consumption are the only parameters of socialization. What feeds the deprivation of this alienated subject is not physical survival but rather the depravity of choice itself. We are faced with an existence situated inside a social fabric produced by technocracy. The certainty of stability for the wage-earning regimes, around which the collective political subject had been built, has been replaced with the individuated offer of identification in the market. This new social episteme, in which the forms of compensation are provided by consumption, “the escapist form” expressed in the axiom that the greater the consumption the greater the debt, constitutes the breeding ground for social mobilization, or for the most complete social anomie, as Jocelyn-Holt argues (38). To be replaceable, together with the insecurity of work for these disposable citizens of the hypermarket and the most radical political act of living the illusory experience of choice, are added as symptoms of democracy. If before work humanized, today it serves to mediate the exact opposite process. This means the complete alienation of the individual. It is clear that the possibility to choose amounts to imagining a place of belonging and recognition rooted in the purchase.

Thus, we are faced with a country articulated by the models provided by republicanism, Catholic evangelization, and the positivist system, in which organic regulation is dictated by the market and characterized, moreover, by an oligarchic political leadership in which the forces of progress are based on the false tutelage of the state. But the state has been completely detached from the duties that characterized it in order to transfer them to civil society itself. Education and health, the two primary tasks of the old welfare state, are now

found in the hands of civil society and of privatization, a revealing panorama of a nation-state weakened by liberal neocolonialism, with increasing fees for modernization and development, sheltered by the authoritarianism of the day.

It is possible to ask about the location of these memories, how they constructed these subjectivities, what their demands would be, and whether or not they were appropriated by the collective social account. Citizens of other worlds! Residents of other skies freed by chance from a territory-less utopia more than the fourth-world delirium! Perhaps the archives no longer exist: those who went through their stories condemned them to anonymity.

Other Kidnappings

But this was not the only debatable compensation. In visual arts and literature, the symbolic gain against the uneasiness of the socialist utopia was strongly entrenched. It was precisely in the decade of the '80s that the best Chilean narrative of the period would be written, together with the most radical of visual wagers. I call them "artist as primary witness" because the historical past was their present.

The group Art Actions Collective (CADA, from its Spanish name), the Institute of Humanistic Studies in the University of Chile, and the Department of Visual Arts from the same university make up the members of Advanced Scene (La Escena de Avanzada). On the literary side, the post-coup narrative was ordered around the literary workshops, primarily that of José Donoso. Both ventures, narrative and painting, united through neo-avant-garde conceptualism; they avenged the discursive deflation of the Left's defeat in order to replace it with a symbolic inflation. It is still possible today to think of some creative scenes in Chile as a closed symbolic system of powers and counterpowers in which the axis is articulated around an authoritarian, theoretical discourse founded around the ruins of the coup—ruins that today are made into sacred memorials (museums, memory sites)—where the rhetoric of legal artifice (public policy) has erased the scar of horror. These ruins are also a site of cultural heritage that records the installation of a hegemonic power group in the languages of the avant-garde. It is fair to recognize that the only means of expression not controlled by the analytic discursivity of this critical-theoretical body, namely cinema, will bring the most resistance. It is a matter of a generation of filmmakers and visual artists without an explicit affiliation to the cultural matrix established by their predecessors. Financed directly by the state—through public, contest funds—these creators explore the subject matter of the private individual. Their emphasis rests on the reno-

vation of languages with keys of interpretation set apart from those defined by the “memory scene.”

This brief approach reveals one of the first reevaluations of the two worst decades for the political institutionalism of the Chilean state. The undeniable necessity to expand the range of accounts of the period becomes urgent. Historian Steve Stern argues this, saying that “the problem with the memory-against-forgetting dichotomy, and the related idea of a Faustian bargain, is not that they are ‘wrong or untrue’ in the simple sense. It is that they are insufficient- profoundly incomplete and in some ways misleading” (xxvii). In other words, he suggests understanding national memory discourses not only as a receptacle of certain ideological historic selections but as an archive in the process of being constituted and that needs to incorporate all sorts of alternative accounts (popular art, songs, visual artifacts). At the same time, Stern understands it as a mechanism (law) equipped with agency for the task of repairing the social fabric through the elaboration of instrumental and incomplete versions of truth. It is what Stern calls the “Pandora’s Box” effect (xix). For him, as well as for many Chilean historians, there is still much work to be done in order to resolve the multiple contradictions present before and after the military dictatorship of Pinochet, but, above all, in order to end the paradox of the imposed discursive amnesia that holds the nation’s modern future.¹¹ Curiously, all cite the case of the traditional Right, plundered by the expropriation of its agricultural land, as economically unfeasible for the new model. But, as I have already said, many other memories have fallen by the wayside. In general, due to the lack of legal necessity to record them, the stories of these accounts remained in generational silence until the dismantling, during the following decade, of what was previously called “the memory scene.” This is also because these memories do not belong to a hegemonic identity group, as was the case with what Ileana Rodriguez calls abject citizenships.¹² Finally, to look at the past is not to build a bridge between it and the future; it is to produce a necessary solidarity for the recomposition and support of the social fabric. This is the paradoxical role played by memory.

11. This includes the historians of the most radical Left—Gabriel Salazar and Julio Pinto—working with the urban and rural proletariat, or even Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt, rereading the national heroes and founding fathers, as well as the representatives of the most conservative faction, now engaged in rewriting the history of the private, urban life, such as Cristián Gazmuri and Gonzalo Vial.

12. For example, the prisoners and homosexual and lesbian victims, or those belonging to ethnic minorities, such as the Mapuche.

The Veils of Memory

Seen from another angle, the invisibility of what happened occurs because of the very discrimination of the ideology of the state's crime and because of the form in which the trauma of the dictatorship is moved from its proper historical occurrence to a fictional ubiquitous present. The silence about what happened could well be understood in light of what Dominick LaCapra calls "structural trauma." For LaCapra, the power of the structural entrenchment of historical fact as a network of subjective links that provide the subjects with meanings acts like a mechanism offered for the citizen's identification. This dynamic stems from the fact that the "act of memory" operating as a master narrative is needed. The necessity of fantasizing a collective belonging acquires its consistency by way of the ascription of individuals in this narrative *dictum* identifying them as protagonists of the state counterplot—the pastoral reconciliatory narrative—versus the military *traum-epic* account. This new community is reinforced as long as it rebuilds the social bond in terms of a common memory. The narrations or versions of history have a shared trait: all of them, or rather none of them, approach the historical evidence of the coup of 1973 and its consequences without the filter of memory. Stern comments, "Memory is the meaning that we attach to experience" (1:105). Even when documents are released, these are interpreted in the subjective light of the observant subject. If, in a determined case, the subject identifies with a collective, the history to be told will respond to the epic dimensions of the historical role produced by this collectivity. If, on the contrary, he who tells the facts is disintegrated, the outcome will equally result in the reconstruction of a certain rate of fictionalization. Remembering Martin Conway's book this fight could also be understood in terms of "the original generation specific self remains as the self with whom all later selves must be negotiated" (43).¹³ The rate of fictionalization, corresponding to the necessary distance existing between generations for their self-differentiation, indicates how one can move away from this master-memory narrative by resorting to imaginary storytelling. This is even more evident in the case of the artist as secondary witness. From the standpoint of memory, it is an expression of the dialectic between rupture and tradition. Now, tradition is, for the artist, the master-memory narrative.

13. This chapter, "The Inventory of Experience: Memory and Identity," is included in the book *Collective Memory of Political Events*. Ed. James W. Pennebaker, Bernard Rim, and Darío Paez. Mahwah, Routledge 1997. 21–46.

As Marcel Duchamp¹⁴ argues, true art is measured by its degree of illustrating reality and history. The lower this degree of referentiality, the greater the aesthetic index or artistic rationality becomes. Without this, it is impossible to understand the cultural validity and density of an object or artifact produced by a human being. Thus, with a lower degree of illustration comes a greater artistic coefficient. This is precisely what has happened with the Chilean interpretation of the coup and its consequences.

In the public sphere, without a doubt, each and every one of those that took up the task of telling his or her own story of events had, at one point or another, the necessity to produce the best truth for each individual—that is, to fictionalize the telling of his or her experience. This process included not only a truth that fits each person's life, but a truth that could document a legal case or interpellate a responsible party for the recognition of what happened. The role of the moral reparation of the transition state continued with the epic documentation of the revolutionary project and its consequences for the social actors involved. The first published report with a list of victims, the Rettig report (1991), made memory a judicial affair. Constructed as a factual proof of the transgressions, the statistical account of the victims provided sufficient condemnatory material to move forward with the majority of the trials against the genocidal excesses of the dictatorship. This self-penitent condition of the transitional state would have to continue with the later juridical elaborations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Valech report (2004–2011). The three texts constitute the cement that sealed the empire of human rights in Chilean politics for the government and the era. Between the Rettig and the Valech reports, the government agenda was that of human rights. After this period, the rupture began. The decomposition of the social fabric has become evident in the government's public policies, ending consensus rule. Culture has become politics. The political themes are public security, health, and education. There is no agreement about these.

The problem lies in the compulsion toward historical truth that runs through the democratic-authoritarian state's political will. The absurdity of the country is that it is thought of as a plot of poets. All creations compete for the inclusion of their version in the almanac created by the judicial reports. Returning to this treatise leads us to question, with Aristotle, whether history is more philosophical than poetry or vice versa. When I first started my interest in literary studies, one of my professors repeatedly returned to this question. Perhaps even then, in the '80s, this long country of poets began to

14. *Marchand du sel: Ecrits de Marcel Duchamp*. Paris: Terrain vague, 1959.

awaken from the dictatorship's lethargic anesthetic, and it did this by way of fiction. In this fiction, generations would be in conflict, characterized by the youngest for having been raised "dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation, shaped by the traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated" (Hirsch 22). But history is always a judge of facts. For the work of art and literature, this relation with the past would be in itself "mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation" (Hirsch 22). To summarize, the speculative labor of art in telling that which cannot be told opens a new imaginary order of reality in the same way that the labor of memory reconstitutes the self-devastated by means of social violence. Outside of this remains the statistical template of the atrocities offered by these judicial reports to history.

The History of History

Chilean, Marxist historiography recognizes the existence of four models or stages of building the country's governmental, juridical institutionality. Grouped according to the hegemonic conditions of dominance, we have the following orderings, chronologically: the Imperial Hispanic State (1542–1810), the Oligarchic Creole Liberal State (1810–1920), the Mesocratic State of Liberal Democracy (1920–1973), and the Authoritarian Neoliberal State (1973–1989). Each one of them is characterized by its respective crisis of hegemony,¹⁵ but they share a solid state imaginary-institutional continuum recognized by Chileans as the "major recorded feat in the political history of Chile" (Salazar and Pinto 3:24). Beginning in 1989 and continuing until today, a fifth model has begun to take shape. In this form of political-institutional organization, known popularly as "the Transition," the state resurrects from the ashes of the

15. Respectively, during the twentieth century, the mobilization of the army known as "the sound of the sabers," commanded by Altamirano, Neff, and Benett, that led the military uprising that disposed of Alessandri Palma in 1924; in 1927 the rise in popularity of General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo led to a military junta that had power until 1931. Despite having a presidential democracy behind Gabriel González Videla between 1946 and 1952, the so-called *Ley Maldita* (Damned Law), or Permanent Defense of Democracy Law, was enacted, by which the Communist Party was outlawed from the civil life of the nation and its members were persecuted, incarcerated, and forced into exile, as in the case of poet Pablo Neruda. The presidential authoritarianism of González Videla was accompanied by the creation of the Pisagua concentration camp, followed by numerous persecutions that included not only communists but also homosexuals.

military authoritarianism and is renewed by the promise of capital. Meanwhile, the transitional state will fight to resolve the pending human rights violations judgments within the framework of the amnesty agreement signed with the military. There will not be a “witch hunt” in the country, but rather, as classical Marxism proposes, there will be a transition from one mode of production to another. The figure of Pinochet will embody the success of authoritarian pragmatism from the absolute monopoly of repression, aided by two discourses: one, the constitutionalist nationalism, emerging with the reprinting of the Portales constitution of 1833 in combination with the Francoist doctrine; two, the proposals of Milton Friedman and the Chicago School, responsible for the production of a subjective horizon for civilian life, in which the Chilean society would begin to recognize itself as a market society. As Idelber Avelar reminds us, after the period of military regimes in Latin America, the entire society has transformed into a “global market in which every corner of social life has been commodified” (1). To refer to the historical moment of *Portaliato* is not superfluous. Many of the characteristics that define it are equally applied to the adjectives that would describe the dictatorship a century and a half later. And not only this, but the economic base inspired by the political constitution that Portales gave to his postmercantilist regime in the first third of the nineteenth century almost completely coincides with the neoliberal paradigm of the end of the twentieth century. However, the most interesting point here is that the operation of legitimacy in the public sphere deployed by Portales had to do with the creation of an artificial public sphere upheld by Chilean intellectuals. Grouped together in what was called the “42 generation,” these ideologues advertised, as philosopher Carlos Ossandón argues, the advantages of liberalism. This thesis reconciles even the idea of establishing commercial alliances with those who had been their economic enemies thirty years earlier, the United States and England, alliances that could be understood today as a concession to transnational economic citizenships. Thinking this way, nineteenth-century liberalism authorized the presidential verticality. The fiction of the nineteenth-century public sphere, armed by its intellectuals, was the only way to overcome the “monstrous popular assemblies” before which it had to bow. The ruling elites constructed an ideological-institutional apparatus, with which they faced the conditions of state governability, in which civil society was excluded from the modes of regulation. A century later, despite Chile having the seventh-worst income distribution of sixty-five nations surveyed by the World Bank, the economic *aggiornamento* will nevertheless celebrate the Chilean miracle that begins to outline a neoliberal democratic state. In this scenario, successive governments, marked by the transitional alliance of the Center Left, will

alternate the leadership of the country without changing the economic guidelines proven successful during the dictatorship.¹⁶ On October 5, 1988, in an open referendum, more than 55 percent of the Chilean population declared itself against the continuation of the military regime that the constitution of 1981 consecrated as a possibility for the future of the military.

One year later, in December of 1989, after seventeen years of a military dictatorship, Christian democratic ex-senator Patricio Aylwin Azócar achieved an electoral majority and was elected as the first president of the transition's republic. He represented a coalition of seventeen political parties from the Center Left. Aylwin had been accused of sedition as one of the parliamentarians that prompted the armed intervention in 1973. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, he emerged as a consensus figure against the armed forces. Almost two decades and four successive Concertación governments later, the transition commanded by this conglomerate has finally exhausted a model that promised to be the only viable possibility for maintaining the Pinochetist Right and conservatives away from La Moneda. United in the immediate past by the need to solve the historical debt to human rights breached during the military government, the transitional governments will maintain cohesion until the moral grounds given by the reports of the Rettig and Valech commissions are dissolved. This dissolution takes place in a new public sphere, ruled by the market two hundred years later.

In this new public sphere, the political agenda of the millennium is built around public safety; reproductive, sexual, and health rights; and economic tensions. I will return to this point later, but it is important to state here that the explanation for this reexhumation of social memory is the result of the arrest of Augusto Pinochet in London in 1998, accused of "crimes against humanity" by Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón. I pause here, then, to outline the ideological, historical continuity of the authoritarian mode of state rule. The hope for justice marked a starting point for the second modernization of the country, the state, and Chilean society. As recent Chilean historiography has substantiated, the necessity of modernization was proposed by the military government before "God and History" in its symbolic dimensions as well as in its material bases with the enactment of a state of emergency in 1973.¹⁷ The military's plan, the goal of which was to reestablish institutionalism and safeguard democracy, was transformed with the passing of days into a definitive foundational plan for the nation. In it, the state of law was replaced by

16. Respectively, the governments of Patricio Aylwin Azócar (1990–1994), Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle (1994–2000), Ricardo Lagos Escobar (2000–2006), and Michelle Bachelet Jeria (2006–2010).

17. See Correa et al.

the ideal of the Hobbesian state, which, compared with the empire of death, reasons with the logic of the annihilation of the threat. The dictatorship was projected even beyond its constitutional self-legitimization in 1981. During a complete lapse of seventeen years, it operated around the idea of the *de facto* disciplining of its citizens.

What is curious is that this process was carried out in the midst of a central paradox. The modern mode of national refoundation, in which the army plays the role of moral reserve, combined two completely antagonistic elements. One was constituted by a government that was led by a “National System of Planning” of a neocorporatist cut; the other consisted of a state that argued for private property and whose major successes came a decade later, just after the decline of the same state as a governing subject and administrator of sovereignty. These two facts were going to mark the guidelines for understanding that in reality the authoritarian military state was not so clearly distant from other previous governments in Chilean political life. It would be done in connection with its national security doctrine and its marked, Cold War–type anticommunism. These elements were to permit the North American orthodox monetarist interventionism to convert Chile into a position against the Habana-Moscow axis, and, at the same time, once the credit embargo was suspended, to position it as an attractive hub for foreign investment on the continent.

In this way, the social projection of the model of the Chilean “miracle” produced one singular juncture. From the monetary proposals, it was able to open a modernizing revolution of Chilean society, clearly with an elevated social cost, in which, alongside the retreat of statism, arose an avant-garde paradigm of change and future that resonated in the nineteenth-century national imaginaries. Chile’s fate was to be an exceptional nation-state in the Southern Cone and the entire continent, foreshadowed by the literature of the beginning of the twentieth century. It is clear that this was not the only noteworthy contradiction. The traditional Right, connected with the countryside, was stripped of its seigniorial feudal privileges. The agricultural lands were reallocated. All land that was not productive was replaced by deindustrialized financial conglomerates organized around transactions associated with fruit “packings” and “holdings.” The surge of a new economical class and a new social sensibility was immediate. Chile was now the model for new forms of political and economic administration, demanded by the geopolitical realignment of the Western world. The great socialist projects now fallen, statism gave way to the self-regulation of markets, introducing not only new forms of economic organization but also new norms for social formation.

Each of the different states of political-economic administration offered, alongside culture, different options for the configuration of subjects. From the seventeenth century and on, the figure of the market has lifted the shadow left by the new citizens of *novo* Hispanic societies. Each of the junctures in which the economic and political liberalism placed the subjects had a peculiar configuration. The first of them is the correspondence to the offer made by the liberal laws of 1778, by which the Crown began to outline protectionism as the “political mode of production,” making way for the abolition of monopolies and the opening of international commerce. The theory behind the existence of a market, understood already in the seventeenth century as a political configuration, endowed with autonomy by the economic laws, is sustained by Chilean historians Gabriel Salazar and Julio Pinto (3:34). The thesis of both, which I follow in this chapter, confirms the core regulatory directions that liberal thought will create on the concept of market. On the one hand is the condition of spontaneous self-regulation, or the mechanism of “the invisible hand,” and on the other hand is the inherent goodness of this practice for the population, as De Francisco advertises (24). The result of this stance is reflected in the desirability of the intended equilibriums that, by De Francisco’s judgment, suppose “a splendid scene of mathematical possibility, but of social infeasibility, a *happy world* of ‘natural liberty’ but unrealizable” (28).

This utopia rests on the three pillars that hold up the ideals of economic liberalism: the decline of state interventionism in its dimensions of aid and social protection, the fantasy of the existence of depoliticized markets, and lastly, an understanding of politics as an activity of pluralist negotiation between individuals. For subjects, this form of understanding the political realm is expressed in the idea that Chile signifies, since 1973, a peculiar point of subjectification and the contemporary, national, and citizens’ imaginaries. To signify is to make a contingent sense of experience, but it is also to speak of how this is produced from a speaking subject. This traditional perspective encrypts its interest in the discursive formation of narratives that reorganize the data that consciousness provides. The record of this data is adapted to the conceptual framework and hermeneutic horizons for the subjects. Yet another way of thinking about this dynamic is one that highlights how this dimension is only one part of the plot that articulates the production of subjectivity itself. As Araujo has clearly argued, following Freud, the subject is constructed in the intertwining of its biography, its material and historical circumstances, and the narrative offers that culture itself makes as identification models (*Dignos de su Arte* 16–17). It is the latter that are of most interest to us in this work.



It is no wonder then, or perhaps it is, that recent Chilean history has been mostly interpreted by the transitional justice narrative of trauma and that this has been the hermeneutic template from which—or through which—the facts and consequences that these have had for the population, both those related to the social impact and those linked to the political and economic consequences, have been understood. As we have seen in the works of Richard (*Políticas y Estéticas de la Memoria, Utopia[s]*), Salazar and Pinto (*Historia contemporánea de Chile*, Vol. 1–3), Lira and Loveman, Stern, Cárcamo-Huechante, and Lazzara, there are two major axes around which the historical and critical revision is articulated, particularly in the areas of humanities and the social sciences. From a perspective of historical reparation, the transitional governments, starting in 1991 with the Rettig report and followed by the document elaborated by the Valech commission in 1994, confronted historical memory with the attainment of a legal-institutional exit that could, inside the legal framework provided by the 1981 constitution, resolve the political and criminal responsibilities of all those who were proven guilty of human rights violations.¹⁸ These crimes that occurred during the authoritarian military government in the period between 1973 and 1989 called for the court appearance of the state as responsible for genocide for the collective death of 3,195 compatriots. Three decades later, the remains of 1,357 disappeared remained unidentified, according to the official figures. These enabled the negotiation of an ethical ground for the modernization of the country, fulfilling its “historical prophecy.” The new social contract between the state and civil society maintained the unity of the Concertación for more than fifteen years, permitting, alongside the institutional solidification, the profile of a new urban subject. Despite this homogenizing agreement, the social and imaginary narratives began to present a particular constant. In all of them, the presence of a new actor began to make itself evident and clearly continues today.

Curiously, many of the novels, movies, visual expositions, and theater of the decade coincided in their interest for the intimate stories of their protagonists. The previous feature is present in the milestones marked by the dramatic works *La Manzana de Adán* (1990) and *Las Historias de la Sangre* (1993) and through the movies *Caluga o Menta* (1990) and *El Chacotero Sen-*

18. Popularly known as the Rettig report due to the name of the magistrate Raúl Rettig, who presided over the commission that for nine months investigated and catalogued the crimes and abuses committed between September 11, 1973, and March 1990. The document is known as *Informe de la Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación* (*Report of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission*). Edited in three volumes by the Chilean government.

timental (1999), with their explorations of juvenile proletarian subjects and the secret past of urban intimacy; or in the iconic novel *Mala Onda* (1991) and the book of chronicles *La Esquina es mi corazón* (1995), where the lives of the bourgeoisie and proletariat after Pinochet are examined. What is really fascinating is how even in the public discourses, particularly in the press, the traditional crime page will cede its success to cover projects that highlight the exaltation of the intimacy of the new Chileans. Along with it, in a steady manner, the capital city tabloids insistently take interest in crimes related to infancy and adolescence. The moral horizon of the country is projected, then, not only over the commemorative memorials of human rights violations but also over the bodies of the future: children and adolescents.

On the one hand, Chile is the extension of a violent memory, uprooted from the bodies that were taken from it; on the other hand, the five letters of the name mark the continuation of a tradition of political-economical stability and progress, held on the continent, that in the following decades would mean the successful proof of the postcapitalist reengineering of economic liberalism. In one case or the other, the imaginary narratives or accounts circulated in Chilean society of both forms of identification and solidarity in the population would act in a combined way to change the physiognomy of the offers for the production of subjectivity in the post-coup Chile. I am referring not only to the historical-legal dimension of state interpellation for the moral and material reparation of the excesses committed, or the institutional narration of the civil imaginaries, concentrated on the validation of the set of ethical and moral rules for the advent of politics, but rather to the subtle infiltration of the supposedly philosophical and political liberalism in its variable economic discourse.¹⁹ This last perspective, following the ideas of Araujo's reading of Freud, proposes that the combination of the identification offers provided by the culture of this period allow us to observe a change in the way subjects are produced—are narrated—from the I, and in how other social discourse offers realize these variations of subjectivity.²⁰ We are almost in the presence of the perverse, and I will explore this configuration in depth in chapter 2.

The Installation of the Market

For many, the historical experience of 1973 is equal to the year of the founding of the Motherland in 1810. Defined as one of the most morally and ethically

19. See Cárcamo-Huechante.

20. See Araujo, *Dignos de su Arte*.

controversial periods in Chile's history, this period is not even equal to the previous time of armed intervention at the end of the '20s, with Ibáñez del Campo. There have been many euphemisms to refer to the coup d'état and the extermination of a large part of the leftist, revolutionary leadership: "Refunding of the Nation," "Second Independence," "Entrance into the First World," "The Revolution of Jaguars," or, simply, "the greatest revolution of the Chilean twentieth century." In any case, the interruption of the socialist, middle-class models of government, under way since the Juan Antonio Ríos presidency (1942–1946), put Chile in front of an exceptional economic proto-revolution. This would reach its peak in the following decades, extending its influence until the transitional governments of the '90s. The greatest achievement of this change lies in the imposition of the exterior growth model with scarce attention to national industrialization and a towering interest in the commercial oligopolies, a brutal reactivation of the primary export sectors (raw goods), and the presence of internationally allied economic groups. Its model lends scarce attention to the social guarantees of the most dispossessed sectors, demanding a modernization of these latter groups through its entry to the financial dynamics provided by the new credit agreements.²¹ Precisely, the new social contract is that which consumers sign with financial banking systems, in a Faustian way, trading in their civil rights to those defined as debtors by the banking credit managers. Approached from another direction, the model also produced its own subjects—subjects whose collective identity, as I said before, is pulverized by the combinatory rules of globalization and the flexibility of markets. It is precisely the 1980 constitution that must be analyzed in order to understand how and why the social imaginaries will institutionalize it. Cárcamo-Huechante has read this period from the intersection of the pronounced discourses of Milton Friedman and the Chicago Boys in 1975 and the discourses of presidential candidate Joaquín Lavín Infante, picked up in his text *La Revolución Silenciosa*.²² Although in his book Cárcamo-Huechante explicitly intends to "analyze the way in which the free market system has transformed into a discursive formation of cultural character in Chilean society since 1975" (237),²³ his investigation is centered exclusively in the foundational texts that leave aside, for methodological reasons, the

21. One example would be that of student movements that fight against the privatization of education.

22. Joaquín Lavín Infante was a candidate for the presidency of the country. Twice defeated by the Concertación Parties for Democracy, he retired to private management. In the current government of Sebastián Piñera, he was Secretary of Education.

23. Translated from the following: "Analizar la manera en que el sistema de libre mercado se transformó en una formación discursiva de carácter cultural en la sociedad chilena a partir de 1975."

political constitution of 1981 and the mission statement of the military junta. To incorporate these public documents into future works on the topic, understanding them as narrative offers for subjectivation, shows the importance of the way in which the social imaginaries permeate and produce the subjective plot that maintains the legal dimensions of institutions. As Anthony Elliot argues, explaining the importance of the thought of Cornelius Castoriadis for social theory:

Rejecting this standpoint, Castoriadis argues that imagination renders the relation of mind and world possible. “The imaginary,” he writes, “is the subject’s whole creation of a world for itself” (1984b, 5). Castoriadis’s Freud is not the gloomy prophet of repression and repetition, but the high priest of imagination. Dreams, desire, wish, pleasure, fantasy: these are for Castoriadis at the core of our social process and political institutions. (143)

On the other hand, in his analysis, Cárcamo-Huechante highlights the role played by the textuality deployed in Milton Friedman’s interventions, arguing that it is capable of producing stagnation in the Chilean social and cultural fabric. Cárcamo-Huechante says that “Friedman’s intervention exceeds the economic sphere and gives a glimpse of a set of images and key cultural conceptions to begin to see the status quo of intellectual production, the academy, the hegemonic knowledge of the experts, the national culture, and the new global relations inside a free market model” (238).²⁴ This critic leaves out another variable, besides the foundational discourses of neoliberalism. I am referring to the abrupt interruption of the model, occurring between 1982 and 1983, as a palliative effect of the generalized crisis of the Chilean banking system, which the state needed to uphold, declaring a triennium of protectionist intervention very similar to that existing before 1973. During this time, other discourses emanated from the economic powers that be; they also intervened in the public and private sphere as subjective constitution offers. It is precisely in these years, 1982 to 1985, that the military government rearticulated its “*vamos bien, mañana mejor*” (we are doing well, tomorrow will be better) policy by way of a *de facto* state of emergency in order to control the growing wave of social protests against the government’s ideological excesses, this time committed by the economy against the social body. Salaries depreciated by 40 percent and in just one year there

24. Translated from the following: “La intervención de Friedman excede la esfera económica y deja entrever un conjunto de imágenes y concepciones culturales claves para entrever el status quo de la producción intelectual, la academia, el saber hegemónico de los expertos, la cultura nacional y las nuevas relaciones globales dentro de un modelo de libre mercado.”

were over eight hundred corporate bankruptcies. The many violent days of popular unrest reminded the economic minds that the collective value of political solidarity, as a sovereign exercise, had not been traded in the covert dollarization of the financial system. Yet, the successes of the model were not minor, above all in its first decade of application. Primarily, there were three of them: the substantive reduction of inflation, the decrease of the fiscal deficit, and the increase and diversification of imports. The decade of the '80s would see the second moment of the model be consolidated, with the secretary of finance, Hernán Buchi, at the head and leading the privatization of sectors traditionally substantiated by the state, like higher education, health, and social protection. The future presidential candidate from the military Right was going to embody the post-Chicago free market ideals. His rise to power brought with it the popularization of the image of a blond runner, hyper oxygenated with long hair, a brave, charming prince who defended and incarnated the ideals of the new man in Chile.

Thus, the 1981 political constitution would work as one of the fundamental references of the new offers for a subjective constitution, offered to the individuals of the '80s and '90s. Its exceptionality is notable not only for the legal obstacles implicit in it that hinder its reform, but also for the way in which the articles that compose it orchestrate a type of mechanical citizen. This new citizen presents a high devaluation rate with respect to its capacity for political organization, compensated by an inflation of its ability for private administration and management. The new conception of autonomy that the '81 constitution yields will be added to the elements that characterize the modern subject in contemporary times, namely, its pure self-orientation, its high social sense of anonymity, its demand for productivity and efficiency in the performance of its duties, its permanent psychic flexibility to be permanently reassigned in the only contemporary passion that is work or a career. It is these characteristics that were also included in the Pinochetist constitution of '81 and that, combined with the economic prayers of the Friedman-Buchi dyad, would eventually forge the "ideals of the time."



In this first chapter, I have described the different variables of the neoliberal cultural narratives that work as subjective offers present in the Chile of the past thirty years. The emphasis placed on the description of the historical-discursive conditions thereof seeks to highlight the peculiarity of the country's condition. From the ideological offer, through the sacralization of history-in-time, until arriving at the free market narratives, Chileans have been

discursively intervened in their socialization, subjectification, and individuation choices.

Two of the most widely used approaches in the analysis of this period are those of memory, in the ideological, generational, and countergenerational register, and the state and private historiographical memory. Both, nonetheless, fail to detect the presence of a third possibility of intervention, that of the failure of memory itself as a symbolic bind.

Central to the processes of reconstruction of the social bond after extreme situations for the subject, memory has been colonized as an imaginary function by the market. The state's rescue attempt of this crucial function for social cohesion involved identifying it with the notion of culture. Each and every one of the transitional governments pursued this aim, with greater and lesser success. But, during the same period, another variable was shaped.

Thinking of memory from the field of trauma studies, the discussion centers on its function as an agency of symbolization and, hence, the untying of the traumatic impact. The studies organized around this power of change signified a success but also a carelessness. To see it from an absolute manner, in the imaginary access of the restitution of symbolic orders, does not consider the disempowerment that the colonization of the imaginaries by the market itself had on it. The consequential loss of its capacity for sociodiscursive reparation became the proliferation of a singular phenomenon: that of the narratives that show how the link of solidarity between the subject and its bond fails. These other narratives, which I classify as proper to the "ideological limbos," operate in another direction. I will work precisely in this line of thought in the following chapters.

Beyond a mechanical summation, the overflow that I talk about behaves like a chain composed of inferences of signifiers: the character of the wrath and the character of the rupture are self-defined as foundations for a condition of aesthetic overflow. Thus, the wrath acts as a primordial unit of rift and a referential unit of the overflow. Beyond a mechanical summation, beyond unraveling such compounds, the literature of overflow presumes literary, tragic indications, imprecations in its thematic and linguistic construction.

In the symbolic construction of the territory of an aesthetic of excess, the work is not always willing to reveal with a mere glance its torn creature, its tragic essence, its aesthetic axis composed and decomposed by pain. Sometimes certain pieces, certain texts assume an apparent docility in the thematic, formal, or moral proposal as significant postulations. The overflow, then, appears enveloped, hidden, as if wearing layers and layers of cloth to cover the tragic heaviness, the unrest that is embedded in signical depths. Therefore, it must exercise a sort of excavation to organize the symbolic resources pres-

ent there and to extract the signifying essence apparently absent at first sight. Other times, the overflow is visible, since the writer has assumed the trade of kneading together the subject matter and technique from the linguistic imprecation, a sort of semantic avalanche and the configuration of an authentically dramatic literary plot. The literary work of overflow is constructed from the rift; this is the soul of its symbolic composition. It is shown, then, no matter what its format of visibility is, that a rift is the source of meaning.

To spill over is to unbridle oneself, to unleash oneself, to run rampant. Accordingly, to inquire with respect to the overflow in art and in literature constitutes, above all, the existence of a reflection and action of rebellion, unease about the symbolic treatment and the subjective material installed in the spirit of the artist. It would seem that history of art and literature roams in its creators' experience of overflow. The literature produced in our country does not escape from this.

What I have been calling aesthetic of overflow corresponds to a construction of artistic and literary worlds from the experience of the ontological rift, in the sense of demonstration of being, in virtue of the events that serve to motivate the symbolic, aesthetic treatment. It is therefore a tragic composition in which the human drama prevails. What is dramatic is underneath, acting as a support of aesthetic renovation.

In this way, the readings proposed here stop their gaze on a few moments of rift, in the content of the story, in the discursive atmosphere, in the location of the author and his or her work in the context that surrounds it. Along with this, it will be crucial to approach a sort of signage, which I have been articulating as cursing language of the literature of overflow.

2

Perversion and Subjectivity

The Possible Worlds

THIS SECOND CHAPTER presents a genealogy of the concept of perversion in Western thought and a discussion of its productivity as a privileged symptom of contemporary social analysis. I specifically use this concept to deal with the tensions that arise in the subject due to the cultural shift from authoritarianism to democracy in the framework of the Chilean, postmodern, and globalized post-transition period. The discussion is in line with the problematization of the active memory narratives during the Chilean transition made by the generation, which emerged around 1980. This generation wants not only to cancel the scene of the transition but also to deactivate its interpretative validity. My argument is that the contemporary subjective forms with which the subject is produced inside Chilean culture correspond to the dissolution of links with history and ideology and with the active, moral foundations of the authoritarian rhetoric of the “pastoral state” of consensus. I also argue that the emerging generation proposes an alternative grammar, defined by the phantasmatic encapsulation of the imaginaries in literature and the visual arts. In this cultural context, ideological interpellation and symbolic regimes fail. Instead of the utopian, revolutionary Other, or the hope that the market presents in the discursive dispute over the available identification offers, the subject of the first hypercapitalism discovers, in the enjoyment of its modes of individuation, perversion as a privileged mechanism for upholding order.

Chile and the Post-Transition

For more than a decade, anticipating the arrival of the end of the dictatorship, the Chilean press and, in general, the media, seemed overjoyed with the idea that Chile was experiencing its own “move” forward. Supported by the postdictatorship experiences lived by the Spanish, post-Franco society and the analogous Argentine situation under the recently elected president Raúl Alfonsín in 1983, the regime was opened to a gradual liberalization of the mechanisms of control and censorship that the military authoritarianism had upheld during the first ten years of the Junta government. Of course, these mechanisms are not sufficient in themselves to explain the resoftening of the “hard hand” of the dictator. In parallel, the international political situation of other authoritarian governments on the continent, such as those of Bolivia, Uruguay, Argentina, Peru, and the Dominican Republic, counseled the redefinition of the government’s model of violent repression. The clarity of the maneuver of the political leadership against the fall of Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua in 1979, or the growing weakness of Alfredo Stroessner’s regime in Paraguay, and the internal crisis of the bank, a product of the pseudo-dollarization of the economy, maneuvered on behalf of the dictator’s expectations. With the economy healed, a constitution supported by the majority, and the cosmetic impression of an honorable solution to the internal and external criticism of the genocidal violence lived during the first ten years of Pinochet’s government, Chile became significantly strengthened by this situation. The definitive success of the neoliberal implementation would be accompanied with the first signs of globalization. The entrance of color television in 1978 was added to the system of electronic RedBanc cards¹ and the complete liberalization of credit. Nonetheless, the *other* Chile became restless.

Added to the wave of protests between 1983 and 1985, which would culminate in the attempted assassination of Augusto Pinochet in 1986, was the lack of governability that impelled the dictatorship to a hasty interpretation of a political scene that the economic bonanza sustained during those years. This way, the dictator risked a constitutional, political continuity, led by the then-successful finance minister Hernán Büchi. The results can be summarized in Sandra Rios’s 2004 study:

The Gross Domestic Product grew at an annual average of 6% in that period. The price of copper rebounded and non-traditional exports increased, especially wood, fish, and the fruit-growing sector. In 1986 agri-

1. ATM electronic cards.

cultural production increased, reaching one of the highest-yielding wheat crops of the 80s. Monetary stability was maintained, although the real price of the national currency was kept artificially appreciated. Between 1987 and 1989 there was a relative growth of industrial exports, including those from agribusiness. Chile was able to increase their non-traditional exports thanks to the so-called comparative advantages, amongst which the low wages and salaries paid to workers stood out.²

At the end of the dictatorship, in the last third of the twentieth century, there were two milestones that showed the change of an authoritarian culture to a democratic one in Chile: the triumph of NO on October 5, 1988, an inaugural moment of the so-called Transition; and the arrest of Pinochet in London in 1998. A decade separates these two events that mark the decline of a way of understanding and explaining the country's past. The epic-revolutionary narratives of winners and losers that were historically structured as privileged modes of understanding the trauma of the dictatorship left their impression as a "structural narrative" (LaCapra). This permeated the social forms and communicative contracts and affected all symbolizable possibility of remembering. As Elizabeth Jelin proposes in *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*, referring to Maurice Halbwachs's contributions to the purpose of the notion of context or framing, "the collective aspect of memory is the interweaving of traditions and individual memories in dialogue with others and in a state of constant flux. The outcome is not a chaotic disorder, because there is some structure shaped by shared cultural codes and some social organization" (12). This network of meanings under negotiation would become reified from its mythologization. This way, the modes of history were reenunciated, understood now as a mythic-mystical past that explained how the "communist chaos" had been left behind, the costs paid for it, and the type of future that was anticipated for the society refounded from global militarism, now under the charge of the Concertación governments. Thus, Jelin is able to propose that "what is 'remembered' is the cultural [state] framework of interpretation, a tool that facilitates the understanding of circumstances that viewed from the outside seem 'new'" (14).

Between 1986 and 1997, a first imaginary moment of remembering was marked by two analogous tendencies in the country's discursive production. One tendency showed how to record, document, and accumulate evidence for state interpellation against authoritarian abuse/genocide, constructing ethical-moral reserves for future judgment in its texts; the other tendency

2. *Revista Qué Pasa*, July 3, 1985.

showed a second generation concerned with delivering its own version of the facts. This involves a narrative in which the intersubjective ties between generations, subjects, and processes have been disconnected due to the fracture that media impresses on the transitional languages and culture. The latter tendency no longer completely obeys the ideological control of the authoritarian society, for which the socialization models were provided almost in their totality by a military/nationalist messianic narrative and later by those of a mercantile-communicative mediation. The new actors shared much more compartmentalized life modes. In them, social programming yields to a much more problematic reality in which individualization is accompanied by its generic, age, class, and racial differentiations until, as it is now, it comes to propose a subjectivation of a cultural sort. This status of individuals acquires a radical peculiarity when we ask about the ideal modulations of the subject in neoliberal culture. In contemporary sociology, Danilo Martuccelli characterizes this phenomenon as the “growing exploration of the plural and contradictory dimensions of socialization” (23). One of the most clearly discernible variables in the field of critical studies on the topic of the individual and his or her social determination processes is precisely the time/space distance that is produced during the social maturation process itself. Analogous to Freudian thought on the individual’s psychic-sexual evolution, sociological thought recognizes that differentiation occupies a fundamental role in studies that are increasingly focused on the multiple facts that the social performativity of the subjects acquires. The staging of their subjective positions relegates the previous emphasis given to the study and theorizing about social action to the background. A human agency that materializes the past (or the future) in cultural contents occupies the center of the public debate today.

For the Chilean case, the boundaries will be given by the nation’s political, ethical, moral, and cultural modernization project. Its benchmarks will be consensual government reparative action for historical memory, expressed through the cohesion given by the *ideological umbrella* of human rights; the concern for the state’s technological modernization; and the formulation of public policies oriented toward repairing the nonmodern error of minority exclusion, together with the redefinition of culture against the accusation made against the military government of producing a *cultural blackout* in the country. The specialization of culture and social life will translate in a scene of traditional concerns mediated by other innovators whose technological-developmental, instrumental matrix will mark the agendas of the political and economical, multiculturalist liberalism of the Chilean transition. Thought of from these coordinates, it is not strange to observe how these generations began to produce the *per/version*—version of the father—of the

history of the national archive of utopian socialism.³ In their representations, this is dissolved together with the real borders of a society coming to operate inside a cognitive map, constructed primarily around the technological-informative modes, oriented by a segmented globalization-modernization. On both counts, however, it was possible to distinguish the script from the collective, traumatic matrix, oriented by a liturgy that promised salvation. This was understood as a promise of continuity toward tomorrow by way of a perfectible social order of divine character. In it, the present would take the form of consumption as a way of differentiating itself from the collective stage of the previous moment; choice was the best way to confirm the imaginary feeling of future that Pinochet's reelection promised. This was a future characterized by the commodification of every experiential remainder and in which only the teleology of progress could fit. Only from the '90s did the Chilean public sphere seem to cede the hegemony of its regime's management, imposed by the arts and literature on that of the domination of mass media—this is, according to Richard, “the passage of politics as antagonism to politics as transaction” (*La Insubordinación de los Signos* 85). It is precisely between 1997 and 1998 that the imaginary narratives and the public discourse (mainly press) began to circulate in different formats (cinema, chronicles, political humor periodicals, feminist- or youth-oriented radio broadcasts, open television), telling a series of “stories” in which the radical alteration of the intersubjective contracts constituted the principal feature.⁴ It is these “texts” that began to install themselves as a unilateral offer for subjectivation for a different social actor: the individual at scale (Martuccelli 25).

The New Individualism of Culture in Chile

The majority of cultural analyses coincide in affirming that since 1991, as Ana María Foxley and Eugenio Tironi propose in the introduction to the book *La Cultura Chilena en Transición*, the common feature of culture in Chile is the “integration of marginalized social sectors” (9). The sociology of the term *integration* points to the compensatory statistic of public policies traversed by multicultural-global impetuses. Ana María Foxley, head of the Culture Department, describes them as a “cultural micro-world,” highlighting the intrinsic tension that runs as either belonging or resistance to the solution that had been the “national drama” (11), and finally situates them

3. See Julia Kristeva. *Poderes de la Perversión*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores, 1988.

4. Think of the cultural and political satire television program, *Plan Z*, from channel 2 Rock & Pop.

“beyond the commercial and State scope” (12). For M. Hopenhayn, cited by Foxley and Tironi, these worlds are found traversed by a persistent “unfolding: a gap between private and public life” (12). The filmmaker Miguel Littín, meanwhile, defines the cultural phenomenon as characterized by “an ambiguity without features. It has the vocation to be but it falls short because it is not capable of recognizing itself in the actual country” (13). Littín’s sentence confirms the anxiety that provokes the lack of transparency and reciprocity between symbolic and imaginary levels in Chile in the subject, more concerned for the legal institutionalization of politics than for its imaginary dimensions. We recognize this tension in the political/poetic distance that separates the films and generations of *El Chacal de Nahueltoro* (1967) and the disturbing film by Pablo Larraín, *Tony Manero* (2008), in which, as I have previously stated, the differences are marked by the presence-absence of discourse. Left to its destiny and dehumanized by material conditions, “el chacal” succumbs to the social pathos of the outcast. For the other, a serial killer, no redemption is possible.

In turn, Eugenio Tironi, sociologist and ideologue of the First Concertación, in his article “Comunicación y Cultura,” defines the cultural capital of the nation as “the intelligence, imagination, and creativity of the Chilean children” (33). His evaluation shifts the Chilean cultural capital to a completely phantasmatic dimension. Beyond the concrete value that Tironi delivers to the cultural politics of the Concertación governments and the reevaluation of the citizen ethos as profoundly individualist and self-oriented, he introduces an observation symptomatic of his social analysis. With it he confirms the irreconcilable separation existing between the real country and the imaginary. This schism is reflected in the utopian-liberal formulation implicit in perceiving the moral reserves of the society in the moments prior to the constitution of politics. Childhood and adulthood are shown as two separate nations in which the children’s country provides the guidelines for cultural enjoyment.

For José Joaquín Brunner, in the article “Preguntas del futuro,” the discussion about culture is more like a hackneyed “dialogue between officials” (71). For him, “culture is predicated on an interpretative community” (71), whose past denounces “the limits of reason in history” (72). However, no one pays attention to the failure since the Concertación’s definition does not become that of another state “service” (74). It is obvious that Brunner has dismissed continuing to listen to the echoes of the past and is certain, as philosopher Martín Hopenhayn would say, that the state has fallen prisoner to a “moral doctrine of conquest” (76). The secularization of social life entails the dissolution of social bonds. The “privatization individualizes the bonds” inside the

libidinal economy of a society of choice, as Renata Salecl would propose, and carries out a valoric regression in the field of customs, imposing an unbridled advancement program on the future for the sake of modernization. The logic of the media owners, expressed in the phrase that claims there is a “model for each client” (80), will eventually prevail. For this Chilean philosopher, the primary problem is represented by “the dispersion of social life” whose climb reaches “increasingly exclusive spheres of public and private life” (81). This is a phenomenon promoted by a secular, mercantile modernization with a retrograde and schizophrenic framework of values. From another angle, the discussion on culture puts the accent on the type of inscription that certain cultural productions receive.

Going beyond the dictator-democracy dichotomy, in the third chapter of the book *Cultura y creación artística*, Diamela Eltit proposes that to “refer to culture and democracy, or more specifically to the democracy-art relationship, it appears that the most appropriate is the way that the official integrates or abandons works and extracts from them a political procedure” (113), and she stresses the need to think about uncertainty, the central question posed by art for social life. At the end of 2005, Eduardo Carrasco and Barbara Negrón’s book picks up the discussion, which aims to

deliver the most complete vision possible of what happened in the field of culture. The book commemorates the first 15 years of the return of democratic culture, entering this interpretative fight in relation to the notion of culture. Published by the brand new National Board of Culture and Arts, the text covers the period from the advent of democracy, with Patricio Aylwin’s government in 1990 until the end of Ricardo Lagos’s government at the beginning of 2006. (11)

The text itself makes clear in its introduction that its desire is to serve “as an essential starting point for the development of cultural policies for the coming years” (11). The technocratic purpose of the official who looks to justify the increase in the budgetary amounts assigned to the area during the transitional governments and the effectiveness of its administration and control is clear. While considering the previous diagnoses, marked by the developmentalism or the technification of culture, the article that inaugurates the volume, “Cultura y democracia,” by Bernardo Subercaseaux, perhaps serves as a historical pulse of the state of the question in the country, almost two decades after the recovery of democracy. In this work, Subercaseaux proposes that the development of “the dynamic of cultural affirmation” (19) continues to be fundamentally defined by three lines of thought: “one of a

nationalist style, the other a spiritual fundamentalist, and a neoliberal third.” In the first of them, we recognize the idea previously expressed by Moulián in his book *Chile Actual: Anatomía de un Mito* about authoritarian culture, underpinned with the understanding that in “its core [authoritarian culture] was a telluric-metaphysical conception of being Chilean, according to which this is conceived as a forged essence in the intersection of man and nature, an essence that would be latent in all inhabitants of the national territory” (19). Thus, culture would be a simple revelation of this idiosyncrasy, embodied in the soul of each and every Chilean. The metaphysics of its design would completely put Chileans at the mercy of the manifestation of a superior plan, expressed in the divine will, completely disconnected from material-situational reality, a second vector of cultural formation during the dictatorship as Bernardo Subercaseaux points to above. The third, the neoliberal, would be given by the allocation “of a preponderant role, not only in economic life but also cultural and social life” (Moulián, *Chile Actual* 20) to the market. Considering that Subercaseaux’s account is from 2005, we clearly see how the persistence of the previous discourse on authoritarian culture continues. We insist, then, on our idea of culture as the pastoral of new times. We must not forget the rise of religions in the region during the same period, a phenomenon that involved both the privileged and the dispossessed classes sharing a market system in which poverty alleviation is accomplished by work and moderation. In spite of this faith-driven market leveling the maintenance of a privileged status for the most affluent sectors remains.

José Joaquín Brunner, fifteen years prior, included in the same volume, celebratory of the twenty years of “democratic culture,” insisted on the thesis of his article “Con ojos desapasionados . . . (Ensayo sobre la cultura en el mercado)” to propose a more humanist vision of the culture problem. In this text, Brunner highlights two fundamental facts, clearly observable in relation to the construction of the social bond in the Chile of the first decade of 2000. The first is that intersubjective relations are no longer mediated by the market as automaton but are constituted as “imperceptible ties that surround us” (31), producing models of identification, and secondly, not only have “the spaces and limits of the public and the private been redefined, but so has the space that they occupy in our consciousness” (32). Later, Brunner insists on the concern for the psychic dimensions of the process of appropriation and reappropriation of reality and its senses, insisting that “traditional morality is being replaced by psychology and guilt by anxiety” (33). It is precisely the phantasmatic dimension of intrapsychic life that Freudian psychoanalysis clarifies for social theory and that is found behind Brunner’s observations. As Daniel Bell claims, paraphrased by Brunner in his article, credit, abstract plastic money, and its derivatives have ended the “old

Protestant fear of debt” (34) in order to constitute a society like Chile’s, in which “the libido has been sublimated through work, individual enterprise has been encouraged, attention has been centered on the own interests of the market, and even the agents have been engaged long-term through housing credit and consumption” (41). It is at least interesting to observe how the once-scientific discourse of the sociology of the masses gives way to a sort of psychologization of social life in which the most notable aspect is that of the “right to happiness” in communities that Brunner longs for as “more deeply human” (49). It is not only that the categorical apparatus of social sciences appears insufficient, but rather that the type of social symptom identified—the anxiety-stress duo—appeals to a clinic of the subject in psychoanalysis. Brunner himself explains its approach as one of “almost therapeutic meaning” (45). As a corollary of this massive Freudian influence that the author filters through the permanent citations of Marx and Weber, Brunner declares, following the Moulián of *Chile Actual: Anatomía de un Mito*, that “man loses his transcendental soul and forsakes the polymorphous diversity of desire” (47; my emphasis). The two concepts show in their enunciation that Brunner has changed his mind about culture. He no longer conceives it in terms of the exclusive dominion of the communicative circuits in their symbolic dimensions in the fight for hegemony, as in his class work with Gonzalo Catalán, *Cinco estudios sobre cultura y sociedad*, but rather, as a central dimension of the psychic life of individuals in constant flux and change.⁵ But what are these fears based upon? What and how does the new compulsive *dictum morali* work for the market subject? It functions, neither more nor less, as an expected effect of the technological change, not only because of the progressive secularization of social worlds, but because of the tension that is triggered in the clash between instrumental and affective reason. As Danilo Martuccelli claims:

The individual is the liminal horizon of our social perception. From now on, it is in reference to its experiences that the social does or does not obtain meaning, which requires a change of course in our considerations: in the same way that yesterday the compression of social life was organized in notions of civilization, history, society, Nation-state, or class, from now on it concerns the individual occupying this central place of analytic cogency. (4)⁶

5. Brunner and Catalán’s work becomes a compulsory reference for the discussion on authoritarian culture, democracy, and development. Published by FLACSO in 1985, it covers the Chilean political institutionality reflected on these constants.

6. Danilo Martuccelli is a sociologist and professor in the Lille University in France. His work reflects on the processes of subject individuation in postcapitalist society. This book,

The increase in neo-Pentecostal and Evangelical religious groups in the popular strata, or of the new religious Right in the upper class, confirms the necessity for the subject to provide itself different ideological-valoric frameworks for the preservation of its psychic consistency. In the cases of the upper classes, religious endogamy as a lifestyle will provide them with the reaffirmation of their social recognition. All of this constitutes, without a doubt, another of the visible signs of the tendency toward individuation that reaffirms the idea that collective notions, characterizing features of social analysis, have entered into crisis, and today it is essential to return to the individual as a source of exploration of the societal dynamics.

Another of the key elements in the reflection on the individual is the notion of subjectivity. Contemporary sociology has not been left out of this concern. It has established in its discussion an analogy between subject and self-reflection-modernity, which is very useful in our discussion. It confirms the increase of contemporary self-reflexivity, which goes hand in hand with the rationalization processes that accompany it. In each and every daily endeavor, the modern subject is involved in an anticipatory, vitalist over-determination. It was necessary and appropriate for the subject to enter into the logic of instrumental planning. I note here that the class consciousness of the proletariat is the first of the theoretical model formulations of subjectification. It rests on the comprehensive knowledge of social life's interior, producing an emancipatory movement. From this collective subject model we move to the individual model.

Beginning in the '70s, the emancipatory vision yielded to the approach proposed by Foucault in the first book of his *History of Sexuality*. In essence, this philosopher defines the construction of subjectivity from a cultural orthopedics of instructional discipline, emanating from the scientific discourses of power. The subject, then, will not only be a nondiscursive reality but also a material reality, a product of an organized series of mechanics of external and internal repression and indoctrination. This change of approach, from the dialectic of emancipation to that of Hegelian subjection, will confirm the entry of "individual subjectification" as the core of discussion for contemporary sociology and psychology (Martuccelli 29), and will also announce the hopelessness left by the failed utopian-revolutionary movements of the last third of the century. The same happened with the fall of Salvador Allende's government in 1973 and the late reply of the demolition of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The epistemological forecast of this Foucauldian conceptual tension

Cambio de rumbo, is his first work in Spanish, published in Latin America after fifteen previous publications, the majority of them in French.

between regimes of emancipation and those of subjection will be addressed with varying degrees of emphasis of the I in search of its explanation and regulation.

Another indispensable reflection on the subject is that which stems from works closer to Lacanian studies. In this aspect, the subject category is defined not by its link with social action or its dependence on the social question or power, but rather by its relational dynamic with the culture that receives it and the formative ideals that it provides the subject. I have not found a better definition of subject than that given by Kathya Araujo in *Dignos de su Arte: Sujeto y lazo social en el Perú de las primeras décadas del siglo XX*. In a careful reading of autobiographical texts of the first Peruvian modernity, Araujo advances a notion of subject that I could add to the revision that I have made so far. The first striking element is the consideration of the subject as an artisan of its own self in relation with the discursivity that receives it, while also with the materiality with which it has to cope. The second element discusses the preeminence of the normative social function on the production of subjectivity, confronted with the subject ideals associated with its precise period. Both features lead me to believe that a look at the form of a subject's construction responds to the modes in which this is produced, "a deduction made from the analysis of the attributes that appear linked to what people are or should be in social discourses" (16).

It follows from this idea that in the formation of subjectivity, certain offers will prevail over others, even when, in reality, these will be of a combined form. Having failed the nominal model offered by culture, we find ourselves with something that Judith Butler describes in *Contingencia, hegemonía, universalidad: Diálogos contemporáneos en la izquierda*. In the chapter dedicated to the role played by the semantic universals in politics, she maintains that "any effort to order the subject through a performative capturing, whereby the subject becomes synonymous with the name by which it is called, is doomed to fail" (163). Seen from another point of view, the theory of the "subject ideals" that Araujo presents, following Žižek, framed by the Real-Imaginary-Symbolic triad, reintroduces the idea that subjects seek an identification in culture's offers in order to put them in the place of their "ideal I" (17). An ideal corresponds to the figuration expected of an individual in society. In the theory on dominant ideology, this offer works on the recognition that individuals make of their collectively represented, "natural" desires. In each of these cases, the authors coincide in highlighting that the subject, in one way or another, is recognized or not in certain discursivity. This is true whether in the intersection of social ideals (figures of discourse) with those of the I, or in the proliferation of partial identities that supersede them, like those produced

by the market. In both situations, the articulation of the I's belonging must yield to a discourse.

In this reflection, I propose that the proper condition of the subject is not that of being capable or not inscribing itself in a determined symbolic articulation (maternal castration), but rather that of sustaining the articulated fantasy of its own enunciation in the discourse, through the use of repetition. This event in the discourse provides the subject with a memory of itself. Thus, the subject and society are mutually protected by being predicated in the certainty of their event and the memory and recognition of one another. This way, the subject accepts forming part of the "Ideal," without actually producing itself in it, since it is recognized as a discursive effect. For this to happen, it is a necessary condition that the subject "awakens" to reality, identifying with it, while abandoning the ominousness of its "limbo."

This dynamic takes on a different appearance in the moments in which relations between the imaginary and symbolic universes have been redefined in contemporary times. The tension between both is no longer given by the entry of one into the other, by way of defense against the incommensurability of the phantasmatic dimension. Now, the relation between the imaginary and the symbolic has changed, due to the lack of solidarity, sociologists will say, or to the loss of the bond or the intersubjective relationship, according to psychologists. The abyss between the two dimensions has grown to the point that it forms a *trompe l'oeil*, in which subjects cannot become incarnate because their level of consciousness prevents them from tamely accepting the fantasy. Jan Jagodzinski concludes that the contemporary ego has been disposed of by the impact of technological means of reproduction, since the offer between the symbolic and its imaginary correspondence makes the "homo videns" a "spectator . . . [that] becomes aware that she is being 'framed,' constituted and inscribed by the Other" (55).

Today in Chile, the subject suffers a singular transformation. Unable to confirm his performative projection before the dizzying speed of the change of the subjective offer, he is left to the mercy of the loss of his imaginary consistency. Instead, a product of what Freud called the "distances" between the subjective fields, the I versus its discursive and material projection/offer, the subject fears that it could fail in this endeavor. Thus, a third possibility rises before the failure: the unmasking of the fictional support of reality. The subject is unable to perform "the intertwining of the specificities produced in the conjunction of the structural determinations, the social gaps, and the dimension of contingency, both in the individual and social sphere" (Araujo, *Dignos de su Arte* 19). This leaves him in the psychic open. In this position, the subject identifies exactly with the structure of perversion as a defensive mechanism, a resource that reveals the specificity of the subject's psychic structure

in responding to this failure. His reaction to the failure in the construction of self and of the place of interpellation toward the Other will serve as the foundation for the consolidation of this subjective form. With it comes the necessity to remember for the subject. As James Penney suggests, “the effort to suture this split produces the ethically, and indeed, problematic perverse structure” (2).

Here one finds the absolute necessity to properly recognize the discursive offer in order to exercise the psychic agency in the production of the social bond. As many of the so-called queer theorists have affirmed, power has fallen in an imaginary-institutional dismemberment by having lost the primordial grammar of its articulation, especially ideology.⁷ Extending this analogy to the state, as a custodian of sovereignty, we could propose that the latter is also, like power itself, following Penney, “no longer localized, concrete, or traceable; its efficacy has become diffuse, plastic, and elusive” (5). Nonetheless, this work, following the thought of Ileana Rodríguez for Latin America, will sustain that it can be perceived in its effects. My reflection coincides with Rodríguez by viewing the cultural text and the subjective formations that determine it, especially perversion, as Penney suggests, as a possible way to escape “from this traumatic fantasy of the Other’s jouissance” (6). The closing of identity offers for the formation of the social bond, made by the invasion of the market’s privatized imaginary, has provoked a historical, ideological emptying of the subject as actor-individual. This simple observation makes us understand that if the individual cannot constitute itself as a social actor, it is also simply unable to produce itself as a subject—or as a perverse subject.

The Work and Nights of the Individual: Of Perverts, Pedophiles, and Souls

The concept of perversion is an analytical tool for organizing cultural interpretation paradigms in force today in contemporary thought. The concept

7. A familiar scene, but in relation to the cultural discourse and the definition of sexuality, has been problematized by queer studies during the same time period (Butler, *Género y Cultura*; De Lauretis; Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies*; Warner). From these discussions, a new form of understanding and analyzing the continuum of the social and the formations of the social bond has arisen. This process is perceived as a space that is constantly reorganized and in which it is not possible but to think of the supplementary forms of the individuals’ cultural and political articulation. In this space the subject is always exceeding his own constitution, becoming excessive signs, which in their own and many contradictions and dissonances express the multiplicity of possible identities (subjectivities) in our multicultural, globalized, and hypercomputerized societies.

gives a central role to the notion of the individual and the changes that its subjective status has suffered in the recent decades. Perversion as a symptom of malaise is expressed in the public, the private, and the intimate and, in particular, affects the modes of building intersubjective solidarity. The objective of this chapter is to introduce this type of paradigm and examine the modes in which the concept of perversion organizes, from cultural criticism, as an alternative to other approaches, the subject's relationships with its bond and the forms of organizing the social bond.

This work explores these processes in the narratives on abuse in the Southern Cone, especially Chile. The presence of these in the symbolic and public fabric of societies subjected to authoritarian processes, followed by periods of neoliberal democratization, works as a constant in the region of which Chile is a test case. It also problematizes the anecdotal history of the subjects implicated in it under social, political, and economical determinants that pervert the social contracts. The cultural framework of abuse highlights the empowerment of new subjects and institutions. The latter, together with the hyperinflation of the I by economic, free market discourses and ideology, increases the lability in which the type of bond that has been in force during the previous period has fallen.

This chapter also explores the weakness and discredit of a political, institutional normativity increasingly undermined both in the public and the private and intimate spheres. The protagonists of the cultural text interweave transgression/abuse as a type of common experience, implicit in social, perverted processes. The conditions of structural, collective, public, private, and intimate inequality are derived from the previous dynamic. Therefore, the governability, democratization, and forms of social inclusion/exclusion are questioned in these narratives, which centrally determine the construction of social ties or bonds.



I have selected this revision of theories on the individual and their variants in relation to subjectification in order to launch them in a different direction. Briefly, my intention is to introduce an analysis that does not have symbolic identification as an ideal but rather deals with the intermediate possibilities that the distance between the Real and the Symbolic offers. The distance between the symbolic and imaginary discourses is covered not by social interaction and the struggles and tensions that arise from it, but rather by the expression of a fission produced in the same foundation as remembering. My argument is that the deactivation of memory as a support to the social

bond produces the complete anomie of social space and its definitive segregations, in addition to denouncing the fantasy of the symbolic construction upon which institutions, processes, and subjects rest. If the foundation of the subject is always phantasmatic, the foundation of the discursive regimes will be likewise: that is, the revelation that, for human subjectification processes, there is no ideal model that allows the construction of a definitive position for the subjects. This leads to the subject constructing itself based on a desire that integrates it, that cannot be named, making the phantasmatic dimension of its intrapsychic life regulate its selections of individuation. The dialectic between the desire and its symbolic regulation is maintained by the fantasy of totality that we place on reality. However, there is nothing more proper to the subject than its perverse condition, understood not as a behavioral abnormality but rather as an abolition of its historic status, due to its lack of consubstantial discursive inscription. In a recent study, researchers Araujo and Martuccelli propose a reelaboration of the notion of subject position in order to explain this same observation in the structural plane, from the development juncture and its individual and collective tensions. They say that in Chile, there is “a daily attitude of unease that reflects a society traversed by plural feelings of instability” (128), which would mark the liberal homo as retracted to the primary concern of his intimate and familiar space, which is a detriment of the social. This idea of the lack of a certainty given by the high velocity of consumption and its narratives makes symbolic space one of nonidentification. That is why I claim that memory seems to be the primordial bond of socialization. It was thus in a first moment in relation to fear; later, it began to operate as an anecdotal component that ended in its thinning, to completely deactivate later with a state-market in which participation is mainly given by way of a segmented consumption of the highly transitory and frightened offers of citizenship-status. Its deflation in contemporary Chile expressed in the equation consumption-expectations-obligations has produced a retraction of the collectivists’ discourse toward representations closer to what poststructuralism defined as the “death of the subject”—that is, to personal narratives in which the cancelation of the realist, abstract fiction of never-ending work and its supports occurs in order to be replaced by more materialist visions, debtors of the republican-Catholic morality (Araujo and Martuccelli 75 and following pages). I want to think here about the confinement of the hegemonic cultural ideal of the myth of progress and its replacement by the always multiform, phantasmatic ideals, borne by the art and literature of the period. These are Ideals in which the positional inconsistency described above is conjured with those of the imaginary dynamic of perversion’s structure.

To undertake a work of cultural analysis from this perspective implies realigning approach strategies. It implies having in mind the subject-repression-culture dynamic, the base of the Freudian-Foucauldian paradigm of the repressive hypothesis on social construction. As I have already outlined, the Chilean case appears to imply this readjustment. The document that the researcher has is the text that is analogous to that produced by the patient of analysis. Just like in the elaboration of fiction, the nonsymbolizable contents in the linguistic, discursive, logical-causal economy become, in the transfer, the “scene” of analytic dialogue from its repressed locus. This displacement of contents, not available for the subject, operates with irreducible insistence as the backdrop that upholds the social framework and the bonds emanating from those contracts.

The agency is precisely the mechanism that triggers access to those contents, a fact that worried the first psychoanalysis. For psychoanalysis, the category of desire was that which gave agency materiality, for its followers it is the psychic structure itself that contains it. I am referring not only to Freud’s subsequent discovery, that transference articulates a temporal displacement as well as an imaginary one—just as the body of work of trauma studies has demonstrated. The latter connects the unconscious levels of the subject’s fantasy with the subsequent exercise of conscious symbolization. In this process, the subject’s vital “interest,” the Lacanian “object little-a,” intervenes in the organization of the discourse that supports its psyche and, together with it, the bond that will reconcile it with social life. This point is particularly important when one is faced with the task of accessing history. Just as Penney claims, the “Freudian discovery insinuates that fantasy constitutes reality as such” (23).

Let us agree that this observation will articulate the later developments of psychoanalysis until the moment in which Lacan, paraphrasing his assertion that the unconscious is structured like language, affirms that the subject’s truth has the formal disposition of fiction. It is precisely in the point of fictionalization that we meet with the category of perversion as a methodological resource of analysis, useful for our investigation. This idea perceives the deviated subject as a producer of transgressions, but also as a maker of laws, and finally as a producer of an entire system that supports it. I will use the figure of the perverse and his subjective contracts as a field of debate and analytic category in order to problematize the notion of enjoyment in relation to the exemplary attributes of neoliberalism, in particular with the idea of the negativity of the notion of liberty and its exercise in the contractual frameworks. The perverse and perversion are understood in this work as examples of a subjective modulation in which the subject becomes an object-

instrument of will and/or command; his ultimate desire is to make the limit occur, ergo restoring the law as social horizon (proper) and as control compared to liberating himself from the anxiety produced by a high material, spiritual, and political transience, characteristic of the period. If in the apparatus of the human psyche the figure of perversion embodies the exaltation of the self-affirmed and self-oriented dimensions of instrumental satisfaction, the polymorphous dimension of desire is reproduced in the social worlds. Thus, choice itself, as an object of desire, will reproduce successive and alternative ways of identification from high transience to “making knots” of solidarity in the analogous space of the social-mercantile. In this context of analysis, memory—the social discourse—works as an alternative dimension to that of the neoliberal market culture, offering subjects alternative narratives for their subjectification-individuation.

This dynamic was already articulated in 1863 by Marx, who declared that every social subject is an agent in the chain of production, an idea to which we must add the imagined adjective. From this perspective, observing the Chilean cultural field allows us, through the analysis of a series of narratives catalogued as perverse, to go inside the cultural logic that articulates it. At the same time, the perverse narratives demarcate the inside and outside of a culture, the limits of social inclusion of subjects and those of their imprisonment, and the forms in which the sanction of social life is administered. Thus, the figure of the perverse, present in the texts selected for this work, will allow us to relate, by exclusion, the historical imaginary condition of permanent change of the different bonds that hold the subject, the state, politics, and culture in a determined moment.

The new social order in which these subjectivities are inserted denounces, in Chile, the immense concern for reorienting the power of these new generations, not only in the private, imaginary discourses but also in the public ones. This becomes clear, particularly in the press, through the demonstration of the negativity of childhood as a sign that produces its annihilation and, with it, that of the entire society. It is not about entering into the pious or alarming statistics of the church and the new Right of the actual cases of pedophile abuse occurring in Chile in the past twenty years, as a sociologist would. It is also not about insisting on the structure of the patriarchal, rural, or *lumpen* family and the relationships of production and exploitation associated with proletarian childhoods, as a feminist historian could conclude upon interrogating the news or even literary texts as reliable documentation. It is about discovering, behind the narratives made of these events, the imaginary matrix that hides the direction of social desire in this postdemocracy, torn from the cultural grounding organized around memory's plots.

The last years of political transition in Chile have seen the blooming of a different society than that in which my parents and grandparents lived. The austere and neighborhood lifestyle in which everyone knew each other and shared the belonging given by the daily mapping of strollers simply disappeared. The inhabitants of the capitals, where the shock of the modernizing change was first felt, asked where that tradition of belonging to a country that at one time was a home with ocean views had gone. Suddenly, Chileans began to move compulsively away from the hand of the military junta's authoritarianism. Decade after decade we were leaving the baroque, Catholic culture behind, replacing it with one of consumption, in which market and profits began to regulate the patterns of social bonding and regulation. The first of the definitions of the lived process was coined by the military dictatorship itself that defined, in its Declaration of Principles of March 1974, the process of the collapse of the local world, the result of a world crisis that highlighted the moral character of its problems.

According to the military, at this catastrophic juncture two types of society and their respective valoric frameworks confronted one another. Socialism and capitalism rose up, during and after the Cold War, as the privileged modes of economic-political organization, and above both, despite the utopias that had supported them and seemed to say otherwise, loomed the threat of social dissolution. In the first of the cases—that of socialism—the soldiers' warning fell upon the denaturalization of individual liberty, because of the totalitarianism inherent to the societies conceived under Marxist inspiration. For the second, the criticism of the military leadership fell on the spiritual emptying of the human being, a product of its absorption with consumerist materialism. Before both models, the junta once again referred and invoked, like an umpire, Chile's catholic, Hispanic matrix, from its foundation, as a *novo-Hispanic* society and, later, as a republic, in order to insist that man is made of an ideal substance. Let us see:

In consideration of the patriarchal tradition and of the thought of the vast majority of our people, the Government of Chile respects the Christian vision of man and society. It was this that gave form to Western civilization of which we form a part, and it is its progressive loss or disfiguration that has provoked, in large part, the moral breakdown that today places this same civilization in danger. According to the above, we understand man to be endowed with spirituality. (Junta Militar del Gobierno de Chile 12)

Faced with the annihilation of Allende's socialist government, the army explained its intervention as a national liberation movement against the

Marxist cancer, and as a refoundation movement that would return to Chile the values and the right to the future that had been perverted by the rise of communism to power. The valoric stain implied by the definition of a human being in the Declaration of Principles of the military junta, and the insinuation that there was “something deviant” (14), clearly relaunched the most problematic and paradoxical dimension of its own political program. Could the new power lead the whole of the social body to its complete atonement, debating, as it were, at the intersection of two modes of the political that were incompatible with the idea of a state of divine, monarchical origin?

In this context, the dictatorship recuperated for its road map the colonial memory of the monarchical state, the same that was called on to transform itself into an ideological vector of the constitutional principles of the new government. Of course, the manner in which this would be produced needed to pass through the consummation of a sacrifice, through which the borders could clearly be reestablished between that which belonged to this spiritual nation—the messianic myth that once again reunited the political with God—and what was achieved through the human rights crimes against the three major Left political parties. Although the simulation of civil war of the violent period between 1973 and 1976 seemed to indicate the success of the sacrificial milestone, the questioning of both societal models would extend and maintain itself from and beyond the temporal limits of the authoritarian government. Thus, in subsequent decades, the idea that a new sickness threatened the social body would circulate: a threat was beating down the entire society; a moral weakness was responsible for the values local-global crisis within which Pinochet’s Chile-World stood. In other words, the Junta had made the moral judgment on the socialist-capitalist world system, expressing the universal need to redraw the limits of good and evil and projecting itself as an ideological-communicative pact, privileged for the construction of social bonds anchored in the memory of chaos and catastrophe.

This excess of narrative with which the social worlds of the post-transition were reflected finally sealed the fissures of memory once again under what Moulián has called “the politics of mourning of the Concertación” (23). With it, he insists on the danger of falling into the political trap of the narrative of collective “grief”—Freudian melancholy—provoked by state terrorism. In his short text, Moulián, from another optic and with different intentions than this work, proposes to call the political operation of the state a genocide, a liturgy of reconciliation. He defines, along the way, a Chilean society possessed by a profound mysticism (25). In this line of thought, the projection of the messianic, military model will exceed the successive state, moral crises, the transnationalization of experience together with the rise of the market, the

loss of confidence in institutionality, and even the demand for punishment for the crimes committed during the dictatorship. Covered in its messianic model, it will articulate a series of prohibitions of moral or religious character, summarized in the humanist poetics of forgiveness and repentance, in a moral-national history of the events occurring since September 11, 1973. It is precisely at this point that the metaphor of perversion and its grammatical derivatives are called to the task of reconstructing this judgment, a necessary limit for the operation of the law.

The influence of the military dictatorship was kept on the Chilean society, not only under the pacts of civic-military amnesty, the constitutional article, and the vast economic power of the Right and its media conglomerates, but rather in the refined communicational and discursive network with which they set the active guidelines for interpretation of the past and recent history. The lesson of the socialist experiment, as a catastrophe and a Marxist cancer, was frozen in an antinarrative to that of heroic memory, with its revolutionary epic and counter-epic for the generations committed to that present ruin, which would become ubiquitous in the decades of the democracy's recovery. The social, political, and intellectual resistance sought to strengthen the heroic narrative, remarking:

The tensionality of historic memory and its lacerations . . . to decipher the hidden techniques of the disappearance that attempted to suppress the physical traces of the bodies and the traces of their memories so that the refractory negativity of the disintegrated, the embarrassing residue, would not block the advance of economic modernization in post-dictatorship Chile. (Richard, 1998 11)

But the pursuit of these goals is also a sure sign of the tones acquired by silence. They represent the freezing of a memory scene, a symptom of the historic-subjective stagnation in which this generation fell.

Precisely, what was observed years after was that the youngest generation opposed the political-communicational modernization's strategy of the consumption of memory. The young generation is unaware of its linking relationship with the collective I of the utopians, and this connection will destructure its discourse, appealing to the strengthening of its global individuality as a consequence of the eco-technologies of development, provided by the transitional governments themselves. Nonetheless, the phantasmatic dimension of remembering will suffer a sort of retraction in the narratives produced by young people born after Allende and Pinochet's regimes. The generations of the "Prisoners" and the "Pinochet boys" establish a distance with respect to all

those who in those periods were constituted as social actors.⁸ Detached from the ideological-partisan impositions and much closer to the global imaginaries, the authors selected for this work will narrate their experience of the dislocation of the structural rhetoric of that “violent or violenced” memory (Cánovas 17). This means that, distancing themselves from the dynamic of the work of mourning, these subjects will manifest an inability or resistance to symbolization in order to show with this abandonment of experience’s totalizing meaning the belligerence of its generational positioning.

Until the mid-’90s, the control exercised by the rhetoric of the postauthoritarian, political, and mercantile discourse was unquestionable. After Pinochet’s arrest in London in 1998, a series of cultural artifacts reinstitutionalized the imaginary inheritance of the dictatorship and, like a requiem, abandoned the sacred signs of the liturgical authoritarian rhetoric, which Moulián alluded to earlier, in order to reimagine the symbolic supports of the social. It is the capacity of these narratives to resist the interpellation of the Other and to produce autonomous subjective fields in the cultural fabric that is expressed in the texts selected for this work. Unlike the political exile narratives and the repression of the ’70 and ’80s (Skármeta, Dorman, Délano, Cerda, Ostornol, Spotorno, Vidal, Díaz Etérovic), the neovanguard and/or neotestimonial narratives of the mid-’80s and early ’90s (Eltit, Santa Cruz, Lemebel, Berenguer), or those labeled as Chilean new narrative during the ’90s (Franz, Fuguet, Maturana, De la Parra, Fontaine, Contreras, Collyer), the perverse narratives pierce the rhetorical tissue of the dictatorship’s master discourse in order to produce its own point of subjectification. This appeals to the freezing of the imaginary space and the closure of the subject for history—or culture—to the interior of its own mechanisms of enjoyment. I am referring to the work of Mauricio Wacquez, Jorge Marchant-Lazcano, Jorge Ramírez, and Lina Meruane in literature, like that of Bernardo Oyarzún, Voluspa Jarpa, Mario Navarro, and José Pedro Godoy in the visual arts. They present us with a series of works in which the key of interpretation will vary significantly from that imposed by the authoritarian matrix of the national archive, replacing it with that of a perverse subjectivity, profoundly ahistorical, prepared to show itself against the light of the institutionalized social mandate. It is a subjectivity refractory to three components of individuation in Chile: (1) the notion of autonomy and private property as bonding ideals, (2) the presence of subjective sadomasochistic contracts faced with cultural offers that largely surpass the material capacities of realization for its

8. Those born between 1965 and 1975 and who spent their childhood and adolescence underneath the dictatorship.

subjects, and (3) and the solidarity fusion between memory accounts and their consumption, those of the social bond and its perversion as linking elements of a popular form of individuation/subjectification in Chile. It is the homo, neoliberal perverse.

The majority of these works present childish narrators with landscapes and accounts of childhood and adolescence, in and from which they revise the weakened history as young adults and organize their phantasmatic universe around deideologized points of subjectification anchored to familiar and intimate spaces. These display discontinuous series of signs that never quite unify due to a blockage of access to the symbolic dimension or to its social realization. The discontinuity in the accounts, mostly fragmentary, marks a type of unprecedented subjectivity in Chilean literary or visual production. These infantile-*pervse* subjects progress through history, not only from intimacy or the particularity of the private, but rather in breaking down the previous epics by placing the dictatorship's trauma not as a cause of history but as a cause with a nonsymbolizable excess for them. This cause marks for the subjects the necessity to produce themselves against and for their discursive occurrence, questioning their own material supports. The accounts fight inside this dialectical series to produce a symbolizable series, outside of the cultural, meaningful economy, in search of a law that organizes the experience of the haunting combinatory freedom given by a present fit for enjoyment. This analytical perspective dismantles the old idea of thinking of the sexuality-culture system as linked only to historical archives or the concrete experience of the subjects. The condition of these texts, surpluses of the social body not assimilable in the available categories of the liberal-multicultural taxonomy or in those of its technical-communicative, local-global version, will be the object of our reflection.

Perversion and Radical Imaginaries

The starting point for the selection of the category of perversion arises from a much earlier reflection. It is about the argument made by Cornelio Castoriadis in his most radical text, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. In it, he affirms that the relationships between the individual and society can be seen from the double perspective of the objective relationships that constitute social life and from those that restate their psychic, creative, and imaginary foundations. Thus, Castoriadis postulates the necessity of incorporating the oneiric unconscious and the psychic impulses to the categorial apparatus of social theory; he contributes to clearing the theoretical-philosophical

confusion regarding the concepts of the imaginary and imagination in relation to the so-called metaphorical universals.

For Castoriadis, the big mistake of logocentric philosophy consists in considering that imagination reflects the exterior world instead of thinking of it as a psychic instance that allows its existence. His claims articulate, in a way, a variation on the emphasis given by Freud to his theory of subjectification. Castoriadis's Freud "is not the gloomy prophet of repression and repetition, but the high priest of imagination. Dreams, desire, wish, pleasure, fantasy: these are for Castoriadis at the core of our social process and political institutions" (Elliot 143). In the same way that Giambattista Vico noted the power of myths in the seventeenth century, recuperating a line of thought relegated to a second plane by Platonic idealism and Aristotelian logic, we find in Castoriadis the affirmation that it is the figures, forms, and "conceived" worlds that are called to uphold institutionality or dissolve it from its pre-logical occurrence. According to Anthony Elliot, "the social individual arises for Castoriadis through an intermixing of the psychic and social imaginaries, a process fundamental to the psyche's capacity for sublimation as well as to society's institutionalization of representations and practices available for the psyche to invest in and sublimate" (149). Thus, the great contribution of Castoriadis's thought is to consider that the human psyche itself moves from a monadic, mythopoeic, self-referential condition to a socialized instance, prepared to receive the cultural and social contents, behind the symbolization-castration of the law of the Father. Precisely, as Elliot claims, Castoriadis's theory separates itself there where it meets with Kristeva. For both thinkers, the existence of a pre-symbolic condition is evident in the lack of recognition in front of the mirror.⁹ This lack of recognition of completeness does not mark the entry into language, but rather the preexistence of "certain imaginary capacities" (155). As Castoriadis states in *The Imaginary Institution of Society*:

The imaginary does not come from the image in the mirror or from the gaze of the other. Instead, the "mirror" itself and its possibility, and the other as mirror, are the works of the imaginary, which is creation ex nihilo. Those who speak of the "imaginary," understanding by this the "specular," the reflection of the "fictive," do no more than repeat, usually without realizing it, the affirmation which has for all time chained them to the underground of the famous cave: it is necessary that this world be an image of something. (18)

9. See Lacan.

The contribution of this category to the discussion of this work is that of paying more attention to the conditions of the intersubjective existence of individuals, in particular those that mediate the relationship between mental space and the space occupied by otherness. In a society like Chile's, in which the subjects are transformed from memory subjects linked together by the narratives of political violence pre- and post-Popular Unity into postindustrial subjects in which the "capacity of choice" redefines their self-oriented lives, it becomes central to think in phantasmatic terms with which the subject will deal with the loss that the choice to suppress a memory provokes. Hence, both the notion of the imaginary and of perversion are appropriate categories for such purposes (Salecl).

Perversion, Limits, and Uses in Social Theory: A Provisional Genealogy

The symbolic weight of the word *perversion*, in our culture, runs from the Sunday pulpit to the therapist's waiting room. In both scenes, the subject becomes an object of scrutiny and normalization. From the priestly admonition against autoeroticism as the epitome of the repression of sexual-cultural deviations to the first Freudian classification of the childhood perversions in *Three Essays on Infantile Sexuality* (1905), the regulatory and counter-emancipatory character of the term is preponderant. Socially, historically, religiously, and philosophically, perversion has been perceived as a notion that implies a disturbing polysemy. Most of the time overdetermined by the descriptive connotation of abnormal sexual conduct, today it tends to be perceived in the domain of psychoanalytic studies and social theory with new and paradoxical conceptual returns. The definitions of contemporary psychiatry address perversion with a different objective than other social regulation devices. Unlike the first psychiatry of the twentieth century, for which perversion was one more of the social psychopathies deserving of admission, nowadays perversion is seen not as an anomaly in behavior especially present in criminals but rather "as a moral anomaly, because morality is like a counter-impulsive system for psychiatrists" (Leguil 9). Like hysteria for Charcot and Freud, or paranoia for Jaspers and Wilmanns, or depression nowadays, sickness, especially a mental one, constructs discursive and historical fields. This formulation allows us to take an interest not only in that which concerns the sick themselves, but in all the other marginalized subjects that, against the grain of the category in question, are produced in a

radical and compulsive way. This is how Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Judith Butler pose it.¹⁰

The concept of perversion has varied in its meaning throughout history, as the accounts traced by Jonathan Dollimore and James Penney have established. I will follow and summarize their linguistic-political debate, but only to take it into a different context within the Lacanian formalization of the perversion structure, in contrast to Araujo's Freudian rereading of the role of culture's ideal narratives in the formation of the contemporary neoliberal I. As Dollimore and Penney have established, the term is found in Joan Corominas's *Etymological Dictionary*, with a first use that goes back to the fifteenth century. In it, the notion manifests the meaning of "to upset," dating back to the word *vertere*, which implies the semantic field of "flipping" or "turning" and dating from the first century. The Anglo-Saxon line has traced two fields of meaning in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. The first relates to Corominas's notion of "flipping" or "upsetting," while the second points to a moral condition of "corruption." The latter is that which subsequently prevailed. Its use in romance languages recovered the moral connotation, or moral judgment, on conduct, showing a semantic homogeneity in all of them. The coincidence of these meanings with that of the Patristic and Scholastic Christians of the twelfth century settled their association with the Christian propaedeutic about sin, eventually associating both terms in one single connotation. Later, the category displaced its use to more restricted contexts. In them, the moral imperative permeated the discourses of the canonical right, civil law, and the Christian pastoral. The coincidence of the modern subject's explosion as the epitome of the modernity project and its ethical claim for access to sovereignty and self-determination fit with the accumulated historical definition.

Another line of evolution of the concept is that which derives from its progressive incorporation to the multiple taxonomical-classificatory exercises of human conduct during the nineteenth century. Perversion was in these cases a criterion or sanction that looks to preserve the hygienic dimensions of society's moral life more than its mere scientific characterization. The arrival of modern societies brought with it an increase in the rate of self-reflection. Subjects began to question more and more each and every one of their acts in order to conclude, with Hölderlin, that where danger grows, that which will save it also grows. Perversion traces, then, with its two meaning possibilities,

10. The quote references Butler's now-classic studies in *Bodies that Matter* (1991) and Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* (1988).

the limits of judgment's autonomy, against the unsuitableness of the bestiality of the individual subject's drives in the nineteenth-century sexology. Be it in front of the moral adequacy or behavioral regulation, the intrinsic nature of the contents of perversion refer to a founding principle, God, in which "original sin" occupies a position of emancipatory agency.

However, the discussion is not only about the etymological distinction between the categories of perverse and perverted, but rather about a more radical difference. The first moments of its formal discursive articulation according to Penney go back to the Neoplatonic-Augustinian tradition. For St. Augustine, the perverse is he who, bearing the two primary aspects of Catholic thought, in a willful act of unusual strength chooses to satisfy his own instincts at the expense of social expediency. Be it one or the other, or both, certain possibilities for Judeo-Christian thought, the truth is that, as an act, its production operates outside of the symbolic dimension, that is, the linguistic, which converts perversion into a founding condition of the psyche, a powerful agency of social instability.¹¹

There is already a monotheistic system of thought: the notion that an I able to express its desires through the verbal double articulation is incapable of updating itself as perverse through language, because this consubstantial condition belongs to the sphere of that previously given to cultural formation. A characteristic inherent to this category is to not be able to be discursively expressed, as its record belongs to the reign of the ineffable or, in other words, to the Lacanian Real. Perversion becomes, then, an expressive power of the profound negativity inherent in the human being, in permanent dialectical tension with its vitalist, rational opposite. In a quote referring to impurity, Julia Kristeva remarks how, in the Western lettered tradition, perversion has always been punished as something that in itself belongs to man and that underneath this condition, it is urgent to purge it. Kristeva uses one of the five books of the Christian Pentateuch, Leviticus, or the Third Book of Moses, in order to prove her argument. According to her reading, the situations threatening to the purity of the chosen people are clearly outlined in it. It is precisely this purity that Kristeva will deal with in the chapter "From Filth to Defilement," in which she restates the structuralist thesis according to which "the fundamental symbolic institutions, like sacrifice or myths, amplify logical operations inherent to the economy of language itself; thus, it carries out for the community that which constitutes in depth, historically and logically, the speaking being as such" (98).

More recently, some of social theory's more influential thinkers have suggested the feasibility of thinking about politics and culture from the

11. See Penney.

use of psychoanalytic theory. For them, the projection of the model of Saussurean-Freudian psycholinguistic intervention, in which the unconscious is conceived as a doubly articulated language and, as such, is grammatically accessible from certain combinatory rules of its signs, applies to the reflection on culture in the social field.

What seems to always be present in the categorization of perversion is its condition of departing from the normal course of events. For our reflection, this deviation of the regular course of human action is the interruption in the performative process of recognition or interpellation of the subject. It is not only, for the first psychoanalysis, the cutting of the mature sexual encounter before the election of another object that is provided by reproductive biology. It is something else. To project the matrix of the model of Oedipal castration on the social world means that the integrated norms, a product of early symbolization, will continue operating as the narrative cover that gives cohesion and coherence to the social actor. If he loses the command of his social occurrence, he moves from being a subject to an object. Stripped of his “disguise” in the offered account, this “object” individual cannot continue toward the necessary incarnation of the ideals that will him, as Araujo says, “to be worthy of his art” (*Dignos de su Arte* 19).¹² The negation of this possibility, “to be worthy of his art,” implies a second characteristic for this split subject: that his partition also corresponds to the division of his enjoyment. Perversion’s psychic scenario, understood in terms of Penney, provides the subject with the opportunity to experience enjoyment “outside oneself, as contained within one’s victim/partner, while at the same time allowing one to function as the cause or agent of this enjoyment” (19). Elizabeth Wright and Edmond Wright give us the key to cultural interpretation of this when, speaking about the conditions for the intersubjective support (the social bond, in other words), she affirms that to be a subject depends “on the split between its phantasmatic support and its Symbolic/Imaginary identifications. If the balance is disturbed, the subject will lose either its stake in the Real or its identification in the Symbolic” (88). The Chilean version of this statement, one of many, is deduced in the title of Miguel Krassnoff’s book *Prisionero por Servir a Chile*; Krassnoff’s father and grandfather were indicted as war criminals “serving” Nazism. The tension between what Krassnoff identified as an object—he becomes as an instrument of a higher destiny—and his historical protagonism not only reproduces its “paternal” command but also allows us to illustrate the way in which the perverse resolves its position as an object in the dynamic that upholds it. As we have already seen, the perverse becomes

12. The title of Araujo’s book, which refers to José Santos Chocano’s poem “El hombre es en cada poeta un personaje digno de su arte” (1940).

the object of the other's enjoyment, making the phantasm the operator of its subjective inscription. In *How to Read Lacan*, Žižek provides two examples of this characteristic of the structure of perversion in his analysis of experiences of torture within totalitarianism. In it, he refers to a former Stalinist who declares in court that with great pain he should fulfill his duty as torturer because the advancement of humanity requires it; similarly, he refers to Himmler, who recognized that someone must do the dirty work, justifying his part in the extermination of the Jews with the explanation that he was the real victim because he had to go through the pain of seeing the suffering of his victims, while he served a historical, higher purpose. The common position of the perverse is that of the promise of freedom from enslavement of the Real, searching for other "fathers" (laws) before the incompleteness of its symbolic inscription (castration). The point of interest, however, is that for the perverse, the idea (phantasm) that the totality is possible of being enjoyed enables it to search for these alternatives and multiple ways for the cathexis of its impulse-phantasm. Thus, the perverse can survive only by imagining scenarios for the law. In the following three chapters, I will work to observe these spaces of stories in which it is possible to observe other types of models of a bond in times of the most absolute, repressive, liberal abstraction.

The great avenues that will open for the posthumous man free of Allende have been not only privatized by property speculation but rather disenchanting by political rituals. The Althusserian need to materialize the ideological apparatus in rites no longer exists. In place of historical materialization and its affirmation through the memorial, today we find a mechanized, digital reality. To the performative nationalization of politics, capitalism opposes its aestheticization. Each individual must surrender to identi-fiction—today, the distance required to perceive "that uneasy sense of standing under a sign to which one does and does not belong." Having no other place, it remains only that the subject settles on the charm of perversion.

3

Chilean Visual Arts

From the Perversion of History to the Hysteria of Childhood

THIS CHAPTER discusses perversion and its possibilities as a privileged signifier of social analysis against the historic discourse/episteme. Just as hysteria or paranoia was a privileged signifier for the discussion of culture in past societies, today it is the figure of perversion in transitional Chile. Through an examination of specific works by the selected authors, we see how each of the works elaborate on an imaginary position for the subjectivity of each, mediated by the structure-figure of perversion as we also see how these narratives form a field.

The work of visual artist Voluspa Jarpa denounces a specific way of exercising power and the operations for the thinning of ideology and history through a reflection on hysteria. In particular, her work is about the emancipatory capacity of certain subjectivities (the feminine) as a response to a determined social organization—patriarchal, cultural subjectivity. Here, I question from which radical impossibility Jarpa moves in order to, from the theoretical reflection on the painting system, interrogate the ways in which culture questions its own functional, stability fiction. How are these modes organized and which fissures give rise to symptoms for the subject and the social, and how is it ethically possible to produce a horizon for politics in art so that dissident subjects find an accommodation that is for them impossible within the social fabric?

I understand the work of José Pedro Godoy in this same line. With him, the change in the cultural-cognitive statute of reality responds with pictorial

strategies that reproduce in their combination of the cultural forms of enjoyment available today, of subjective reformulations in which the social contract is seen as displaced for negotiations of autonomous enjoyment—fetishism, scopophilia, transvestism, ipsofilia—or other practices linked with the reflexive or contemplative excitability of the subject itself or its representations. Perversion coincides with the act of painting in its self-reflexive gesture. The solipsism of art is forged with symbolic disregard, overexaggerating the imaginary mechanisms of individual construction—the brushstroke alone. Inspiration or genius, the subject gives in to the creative experience, devoid of the significant confinements of culture, not by necessity, but rather, as the only possible option for social inscription. Godoy, rootless as an artist, plays with the manual repertoire of his pictorial interventions against the contemplation of the landscape of the technosphere. The gaze upon the virtual landscape turns into the contemplation of the subject in an act of enjoyment, marking a difference with the subject in an act of contemplation that characterizes the baroque artist of mental modes of representation. Just as in the neoclassical period, the operation of representing acquires its consistency in the confrontation between the expenditure and enjoyment of the pictorial gesture, or, to say it another way, in the work of the handicraft. In Godoy, the consumption of digital serialization is added as a mode of emphasizing the simulation-experience pair.

Lastly, the work of Bernardo Oyarzún works different fronts, with a strong emphasis on the exploration, register, and documentation of indigenous and working class cultures. It is the narratives of cultural ethnography and visual anthropology united with the consumer-client of media that produces in his work a perverse offer for identification. Oyarzún begins cutting at the disputes for citizen inscription from a point of inflection that responds to masochist subjectivity. This modulation—that of the artist, masochist subject—negotiates his freedom of enjoyment with the cultural restrictions, always failing in his attempt to produce himself according to the state, patriarchal, theoretical-aesthetic cultural models available for his individuation. This chapter denounces this failure marked in the *hiancia* zones or in the lack of social, normative cohesion present in his work for the minority subject.

A Field of Tilled Flowers Is the Happy Copy of Eden¹

The visual arts, in the time period that I am interested in covering, symbolically accomplished the interpellation of and resistance to the military state

1. A verse from the Chilean national anthem.

that the civil society was kept from doing. Their presence in the public sphere reinstates in this time their foundational mission of maintaining the national imaginary and the institutionality. During the first third of the nineteenth century, they served the epic saga of the national independence movement, and later, they illustrated the nineteenth-century republicanism, a European, constitutional paradigm. Between 1970 and 1990, on the other hand, they expressed the social tension existing between authoritarian and democratic models of development. Intellectuals, artists, and statesmen mediated politics between the discursive cross-linking of their country's projects in the public sphere.

The aesthetic and political discourses, reinvented by the historic vanguard, then remained as privileged referents of the desired models of society. After the military state took control of the political, economic, educative, and cultural institutionality of the country, the visual arts expressed with neo-vanguard and post-vanguard poetics the new courses for social projects. In particular, it would behoove us to look at the changes in subjectivity proposed in this work.

From the SIGNO Group to the Trans-Vanguard

The generations of the '60s and '70s, the heirs of the first abstract vanguard, initiated the modernization of the operation systems of the field with their reflection. Their primary preoccupation was the epistemological independence of other zones of meaning production for the social. This definition placed them very close to the essential concern of politics. The subjects perceived that it was possible to situate themselves collectively on the interior of an ideological project from which to realize social change. Art, then, as in previous times, lent support to discursive questioning of the prevailing model of hegemony.

The first group with recognized citizenship in this space of ideological dispute is the collective SIGNO, composed of Gracia Barrios, Edgardo Martínez Bonati, and Alberto Pérez. Under the directorship of José Balmes, art, as an intellectual field, was reconfigured. The system art-artist-society inflects the self-reflexive gesture on the production modes of the normative system of painting, and, at the same time, it stamps the revolutionary self-reflexive gesture on the militant artist, focusing primarily on the reflection on the art object, its material properties, and its hermeneutic, collective possibilities—expanding the traditional concept of painting. The social commentary in Balmes challenges, by way of the informal pictorial gestures, the North American military interventionism on the continent and the progressive

ideological struggles for the region. Some of his reflexive foci were arranged around the political situation in Vietnam, the interventionism in Santo Domingo, the persecution of Che, and the military presence of the '70s in Latin American countries. Another of SIGNO group members, Francisco Brugnoli, appealed to the overcodification of language by way of the incorporation of different graphic systems in which the references between signifier and signified are politically strained. What is evident from the above is the profound political will of interpellation and denunciation that art acquired as an ideological vehicle and as a cultural practice in Chilean social life.²

So far, it is clear how the political subject of the Chilean visual field manifested a clear will for intersubjective recognition in the interior of the revolutionary pamphleteer discourse of the '60s and '70s. There is no doubt that the strength of this field's discursive autonomy stems from its strong commitment, in solidarity with the cultural integration offerings made by the dominant ideologies, and in particular by the utopian-revolutionary models of those years. The symbolic weight of what has been said is forged with the memory of Spanish exile and the military genocides of Cold War interventionism in Latin America. The submission of the subject to his or her social context, or put another way, to the subject ideals, provided by historic contingency, is evident in these cases.

However, as Gaspar Galaz has made clear, in that time, there were already some attempts to detach the artist from his or her submission to the social referent. The work of Pablo Langlois Vicuña offered the first attempt to "install" an indiscernible sculptural object in the second floor of the National Museum of Fine Arts.³ The interruption of the republican national memory, accumulated in the archive founded by José Miguel Blanco in 1880, marked, with this piece, the eruption of the first gesture of the artist's retraction from the symbolic discourse that maintains it to an imaginary dimension thereof, in which the support is the subject/object itself as a point of articulation.⁴

La Escena de Avanzada and the Santiago School

Defined as the immediate referent of much of the artistic production of the '80s and '90s, the Escena de la Avanzada corresponds to the name given by

2. The so-called *manchismo* dominated the plastic aesthetics until the institutional rupture of 1973.

3. Gaspar Galaz in *Artes Visuales Chilenas, 100 Años*. Santiago de Chile: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 2006.

4. See http://revista.escaner.cl/files/Tendencias-en-el-arte-chileno-post90_o.pdf for a great discussion on Chilean art post-'90s by Carolina Lara.

Nelly Richard to the rearticulation of the cultural sphere after the 1973 coup.⁵ It is perceived as a field in which the connections between art and politics are redefined due to the epistemological, ideological, and social collapse generated by the dictatorship. At the same time during the political repression and censorship that followed the military intervention, the revolutionary collective narratives offered to the subject's configuration during the previous times were cancelled and replaced by an exultant discourse of nationalistic epic. The *escena* seems to coincide with what we affirm in this work in relation to subjective disengagement, but in the case of Richard's analysis and her poetics of the fragment, the collective subject becomes unreconstitutable due to its historical shattering.⁶ Despite this, Richard maintains that the aesthetic operations of the Escena de Avanzada are going to create "in the gap of dissatisfaction left between two histories that dispute the present and its teleology of action or of discourse [. . .] a new topology of the real" (5). In these dynamics of the cultural field, the center of the political energy deployed is occupied by the necessity to resymbolize the real according to the spaces such as bodyscapes, mediascapes, and landscapes. These spaces until then not belonging to art per se in Chile were affected by poetics interventions on the sky, printed media interventions, public urban spaces, and poetic actions on the homosexual and female bodies. It is the application of the micro politics of everyday gestures, of domesticity, of the appropriation of the urban routine or city life, of the *performance* in the body and in the territories of individual and collective desire. Even so, the subject of the elite resides in the interstitial space of the poetic "non-place," whose symbolic refuge gives it consistency. The translation of these deterritorialized languages endows the artist and the circulation of his or her works in media with a new word, not necessarily linguistic-discursive, making its discourse incidentally safe from the authoritarian censorship intervening in the urban topography and the architecture with the allegorical veil of memory in the work. These works of emergency will still function as an ethical reserve against the programmatic destruction of the sociosymbolic institutionality of the socialist state.

The moment is that of the critical and pictorial conceptualism of the Santiago School. Composed by visual artists Gonzalo Díaz, Arturo Duclos,

5. There are four groups that make up this scene: the editorial V.I.S.U.A.L. linked with the gallery Arte Espacio; the joint work of Carlos Leppe, Nelly Richard, and Carlos Altamirano as a critical-theoretic collective and as art actions; the Brugnoli, Errázuriz, Castillo, Israel, and Frommer Workshop of Visual Arts, articulated around the production of etchings; and finally, the most famous of all, the Colectivo de Acciones de Arte, CADA.

6. This is the thesis deployed in her first book, *Márgenes e Instituciones*. Santiago de Chile: Francisco Zegers Editor, 1987.

Juan Domingo Dávila, and Eugenio Dittborn, it proposed an artistic reflection on contemporary, popular, academic, and historical mythologies inside of an extreme reflection on the system of painting and the changes in the statute of representation. The pictorial procedures, the mechanics, and the objectual operations characterize their project. Unlike the social-democratic project of CADA, this group focused on the work that addressed the suppression of memory and the rescue of the republican and popular imaginary, be it of a collective or individual character, public or intimate, in a hermeneutic tone of even more restricted access than that of the previous generation. The philosopher Willy Thayer, in a controversial article published in the disappeared journal *Extremoccidente*, titled “El Golpe como consumación de la Vanguardia,” takes a fiercely risky approach on the intermittences and analogies that could be seen between the bodies of work of the Chilean avant-garde (CADA, Escena de Avanzada, and part of the Santiago School) with respect to their symbolic solidarity with the dictatorship. This argument advances the idea that privileging the micropolitics of critical discourse over the structural debates “maintained a complicity with the structural cut of the dictatorship by reiterating that cut in the cultural field; and it maintained, discursively, structural closeness with the vanguard” (54). Precisely the recognition of the will for the future, the conservative volunteerism of the most retrograde ethics committed to overcoming the present and the annulment of a past (that had not yet taken place, according to Thayer), and the characteristic of the dictatorial strata of the post-transition and the vanguard itself stopped them from valuing and acting out the real emancipating gesture of art. Replacing it was a productive series of acts proper to the national-nostalgic or its melancholic version (*Para no morir de hambre—Zurita, Las Aeropostales—Dittborn*), in which grief was emptied in the tenacious insistence to recover the symbolic utopian-revolutionary ideologeme. Making vanguard art happen resulted in complicity with the negativity of the bourgeois component of the same passion for sign that hid the changes that began to manifest in the forms of subjective production of the “new” individual actors not aligned with the new Left. Just as Hernán Vidal proposes in his polemic with the *Revista de Crítica Cultural*, the intellectual-artist has to “distanced itself from direct political activity, and retreating to the ‘margins,’ sought to intensify the break with past, to accept and re-function the psychosocial fragmentation and trauma instituted and administered by the repression” (211–12). Clearly, this position by the Chilean Marxist theorist contrasts with the position of medium of the *Revista de Crítica Cultural*, whereas the elitism of their announcements contrasts with the enormous sociocultural heterogeneity

of the individuals alienated by the theoretic metanarratives of the post-coup's new Left. Vidal's main point is to try to understand how a "progressive group of intellectuals assumed and responded under the label of postmodernism to the social trauma initiated by the Coup in 1973" (283) and in doing this, putting their response in a post-coup space where the "emergency" counterdiscourse has become a "close space," occupied by a small group. His point of intervention highlights Araujo's thesis concerning the availability of certain narratives and its influence in the process of subjectification, in this case, the theoretical postmodern French thought. Both theorists coincide on the spectral presence of the nonpartisan intellectual and artistic subject that has been neglected by the more "effective revolutionaries" (Zamorano 291)—avant-garde intellectuals—behind the hegemonic symbolic codes articulated by this group.⁷

During the '80s, another group of painters, the neo-expressionists, was established. With them, formal experimentation with color, materials, and form conformed the aesthetic reaction to the dictations of political art forged by the theoretical scene of the Avanzada and the Santiago School. Their work became qualified as a "pilot department," emphasizing the universality of color and abstraction in opposition to the theoretical-political line of their generational peers. In the same way, the prejudice denounced the economic success of the group's internationalization in the foreign markets, particularly in the United States. The entrance of these works into artistic auction overlaid them with suspicion of the neutrality required for their placement in external circuits. Chile was able to produce a symbolic capital for export that confirmed its destination of modernity.

Despite the prejudice regarding the withdrawal of these artists from the requirement of art's political performance, their gesture should be considered, in light of this work, in another way. Although they do not form part of the corpus, due to the difficulty installed by the languages of abstraction for a cultural reading, it is interesting to note the retreat they make from the models of figurative art. The same unframing gesture of the offers consolidated by the traditional pictorial genres opens the question about this change. The different degrees and types of register with which the discourse of memory forged the new historical genres are dismissed by them as an offer of the painting system. Instead of resuming the direction of "archivists" of the past and "interpreters" of the present, the new-expressionists returned to the registers of the unconscious: the forms, colors, space, and time became part of the poetics

7. Cfr. César Zamorano. "Revista de Crítica Cultural: Pensando (en) la Transición." Diss. University of Pittsburgh, 2014.

of these creators. Among them, the most notable are Asunción Balmaceda, Pablo Domínguez, Matías Pinto, Sammy Benmayor, and Carlos Maturana, “Bororo.”

In this short history of Chilean visual art, I have referred to the antecedents that the three artists studied in this chapter constantly mention in terms of both affiliation and rejection. The scenario that I will elaborate in this chapter partially corresponds to the following panoramic proposed by Richard about the relations between art, politics, and neoliberalism. Richard says:

The transition in Chile was conjugated under the double sign of the ritualization of political consent and the neoliberal unleashing of the modernizing forces. Both mechanisms—consent and market—were efficient in disciplining the still rebel or nonconforming energies of those who drug the wounds of truncated biographies. The pact between redemocratization and neoliberalism was made, during the Transition in Chile, in the hegemonic language of political-communicative mediatization: a language that leaves the interpellations and claims of intellectual criticism out of the informative banalization of its audiovisual regime. The technified forms of knowledge of communication, of economy, and also of official sociology, quickly dismiss their professional agendas of political moderation and of integration to the market, the imbalances of the memory that remembers the traumatic unfinished past of the dictatorship.⁸

This fragment serves to confirm the hypothesis from which I begin. The revision demanded of the limits of the narratives and ideological rhetoric of the politics of memory in the '80s and '90s gave way to the revision of new forms of subjectification of that generation that, although influenced by the cultural offer made by the “unleashed forces of neoliberalism,” in the words of Richard, no longer responds to the means of symbolic inscription of the memorial rhetoric of the historic Left’s collective subject. In a more complex way, the social energies take the form of demands, although testimonials and/or critics are no longer inscribed in the discourse that served the transitional alliance to maintain power for nearly twenty years. The moral and ethical ground of human rights discourse as the sole support for the collective political subject has been interceded by the eruption of a substantial number of alternative narratives to those of the memory of the cultural, mediatic, and ideological fields. These subjectivities—predominantly the

8. <<http://www.criticacultural.org/presentacion>>. This text was read in the Transregional Magazine Meetings, organized by Documenta 12 Magazines in the city of Cairo, Egypt, between November 11 and 13, 2006. Retrieved April 10, 2010.

homoliberal narratives (Araujo and Martuccelli 34)—appear ideologically misaligned during the decades of the '90s and 2000s from their historical-symbolic affiliation with the trauma of the dictatorship, North American interventionism, and the legal rhetoric of exhumation and compensation in the confessional genres in public discourses. These subjective configurations became transformed into a sample of the contemporary fragmentation of our societies. On the contrary, this new subject can be defined by his pro-market positions combined with more traditional family and national values and an acute individualistic sense of competitiveness. Even nonheteronormative or conservative individuals followed this path to become global citizens (marriage equality, sexual citizenship rights). The idea underlying this view is that of the explosion of the collective subject of politics in order to give way to a demand for the reorganization of the public from the politics of the subject. It is a subject that seems to be recovering its capacity for action/enunciation over the dictations for enunciation of the previous subject. Leaders have been deauthorized to speak for the sovereign I of hyperliberalism.

The Masochism of the I and Its Declinations: Bernardo Oyarzún

Incorporating the theme of the subjectification of the perverse in the work of Bernardo Oyarzún (1963–) presents us with a different dimension from the focus studied so far. In the work of Bernardo Oyarzún, the autobiographical traces that his visual endeavor reflects permit a more appropriate approach than the analysis developed so far. Primarily, the consistency of the focus derives from the subjective production of the subject, and in the artistic work of Oyarzún, we will discover the essence of a voluntary determination with which “the strategies and possibilities for self-production are revealed for someone, particularly in view of their own subjective determinants but also of the social space occupied, a belonging of gender, class, culture, ethnicity, in a given moment” (Araujo, *Dignos de su Arte* 23). This artist includes not only the disputed features in the offer of the heterosexual, subjective hegemony by presenting himself mediated by the mestiza, homosexual rhetoric, but also the materiality of white and territorial hegemony imposed by the Chilean state on the Mapuche people, denounced by the decline of the wandering, delinquent subject marked by his physiognomic features.

Even more critically and professionally separated from his elders, Oyarzún, with his removal, lifts the profound distance between the postmodern or poststructural modes and practices of the generation that precedes him,

those of the aesthetic of the fragment, calling for a different inscription into the cultural field. Closer to the subject-popular-artist than to the intellectual of bourgeois hegemony, Oyarzún deals with the ghosts of a different oppression, whose materials come from cultural practices and modes radically different from the heritage accumulated by the symbolic capital of northern Europe. It is precisely this subjective layout that makes the subject observable in Oyarzún's project of self-representation. He justifies his public purgatory with the goal of cleaning up the white and heterosexual drive that is presented as an imaginary compulsory option in the media, redefining the type of social activity (economic and gendered) associated with his racial phenotype and his aestheticized sexual identity. As he explains in an interview with Jaime Albornoz granted to the virtual journal *Plagio* in 2008:

There are two tools with which I work that in that sense, or for that reason of being so intimate, to produce an effect of psychic healing, the morbid fascination in people and this masochist-like thing, since by exposing yourself you visually sacrifice yourself. I think that it is precisely in that exercise how a sort of cleansing is produced, when you expose yourself, you expose precisely what hurts you deep down, that's why I say that it is masochist, that's why a cathartic sort of effect of healing is produced.⁹

It is not only about considering the symbolic, historical, political, or aesthetic disjunction. We see how all of his work opens the multimedia sign of autobiographical representation in order to explore places of interruption of homogenous cultural perception by and for the subject. The gap, antimony, contradiction, or abyss arisen in the friction points between some representations and others constitutes for the audience and for the subject-artist himself the notice of the appearance of spaces for reflection constituted by infinite points of inflection in which the interpretative "error" is the source of knowledge. The hegemonic vectors of proletarianization and the racialization of sexuality present in his work, for example, together with the politicization of the land, show a peculiar consistency for his I that represents the infinitude of contradictions and problems that the tension between the social and individual ideals for the subject bring for minorities and subaltern cultures. This gap is summarized by the following sentence: "Masochism in the first person," just as he declares in an unpublished interview.¹⁰ It is precisely this aspect, that of masochism, that starts to cut at the debate

9. <http://plagio.cl/home/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=87&Itemid=51>. Consultada el 20 de febrero de 2010.

10. Unpublished interview with Fernando Blanco, January 12, 2009.

over the meaning of the identificatory Ideal whenever what is exposed is not “worthy of love” for the subject. The representation of the criminal judged by his indigenous features or those of the homosexual artist, for whom masculinity is worthy of a homoerotic affection, are presented to us in all the dissonance with which culture operates as a collective aspiration. Specifically, Oyarzún’s work reflects on these breaking points between what we call, following K. Araujo, “social ideals of the subject” (*Dignos de su Arte* 24) and its imaginary derivations for the individual, those which in the case of Oyarzún are organized around the figure of masochism, allowing us to visualize the complex web of modulating norms and rules of the social space of the transition.

This view of Oyarzún, contrary to what one might think, works with the idea that a masochist formation is liberating for the subject. This is the case not only, as he comments in the interview, in the face of purgation against the collective condemnation, but also, as Roy Baumaister proposes, as a form of escape to the excess of consciousness “of self as a symbolically mediated, temporally extended identity” (28). Baumaister confirms that the preponderance of this type of conduct is exacerbated in historical periods in which individualism has been refined as a social collective ideal. Here, art becomes the privileged means for the subject, just as the anecdote of Oyarzún’s arrest by police for suspicion due to his racial appearance reveals, triggering his return from the world of publicity and media to that of visual arts after ten years of inactivity.

Masochism is defined as the displacement of subjective consciousness toward the objectual fragmentation of the body against the social anxiety by the symbolic performance of an individual. In the case of sexual, ethnic, or cultural minorities, this anxiety is found present in the imaginary articulation itself of individual ideals of subject. This condition or circumstance is that which makes me ask in this work how this type of configuration begins to form part of the collective ideals for subject formation in contemporary times. Of course, the conditions in which ideology worked as an alternative support for symbolic configuration reveal, in all its bareness, the precariousness with which the subject should see them in terms of subjective construction, especially after their postindustrial collapse in late capitalism. Individuals belonging to nonhegemonic socio-identitary layers or strata will see with even more dread the disappearance of familiar options of visibilization, as it was for the worker subject in the factory, the revolutionary subject of utopia, or the political subject of the ideology of the common good.

Just as Baumaister proposes by referring to the levels of self-consciousness in the raw masochist configuration the second order, the first of them

is characterized by an involvement of the subject on various levels. On these levels, objectives, ambitions, and responsibilities intersect, allowing symbolic consistency to extend toward the past and the future. In the second, proper to the masochist contract, attention is placed only on the present, allowing sensations and movements to absorb all the attention of the subject. This last characteristic is also common to the subjective structure of perversion. The preponderance of this sensorial attention to the body is given in Oyarzún's work—in all of the works with different emphases—but above all in the pieces *Bajo Sospecha* (1998), *Proporciones de Cuerpo* (2003), and *Cosmética* (2008). Reconcentrated in this reflection, the subject is able to free itself from the anxiety that the social offer provokes. This way, the masochist declination becomes a highly attractive escape for the minority subject, in cognitive dissonance between its historic occurrence and its negated symbolic inscription by the cultural administrators of its circulation. This irruption again highlights one of the problems in the fight for representation in the public sphere, as Willy Thayer proposes, that of “the feminist or transgender vanguards,” since “the popular vanguard remains predominantly male, and that is the limit, the embarrassment of its transversality” (58).

The Usual Suspects

Like the majority of young people belonging to the theoretical “hard” cores of the '90s generation, Oyarzún was trained at the School of Visual Arts of the University of Chile. Of rural and mestizo origins, his past as a provincial student of Mapuche ascendancy who came to the city to study recalls the paths of many Chilean artists and intellectuals who were born in the south of the South. The history of his I is also, in large part, that of his land. The Mapuche people have historically suffered the expropriation and plundering of their land and people. Between 1541 and 1641, they lost two thirds of the 33 million acres they occupied in Araucanía. With the independence of the Chilean state in 1810, all the lands of the native peoples were confiscated and declared part of the state. The year 1883 marked the end of the war named the “Pacification of Araucanía.” Toward the end of this year, the Mapuche people were reduced to an extension of 525,000 acres, confined to live in extended communities in 1.3 percent of their original territory. The communities became “reserves” by decree of law, marking a new frontier for the relation between *huincas* and Mapuches. The government tried to nationalize everything: education, religion, customs, especially the economy, and directly, through these sectors, Chilean citizenship. The idea of an ideal

Chilean was implanted, encouraging everyone to strive to reach this public homogenization. Two centuries more of discrimination and systematic violation of their rights to their ancestral lands ended with the absolute pauperization of the Mapuche people. The excessive use of the land has exhausted its productive capacity, and this scarcity of arable lands has forced many to migrate to urban areas. Women were employed primarily in domestic service; men found work as laborers, pioneers, loaders, and operators of heavy machinery. The young Mapuche poet David Aníñir puts it this way in his poem “Mapurbe”: “We are mapuche concrete / Underneath asphalt sleeps our mother / Exploited by a bastard. / [. . .] / We are sons of laundresses, bakers, peddlers and hawkers”¹¹

According to official surveys, poverty among the indigenous people is almost eight percentage points higher than in the rest of the population. The health and education indicators show similar imbalances. In recent years, the battle over resources has been framed inside a debate on development and progress. The Mapuche face an unsustainable challenge by trying to maintain their meaning of identity as a people, since land is the primordial offer for the individual’s subjective constitution. In this framework, the modern ideal of the authoritarian state was to consider them as an ethnic minority and not as a “native nation.” During Pinochet’s dictatorship, the economic exportation model subsidized forest plantations in Mapuche ancestral lands in order to develop the timber industry. The industry has been the center of Mapuche conflict since then.

Review of Work: Marginal Worlds in the World of Third Person

From very early, Bernardo Oyarzún felt the symbolic weight of an older generation in which the theoretical formation emphasized the reformulation of art’s languages and operations. Conscious of his difference of cultural capital, the offer of university culture to become a vanguard intellectual made him fall into a brutal “semiotic illiteracy.” Being part of a generation, of a time, of a mode of producing and signifying social reality by way of theoretical visuality became inaccessible for him:

When I begin to work after 10 years, in a very conscious way, I would say bold and risky, I develop an opposite work “anti-Benjamin,” anti-displacement, anti-analogical translations, anti-Díaz, Mellado, etc. . . . [discursively

11. David Aníñir in <http://www.apatapela.org/spip.php?rubrique27.El_05-10-09>.

speaking] producing a very direct visceral work, grazing the pamphlet, which gave me pleasure, a very exciting vertigo of possible failure, of rebelliousness, betting it all for nothing, and of artistic liberation, in addition.¹²

Bernardo Oyarzún's work includes several gestures. The first of them is that of constituting a continental popular testimonial. The peripheral social worlds of indigenous people, proletariats, criminals, workers, sexual minorities in Latin America, and their imaginary references are present in a historiographic, anthropological gaze with which the artist portrays the interior of these communities, poeticizing the identitary tensions, the materials that run through them, and the modes of domination and production in which they are embedded. The second is that of an elaboration of the I inside of the same code of the popular testimonial, but degraded in its failure of inscription to gender, race, class, and ideological hegemony.

We are facing a peripheral work in which the political-aesthetic gesture of the I, inscribed in the foreground, is situated next to the dissident collective, threatened by way of an appeal to photography's mechanical resource, the multimedia installation, and the computational digitalization in order to stage the territories of the popular-mestizo-indigenous subject. An example of this is *Tierra de Fuego* (2006).¹³ In it, by way of a photomontage, Oyarzún's own body, naked in a hunter's pose, "appears" like one of the indigenous of the selected photographs intervening, one hundred years later, in another digital performance. The work alludes not only to the genocide of the *selknam* people by German settlers in the south of Chile but to the macabre ingenuity of the recording of their disappearance, done by photographers Alberto de Agostini and Marín Gusinde between 1916 and 1924. Their works in film and photographic recording theatricalize the disappearance of these "Indians" through scenes characterized by the everydayness of these hunter-gatherer bands of the South. Oyarzún resumes the documental records of the two ethnographers and uncovers the empire's target in the freezing of the species on the brink of extinction. The *selknam* have disappeared in the state modernizing pact, and together with them, the fiction of a homo engendered, national territory gains ground in representation. Their photographic conservation is not far from the "hunting scenes" of bourgeois realism. We note, from the ideal of the enlightened modernization project, how the rational subject has imposed itself on the savages through means of photographic documentation. The ethnographic gesture denounces not

12. Unpublished interview with Fernando Blanco, January 12, 2009.

13. The work is a light box of two meters by three meters. In it is a digital photomontage made over another "montage" by Martín Gusinde, 1919–1924.



FIGURE 1. *Tierra del Fuego*, 2006 (Bernardo Oyarzún)

only the geocultural intervention and appropriation but the classifications of types of barbarism to overcome. The photographic document is inverted by Oyarzún by using it as an instrument for denouncing the civilizing gestures understood by him as those of the negativity of Enlightenment. The simulation of the scene becomes the liminal scar of the moment in which the memory of the scientific archive, through its reenunciation in Oyarzún's work, reveals to us the repressing mechanisms of the rational, modernizing state of the nineteenth century. Along with this, the work explores the politics of disappearance implicit in the efforts of the progress of the state officials responsible for charting and mapping the "barbarism" of the southern confines.

Tangentially, in this work, the artist reworks the ideal of the cultural subject from his own identification as an at-risk indigenous-mestizo. Both subjects share the feature of being considered proto-national subjects in the conquistador's fantasy—that is, individuals who, educated in a certain way, will achieve their integration into the national core even while they will conserve their "devalued status" as minorities. The "Chilean subjects" deployed by Oyarzún's work match their commercial value; in addition to laboring bodies, they become prestigious bodies. They are prestigious in the "aura" of art's object, denouncing the multiple inquiries that will be the object of subaltern studies in these two national moments. The emergence of their disappearance as a consequence of military, economic, and cultural annihilation will coincide with the phantasmatic figure cited in the photographic impression. Having recaptured the subject in his rereading of photographic testimony, Oyarzún also opens a reflection on the impossibility of accepting the ideals offered by the culture of the modern Chilean state when these are not articulated/imagined inside hegemony. Perceived and self-confirmed as peripheral, the offer made to the subject enjoins it to the space of the artist/pariah who performs two simultaneous registers of transvestitism: first, the parody of the scientist-ethnographer that houses the documental records of cultural heritage, and second, that of the vanguard interpreter of the glorious remains of their archived past. The first gesture has an anthropological foundation, linked to Latin American identity and its native and mestizo roots; the second, however, marks the artist's reaction to the event—the finding of the record in the National Museum—an excuse that articulates a formal situation in order to intervene in the system of visual representation and its product. The tensions that Oyarzún puts on subject ideals evident in this work are less related to the discursive offers than to the material conditions in which the subjects live. Although we should not under-

estimate the profound interest of the “portrait” collections present in this work, bearers of a spectral nature that are transformed in explicit reference to the insubstantiality of the national state, Oyarzún seems more interested in the gender relation of the intellectual and the work of the archivist of the first ethnographers underlying the *mise en scene*. The major inflection of this work is marked by the calligraphic textual intervention that “encourages” the photographic spectrum. Handwritten and “blood colored,” the text reads: “Reality is less than the event.” Not only is the vicarious condition of the artist’s body manifested here, providing an incarnation to the disappeared in order to mark the catastrophe produced by capital’s progress in the *selknam* ethnic group, but it also shows that the event is the work itself. This is instituted on the national archive, no longer as a record, but as a barefoot “plagiarism” of official history. The visual discursivity takes the place of the social imaginary in order to offer its own identificatory alternative. In doing so, the artist is himself a prisoner of a retraction that has been operated from the system-piece. The sign artist-*Selknam* is offered to the spectator as a resilient alternative to the massacre that should be integrated into collective memory.

Two other examples of the second feature are found in the pieces *Sentimiento de Culpa, Cosmética* (2008), and *Bajo Sospecha* (1998). As in the earlier work, in these three works Oyarzún explores the positioning of I in relation to a collective and an identity offer. *Bajo Sospecha* is the oldest of the three and it, in a direct way, presents the integration of the gaze of the other/ Other as an identification offer for the subject. It is not about integrating the contents that culture provides in order to elaborate a subjective production, but rather about how the Other comes to contemplate the subject, filtering the contents, forcing the viewer to an identificatory compulsion in the face of hegemony. *Bajo Sospecha* is composed of four of Oyarzún’s photographs in which he replicates the procedures for police identification of a possible criminal. The transformation of a civil identity into a delinquent by way of mechanical procedures is the rationale of this montage. Photographs taken from the front, the side, and three-quarters and a spoken portrait propose four variations of the face of crime. Oyarzún departs from the anecdote of his unjustified arrest on the street due to his Mapuche features. We see how, even in the beginning of the third democratic government, the authoritarian practice of arrest on suspicion remains in effect. What I am interested in highlighting in this work is the gaze of the other on the subject-outcast for whom the impossible cultural and identitary assimilation arouses suspicion. This stateless subject is forced to become a criminal due to his difference.

Carefully working the identification between outcast and artist, the resulting worker-artist subject becomes a conscious outcast whose mission is to negotiate the entry of these identities into the social body. As Oyarzún himself proposes, “*Bajo Sospecha* is a self-portrait and a very simple and direct semantic construction.”¹⁴

Unlike *Bajo Sospecha*, *Cosmética* and *Sentimiento de Culpa* explore other dimensions of subjectivity. Two of the cognitive strategies that drive the work of these expositions are, according to Oyarzún, “catharsis and self-assertion that are fused basically from two very clear principles: the morbidity fascination of the third and the masochism of the first person.”¹⁵ *Sentimiento de Culpa* is a series of photographic portraits in which the face of the author has been defamiliarized through the saturation of the skin, the hair, and the eyes with the colors of the Anglo-Saxon phenotype’s palette. From a technical point of view, this series is a self-registration with a digital camera in which the subject opposes the collective ideals of the white, racial subjectivity with the ideals of the individual, mestizo-Mapuche I. The task of readjusting between one and the other is produced on photographic paper as in Photoshop. The mestizo subject, apart from his imaginary support, becomes an alter ego¹⁶ of himself that is contemplated from outside with the mediatic racial ideals offered by culture for his inscription as a white subject of choice. Medical technologies of sexuality and the mechanics of the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries capitalize this desire of inscription and recognition. The blond hair dye that dyes the “filthy indigenous”; the optical, placebo, colored contact lens; the sweeping bleach of creams to erase imperfections from the skin—all are conjugated to stage the sacrifice of those subjected to the inquisition of a community accustomed to living in homogeneity. The democratic abstract of homogeneity is taken here as a problem of political coexistence that joins the importation of models of mass consumption. Oyarzún, the mestizo, does not respond to the solidarity models of Eurocentric modernity. By contrast, and in a gesture of self-affirmation of the racial-popular identity, he deconstructs the subject offers of this discourse and at the same time denounces the profit of the cosmetic-surgery industry. We can also note in this work certain features of the masochist experience in which the subject is abandoned as a passive participant to the operations of his partner. Tensing the analogy to the cultural field, the artist works with the vulnerability of being a slave to the heterosexual and white subject ideals retaining all libidinal energy in the body and the bodily feelings of aesthetic

14. Unpublished interview with Fernando Blanco, January 12, 2009.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

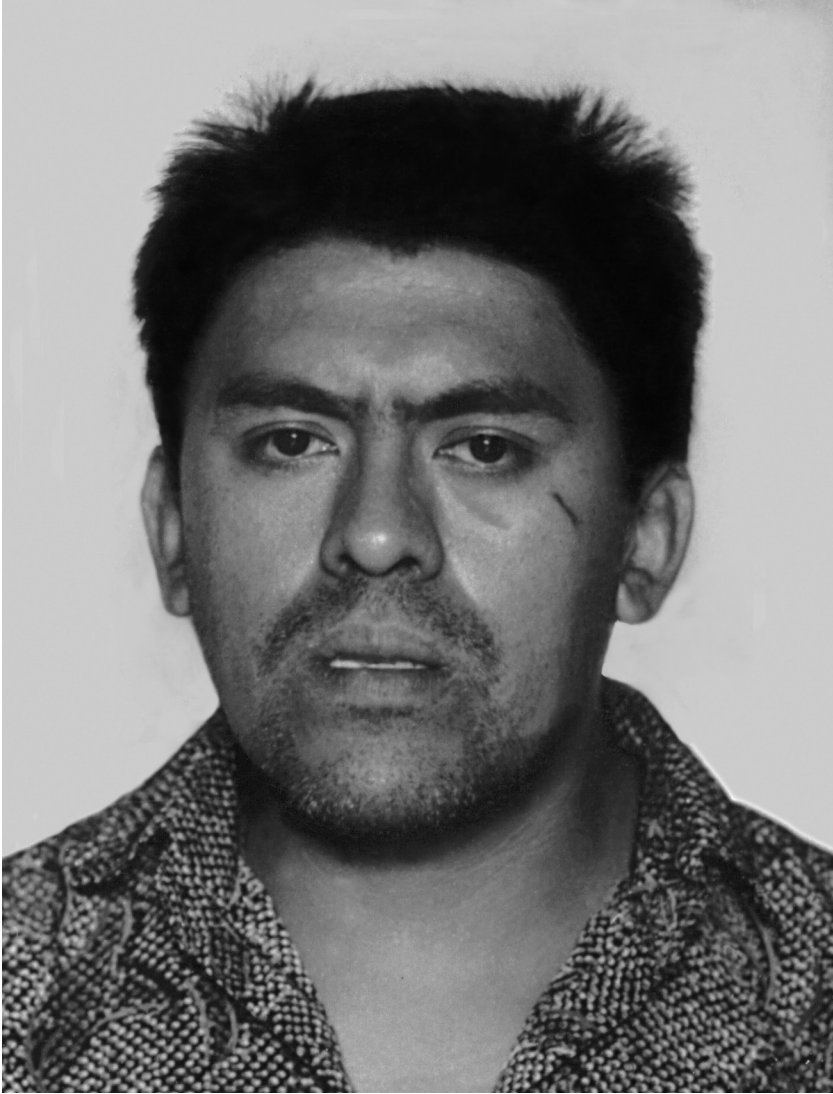


FIGURE 2. *Bajo Sospecha*, 1998 (Bernardo Oyarzún)

intervention. This is why the relationship between the model and the copy, in this work, simply renounces the poetic-political dimension of language in its performative capacity. Just as Butler proposed in the classic *Gender Trouble* (1990), following the line of Platonic metaphysics, the abstract ideals deposited in the signifiers are nothing more than the transitory social agreement of their representation in the public discourse. The political dimension of enunciation mobilized precisely by this transience of the sign in Oyarzún's work is key for the discussion on the narrative differences of the identity provided by the mediatic offer in the post-transition.

Cosmética, meanwhile, stages posing situations in which an ambiguous, homosexual declination and a clear racial option are at work. The sexual ambiguity points to the subjective offer of a polyvalent techno-sexuality, which has been anchored in Chile with the phenomenon of “adolescent ponceo,” virtual and deaffectivized promiscuity and electronic sex.¹⁷ In Oyarzún's case, the variability is dominated by the advertising referents and induced by the canon of anglo, mediatic beauty—fourteen photographs taken from the blogs of models. The I is shown in these works from the freezing of the pose through a photo performance. The pose is nothing more than the transvestite exacerbation of the Latin American subject of the alternative modernities. This introduces a certain index of sexual ambiguity to the work, which points to the exacerbation of the administration of identities and the bidding game organized between them by advertising's consumption models. The mode of consumption and the identities to be consumed are repositioned here, using the same strategies of the recyclable aesthetics of secondhand clothing.

The subject ideal that seems to be behind Oyarzún's operations, as I have proposed it, is that of the mestizo-artist-intellectual capable of cultural agency. The subject affirmation made by the artwork passes precisely because of the high capacity of questioning of the offers and their mediatic modulations. Using strategies that we could qualify as perverse, in that they alter the ideal without producing its opposite, Oyarzún constructs an interpretative distance in which to recognize himself. The recognition does not occur at the level of the subject itself, but rather in his critical capacity to distinguish the ideals imposed by the hegemony and to pervert them. This subject, conscious of his failure of inscription, appeals, nonetheless, through the materialization of humiliation—the masochist guide of his failures—to the consistency that other models make for him. In Oyarzún's case, we find

17. Several books have been published on the topic of the new urban sociabilities. See Andrea Ocampo *¿Quiénes son los pokemones, visual, emo, peloláis y flaites?* Santiago: Planeta, 2009.

someone for whom class-consciousness, along with the collective, cultural identification with the Mapuche nation and the popular realms, offers a point of subjectification that protects him from the risk of retraction that we have seen in Ramírez and Wacquez's characters in the previous chapter. As he himself states, he is working with popular aesthetics and its links to contemporary art. They interested him from the beginning because of their significance, which he believes to be epistemological. He also proposes, from his first montages *Metro Ruma* (2000), *Instalación Faena* (2002), and *El Ñadi* (2000), that we reflect on the indigenous worlds and their relationships to the neoliberal politics of the Chilean state, in particular those that since the military dictatorship have voided the category of indigenous in relation to rights over ancestral lands.¹⁸ Oyarzún makes an anthropological takeover of the remains of the cultures disappeared or decimated by "white" colonization in order to show the existence of alternative modes of knowledge and action in indigenous communities. Despite the persistence of colonial oppression, the survival modes of communities today show the value and necessity of thinking of alternative forms of citizenship and democratization. Oyarzún's work

18. See the article by Rosamel Millamán Reinao from which I transcribe the diagnosis of the three stages of "Mapuche conflict":

After the lapse of the first years of enforcement of this law its limitations clearly appear along with ambiguities that make it impossible to protect the natural resources of the Mapuche communities, such as with the imposition of the installation of the hydroelectric power stations in Ralco, the infrastructure megaproject of highways like the Coastal Highway, the Temuco City Bypass, and landfills or dumps that have proliferated in several regions with a Mapuche population. Moreover, the historic lawsuits that deal with the recovery of lands that were usurped from the indigenous communities legally constituted under the Chilean State by settlers and creole landowners of the region are unachievable. This lawsuit, the most felt by the communities, that seriously put in question the revolutionary character of Salvador Allende's government, today with the existing Indian legislation is being prevented because this instrument does not address the restitution of these lands since some of them today remain in the hands of the region's agribusiness and forestry companies. This is compounded by the fact that the Mapuche organizations that have set a goal to recover these usurped lands, various legislations prevent the attainment of that objective. And finally, the policies adopted by this legislation do not respond to a wide range of necessities demanded by the communities. The Mapuche demands exceed the responsive capacity of the National Corporation for Indigenous Development (*Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena*—CONADI) that does not have sufficient resources nor a comprehensive policy to address and resolve these particular and specific claims in each region.

Políticas públicas neoliberales por sobre una política de desarrollo sostenible: El caso Mapuche. Red Indígena CLAPSO. Temuco. Chile, <lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/claspo/rtc/0042.pdf>.

folds into the reorganizational demands of indigenous emancipation movements during the Chilean transition, from an autobiographical perspective, because the symbolic space is that of affect for his native land, Los Muermos. In this montage all tools/waste, from the most basic to langue, modulate a certain resistant wisdom or knowledge to the so-called intercultural of indigenist policies of the Concertación governments. Under this premise, we must accept the peasant world and the working class as bodies devastated by the central government, whose sovereignty and forms of organization have been alienated.

In another of the works of this period of familiar self-exploration, memories of the nonspecialized salaried work take the form of the spectrum of the father. The homage to “man power” in *Trabajo Forzado* (2003) underscores death as the worker’s destiny, reduced to the exchange value of its driving force, condemned as a social species to ideological disappearance with the cancellation of the revolutionary worker’s consciousness, characteristic of the period. At the same time, Oyarzún, perhaps unintentionally, makes a warning about the biological and moral annihilation of the cultural-religious subjectivity of the Mapuche people, in terms of a break with the transcendental destiny of spirit. The vital obliteration of individuals also entails the dismantling of a culture in which Western individualism had no place. From his childhood memory, Oyarzún recalls the worker’s everydayness, highlighting the unique salaried body of the father, which results in a painful realization of the rushed genocide of many at the hands of modernization.

The Mapuche-urbanite is another of the topics of Oyarzún’s postmemory. In *Instalación Faena* (2002), identified with the spring of the future, a young Bernardo observes the worker’s routine in the key of a ritual. The catalog text says:

This piece is an image that I retained as a child. I often accompanied my father and I observed this scene that to me seemed so diaphanous, polished and cleaned pots at dawn, put over some metal trays with hot water, they exemplified the dinner ritual, precarious, forceful, and dignified. Workers with a common history who migrated to the capital to quash their life and their dreams, thinking that their effort would cut the misery, twist the hand of destiny, and build, with their sacrifice, another future for their offspring.

The fact of referring to himself as displaced within the rural, indigenous, migrant family situates Oyarzún in a specific subjective place. Not only does

he continue the intellectual character of the artist-worker here, but in addition he assumes the task of preserving the memory of the extermination of the displaced race. The father's manual work is superimposed on the artistic work invested with added value: that of the experience provided by the journey. Although this is one with no return, Oyarzún assumes the trade of witness in order to document with his work the devastation of the value of these minimal lives, just as the naturalist and postnaturalist narratives of González Vera and Diamela Eltit wanted to do.

The resymbolized manpower is that of the artist himself constructing the memorial of the death of the father in the present. The aesthetic strategy that emerges from the catalog text warns us of a subjective declination not yet noted in this analysis. Oyarzún perceives himself as a survivor and shows the absolute collapse of ancestral time to which neither he nor his father belongs anymore. The banality in his later work—the photographs of advertising models or other media objects like the TV series—is resemanticized by staging individual memory, in order to relocate them in the public as ruins of an affectivized world whose destiny remains incomplete with the coming of modernity.

Although the masochistic aspect is self-evident in his work, Oyarzún fixes it through multiple operations in which the subject-artist, conscious of the character of the intersection of his sociosubjective conditioning factors, promotes self-consciousness of the sociosexual or sociocultural difference in order to be placed in the position of a slave for whom the rank and status of social belonging have been denied by negating access to any cultural capital, family ties, ancestry, civil rights, among other things. This absolute incapacity for citizenship proposes, overall, like the absence of the described traits, the sanction of his death or social sacrifice, represented in the vicarious humiliation of the work. As Baumeister says, “the predominant model of masochism is a condition [slavery] in which one's social identity is removed” (41).

One last element that we can associate with the ideal constructed by the artist-masochist in Oyarzún is the spectacularization of body and self. Through the blatant display of his humiliation in the masochist theater, police photography or Photoshop, Oyarzún calls the attention of the spectators, his citizen peers, directly toward that which constitutes the core of his predicament. Two feelings work together to denounce the discomfort of denial. Shame and humiliation articulate the state indignities suffered by the territory and the Mapuche people, simultaneously with the exclusion from the public sphere of those to whom their own identity has been expropriated at the hands of mercantile hegemonies mediated by Western cultural subjectivity.

This is an action that includes not only the body-face signs previously described but also those of the facilities like the ecosystem, in which an object puts its own illegitimacy in the center of the debate, that of the struggle for ancestral lands and the cultural forms and practices associated with them, just like the slave in the sadomasochist contract.

We may venture to say that we find ourselves in this moment of the work faced with a popular-masochist subject who has made his the identification offer of the modern subject. One of the declinations of this popular-masochist subject is that of aesthetics. It is this feature that perverts the natural condition of the subject's Ideal to desire to be collective, avoiding any exacerbation of the individual. Being that Oyarzún's case is that of a vanguard artist, to which the theoretical, reflexive discursivity gives consistency, perversion as a possible alternative is disguised in the symbolic value of the artist. The excess of individuality that threatens the consistency of the bond is neutralized by the aesthetic position of the subject, whose ostracism is given to him by his peculiar artist's habitus. Otherwise, Oyarzún's work shows us that in spite of his strong social anchoring by means of the bond, as an artist he is protected for his abdication to the norms and regulations of social life and is able to overcome the systemic individualism in order to fight for a different individuation process: one that by means of the imaginary transformations of identity would lead to the access of temporary identitary fantasies, whose reparatory nature of the denigration suffered due to social marginalization. This provisional *I* would provide him with a support in which fear as an identity supplement would permit him to transform reality with his own experiences of exclusion. All marginal subjects, in the masochist fantasy, are able to conquer a subjective space in order to realize their fantasies with the approval or admission by means of their exhibition of social reality. Accompanying him in this process of symbolic inscription in his works, the photomechanical and digital mechanisms materialize the strategies of adaptation with which the subject attempts to conform as such, giving evidence of the discrimination suffered not only as a political nonsubject of rights, in his social-racial difference, but also in his subjective-cultural exclusion as a homo-oriented subject, resulting in a double criminalization.

At this level, as Baumaister will conclude, the masochist subject will be concentrated at the minimal level of self-consciousness, focusing attention instead on the object-body—the sensorial locus—deprived or lacking its conditions of being “worthy of love” (as Lacan would put it) in order to denounce it as a cultural subproduct that fails in the imaginary production of its subject ideal, as occurs with the cases of the photoshopped mestizo in *Cosmética* or the infrahuman version of the Virtuvian Man in *Proporciones*

de Cuerpo. The paradox of this construction is, nonetheless, that for the subject of the work itself, the identity negotiated in the masochist contract, the liberating fantasy of its identity exiled from social life, will have permanent value in the interpellation with its audience, because the “true” forge of subjectification materials is not seen. That is, the escape will become assertive and proof of the subject’s real abjection.

An imaginary epic, financed by state politics, responsive to transforming even the most minimal emancipatory attempt into recyclable culture, thanks to the financial contracts between art and state, characteristic of the period being studied, hangs over the curacy work of certain spaces in Santiago. State management against the social demands and their theatricalization in the public is one of hegemony’s perverse skills.¹⁹ Oyarzún is, without a doubt, one of the exceptions to this circulation.

Voluspa Jarpa: Private Hysteria/Public History

Formed just like Bernardo Oyarzún at the University of Chile, the visual artist Voluspa Jarpa (1971–) has followed a course of work that we could qualify as programmatic. Jarpa has shown a solid aesthetic consistency and a greater political commitment in each and every exhibit since 1995. A declared conceptualist, her works are characterized for presenting a forceful agenda centered on the pictorial and political reflection on representation and its ideological, technical, and language problems. Theoretically close to baroque poetics and those of the first European avant-garde, Jarpa is primarily interested in the questioning of history’s discourse, in its material inconsistencies between public events and private accounts and those concerning the representation process within the regulatory canonical system of painting. Historiography, public, private, and the notion of archive appear in her work as discursive and problematic poetics nuclei. In her early work, the artist operates with the questioning of patriotic symbols, the scenes of the nation’s album linked to ideological models, the pictorial genres and the role of the artist as a subject of aesthetic-political interpellation. A staunch

19. In the performatic work *Negro Curiche* (2002). Using the body as support once more, this time his own, Oyarzún presents a rereading of the white, anthropometric model of *Virtubio*. A series of slides show Oyarzún himself naked. His images fit against the model of the geometrically perfect masculine body of Da Vinci’s *Vitruvian Man*. Behind him, as a backdrop, a narrative series accounts for the racial and social abjection of the mestizo/Indian body by way of insulting adjectives. The series reads, “negro curiche picunche mapuche cocha noche boliviano pizarron huacho chocado paticorto atacameno tenido sin futuro . . .”

critic of the rhetoric of the national-military, she proposes to reinterpret the patriotic narratives allied with the foundational, military state model, denouncing the illusory nature of its construction. Jarpa exposes the political instrumentalization of the national utopia constructed by the ruling classes by intervening them in the present, reopened by her work. The artist deconstructs the identification or naturalization of the contents communicated by the discourse, questioned by the resources of quoting and parody, articulated in a *grammar of the fragment*. This maneuver denounces the fictional supports of the discourses—the national historical and the pictorial discourse—the sociocultural, authoritarian, and patriarchal canon in which they are inserted; and the specialization/monumentalization of the oligarch-bourgeois subjectivities of the Chilean nation-state in its institutions (museums, ministries, libraries).

The Hysteric as an Excess of Historic Deflation

In one of her early works, *Pintura Mural/El sitio de Rancagua* (1994)—done in conjunction with painter Natalia Babarovic (1966–)—the denunciation of the fictional support of official history is joined to the reflection on the problems and limits faced by the realist convention for the system of painting. Large oil paintings replicate the grandiosity of the military theme, but in none of them do we see the heroes of the military epic. The characters chosen for this version of Chilean history, the representation of the “Rancagua Disaster,” are anonymous combatants appearing behind the scenes of the battle, many of whom have the same faces as the workers from the San Eugenio dockyards. They are against the light of history on both sides of national time, that of the national-military and of the national-popular. Arranged on unframed canvas, the work of imaginary intervention of Jarpa’s Chilean emancipatory epic poem puts the anonymous participants of the machinery of war into the urban proletariat’s contemporary record. They are rural men and women at the service of a military proto-state. The battle is seen as manual labor. A labor is stripped of the epic aura of the founding rhetoric in which salary reveals the proletarianization of human capital and also the symbolic value of art. Mounted directly to the wall, the paintings create the visual effect of a shroud “hung” on the flipside of history. The manifest, muralist gesture of the montage popularizes the national discourse, embodying it with exposed characters behind the curtains of the public scenario. The collective, the crowd, the people, later the proletariat, then the masses, and even “Alessandri’s beloved rabble” contemplate their mestizo and anonymous roots in the citing of the

shirtless of the painting.²⁰ We note the recurrence of the pictorial quotations by Pedro Subercaseaux or photographic records of other wars for the composition of the narration. In the given uses, the leading role of the founding fathers gives way to the conception of the people as an anonymous collective transformed into the landscape of the desolation of worldwide postimperialism. It is the bodies of the fallen that saturate the retinas and the recording of the human horizons illuminated by the technologies of filmic prints and the photographs of mass circulation. While at that time Jarpa was just arriving from Brazil to start her studies at the University of Chile, she felt a stronger connection between her work and the political moment. Already in this initial work she puts forth the idea that behind the rectilinear discourse of official history, subjects retain the possibility to complete, with the resource of post memory, the fictional layout imposed by the patriotic scenes. From her pictorial perspective, the quote, the collage, the parody, each correspond with the scattered memory remains and traces on which the subjects rely for recomposing the void left by the lack of a rational explanation for the irruption of violence. It is normal with traumatic memory that violence forms it in the implosion of the normalizing, narrative continuity of memory.

In this work, like Oyarzún's work, Jarpa genuflects the perversion of her gaze, retracted from official history, toward the subject ideal declined in the modern artist whose exceptionality comes from his or her privileged condition. She makes the cultural ideal for the subject her own, freed from cuts, states, and churches in order to come to serve as an exegete of the social, in direct contact with the streets, a *metonomizado* gesture on the wall chosen as history's support for mounting her work. Despite this, the subject's illustrated dimension is modified by the vanguard's intervention with their politics of art as labor. Perversion works on the discursive and procedural levels. It also works as a deviation from the ideal of subject-artist that Chilean culture replicates from the offer of enlightened modernity. The subject derived from Jarpa results in an intellectual-worker-student ideal in complete consonance with the first historical vanguard, that of Montparnasse's group, and with the political position of her generation.²¹

In her second installation, *El Jardín de las Delicias* (1995), as in *No ha lugar* (1997), the artist repeats the aesthetic gesture of the cultural ideal of the modern artist. She composes an urban landscape inside the formal gender covenant but extracted from the register public of elements characterized by the

20. President Jorge Alessandri Palma, known as the "Lion of Tarapacá," challenged his followers with this paternalist expression.

21. I am referring to the concurrence of two historic facts that occurred in the same time period: La Matanza del Seguro Obrero and the publication by Juan Emar of *Las Notas de Arte*.

liminal space of the empty lot disputed by property speculation. With these materials, Jarpa is able to present the city's landscape from the metonymy of the vacant space, understood as the urban experience of nonplace, of noncity, and consequently, perceived in the pictorial tradition as nonlandscape. In both works, the poetics obey the macro objective of unveiling the manual and mechanical procedures that uphold the artifice of genre and technique, just like that of the imaginary dimension of historical discourse. It is a work that from its problematization of the limits of representation of painting reflects on the inconsistency of historical fiction and the urban space of the capital as the spoils of the first and second economic modernities. In turn, this monumental work imposed by the intellectual is the work of recording and documenting a reified violence in the architectonic, statutory, and ideological ephemeris that they enshrined together in the military intervention. The equestrian leap of the hero—a syntagmatic continuity with her previous work—this time phantasmatically emplaced on the axis of the “flame of liberty,” the Defense Ministry's buildings that complete the subsequent hemicycle of the government's palace, and the double figuration of two images, that of the painted photograph of hysterical convulsion and that of the vacant landscapes, complete the scrutiny of the materials for the archive of the restoration of Pinochet's regime.

Let us focus the eye on the triptych, *El Jardín de las Delicias*. Three monumental panels offer us, at first sight, the horizon of Santiago's civic-military district, observed from the state house. The Ministry of Defense and other buildings of the second state modernity complete the composition. The quotation in the world-format is of *El Bosco* (Hieronymus Bosch) in the pastoral three-dimensionality: Heaven. Hell. Purgatory. It forces us to complete the challenge of the gaze of modern faith in the state's landscape. We are faced with Calderón's world theatre. In this space, one hand draws back the curtain to expose us to the scene depicted. The monument, the Altar of the Fatherland, convokes the place of offering and of sacrifice to the center. On the sides, through the aisles of this vicarious church of the government's palace that constitutes its imaginary front, the architecture of the modern-military state is projected. A variety of buildings crown the composition, their facades faded from the multiple points of escape that establish the metonymic disappearance of the welfare state. The wasteland, framed in the bottom right corner, warns of the failure of narrative inscription of the signs of economic success of the “Latin American jaguar.”

It draws attention by altering the apparent semiotic order of the landscape, a small, manual reproduction in oils of a photograph taken by psychiatrist Jean-Martin Charcot. In the lower left corner, an open book offers

us a reproduction of a feminine, hysteric convulsion. The body of the hysteric appears bent in a back spasm. The position of this element in the total composition of the piece works by metonymy on the symptomatic reading of all the other elements of the series. The spectator can no longer accept the pact of verisimilitude in the reading of the painting because the signifier of the hysteria mutes the discursive history. Using the resource of hysteria this way, materializing like language, Jarpa offers us a first proof of the awareness of failure that she has of the domain of the symbolic, which she postulates for the period. Following the idea of the closure of the hysteric subject in its narrative inscription, Jarpa elaborates here the retraction of the body of history in order to make of it a symptom of its fictionality. In this first attempt, the unified hysteric symptom and the patriotic history ask for an interpretation for both the subject and the cultural system of scenes in which it has been inserted.²²

In the next group of works, Jarpa introduces a higher rate of presence for objects. If the excess of narrativity bothered the poetic execution of her first projects, in which the discomfort of the referential system and its metaphorical permutations were evident in her conceptual solidarity with the fiction of history, with *La Silla de Kosuth* (1997), *Homenaje a Rodrigo Merino* (1998), and *Un miedo inconcebible a la pobreza/ La Conquista del Sur* (2002), Jarpa opts for redefining the axes of signification, giving her an even greater preponderance to the metonymic function. The materialization of this change is manifest in the selection of objects arranged “outside the box.” Amongst these are models and scaled replicas of the emergency houses. These reproductions are laid out like axes of the reading of the two works. Hung on the wall or in the middle of the room, the material objects mark the entrance of the artist in the logic of the installation by way of the permutation of senses between images and objects. The same logic, shown later in her works of 2006 to 2008, with *Soma* and *Plaga*, is made present by appealing to space and the volumes. The objective is to tighten the relationships between a politics of experience and one of numbers. Through exposing the observer to the object that embodies his singular fear (symptom-house) opposite to those of his collective organization under the repressive structure of the property-regulating system (citizen-

22. Note in the triptych. In it, the Altar of the Fatherland and the combination of rider and horse are perfectly centered: patriotic metaphors. Dissected by the decision of the picture's composition, the referred-to scene becomes significant by supplementarily increasing signification of a historic cut selected through the metonymic substitution of the landscape of the “civic district” and that of the “wasteland”: an attempt at a failure. These two images mobilize the “historical” meaning of the inaugural project of the fatherland and the state toward their complete dissolution in the “conversive hysteria” of their impossibility of being. The hegemonic subject becomes a pure signifier and evanescent in the new discursive disposition.

model on the wall), Jarpa constructs an urban anthropology of dwelling in the postdictator city. In the words of Fernando García Selgas, she shows us with this work “the way our personal and collective histories are organized” (48) in public, urban spaces that house private life. The urban scenes reified in the “shack” and the image of the city in the “vertically integrated model” carry the truth of certain experiences kept secret in the triumphalist account of the government’s poverty-alleviation projects or of a “dignified dwelling” for all Chileans, instead signaling all the precariousness implicit in the spatialization of poverty. The architectural plans of poverty that move on the city are divided in the exhibition room, installing the precariousness as a building standard of the public programs of the welfare state. This instability is perceived by forcing the gravity on the arrangement of the model of the neighborhood. The rupture with the limited space of the canvas, the limits imposed by the frame, and the illustrative grammar of narration again place her in the offer of the modern subject as a privileged hermeneutic of changes in the statute of narration. Nonetheless, her own positionality is still sheltered in the premise that even the most insignificant manifests a trace of symbolization. We are still not faced with a moment of disagreement between the artists and the models-offers of her culture. Protected by the redistribution that she makes of the significant materials, she safeguards the prevalence of discursive modes, including those resistant to causal signification.

So far, the modern-subject-artist is presented doubly in the meta-reflexive consciousness of the art notebook. The artist’s catalogs will present the narrative version of the work. Traditional in Chilean visual arts, the text on art is going to occupy a central space in the construction of the intellectual field. The poetics of the author Jarpa will produce two interpretations of herself, for the artist. She will situate herself in the ideals from the perspective of the subject of modern art, and also in those of the self-reflexive gesture of the democratic intellectual of the vanguard. In both cases, Jarpa follows here the idea expressed by Althusser in relation to ideology. For her, ideological discourse works clearly as an element that provides an instance of coherent recognition for the subject according to the social place it occupies. To be precise, this is an instance that in the practice of art—in particular, in the case of the artist as double consciousness of an idealized citizen-intellectual—allows for the passage from the anonymity of the individual toward the social, individual, and collective recognition of the subject. This mediation is expressed through the construction of an imaginary relation “between the individual and his real conditions of existence” (Beverly 7). This imaginary relationship is that which, in this work, we have incorporated to the subjectification model proposed by Araujo. In this paradigm the subject is produced

either for or against the dialectical tension existing between the social and individual subject Ideals. It is at this point that I suggest rethinking the meaning of this imaginary articulation, considering the fact of the change in the cultural offers of subjective production for individuals by the privatized culture of mass media, along with the neoliberal narratives transmitted by public discourses. Ideology's role is problematized by Jarpa in her work transitioning from the series *El Jardín de las Delicias* (*Garden of Eden*) to *Los Eriazos* (*Waste Land*). Jarpa is working here within a twofold perspective. On the one hand, as a female intellectual, she problematizes memory formations and accounts for the past using the discourse of hysteria to denounce the male-military hegemony in the writing of History—excluding women from the process of symbolization of the “scene of memory.” On the other hand, as an artist, she criticizes the uses of historical narratives to falsify the facts that led to the coup in 1973. Her work claims the impossibility of accessing through language the real conditions of women's existence; however, it also proposes—following an Althusserian-Lacanian perspective—that the rigor of a scientific approach to politics and economics in contemporary Chile allows the subject to discover the way in which real conditions of domination are inscribed within neoliberal ideology. She has presented the issue of symbolizing history as a central problem of her poetics working with the urban-scapes and the writing of the dictatorial past.

I was trying to point out that Jarpa's identification point as an intellectual-revolutionary subject—stated by criticizing the national-military discourse and the ways in which historical narratives are constructed based on misconceptions, secrets, and lack of historical facts and excluding subaltern individuals also from the account (the metaphor/photography of the hysteric woman on the bottom left corner of the painting)—is one of her major concerns. She is revealing the ideological connections “on the stage.”

Referring to her poetic work with regard to *La No-Historia* (2000,) in which she used material from the archive of the 24,000 declassified files of the CIA, Jarpa confirms what we have been proposing in terms of her double imaginary affiliation as an intellectual artist and a vanguard artist interpolated by the ideology and obviousness of her inscription:

I think that *the size of the image* of the 24,000 declassified files has been cut down. A central point has to be taken into account in Chilean art, and as part of my objectives as an artist, is to ensure avoiding what I consider to be an error or negligence of an ethic and a symbolic level with respect to the mode in which the History of Chile has been narrated and symbolized—also from the visual arts—, where the fundamental emphasis was to

produce works with a cryptic language that ends up being an accomplice of what it criticized, this way helping to not reveal the events and their signs, but rather overshadowing them. I think that this declassification of documents marks an original scene with respect to Chile and its history, that which should interrogate the epic-metaphoric tone adopted by the artistic representations of the end of the 20th century in Chile, since they, instead of collaborating with the truth, have thrown a blanket of negligence and lack of investigative rigor in the processes of social symbolization that art can accomplish with respect to society, and that allows it to participate in the construction of images and identity discourses of a collective, since it guarantees a subjective dialogue, enriching the versions and interpretations of historical events.

When I consider the archive documents as material for a work it is because I see in them conceptual (semantic and political) and visual characteristics with which I am interested in working, on the one hand, I think that these are appropriate and precise for the development of my artistic language. I am fundamentally interested in working with the problematization of the historic events treated in art, I think that artistic language gives a possibility for confronting those historic experiences with symbolic inquiries, those which are incumbent to the images that these contain and not necessarily directly to the historiographic content, since it is incumbent on them to be treated by other disciplines like history or political sciences. (*Histeria Privada* 19)

Just as John Beverly proposes in his article “Ideología/Deseo/Literatura” that “a habitualized perception is a perception inside of everyday life, a dimension that includes the ideologic as a form of political utility, and therefore, something extrinsic to the aesthetic in itself” (9). Thinking of Jarpa’s work from this perspective, we find that the distance of the ideologies that constitute and interpellate them are not radical but rather partial. If indeed it achieves the necessary “Brechtian separation” to allow the collapse of utopia, it fails to totally remove the discourses explicitly present in the work, forcing the spectators to question the artistic and historic premises upon which she builds her interpretation, but putting others in their place. In other words, the subject ideals work even in place of a real identification whose imaginary support in the present of the piece is constituted in a second historical consciousness, this time, that of the failure or the impossibility of accessing the total narration of history. It will be only in the second stage of her work, with the series *Soma*, *Paisaje Somático*, and *Plaga*, that the orientation of ideals will give rise to the fictionality of the discourses

that constitute the ideological interpellation and will also show the lack of discursive consistency for the subjects' desire, in that the access to interpretation will be mediated only by the muted signifier in its purely visual rather than narrative occurrence. Indeed, the de-eroticization of the feminine body-sign of the hysteric in this phase of its production makes the vanguard, artist-intellectual subject turn down this ideal position in order to begin to form part of the effect of reality that rests behind the plastic formation of her installations. Jarpa is no longer at the point of ideological interpellation where the real of the social is mediated by history and directly interpellates individuals and their circumstances, but rather in the phantasmatic distance that all artwork presupposes—*ostranenie*. Situated in that distance, the subject itself is mediated by the convulsive and silent symptom of hysteria in its visual solitude. With the rates of illustration of the symbolic fiction with which the I is oriented being cancelled—in any narration—the somatic discourse of hysteria occupies the place of discourse, producing an imaginary social place, matrix and receptacle of multiple emotional reactions. The receiving subject's truths that pass through the matrix of senses are proposed in its surrender to *Plaga*, a hanging volume of 1,800 nylon threads threaded together with thousands of flat images of women figures in convulsive, hysterical crises. With this work Jarpa makes the subject appear before a new subjective contract. The work proposes the liberal ideal of the sadomasochist contract and the utopia of its realization. Both discourses share the fact of being modulated by the fictional drive of their performative occurrence. This contorsive gesture problematizes not only the relation of the hysteric I with the social world but also that of the type of experience that produces its contemplation in that it resists the symbolization articulated in a consistent narrative in order to leave in its place the discursive void that the volumetric images supplies. Faced with the "hysteric," the interpretative reaction of the spectator is encouraged by the liberty of its lack of symbolization, and results in confusion, unrest, and uncertainty of sense. The subject that contemplates cannot be located in relation to the convulsive gesture of the image of the hysteric multidimensionalized by the installation. The organless body of the hysteric, a flat body, materialized in the transparent platelets, becomes disturbing in its power, disruptive of the discursive-cultural agencies of gender—that is, of the social narratives that order them and the hegemonic subjects that interpellate them. We are faced with thousands of impenetrable bodies, devoid of reproductive value, therefore not recognizable in terms of feminine principles but nonetheless highly active in the meaningful lack, becoming bodies that appear in a theater of possible interpretations.



FIGURE 3. *Soma* (detail), 2006 (Voluspa Jarpa)



FIGURE 4. *Plaga 1*, 2008 (Voluspa Jarpa)



FIGURE 5. *Plaga 2*, 2008 (Voluspa Jarpa)

In this second stage of Jarpa's work, the artist has realigned her poetics of labor with the political drive that demands an ideological recognition of the failures of historical fiction and, by analogy, of the representational system of painting to a poetics of terror and erotic annihilation. The feminine imaginary of the worlds constructed around the sign of hysteria are presented in Jarpa's work as a psychic theatre in which the subject is identified with the de-eroticized bodies of the hysterics. Clearly, the subjective declination of the intellectual varies toward that of the feminine subject, alienated from herself, bent by the interpretative submission that patriarchal ideology imprints on her. From the mechanical spring of the photography of the hysterical women of Charcot, Jarpa molds one of the ideals of the period in relation to feminine subjectivity, her propensity to the crisis. Inside this narrative, Jarpa is fixed on the photo-mechanical capture of the subject, documenting her pathology through the pose. The derogatory and animalized bodily gesture emphasizes the loss of reason in order to make it a participant of the game in which the other is a sign and a figure of its interpellation.

If in Oyarzún's work the popular-subject-worker resolved the contradictions of its inscription through parody, with Jarpa the intellectual-subject-worker does it with metonymy and intertextual reference—whose common imago turns out to be the visual representation of hysterical conversion. Common to both creators is the critical response that they generate to the threat that the social hangs over them. It is a violence that declines and confronts them with racial, sexual, ideological, and political vectors. The changes in the level of threat of the offers of the ideals made by culture will be noted with more emphasis in the next stage that I will mention in this chapter, which is that of the installer. This uncovers the semiotic prison that the painter herself has built up around her. The signs with the value of revolution, or those of her previous grief present in the previous period, cede space to the catechesis of reconciliation. Jarpa's work reads the military-transitional parabola in order to desacralize it through a secular counter-reading. It operates within the laws of syntax and, as a subject of discourse, shares the elements that organize the grammar that constitutes it. The clearly delineated presence of the modern, enlightened ideal is, to say the least, threatening to the self-affirmation that artists make in their catalogs. The contradiction between the ideals of the self-affirmed artist subject, an exceptional model of social conduct, that self being charged with acting as the ethical conscience of the modernization and progress of the twentieth century, will be presented in a more ambiguous tone in these authors, as I have already stated.

The peculiar nuances of their biographies are going to produce a subject more in line with the social disruptions characteristic of Latin American

societies. These disputes will also exist with the tensions between the subject ideal and the ideals of the I. In the works of the two artists we clearly see the intention to reveal the procedures that sustain them. This narcissistic gesture of modern self-reflexivity is added to the previous ones, situating the ideal of the I closer to the limits of its conservation. The selected artists, like many others of their generation, rub against the symbolic parameters of their ideal articulation as secular subjects, a product of the social destabilization itself.

I have commented that the retraction against the evanescence of discursivity, as in the case of the decline of institutionality, activates in the subjects this anxiety for secular subjective recognition that finds relief only in phantasmatic self/retrospection. The displacement of the world toward its symbolic limitations, characteristic of the periods of great socio-imaginary, institutional instability, reveals the existence of a “perverse core,” in the words of Chassegeut-Smirgel. According to her, “man has always endeavored to go beyond the narrow limits of his condition . . . [P]erversion is one of the essential ways and means he applies in order to push forward the frontiers of what is possible and to unsettle reality” (62).

In the 2002 exhibition *Histeria Privada/Historia Pública*, Jarpa recovers the index of destabilization representative of the hysterical symptom. She does it from the double articulation present in the photographic study of hysterical convulsion by Charcot. The hysterical gesture and the symptom before the interpreter appear in this montage as associated with the questioning of the patriotic emblem, the flag.

In this exhibition, Jarpa has already completely disassembled the historic referents that hindered her earlier work through the conventions of the landscape genre. The spatial references of the city and its modernization failure, framed by the genre, were unveiled through the resource of the wasteland imposed as a symptom of failure. This subjective sign of urban negativity, an unproductive space, blind to the profitability of real estate speculation,²³ like that of the “emergency house,” will intervene as a symptom of the success-oriented discourse of state neoliberalism. The landscape mobilized by Jarpa, from the discourse of the Chilean, pictorial tradition settled in the oligarchy’s Valle Central to the representations of the civic district, convulsed the state discourse of modernization. The meeting of both landscapes in the quadrant of the eight blocks of state civility denounces the economic fraud of the national archive. Authoritarian-military or welfare republican, the state discourse in Jarpa’s work has already lost the ideological consistency of its

23. A theme re-edited today in the masses of unfinished concrete of the real estate projects abandoned because of the global crisis. See the project “Coastal Center of CencoSud” in Santiago de Chile.

modernizing teleology, pronounced in the urban semiotics by the convulsions of vacant land and shacks. But this does not mean that it has been subjectively replaced, even in the artist.

In this exhibition, another element that differs from this patriotic intra-history is introduced: the return to the human figure at the hands of the portrait's monumentalization. Here Jarpa works with parody to portray the symptom of betrayal using the support of the flag. According to her catalog, the search for the kiss as a main theme in the Western, pictorial tradition resulted in "Judas's betrayal" portrayed by Giotto. Remember that the language of painting in itself, when not mediated by narrative illustration, is symptomatic per se. That is, in an analytic sense, it is to interpellate through an interpretation that legitimizes its occurrence in the world. In this last work, the allegory of the flag on the canvas and history is found to be intervened by the kiss. The pulsional meeting of suction, with all its erotic charge over the act of containing the other runaway, saturates the national space of the symbol with private experiences. The multiple versions for the kiss rest in diverse material supports of the patriotic collective, tightening its symbolic unity and coherence.²⁴ An emergency blanket, a traditional flag, and a white flag with text represent the tensions between the public cloths and the private cloths, between the discourses of history and of hysteria. This is a tension that can be moved to the constitutional risk of contempt of the patriotic symbols in which this exhibition could incur. What is evident here is the necessity of the painter to question the patriotic monuments and their liberal, failed counterpart, the wastelands in the continuity that these bear in the use of the shack as a signage of poverty and precariousness. Discursively speaking, face to face, her interpellation is directed to whoever occupies the foundational place of lost faith or their tradition, interrogating the nonexistent achievements in the evident failure of material modernization and the politics of the country.

With respect to this work, Jarpa says:

The images belonging to history, it is worth saying, those that are worthy of being in this category, of illustrating them and that are constituted into symbols, are the images agreed upon as *appropriate* to maintain the convention of narration. In *Histeria Privada/Historia Pública*, as the title indicates, I took into consideration two aspects that draw a range from the marginal to hysteria. The image and materiality of poverty—shack and

24. The originals of the three kisses painted in the exhibition are by Giotto. The first corresponds to *Santa Ana y San Joaquín*, the second to *La traición de Judas*, and the third to *Pietá*. For a specific explanation, see Jarpa, *Histeria Privada/Historia Pública*.

emergency blanket—speak to us about the social barbarity with which we habitually live, and that remind us of the precariousness of historical processes. I use the image of the kiss as a metaphor for the private realm, from the erotic in this case, and as a subjective drive erupts in the public sphere, that is, from the collective image that is signified by the flag. From this the existing limits between the public and the private visually appear, the limits of morality and desire, and consequently the limits between public history and private under the form of its antithesis: the “sickness” of hysteria. (*Histeria Privada* 26)

Perhaps the most important part of this exhibition, for the turn that her work will take, is the utilization of the two axes of signification: the metaphor and metonymy. History is displaced in the horizontal axis of the construction of meaning, while hysteria, as metonymy, does it in the vertical, interrupted axis. Expressed this way, Jarpa’s thought legitimizes history’s condition of constructing itself as a fiction because of an analogical similarity with the contents projected on it by reading. This is the paradigmatic dimension in which the subject, individuated by his entrance into the symbolic, operates from abolition. In its replacement, the signifier will come from the place of this abolished subject, while in the other axis, that of metonymy, the temporal space of substitution and the displacement of desire are constituted. It is precisely this desire of history, confirmed as one that is attached to the latent history for a subject without a sociosymbolic anchor, that Jarpa will explore in the following samples. In other words, she explores the replacement of the act of documentation and the archival of historic trauma, which the Chilean state took over, with the capacity for restitution of the fictional, post trauma account of those facts of which the discursive reparation is still pending for citizens.

In her nearly fifteen-year career, from 1994 to 2010, Jarpa’s work has deconstructed the primary, national discourses. From her reflection on the system of painting itself, the problematization of the picture, the focus, and what is outside the picture, and questioning the majority of the national accounts about state, citizen, and their identificatory offers, Jarpa builds an alternative narration to the socio-imaginary institutionality valid even in Chilean neoliberal modernity. In parallel, and even with this exhibition, the work of this artist continues the subject ideal from the previous period, carrying the modernization of the aesthetic field forward through criticism and its political counterpart. Unlike the period of military authoritarianism, where the critical equation was amply accepted, in the next moment of her work and until 2002, there was nothing similar to the aesthetic revolution in any

part of the social realm. On the contrary, a series of negotiation agreements between the state, politics, the market, and aesthetics began. Its translation to the field of public policies produced a populist effect as a consequence of the state management of these discourses and practices. The carnival and circus tropes express with clarity the tone that the intellectual field of the translation reaches. It is at this juncture, in which Jarpa's work would be reconfigured in order to express the radical discomfort with the authoritarianism of neoliberal development and with the homogeneity brought for the history of capital. Alert to the continual problematic of the issues represented in her work, Jarpa would attempt something much more radical.

In an interview given in November 2008, Voluspa Jarpa declared the three central questions of her work for the following stages, reunited in *Plaga*:

In my investigations on the relationships between history and hysteria, I am interested in thinking about how the account of history is constructed as an objective account; what happens when this account is faced with facts that are collectively traumatic or that collectively move us and, what happens with subjectivity inside or out, included or excluded from this collective account.²⁵

The Second Coming of Hysteria: From the Somatic Landscape to Plaga

I began this chapter by highlighting the fact that the discourse of hysteria was read in the past as a denunciation of a specific mode of exercising power. This discourse has infiltrated the visual work of Voluspa Jarpa from her emancipation as an individual artist in 1995.²⁶ Mindful of the political situation in the country, her work reflects the unresolved contradictions between one mode of production and another, between one mode of domination and another. The hegemony of capital reshaped the contours of the state and the politics in the Chilean social sphere. After the transitional success in the management of consent, the horizon of subjective interpretation was emptied of meaning for citizens. The mediatized public sphere gave way to a virtual marketplace of bonding, in which the necessary solidarity for the mutual recognition of

25. Interview with Voluspa Jarpa on May 13, 2009, <<http://www.canaldearte.com/?p=59>>, 9:24 to 10:35.

26. Coincidentally, this was the year that the centennial of the first joint publications of Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud on hysteria were commemorated. *Studies on Hysteria* was published for the first time in 1895 in Vienna.

subjects and their imaginary institutionality could not be filled by the old discourses. Only accounts from faith, in particular those of the Protestant churches and the most extremely conservative, were able to continue providing subjects with solid narratives in which and for which they could be inscribed in social life. More and more, Chileans saw themselves pushed toward territories beyond the reach of the secularization of signs.

In the midst of these changes, art emerged as an alternative, moral vehicle, appropriate for getting a hold on the new forms of administering politics through culture. Given the scarce political notificatory capacity of the Concertación governments, they were given the task of constructing a cultural citizenship that could reverse the social differences left by the successful neoliberal experiment, based on the repositioning of a moral, conciliatory basis. Certain that this was the path to development, “to grow with equality” was embodied in a moral-populist invitation whose purpose was reconstructing the social bond through the revitalization of a national cultural discourse in which everyone was accommodated. The idea of constructing a solidarity against two moral catastrophes, first that of communism and later that of the dictatorship, was especially effective. Nobody could escape this logic. Both contingencies reevaluated in economically and legally sanctioned agreements, returned the lost faith to the capacity for moral agency of the state and its institutions. The state, now reestablished in the historic continuity of the exercise, was liberated from an authoritarian past, and the versions of history began to dangerously appear. Capital’s hegemony came from the hand of the private secularization of subjects. Along with this trend, two new modes of behavior appeared: civility and responsibility. Both contemporary processes can be understood not only as new subjective configurations of the domination of subjects, as the sociology of the individual would have it, but as two types of distance between the social and the individual. They are, for this work, the last recognizable distances between what is symbolizable and not. Once the codes of conduct are lost, as a last contention of the common good, the coming of “moral chaos” will respond to the fall of these patterns.

In this scenario, the change that occurred in Jarpa’s poetics, from 2004, reveals that the criticism made of the authoritarian, military state is identical to that which could be made to the liberal, global state. The national narratives have been reedited in the key of multicultural reconciliation, the patriotic emblems and symbols have been revitalized by the border disputes with Peru and Bolivia, the populist nationalisms of the Right and Left have revived Chile’s destiny of a singular exception amongst the nations of the continent, minorities have acquired statistical representation, and even the imagination has become a space privatized by global, communicative management. All

this is upheld by the economic stability given by a liberal, predatory discourse of subjectivity. In the words of Zygmunt Bauman:

Consumer society achieved something that had before been unimaginable: it reconciled the pleasure principle with that of reality . . . Instead of combating troublesome and stubborn, although probably invincible, human desires, it converted them into faithful and responsible (because they are paid) guardians of rational order. (230)

These conditions and others are those that make it necessary to observe how a symptom of the past, like the social figure of hysteria, with a high disruptive charge in its cultural reception, allows us to revisit contemporaneity, given its appearance in Jarpa's work. This urgent presence demands a re-delimitation of its interpretative potential, in particular with regard to the emancipatory capacity of certain subjectivities (the feminine) as a response to a given social organization.

We will focus on one of Jarpa's latest exhibitions, *Plaga* (2008), where her passage from painting toward work with volumes and space becomes definitive. The last three exhibitions have as a common denominator the figure of the "hysterical woman," and a fundamental change in the declination of the subject-artist-intellectual, in order to position herself in reaction to the so-called Foucauldian subject of "bio-politics."²⁷ When I say "figure," I concretely refer to the visual materialization of sickness through a trans-montage with which she takes on a ferocious reflection on the human condition of women, or their lack thereof. For the first time, the subject does not feel intellectually responsible, appealed to in her structural position as an organic intellectual, but rather compelled to do it against the grain of instrumental reason as a gendered subject. Jarpa highlights the structural and material determinants that affect the production of feminine subjectivity because of its pathological identification with the figure of the hysteric woman. The artist proposes the dissolution of borders between functional (normal) neurosis and the other pathological manifestations of contemporary affectivity historically associated in the psychiatric institution with the feminine condition. She understands the condition of gender as a construction that responds to the socioeconomic variables implicated in the modern paradigm of the lack of women's rights. Feminine passion is perceived as a threatening excess that political liberalism has rejected or repressed in its abstract conception of the individual. It is

27. Interview with Voluspa Jarpa on May 13, 2009, <<http://www.canaldearte.com/?p=59>>, 12:50 to 13:04.

precisely women, as subaltern culture, excluded from the enjoyment of full citizenship, that have taken part in their stigmatization inside the psychological record of nineteenth-century social pathology. The feminine stigma is none other than that which qualifies them as “subjects of passion,” positioning them outside the model of the Catholic, baroque modernity prevailing on the continent. The traditional paths of access to their social action in the public sphere are offered to them as the only possibilities for subjectification: women not suitable for bioreproductive labors, that is, that abdicate from the maternal role and the Marian, social drive that sanctifies them; women reticent of the subjective absolute of the spouse clause, emanated from the sex-matrimony contract; women averse to the different types of nonreclusion, monastic, single, of mental convalescence, or to their sociosubjective recognition in analogical institutions to those of the feminine essence, like works of charity, social service, and education.²⁸ Following the thought of literary critic Bernardita Llanos in which she elaborates an interpretation to explain the changes in the modes of production for the feminine subject in the Chilean narrative of the twentieth century, we coincide in that the feminine, aesthetic reflection allows the female subject of art:

To suspend the automation or the naturalization of the masculine, ideological coordinates in culture . . . *passion* becomes a category that opposes the logos, and where the subject constructs itself through the Lacanian or Freudian desire that precedes the symbolic female representation making meanings operate differently while liberating the process of signification from its conventional ties. Thus, when it is put into languages, passion textualizes a singular and individual experience where the world is in process of becoming rather than already completed. (12)²⁹

Jarpa appeals to this dimension of subjectivity, detached from the points of subjectification traditionally assigned to women by patriarchal culture. By using the figure of the hysteric woman, Jarpa reveals the perverse organization repressive of the vital energies of women, oriented by the ideals of a state, authoritarian modernity. It is the materiality of her plastic discoveries, the hysteric conversion, the patient of the scientific will’s convulsed body in the photography by Charcot, and her exploratory zeal of the possibilities of

28. For a detailed discussion on the processes of feminine subjectification in women’s literature in the context of liberal and Catholic modernities of the Chilean twentieth century, see the excellent work of Bernardita Llanos, *Passionate Subjects/Split Subjects in Twentieth-Century Literature*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2009.

29. Bernardita Llanos, unpublished manuscript.

painting as muteness that catapult her to plastically conceptualize the horror that consumes her (subjective) against the organic repression of the capacity for interpellation and subjective and historic recognition of feminine subjects. This finding is what leads her to realign the ethics of her work, that of her previous intellectual, political commitment with the historic and revolutionary vanguards, and, as a secondary consequence, to rethink the logic of her montages. Jarpa, the installer, declares that she seeks the creation of a “pictorial atmosphere that is at the same time graphic” in order to spectacularize the collapse of modern reason over the materiality of feminine bodies by means of somatic convulsions.³⁰ Jarpa thus represents for us the insanity, no longer that of the accustomed artist outcast, but rather that of her time and gender. It is a sickness/sign—hysteria—that demands to recover the feminine body genuflected in industrial modernization by the masculine, Cartesian dictum. These civilizing mechanisms attempt to “cure them” of the irrationality and animalism with which the culture of patriarchal rationalism has endowed them. Tied to Kantian thinking, this idea of passion like “a pathology of the will” is the true center of her reflection in the exhibitions *Soma*, *Plaga*, and later in *Síntomas de la Historia* (2009).

Modernity, then, is a façade that hides the negative, devastating effects exercised over those who do not inscribe themselves in its models of operation. Clearly, the irrationality of its practices is underlined inside the play of conjugal relationships and of gender to which the modern project obliges all subjects. It is the alienation of the feminine subject, by her rejection of her subjective inscription in the cultural mythologies of the binary sex-gender system, that the hysteric women demonstrate not only in their primitive interpretation in the work of Breuer and Freud, as incapable of pleasure and sexual exercise, but also in Jarpa’s reading, where the sexual analogy, with its material bi-dimensionality, denaturalizes them in order to produce a tridimensional phantom as a whole.

Jarpa’s work, with the spatialization of the spastic school of thousands of figurines of hysteric women, coincides or continues also with the main lines of the contemporary discussion on social and individual action. On one side is the feminist, theoretical thought, in its criticism of the social binaries, the political dominance that rests over these, and the biological determinism that is detached from them. It incorporates the redefinition of the ethical and moral parameters in the frame of biomedical developments of the epistemological revolt provoked by AIDS, and, finally, it works with the technological overdetermination of organisms and individuals.

30. Interview with Volupsa Jarpa on May 13, 2009, <<http://www.canaldearte.com/?p=59>>, 13:55.

Taking the already mentioned photography by Charcot as a starting point, Jarpa creates twelve stamps with which she prints a dozen original seals. Each of them leads to two-dimensional (stamped) and three-dimensional (printed and punched, suspended by nylon strings) series.³¹ The figures originate flat, and volumetric formations are installed in two adjoining rooms. The first of them contains the intertwined series, suspended and condensed in the center, and decompressed toward the extremes, giving the impression of a multi-form cluster of minute signs, similar to flying insects. The second room is the deposit for the same volumes, but they are placed/stacked on stains on the floor that end up constructing a “zone.” The working hypothesis, according to the artist, is “to represent the previous experience of the hierarchal organization of language, where body becomes material for narrative impossibility.”³²

By asking ourselves what radical impossibility Jarpa is responsible for by interrogating the ways in which culture questions its own fiction of functional stability (discourses of memory, history, state), we are also asking ourselves how they are organized and from what fissures these symptoms show up for the subject and for the social, and how it is ethically possible to produce a horizon for politics in which subjects find an accommodation that is in itself impossible. The answers to these questions have been disclosed in this work in other sections. Here I am interested in focusing on the appearance of the feature of gender in the constitution of the new declination of the subject ideal. The intellectual subject abdicates its condition, together with the anomaly that the offer of the intellectual acquires in market culture. Discredited or replaced by the businessman or the technocrat, the declination of the I’s ideal is retracted to the imaginary that in the unconsciousness acquires the phantasmatic representation of the woman’s sign. The radical of the subject’s experience is that the imaginary identification with that position puts her on the side of the defensive formations of animals who group together as a survival mechanism. The curious declination of gender, individuated from the offer of the feminine, liberal subject, does not make sense at all for the artist—in the discussion of the liberal feminisms, both for the subject of the paradigm of rights and the subject of the emancipatory drive.³³ Instead, she is invested in the “weightless unconsciousness,” proposing to return to a place,

31. The montage is formed of 55,000 figures and 1,800 strings. Voluspa Jarpa in an interview by Cecilia Valdés Urrutia appearing in the newspaper *El Mercurio* of Santiago, August 17, 2008.

32. Interview with Voluspa Jarpa on May 13, 2009, <<http://www.canaldearte.com/?p=59>>, 9:24 to 10:35.

33. See Kathya Araujo in the introduction to her book *Estudios sobre Sexualidades en América Latina*.

a zone of representation that negates the scenes in which she discursively occurs, so that she will be able to account for the “air in which this occurrence is held.”³⁴ The subject declines its new ideal formation, continuing the subject ideals offered by the moment she lives in, in order to begin to perceive herself as part of a collective violated from the roots themselves of language. By elaborating the consistency of her subjective position, the artist becomes animal. Aristotle said that the essential human characteristic is its imitative capacity. No other species is capable of voluntary, reflexive, and distanced imitation of its peers. I would like to highlight that the figure of the hysterical woman allows us to observe how the moral distances constructed by the social narratives for subjects are completely abolished. The legitimacy of other abstract patterns introduced by capitalist modernity cancelled them. Civility and responsibility narratives deregulated, subjects opt for the offer that nonsymbolized power makes for them. They should represent themselves as victims of symbolic precariousness. It is here that perversion emerges again as the structural response to the demand of secularized individualism.

Be it understood, the figure of the hysterical woman represents an entity that gets rid of everything that favors its path toward social legitimacy in which the discourses of technology, science, faith, and politics respond to the same instrumental reason. Rehumanized by the narrative precariousness in which it is immersed, the subject declines the liberal, feminine gender in favor of a bioethics of collective terror. This rehumanization, in which the subject can establish a bond, concretely appeals to the nuclear-somatic character of the threatened species. Biology becomes the only possible ethics for subjects abandoned to a letterless destiny. Just like in the movie *Fight Club*, these individuals replenish solidarity registers. For example, consider the case of the self-help clubs for the terminally and chronically ill, addicts, the hopeless, the infectious—those for whom “shared suffering” forms a substantial part of the social bond.³⁵ We live in a society in which the threat of illness stalks the subject with an attractive, identitary power. It is here where the hysterical woman calls for the reinterpretation of her symptom. The swarm replaces the mass, the stain of the people, the pure gesture to the proletariat; becoming secular victims of the signic precariousness of negative, subaltern modernity, we are making metonymy. The hysterics-subjects appear in Jarpa’s work in order to

34. Interview with Voluspa Jarpa on May 13, 2009, <<http://www.canaldearte.com/?p=59>>, 14:09.

35. *Fight Club*, movie from 1999, directed by David Fincher. Based on the novel by Chuck Palahniuk, in which an insomniac employee of an automobile company begins a series of visits to self-help groups for sick people that help him through catharsis to overcome his sleep problem. His encounter with a soap salesman reveals to him the global existence of an organization to channel masculine violence.

mark the discomfort of culture against the extreme fragility of symbols. It will be these figures that show us the lack of collective resources to face the subjective desolation that we inhabit.

The problem that Jarpa illustrates, in the words of Martuccelli, is that which “concerns the unstable relationship and in profound redefinition with which we live amongst social injustices, subjective experiences and political languages” (60). For our reading, the true equation would be, for injustice, that of the psychic implosion of subjects because of sovereign excess, proposed as an ideal offer by liberalism; for subjective experience, the ideological retraction and its imaginary replacement. For political language, both conditions are translated in its fall. The indication of the artists is even more ominous for the absolute crisis of this last point. The work that reflects on the gendered subject collectively terrorized will culminate in 2010, the year of the bicentennial commemoration of the republic.

José Pedro Godoy: Subjectivity and Method in Post-Democracy

The third of those chosen for analysis in this chapter is José Pedro Godoy (1985–). In this section I pause to examine the subjective modulation that this artist proposes against the reflection that his work proposes on representation itself. His theoretical problem is to visually work with the challenges that the technological systems of representation pose to the human sensorium and how the diverse rates of reality are affected by the different scripts of subjectification that the contemporary, social discursivities offer him. The conjunction of the digital-visual transmission of experience with technical problems of the retina is expressed in the selected topics, in which the combinatory modes of the original and the copy are explored. The formal lack of distinction of the digitalization of the original *des-auratiza* the experience while it continues presenting new-old challenges for the genres and pictorial-manual and volumetric procedures. Without a doubt, the most problematic node in his project is that of the manuality faced with the analogical record versus the digital experience of exact equivalence. Godoy, like Jarpa, with the use of the process colors in his works of the mid-’90s, faces the distortion implicit in the analogical reproduction with the noble resources of painting. The thickness of the stain on the glaze of the oil is characteristic. This overlay technique appeals to the monochromatic conditions in order to imitate the digital pose. Godoy works with two visual supports as models: on the one hand, certain industrial memorabilia constituted by visual imaginaries of advertising and

family albums. The photographic resource responds to the traditional emulsion of nitrate from silver. Moreover, he draws from archives digital images taken principally from the repertoire of the nude made by the global culture archived not only in museums but also on the Internet. From high culture, the images come from the history of the male nude in painting. On the other hand, the imagery of the homosexual, industrial porno completes his imaginary repertoires. The result of the combination of these different visual sorts is the coming of a certain type of landscape that will characterize his work. With respect to the social organization of postdemocracy, Godoy embodies the ideals of a generation less worried about the dispute of political hegemony than about access, pleasure, and interaction in a medial public sphere. This right to a cultural global-local citizenship responds to the effects of structural technical-communicative modernization united with the changes in the offers of subjective identification offered to society and in particular to the artistic-intellectual field occurring in the postdemocratic Chile.

In the visual work of José Pedro Godoy, the subject-artist's experience against the problems that his own profession raises in the digital era constitutes his nucleus. The artist is a technician who resolves issues proper to visual work in perfect harmony with his own life circumstance, more subjective than historical, but always attentive to the multimedia and popular offer of visual cultures. With ten years of chronological difference with the work of Demián Schopf (1975–),³⁶ Godoy faced photography and digital media without a formal theoretical training on the analytics of the image or the procedural and rhetorical aspects that accompany it. Remote from the conception of the piece thought of as a support of record or a scene, like Schopf does, and more akin to the work of Oyarzún and Jarpa, Godoy works on the effects that media gives rise to in the spectator in order to discuss the statute of the real and the demands to the materiality of the painting in the context of what is called interactive realism. His work proposes the pictorial rematerialization of the retinal experience in front of the technological-digital sphere, strengthening the imitative capital of the painting. Now, if with Demián Schopf, as seen previously with Mario Navarro (1970–), the images are framed in narrative discourses that intersect disciplines, times, and multiple cultural discursivities instrumentalized by the counterliberal ideology, with Godoy the narratives of symbolic support of his imagery work correspond in particular with rhetoric about the masculine and certain popular-bourgeois memorabilia. On the one hand, we find ourselves in the supremacy of the masculine nude in

36. Whom I choose in order to illustrate the consciousness of the political, postmodern artist before the transmedial experience as a problematization of the visual and cultural languages.

the industrial discourse of pornography. Both imaginaries put two spheres/worlds in contact in his work in the face of mediatic and museum consumption of homoerotic desire. Thus, in his work, we see how the superior model of the masculine image in the pictorial tradition and its imaginary and symbolic projection in homosocial relations is evident by means of the mechanism of the *trompe l'oeil*, in which visual consumption with the virtual worlds of pornography and the canonical, pictorial, Western imaginary are put face to face. The subjective skill in Godoy is the integration with the experiences of the new intimacy of the transglobal sphere. These are exemplified through references to the mass consumption of gay porn, thanks to the homophilic aesthetics, that appeal to the industrial consumption of its idealization of the masculine by the heteroclitite public. The artist subject is positioned like the natural result of the discourses of the globalization of citizenships, economies, and politics. Foreign countries, or should we say, transnational industries,³⁷ resonate in the Chilean discursivities of progress while his work decants the natural outcome of these technical-communicative exchanges. The statistical availability of stored data in the Internet downgrades the symbolic value of the archives—national and museum—resignifying the experiences of the Internet users, extracting from them the ideal features that accompany the subject. Godoy is oriented and produced in line with the offers of his pictorial, historiographic referents. Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806), and François Boucher (1703–1770) provide the criteria of the French rococo: succinctly, the elite persecution of the pleasurable, intimate experiences in imaginary spaces of theatrical inspiration. The characters in them, members of the courtly aristocracy moved to the rural areas in search of fun, are replaced by the erotic ideals of the porno models or private references to friends and acquaintances of the painter. In parallel, the transsubjective experience of image consumption in the Internet is reincarnated in the experiences of the bourgeois-courtesan against theatrical masquerades. It should not be strange to observe in a future work of Godoy the appeal to a *tableau vivant* in an upcoming installation dedicated to the paradisiac rococo gardens.

From a historiographical look at his production, we see that the narratives of bourgeois industrial consumption and its objectification/commodification in the fetish are also present in incorporating this '80s liberalism, rococo imaginary. The object of art as commodity, of mixed, artisan-industrial origin and operation, is erected as a projection of the new style of individualism imposed by the latest of the *Louises* in France. From the noble-bourgeois

37. Pornographic and commercial, with Godoy.

gardens, the taste for the *racaille* jumps to the detailed observation of nature in order to move intimacy to pictorial representation. Godoy's neo-rococo aims to a similar materialization of contemporary intimacy expressed in the decorative and functional work of his imagery. Often erotic, most of the time a reflection of the new moral, postdemocratic liberties, and much less grandiose than the epic-political narratives of his predecessors, Godoy's act rests in the portrait, still life, and *fêtes galantes* genres. His visual work is a perfect proof of the forms taken by the transnational imaginary of sexuality and the contemporary attitudes toward it. It is loaded with the psychological determinants of scopophilia and fetishism—the retinal pleasure libidinizes certain objects—in order to introduce us into universes less and less historicizable, in which the erotic subjectivity saturates all virtual space and that of the canvas. The painting works like a decoration to excite the senses. Just like pornography interacts with the sexual fantasies of its users, the painting acquires a playful value in the eighteenth-century courtesan rites. The new individuality of a modernity more and more self-oriented, fostered by the ideals of the French Revolution, is prefigured here in the libertine modes of a decadent aristocracy, which, retracted to its resting places, perversely engages in enjoying the last pleasures granted by the prerogatives of its nobility. These libertine pleasures, in which the moral degradation of modern free will is announced, are ordered around the celebration of lust, pageantry, and pleasure, whose protagonists, victims and perpetrators, in gender equality, have been seen in more recent investigations³⁸ like a proto movement of unblemished intellectual and contemporary ethical individualism, characteristic of liberal democracies.

Other visual artists match equally with him. Pablo Ferrer (1977–) works, with narratives that come from the imaginaries of porno (heterosexual, in his case), combined with references to infantile rhetoric and catalog scenes from classic painting, coincide with Godoy in both his interest for artificiality/theatricality and in the mixture of narrative and decorative genres. The most notable difference between the two is the conception of pleasure that underlies Godoy's work. The lust-luxury equation opens reflection on the relations between the spatial constraints of desire and the objectual satisfaction of it, where the frontiers between reason and feelings dissipate. Circumstances will determine the individual, and not only his will or the resulting moral action. This libertine maxim acts constantly in Godoy's works upon which I will comment in this text. These circumstances are also of class as much as of the senses in the transglobal and intimate economies. The sensorial role

38. Michel Delon, *Le Savoir-Vivre Libertin*, and Marc Andre Bernier, *Libertinage et Figures du Savoir*.

is present from the beginning in his works. The smell and taste of the food are transformed in libidinal sensations at a dinner to share in *Pintar como Comer* (2005); in *Todo el amor que perdí* (2007), a motley assortment of feminine bijouterie, with glass figures, ceramics, and plaster under the sounds of the *bachata* of the work's title, speak to us about the global Persian markets; in *Orgias* (2008–2009), the digital textuality of the pornographic image is attached to the manuality and pictorial texture in order to collapse the distances between public and private spaces, in the space created by the gaze of the spectator before the painting. The pictorial manipulation of the sexual scene activates the desire in the observer. This is a deep desire, whose satisfaction no longer depends on the secret circuits in which it has been confined but rather occurs there along with aesthetic experience: the coldness of Bohemian glass, of Swarovski's signature, carries him to the parody of Paradise in *Paradise* (2009), the geospatial relocation of exotic birds in mating courtship or fighting in *Bravío* (2010).

From a narratological perspective, we can also observe how the coincidences between speaker and the utterance of the “media-art storyteller” of the painter-narrator in Godoy and Ferrer are repeated in the proposals of César Gabler (1970–) and Jorge Cabieses (1975–). In both cases, the mediated images of international seminaries or myths of origin and the condemnation of the species relating to foundational or apocalyptic stories of Western culture serve to construct contemporary counterstories of the global history of humanity. In them, the active role of the spectator mimics the gesture, no longer of the baroque mind, as Foucault would have it, of his own mental positioning prefigured by the god-artist, but rather of Haraway's homo cyborg. In this, the contemplative individual interacts in a hypertextual way with the technological proposal that upholds the interpretative matrix of the work. Gabler and Cabieses work the scenography of the hypertext in vignettes indebted to the object's historical genres, like still life or the subject, like in certain self-portraits, in order to counteract from the hyperinformative format of banality that art has made of information culture.

I highlight in this general recollection that accompanies Godoy a collective appeal to the construction of history to the scale of the individual, emphasizing the work on the theaters of experience just as it happens with the use of the diorama or the 3-D models with Ferrer. These new subjects, natural inhabitants of the technosphere, are also of the counternarrative provided by the havens supplied by the infantile and adult imagination. These mediatic relationships, combined with the fantastic representations of infantile worlds, show us the construction of a new local identity that responds to the exploration of freedom in artificial formats. All of the authors, in one way or other,

contemplate in their work the new contemporary affectivity observable in the exhibition's landscapes of infantile and adult human intimacy present in the techno-digital dramatizations of their work.

We have made this brief tour in order to situate Godoy's singularity over other possible figures of the perverse artist of interactive realism. As I stated earlier, José Pedroy Godoy belongs to the most recent generation of Chilean artists. Despite his age, he is already emerging as one of the most promising. Unlike Oyarzún and Jarpa, he received his initial formation in the School of Art of the Catholic University, to later continue with a master in visual arts at the University of Chile. The thematic line of his work, currently, is developed around the exploration of the notion of landscape and the formal changes that it suffers in the technological and mediatic scene in which it dwells. He combines the exploration of pictorial manuality against the representative possibilities of other digital media of reproduction with the reeroticization of the act of painting. With them, he resignifies themes degraded by mass consumption, as with the case of homosexual pornography and any image freely available to the public in print or digital media. In an acute and disturbing way, Godoy's work repositions the tension between art and pornography-lettered culture and mediatic-popular culture, particularly observable in the works in the series *Orgía* (2009), *Orgía Floral* (2008), *El Beso* (2007), and *Versión no oficial del Desnudo Masculino* (2006). In these pieces, Godoy inverts the polarized terms of art and porno in order to make the second notion the measure of the first. The polarization between both categories, and by extension of the discourse on which and for which they are maintained, has been a difficult line to discern. Godoy faces the problem not only to reflect on the canon of the masculine nude in the history of Western art, but from the operation of reception and manipulation of it. As Kelly Dennis reminds us in the introduction to *Art/Porn: A History of Seeing and Touching*, the sensorial relation between the spectator of certain works and its object is not one of mere contemplation in the past, but rather one of open interaction, in which the sensorial and biopsychic excitability plays a central role. Godoy takes from his culture the postmodern ideal of the vanguard artist, not an ideological vanguard but rather an aesthetic vanguard, centered in the ontological tension of interactive realism on the side of the subjective, global variations of digital capitalism. Unlike Oyarzún and Jarpa's move, in which the politics of identity is crucial for the production of their works and for the point of subjectification itself, from the revolutionary ideology to that of gender, Godoy disregards these discourses, positioning himself as the artist of globalization, understood as a "natural" product of the socialization of the digital technologies. He is the subject of the infor-



FIGURE 6. *Orgía 1*, 2009 (José Pedro Godoy)

mation society that can choose a nostalgic place for his identification—a subject inflated by the quantity of informative consumption available even when the artist himself is conscious of the expressive-aesthetic possibilities of the products of techno-digital mass consumption. I agree here with the idea expressed by Kelly Dennis while describing the work of North American Jason Salavon (1970–). Certain contemporary art has the capacity to “liberate ‘information’ from its technocratic service to the military-industrial-entertainment complex, thereby claiming information for aesthetic and creative, not just corporative end” (142). We should remember that pornography,

in its exhibition of the human body with sexual, instrumental purposes of satisfaction, is related from the beginning to the use of mechanical technologies reproductive of the image. Godoy associates his work, and in a certain way so do Oyarzún and Jarpa, with the invention of photography at the end of the nineteenth century, but taking it as far as eighteenth-century France. The pornographic and obscene images—those called to remain outside the scene of documentation and record—formed their first findings from the beginning of the popularization of the new media. In this same line of thought followed by Dennis in her book, we can locate the work of José Pedro Godoy. While Ruff manipulates digital, pornographic images with the purpose of altering the potentialities of their support, Godoy chooses to saturate his with the intention of overexposing the digitalized texture of the pornscape as a verisimilitude reality. The intervention of the pixel quality, just as Voluspa Jarpa has done in the series *Besos* (2002), allows both the German photographer and Godoy to obtain a new density on the visual surface that accounts as a new real. This operation on the optical qualities of the digital image is also on the experimental possibilities with the media, where the pictorial materiality is also that of the model. Like Godoy, Ruff is fascinated with the discovery of this new digital body, the body or “post-body” of the landscape of the Internet age (Dennis 130).

We are in the local-virtual Chile of privatization and the consumption of the imaginary of the intimate, marked by the sanitized pleasures post-AIDS. The porno-sphere begins to become public world-sphere, a possible and accessible offer for the majority of the subjects of the new democracy. On it and from it, the discursive liberal coordinates impede the subject from acting together with the offers of the libidinal economy in order to thin ever further the real production possibilities of a social bond outside the hybrid limits of this cybernetic individuality. Fearful of the exchange of bodily fluids from intimate contact orchestrated by global hygiene, the pornological sphere has become in recent years the safe space for the subjects’ intimate and solitary enjoyment. It is a success for hygiene in its most pure form: the market. For others, like Brian McNair, the porno-sphere is a place of multiple subjective mediations amongst which paid transactions count. What happens is that the world opened through noncommercial networks of sexual offers has come to move intimacy from between four walls to the virtual wall of the screen. Just like graffiti takes public space by assault in the city, inscribing urban microstories on various supports of the architectural fabric of the city, the pornographers of the sexosphere write the intimate stories of their desires on the virtual city with their digitalized bodies. The social networks extend and restructure the way in which social groups are organized, and they

also expand the fantasy of the subjects. The pornological sphere has not been exempt of this condition. Thousands of users are connected each day to interact with one another. Hands on the keyboards and the body itself, eyes resting on the images transported by the seminal “uploads and downloads,” from and toward anonymous users, consumers of packaged sex. Already by the mid-1940s in the United States, the pornographic industry was solidified amongst the most stable goods and services; pornography in Chile today ranks fourth internationally in virtual sex searches in Google.³⁹ Its expansion has increased until it has become a transnational powerhouse to which the dividends supplied by the exploited bodies of the third world do not escape. This is the world that the experience of Godoy’s subject inhabits.

Homo Pornography, Social Bond, and Subjectivity

In some of his works, José Pedro Godoy engages with the imaginary-virtual repertoires of homo erotica. Godoy technically explores the capacity for provocation of the pose, in this case using photographs of “virtual sex scenes” and the infancy of family and acquaintances. He also explores in conjunction the forms of stressing an image from its support and materiality. His work includes a reflection on the relocation of landscape in artificial contexts (an aquarium, a toy box), in which the discursive offer of the Internet replaces the streets and walkways of the city of the first modernity. However, the materialization of his work, although it yearns for the center, is maintained in an “in-between” because of its condition of local artist faced with the possibilities that virtual citizenship offers. The ideas of a national essence or identification traced particularly to the Chilean nation have been declined in favor of a universal-mediatic citizen inscription. We are faced with the aesthetic speculation about complete worlds of interconnected users responding to the virtual unison of mediatic interaction/interpellation. One of José Pedro Godoy’s most disturbing exhibitions is *El Lugar de la Fragilidad* (2008). In it, the painter offers a series of works in which he has painted figures of children over layers of industrial sugar on cake icing. Each child, male and female, is representing a pose that is closer to an adult movement than an infantile one. Worried about the tension between both poles, Godoy explores the gaze over the inscription in painting the act of the child offering him- or herself for public contemplation. In general, as the artist himself has stated about his visual work:

39. *Diario Las Ultimas Noticias*, Santiago de Chile, May 2009.



FIGURE 7. *Comestible*, 2007 (José Pedro Godoy)

I am interested in my painting explicitly accounting for the simulation presented from the staging of an artifice. Through this artifice, I construct images lacking verisimilitude, but that are installed from the codes of truth and that are formed from certain devices that account for Western visual culture, in order to be presented this way as reality, even though they are images stripped of a factual existence in relation to how they are represented. They are spaces, scenes, places, nonexistent foliage, but they seem to exist as reality. My desire is to present fantasy as a possible space.⁴⁰

Just as with the perverse, what happens in the contemplation scene proposed by Godoy is mutual recognition. The drive that moves the contemplation scene operates over both just like in the pornographic agreement, moving

40. <<http://www.salacero.cl/?p=59>>.

the subject to the position of object and vice versa. The human interpellation and mutual recognition have ceased to exist from the instant in which only images take control of the imaginary situation. In the adult fantasy projected on the canvas, the sexuality crossed out in infancy irrupts in the intersubjective space of contemplation in order to convene the intimate exhibition of desire itself. Just as the sexual relationship demands the requirement of always occurring, the intimacy that scopophilia generates absorbs and forces the subject to continuously appear with its desire before the image. The analogy with pictorial contemplation becomes evident. In it, the infancy on the canvas unleashes the violence inherent to all erotic consummation.

The preponderance given by Godoy to infancy in this work coincides with the preoccupation of public discourse on the same theme in Chile. It does not deal only with the global agenda on pedophilia. It is about the country presenting the same characteristics as its North American equal in the antireligious roundup that occurred there between the '90s and 2000. Pedophilia is, moreover, the questioning of the representatives of four hegemonic social strata: namely, the priests, the business, the politicians, and the army, in that they are guardians of morality. All of them were exposed to public scrutiny. The public sphere was completely intervened by the investigators in consequence; the conservative backlash was swift. The fundamentalists and neoconservative movements took advantage of the situation of abuse cases discovered, many of them occurring over thirty years prior, in order to criticize the moral, sexual statute of the liberal state. This situation increased the polemic over the limits of the application of the law. Debates on redefining the social contract on the status of adulthood and childhood, the lowering of the minimum age to criminalize adolescents, the renewal of the polemics on the separation of state, church, and the military, not to mention the role of the new state power—all ended redefining the ideological positions around what would be considered as national morality and the relation between public, private, and intimate. The petitions insisted on the criminal regulation of cases—civil law versus religious or military law—and drawing a new horizon of meaning for the political. Infancy was the new moral reserve for the future of the society models that the state should offer as an alternative in a novel public sphere. The defense of childhood against the onslaught of the offer of “sexual consumption” would contain this democratization of accesses and excesses that could alter the social stratification. All of this was a consequence of the modes and access to the media offer. Just as Michael Warner argues, the necessity to produce a new social order for conservative groups implied that in their center was an imaginary energy constituted by their internal child: “That Child remains the perpetual horizon of ever acknowl-

edged politics, the phantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention [. . .] as a fight for the future” (3).

The Split Subject of the Pornscape

Let us look for a moment at the porn scene on the Internet. Virtual pornographic sites like Boy-Napped⁴¹ promote to their customer in satisfying sadistic fantasies using young/ripped adolescent models. Torture with chains, oral sex, military bandages, anal rapes, and mechanics constitute the visual repertoire. The models appear chained to beds that a torturer approaches. This is usually an older man. In other cases, the young boys are forced to practice oral sex without penetration. Other sites, like Broke College Boys,⁴² offer live initiation rites for American college students. On these sites, the challenge is for the boys to “commit” acts to satisfy the homoerotic fantasies of their fraternity brothers and, consequently, the Internet customers. The justification of the homosexual conduct assures that all the participants are older than twenty-one and heterosexuals, and the reason for prostituting themselves online is to pay the cost of their studies or accumulated bills—increasing the regular fantasy about seducing straight guys that some gay people declare having. Other sites, like Haze Him,⁴³ Straight College Men, or Straight Fraternity Men, advertise their services emphasizing the fact that the young men implicated in the available scenes are completing “initiation rites” for their respective brotherhoods or sharing certain lived homoerotic experiences with friends. These sites include all types of sexual tryouts under the excuse of being accepted and becoming “brothers” or receiving payment. The majority of the sites are organized by the erotic preferences of the clients and offer a sexual scale that starts with masturbatory games that, depending on the success of the model, increase in intensity according to the “ranking” that the clients themselves give. Tasks or dares like being a “guy serviced” or trying anal sex with another of the boys receive the highest demand. Without a doubt, the most requested/offered fantasy on the Internet has to do with the desire of having/seeing unprotected sex. These sites are known by the English name, Bareback.com, or by more popular expressions like “No Condom Zone.”⁴⁴

Other peculiar sites are those that join sport and military service as spaces where a great performance of physical masculinity is expected. They

41. <<http://www.boynapped.com/>>.

42. <<http://www.brokecollegeboys.com/>>.

43. <<http://www.hazehim.com/>>.

44. <<http://www.nocondomzone.com/>>.

add to the menu the fact of being real models, like the case of Authentic Footballers.com—a site that promotes Argentine boys who play amateur soccer shown in individual scenes of autoerotic sex. The previews of the pages show them in peripheral zones of Buenos Aires, dominating the game, for the camera to later move to bedrooms or hotel rooms, where they masturbate for the audience. Other sites, like Rugged Bugger, offer professional players and international athletes captured by changing room cameras or journalists in dressing rooms. In addition, they offer home films filtered to the Internet for private consumption. One of the most famous in the United States and Europe is the transnational site Bel Ami.⁴⁵ Based on the title of the novel of the same name by Guy de Maupassant, this Slovak site was founded in 1993. Among its most salient features is the fact that it offers an ample variety of merchandise associated with one of the most known American sites, Corbin Fisher, and it has models that, in their rack of sales, even include incest between brothers, the Peters twins.

All these sites are constructed under a twofold economical contract: a libidinal logic of fulfilling gay fantasies anchored to the “desiring-machines” administered and regulated by the porn industry, and an economical plateau in which capitalism allows the signing of new sexual contracts for perverse desires to be satisfied. What is interesting is the repetition of the sexual contract pattern through the membership option, reassuring the correct distribution and arrangement of sexual drives and its objects. You pay for what indicates you know how to experience pleasure. Visually speaking, in Godoy’s work the market has crafted a body/porn scape for each single existing fantasy in homoerotic dimensions, and the painter’s eye has recognized the relationship between this new genre and his aesthetic project (rococo). The social bond has become a sexual imaginary bond through consumption of the subject’s libidinal choices in terms of what groups he is attracted to (civil heroes, cops, firemen, military men, businessmen, college athletes, prison guards, etc.), willing to be with, and share affections with (youth that represents the hope for future). Godoy’s painting reflects this libidinal new paradigm in which imaginary positions and desires structure the social economy of society. Homoerotic love now is available in a liberating way through Godoy’s reinterpretation of the rococo paintings, replacing the suffering and condemnation of the homosexual desire for a sensual, libertine, and enjoyable gay/scape visual narrative made available by culture with a simple click of the mouse.

Despite the fact that sexual trafficking is one of the most profitable operations around the world in this moment, reinaugurating unprecedented forms

45. <<http://www.belamionline.com>>.



FIGURE 8. *Orgía 2*, 2009 (José Pedro Godoy)

of slavery, with more than 27,000,000 people subjected to some form of it, it is not the central focus of this chapter to discuss the ethical, moral, or political-legal aspects implied in these types of global transactions. The pornography business touches some of these victims, above all in countries belonging to what has been called the Global South.⁴⁶

In José Pedro Godoy's work we are faced with the formal preoccupation that relieves, for his painting, the human landscapes exhibited in the network of sexual consumption. Several of his works represent, in a rich way,

46. The countries that form the Global South belong in their majority to Africa, Central America and Latin America, and Asia. In many of them, the pornographic industry is a possible outlet in the informal job markets.

the mechanical banality of paid sex. The work with materials provided by the Internet, like the previously discussed projects of Jason Salavon and Thomas Ruff in Dennis's book, in Godoy represent the attempt to materialize aesthetic experiences made with the digital-industrial wastes of popular and mediatic culture of the twenty-first century. Unlike the fascination provoked by the new architecture of cities at the end of the nineteenth century, with the consequent emergence of new subjectivities like the Baudelerian flâneur, these new users of the virtual highways care about exploring the digital formats that position them as the subjects of new possible experiences. From their own poetics, these contemporary authors rehearse and show us the new modes in which subjectification occurs in postcapitalist societies. Godoy's work may clearly remind us of the formality of academy in Watteau as a precursor. In his work with childhood and pornography, Godoy shows us the opposite of homoeroticism's sinful demonization through its use of mechanical and serial reproduction, employing popular culture's nostalgic, industrial memorabilia. By way of the painting, the artist is able to reinvent the aura of serialized intimacy of the twenty-first century. Unlike the work of Laura Carton,⁴⁷ and her Chilean equivalent in the work of Catalina Donoso (1958–),⁴⁸ Godoy does not stop at these class constraints that could set off or favor an erotic experience or investigate the influence of material conditions of existence in subjective production, its maintenance and recognition inside a determined condition of exceptionality. On the contrary, Godoy explores the way to recant on the canvas the depreciation of the erotic in the Judeo-Christian, Latin American, and baroque culture and to give it back the luxury that accompanies the unproductive expense of bourgeois erotica. We ask ourselves upon seeing his series *Orgías*, in which he has made the context disappear in order to leave in its place only the detail of the intimate landscape composed by the fragment of intimacy—faces, arms, hands, mouths, tongues—to which we look out upon as with the computer screen: Is this fragmentary intimacy really what we desire in its contemplation? Is it the necessary money to pay them, the status that accompanies the possession of the picture-body, to discover the camouflage of desire itself, the possibility of touching the skin offered? Or is this the best way to elude the surveillance

47. <www.dirtydomains.com>, 2002. Digital print. It presents a luxuriously prepared, rococo-style dining room. All of the objects could be thought of in ornamental function, accompanying different theatricalizations of social life, including a movie set or amorous-erotic fantasy.

48. Sala Gasco. *Oficial Lateral*. 2008. Donoso exhibits six large format paintings, grouped in two series: interiors with typical, Imperial-style furniture, born in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century, together with portraits of characters of the same era.

of censors by putting a price on the object of desire, a desire that in Godoy mimics the commercial purposes of industrial pornography?⁴⁹

Clearly, the derivation of Godoy's subjective position is much closer to that of the artist that in a radical and imperceptible way challenges the profits of the large pornographic companies, eroding with his work the capitalist devastation of subjectivity. With his manual work, he not only restores the aura of human subjectivity itself, but he returns to human sexuality the dealienating range that its commercialization has provoked in virtual circuits. Sex liberated from its mechanical reproducibility acquires new flesh, new textures in the erotic arts, in which the body of the work and the spectator are united by contemplation in order to restore the pleasurable dimensions amputated by sexual and reproductive technologies from pleasure.

In conclusion, let me summarize the subjective possibilities offered for the elaboration of the subject ideal in Godoy's work. Godoy continues the idea of being the operator of reality. No longer a laborer, nor an intellectual at the service of the state, now he is an artist-operator-spectator completely comfortable in his role of privileged "audience" viewing the world screen. Moreover, what is it he sees on the screen? He sees, observes, works, and reproduces the subject's confessional fantasies of the Internet that publically articulate modern lifestyles through the exportation of their intimacy to the public porno-sphere. It is a subject that exhibits its own intimacy in different formats and registers through which culture itself is emotionally, physically, and psychologically opened to others. Godoy represents a liberated-subject-artist whose individual aesthetic/ethics proposes the restoration of the social bond through the dealienation of sexual pleasure from the industrial market and its mechanical techniques of exercising.

49. Many of his images come from the site Bel Ami.

4

Literature and Homoscapes

*Changes in the Status of Subjectivity*¹

THIS CHAPTER presents a general overview of literature labeled as “homosexual” that was produced in Chile between 1989 and 2007. I contrast the imaginary discourses on sexual identity with the concrete advances made in the field of public policy in the same time period. I affirm that the apparent emancipatory achievement for sexual minorities obtained in the period does not necessarily translate into the consolidation of a paradigm of enjoyment of rights, but rather only into regulation. That difference is precisely what the novels selected for further analysis problematize. In both *El Viudo* by Jorge Ramírez and *Epifanía de una sombra* by Mauricio Wacquez, we observe the circulation of desire and the construction of identities outside the traditional regulatory framework. However, I study in depth here the analysis of the status of the subject in relation to the conception of freedom, the possibility they offer for individuation, and the cancelation of the symbolic inscriptions of the neoliberal discourse. Both texts suggest radical subjective constructions in their protagonists with which they denounce the fracturing of the traditional modes of configuration and identification. I deal with the concrete analysis of sadomasochist contracts in order to observe them as a case study of the modes of subjectivation supplied by the market for the subjects’ enjoyment. In the case of Ramírez’s novel, I explore in depth the analysis of the

1. A shorter version of this chapter was published in *INTI: Revista de Literatura Hispánica. Special Edition* (Providence: Providence College: Spring 2010).

libidinal economy that organizes the distribution of identities in the dynamic of sexual exchanges. On the other hand, in Wacquez, the perverse figure is associated with the “passion of memory” that runs throughout the text and constitutes its offer for individuation.

Homoeroticism in Chilean Narrative after Pinochet

In 2002, the writer and activist Juan Pablo Sutherland published the second homosexual literary anthology in Chile.² Entitled *A Corazón Abierto: Geografía literaria de la Homosexualidad en Chile*, and from the hand of one of the largest editorial groups, Editorial Sudamericana, the compiler selected thirty-one texts in which the biographies of the people and the lives of the characters were blended together. The contents dealt with dissident sexualities, present in the canon and in the national countercanon. This attempt, worthy in its political value, reveals how the topic in question fills a niche of market domestication. The consumption of this text constitutes a consecratory sepulcher for sexual minorities since capital, in its dynamic of expansion and reproduction, impregnates them with the homogenizing added value of multiculturalist tolerance.³

This commodification process would not become a commercial anecdote inside the book's circulation record but for the fact that it was considered a radical, and at the same time contradictory, economic-social and cultural setting, confirming the issues of human development in the country—in particular, the development of those citizens familiarized with having access to full enjoyment of sexual and cultural rights. That is precisely the plan of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).⁴ According to its 1998 report, the modernization model applied in the country achieved high levels of satisfaction. These were apparent in the socioeconomic matrix, the highest rate of success being the increase of the debt capacity of the population. However, the index of satisfaction demonstrated a progressive impoverishment of the subjective levels of achievement. This fact was confirmed in the exposure of serious deficiencies in the citizens' perceptions of security, employment,

2. The first formal anthology of “gay” or “queer” literature was published one year before in the magazine *Nomadías 4* of the Gender Program of the University of Chile. Its authors are poet Carmen Berenguer and critic Fernando Blanco.

3. A book with an identical format was published by the editorial Sudamericana in Buenos Aires one year before. The compiler is writer Leopoldo Brizuela and the anthology is named *Historia de un Deseo*.

4. For more information, see the website, <<http://www.undp.org>>.

income distribution, and access to health care. All of them were confirmed as insufficient in the UNDP report of 2002.

Sexual minorities appear in the governmental agenda for public policy with positions of legalization, regulation, and control, rather than access to the full enjoyment and recognition of rights. Despite the above, we observe that, in ten years, the Chilean state had achieved the approval in the Congress of a multitude of laws that provide the legal framework to sanction sexuality, including the decriminalization of sodomy in 1998. These laws include those related to domestic violence, emergency contraception, HIV-AIDS, divorce, parentage, sexual harassment, and sex crimes.⁵ To them are added those of lifting press and cinematographic censorship. Without a doubt, each and every one of them points to a certain level of emancipation of sexuality, but also to its regulation, as Kathya Araujo claims.⁶ The legislative tendency on the continent has been more devoted to debating the technologies of sexuality and its legal status than to the concrete achievements on the level of recognition of a sexual and cultural citizenship and enjoyment for minority subjectivities.⁷ The debate arises in terms of repealing homophobic legal frameworks (article 373 on “offenses against morality and decency”) and the expansion of the spheres of influence of the law, in relation to the regulation of desire (age of consent, same-sex marriage). This political scenario in a country recognized on the continent for its conservatism on themes of public morality seemed to indicate a movement toward change, the increase in the presence of sexual minorities in public space. In contrast, the narrative texts

5. On May 9, 2012, the Chilean Senate passed the first antidiscriminatory bill, including penalties for acts against sexual orientation. This is an emblematic moment, since in March 2012 a young, queer, twenty-six-year-old man was tortured, mutilated, branded, and finally, brutally murdered. Daniel Zamudio, after having stones repeatedly dropped on him from an elevated distance, agonized in a coma for twenty-four days before dying. The law had been in Congress for seven years prior to this crime. The law was finally approved on April 2012. Referred to by many as the “Zamudio Law”, it will enable Chileans to file antidiscrimination lawsuits and to add hate crime sentences for violent crimes.

6. See *Estudios sobre Sexualidades en América Latina*.

7. In another line of analysis, the installation of the programs of gender and sexual studies—the first in the University of Chile directed by anthropologist Sonia Montecino, followed by that of Kemy Oyarzún in 1995 at the University of Chile and the University Academy of Christian Humanism and FLACSO, subsequently—have also contributed to form a pole of irradiation for the academic debate of the theoretical discussions over sexuality. This is a pole that has come to permeate the political sensibility of the government locally and globally (as happened with Chile’s participation in the fourth Conference on the Woman in Beijing of the same year). These centers have also achieved establishing strategic, continental alliances by way of their investigative agendas, with similar centers in Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, and Argentina, in both the plane of theoretical debate and that of the demands of the grassroots social movements.

published during the '90s and the following year present a much more problematic and devastating itinerary than that of readjusting the legal framework in order to regulate what Ileana Rodríguez has called “object citizenships” (16) and their fights for representation and recognition on the continent.

Chile: Joy Comes and Goes

The year 1988 marked the recovery of democracy for Chile after 17 years of a dictatorial government⁸, ushering in a period of transition which would establish a political and moral foundation that would give stability to the government and security to the military. In those same years, Diamela Eltit published her first novel, *Lumpérica* (1984), and the performance collectives Ayuquelén and Las Yeguas del Apocalipsis (Mares of the Apocalypses) converted the city into a book of public and private memories through writing the imprisonment and state genocide with lesbian and homosexual bodies. In his expositions,⁹ Juan Domingo Dávila added the homoerotic imaginary of popular culture to the punished bodies of the proletarian and “Indian-like” homosexuals denounced by Lemebel and Casas. National heroes and film, television, and comic characters, such as Bolívar, Tarzan, and cyborgs, together with local caricatures from *Verdejo* and *Condorito*,¹⁰ made up the peculiar homo-iconography of Dávila, in which the desire for transvestitism combines with political consciousness of difference.¹¹ In this way Dávila confronts the normative, heterosexual systems of painting and cultural pedagogy. The same strategy can be seen in the parody of Valenzuela Puelma's painting *La Perla del Mercader*. In his version, the slave's transexuality is put in the forefront. The eye of *Roto Chileno*, *Verdejo* insists on the objectification of the body, although this time from inside a libidinal economy. This economy expands the desire of the original heterosexual transaction between the old merchant and the bidders of the body of the girl-pearl. Dávila opens another register of enjoyment in which the subjective offer of

8. This refers to the song that introduced the advertising propaganda of the Option of No prior to the plebiscite of 1988, with which the military regime lost its options for continuity.

9. Financed with fiscal money provided for the FONDART contest, this work, in which the liberator appears cross-dressed, with breasts and genitals exposed, his fist in an insulting pose, generated not only a moral polemic in the country but also the complaints of the chancelleries of Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela.

10. A social commentary in the form of a picaresque, national, comic tradition.

11. For a more detailed discussion, see the Masiello-Richard polemic in *El Arte de la Transición* (2001) and the *Revista de Crítica Cultural* in the special dossier in 1994.

culture has expanded. We are now faced with an inventory of the polymorphous fantasies of the proletarian homosexual desire depicted by Dávila.

The 1990s were also the years of the creation of the Homosexual Liberation Movement (MOVILH, 1991) and the radio program of the homosexual and lesbian minorities, *Triángulo Abierto* (1993). The radio program had two phases, from 1993 to 1995 and from 1999 to 2007.¹² The first was supported by the feminist radio station *Tierra*; the second, by the communist radio station *Nuevo Mundo*. It was the time of “underground personal radio” for Víctor Hugo Robles (Robles 49).¹³ In this context, two critical influences, Rodrigo Cánovas and Carlos Olivares, projected themselves from academia and the press to the lettered sphere, obscuring the appearance of marginal authors.¹⁴ The works of these two critics, meritorious in their general purpose, are not able to circumvent the borders of the normative sexualities in organizing their corpus. Olivares, editor of the newspaper *La Epoca* at the time, opened a pseudo-citizenship editorial for a group of authors that successfully published in the decade. His account excludes central names like those of Diamela Eltit and Pedro Lemebel. For his part, Rodrigo Cánovas defines the narrative of the same time period as the orphan novel. His criterion marks the convergence of the historical vectors, the structural condition of the trauma of the dictatorship and the labor of the rebuilding of belonging to the social fabric. The analysis, though extremely compelling, completely leaves out sexuality as a coregulating axis of social relationships.¹⁵

Santiago and London

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the years 1988 and 1998 make up the two epitaphs of the dictator. These dates restructure the civil imaginaries in relation to the legal, moral, and ethical horizons of the presence of the regime in the country. The triad state, civil society, and media produced a

12. Homosexual Liberation Movement, founded in June of 1991. For a historical review of the homosexual movement in Chile, see the essay “*Bandera Hueca*” by Víctor Hugo Robles, Santiago: Editorial Arcis/Cuarto Propio, 2008.

13. Homosexual journalist and activist known by his nickname, “*the Che of the gays*.”

14. These authors published two works in which they worked with the idea of grouping the extensive Chilean narrative production under the periodization model of Cedomil Goic, while Olivares organizes his work around the massive publication in transnational editorials.

15. A curious absence when considering the interest Cánovas puts in his reflection in 2003 on the allegory of the brothel in the book *Sexualidad y Cultural en la Novela Hispanoamericana*. Santiago de Chile: Lom, 2003.

rearticulation between public policies, private policies, and social mobilization. The sexual revolution was the sign of Chile's modernization. In order to not speak of politics, sex was talked about, using the media. It was no longer only about the definitive incorporation of women in the workforce; it had become about converting them into subjects of law. The same happened with sexual minorities. The history of the demands of the twentieth century having proved that the incorporation of more and more subjects into the game of capital and its consumption led to the expansion and reproduction of the system itself. Between 1988 and 1997, the phenomena that attracted the most attention were related to "overcoming poverty and the different forms of exclusion and discrimination,"¹⁶ in the context of the achievements of the Human Development Index (HDI), the third of the objectives of the Concertación government's programs.¹⁷ While it is true that these managed to reduce poverty by half, the indigenous populations and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and queer (LGBTQ) sexual minority communities were still faced with an open legal disadvantage compared to their white/heterosexual counterparts. However, a paradox emerged with this situation of inequity. The phenomenon of media glorification of people's private life was the new citizen's social contract of rights. This liberal gain exhibited the necessity for a technological mediation for the satisfaction of "guilty pleasures." Everywhere, just as the offer of global identification indicated the consumption of commodification, homosexuals and lesbians seemed to multiply in the repertoire of informative circuits. There had never been so many individuals in Chilean show business willing to talk about their likes and preferences as there were during this wave of confessions and coming-outs! Meanwhile, behind the screen, the silence seized those who opted to remain on the outside of this "business of desire."

Of course, this is a symbolically compensatory condition. The supposed democratic opening is intended to seal the destiny of modernization by means of the overexposure of these subjectivities packaged and circulated by prime-time media. We observed the appearance of more and more imported emancipation practices in the '90s in the sexual, cultural-digital-virtual

16. Ortega, Eugenio (Coord.). Informe de Desarrollo Humano en Chile 1998. Retrieved from http://www.cl.undp.org/content/dam/chile/docs/desarrollohumano/undp_cl_idh_informe1998.pdf

17. This is an index made by the UNDP in 1990 as an alternative to the classification of a country's progress based only on the level of its gross domestic product. The HDI considers the level of human capabilities accumulated in time. Because of this, it is a very useful mechanism for monitoring the evolution of human development over long periods of time, not for measuring the cyclical variations, as occurred in the Chilean case with respect to its economic successes.

realm. North American television programs nearly completely filled the prime-time hours in satellite channels, marking behavioral and consumption models for sexualities.¹⁸ This was also reinforced in all electronic and digital media such as chats, blogs, and social networks like Twitter, MySpace, Flickr, and Facebook. For instance, an Internet search including words for sexual partners showed more than 370 million entries. These neo-sexualities are those that mark new behavior patterns and new styles of normative sexualities. The field of work in this regard is significant. It teaches us to enjoy.¹⁹ It seems as though the modern Chilean state needed this concrete gesture in the public sphere in order to inaugurate the new era. This gesture marks a change in the value of sexual culture in the public sphere and a change in the value of politics. The sexuality provided by the industrial culture constructs an intimate space that operates as public. In a parallel way, the local channels and press open new projects in order to carry intimacy to the rank of “news.” It is the novelty of the year to talk about *everything*, above all about preferences, mechanics, and technologies of sexuality. The trend is embodied in the unprecedented success of the radio program *Chacotero Sentimental*, from the Rock & Pop station.²⁰ The listeners called the program to tell their intimate stories on air. Without entering into an in-depth analysis of this phenomenon, I simply hope to convey the following: the media’s glorification of narrations about the intimate, which escape the traditional regulations stipulated by the law, should not be confused with a sexual emancipation equal to that of the Global North. The democratization of a public sphere guaranteeing sexual citizenship is distinct from that desire and enjoyment assumed in the mediatic space during this decade.

The Gay Canon: *Frente a un Hombre Armado*²¹

Between 1988 and 1998, a series of narrative texts were published whose matrix of meaning seemed to be given by the visibility of the sexual prefer-

18. The shows *Will & Grace*, *The Real World*, *Melrose Place*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, *General Hospital*, *ER*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and *Dawson’s Creek*, shown in Chile by HBO and Sony, presented homosexual, bisexual, and lesbian characters during the ’90s to Chilean viewers.

19. See the work of Thomas Rickert in *Acts of Enjoyment: Rhetoric, Žižek and the Return of the Subject*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2007.

20. The program reached an exorbitant popularity at the beginning of the ’90s. In it, the listeners told their love stories on air. Its host, Roberto Artiagoitia, “the Rumpy,” was transformed into a media phenomenon and popular icon for ’90s youth. Later it would result in a movie with the same name.

21. The cover of this novel shows the silhouette of a muscular, lean, supposedly straight, naked man holding a sword that becomes his phallus. I use this novel to highlight the homoeroticism circulating within the transnational publishing world.

ences of their characters. More concerned about the anecdote than the literary wager, these texts, the majority well written, lack the profundity that novels like *Frente a un Hombre Armado* (1984), by Mauricio Wacquez, or *Pasión y Muerte del Cura Deusto* (1924), by Augusto D'Halmar, had previously achieved, they share the lightness of a sexuality put on sale as an aesthetic passport to normalization. The texts of Juan Pablo Sutherland, for example, focus on describing the milestones and winks as *entendidos*. Without further literary elaboration, his stories raise the gay circuit's topography in Santiago, in the middle of which—park, disco, or funeral—his characters pose, held up by a weakened narration, saturated by schematic realist dialogues. His excursions in the futuristic genre are as unfortunate as the idea of a homosexual, *maudit* youth, encouraged by ideas of approval by their heterosexual peers. His narrative sometimes is shadowed by propaganda, where the rights of homosexuals are inscribed onto his characters.

A few years earlier, with *Soy de la Plaza Italia* (1992), Ramón Griffero, a prominent playwright and theatre director, tapped into the short story genre with seven narrations illustrated by Herbert Jonckers, in which his characters correspond to urban legends. They are short stories, proto-scripts, in which the characters' dialogues clearly show the turn of the decade. Pinochet no longer embodied someone to be against, nor would the opposition articulate this, once the trials over violations committed by the military state ended. Griffero does not rewrite the epic of the "grand avenues," like other writers of the period, but rather he advances over the corners and alleys of downtown Santiago. The spatial poetic of his staging overlaps with the heart of the capital that is interwoven in his stories with the urban legends present in the popular, urban culture. In each of them, an anonymous inhabitant of the city works as a trigger for tragedy: an evangelical housekeeper in the Municipal Theatre has premonitions of crimes; a taxi boy²² looks for a place of recognition amongst his clients, only to end as a criminal humiliated by all; a woman collects newspapers, obsessed with finding her family memory in one of them. The greatest merit of Griffero's volume is having portrayed the ideological change in which sexuality remains, despite everything, contaminated with the colors of naturalism and social pathology.

Three other texts—*Cuento Aparte* (1994), by René Arcos Leví; *Santa Lucía* (1997), by Pablo Simonetti; and *El Viudo* (1997), by Jorge Ramírez—appear in this time period as well. *Cuento Aparte* is a compendium of seven texts in which Arcos Leví explores what Alvaro Bisama calls "the ideological aphasia of the New Narrative."²³ Arcos Leví's setting is that of the democratic-

22. The name for a young hustler, who like a taxi driver, charges "per ride."

23. <<http://critica.uchile.cl/narrativa/despuesdetodo.htm>>, accessed February 12, 2009.

Christian transitionism, whose moral languor is transferred to each of the characters of his stories. The language is provided by the imaginaries of North American, Protestant cinema, faced with the double standard of the Latin American, Catholic cultures. Obsessed with the contemporary amorous dismay, Arcos Levi's characters prefer repression. Behind harmless facades, in which the TV series format maintains them chapter by chapter in its scripts, an anguished and hyperbolic "I" is incited by the controlled sex of Conasida's first public campaigns.²⁴ The second of this series, *Santa Lucía*, won the prestigious short story competition of the *Paula* magazine, landing the author in the sights of the major publishers. The story excellently tells of the infidelity of the husband, who finds in the Cerro Santa Lucía²⁵ a refuge for the erotic ceremonies of the closeted homosexuals. The story's impeccable style almost completely covers up the sordidness of the secret. In this story, Simonetti repeats the self-fulfilling prophecy of the life sentence for the bourgeois homosexual to confine his pleasures to the class's closet.²⁶

El Viudo stages a more complex sexuality upon which I will pause. Despite its uniqueness, the novel does not escape the commonplace of "gay pathos": it is a daring cross of genres that intermixes the erotic serial and the social realism novel. Masterfully written, it details the story of a fifty-something lawyer who is deeply attached to his mother, and who establishes a stormy love affair with a young male prostitute. The novel has various models of production of subjectivity. The first of them, perhaps the most basic, is the model worked years prior by Marta Brunet in *Amasijo* (1962). The mother-son relationship is seen here not as that of a subjectivity that produces/programs the other linguistically, but rather as a system that functions as a phantasm of the model of inversion for the young prostitute. The novel is full of references to the Oedipal drama surrounding the relationships that uphold Ernesto, his mother, and Patricio. Recall Lacan in the frame of the mirror as an entrance into the symbolic. What the male prostitute does is cross-dress as the mother, and the fifty-year-old does not tolerate this image projected over his lover. Ernesto resolves the overidentification of his lover by rejecting the transvestite game that he stages. Despite the obvious

24. The National Commission of AIDS, founded in 1990.

25. A hill in the heart of Santiago that is also the center of Santiago's gay cruising circuit. It is the symbolic "wilderness" for gays who want to maintain anonymity.

26. A homosexual himself and a homosexual icon of official Chilean culture, he is one of the best-selling authors in current Chilean fiction. He founded IGUALES, the umbrella organization for middle-upper-class homosexuals. It is the most recent and active group working for sexuality equality, with lots of lobbying power.

psychological jargon, our interest is in the exploration that Ramírez makes of the sadomasochist relationship between lovers. This tour greatly surpasses the homosexual label in order to redefine it.

Ramírez examines the sexual pacts between characters, noting the strong presence of multiple and diverse “paraphilias.” The cross-dressing, the opening of the slave-owner gay couple to a dominatrix lesbian, various versions of oral sex—fellatio, cunnilingus—coprophilia, fetishism, scopophilia, coprophagia, physical violence, masturbation, and others are found in the erotic forms displayed. These and other self- and hetero-oriented choices for satisfaction show that sexuality can be seen as a mobile system of preferences and agreements. The mobility of erotic satisfaction does not exclusively pass through the reproductive aim. All the practices described are connected by a sadomasochist link between the actors of each encounter. And other encounters, by the way, imply both genders and their different sexual arrangements: the sexuality of the two women, Lita and Sandra (Lita is a lesbian); that of a heterosexual male, Patricio, the prostitute; and that of a fifty-something man, Ernesto.

It is worth making two observations. The first is about the exaltation of self, a contemporary demand made by the offer of individualist capitalism. Faced with this offer—for some; a demand for others—the escape that is most turned to is that of remaining at the mercy of the Other/other, resignified inside a different subjective economy, one that permits the subject to remove itself from the position of productive self-demand. Others, like Baumeister, prefer to see this type of practice as one that allows the subject to circumvent the demand of being in control of the environment. These demands guard against the pursuit of individual good. Either way, what is common in both perspectives is the shared notion that sexuality paradoxically also allows the subject to oppose culture and its mandates. Superficially, Ramírez plays the law of money card as an explanation for these contracts, and by doing so, clarifies that Ernesto’s economic power mediates the moral barriers. Thus, the economy imposes a sexual dynamic on all those who are subjected to it. However, the combination of amorous games that are reproduced here introduces another element to confirm the previous thesis, the brazen and not culpable porno permissibility of officials displaying these behaviors (ideal male individuals), faced with the shaped requirements for the immediacy of enjoyment. This is a trait of virtual subjectivities that is very common in the relationships of surfers to the porno space that the Internet offers daily. The modalities of contemporary eroticism cancel the Freudian classics for regulation and normalization, counterinstinctually entrenched in guilt and shame.

The coordinates of punishment come from the strict regulation that social class and correlating expectations impose on this type of behavior, assisted by one's material capital.

I must say that two texts from the Chilean homoerotic canon, published on nearly the same date, are cited here by Ramírez: *El Lugar Sin Límites* (1966), by José Donoso, and *Toda la Luz del Mediodía* (1965), by Mauricio Wacquez. These two texts present the same type of relationships that we see in Ramírez: a love triangle between two men and a woman, and the paid relationship between a transvestite and his client. However, the reflection on the production of a new subjectivity falls on *El Viudo*, on the subject instead of the socioeconomic determinants for sexual regulation and of the economic-libidinal system in which the characters negotiate their desire. Ramírez also constructs his own urban vision of the Olivo's Donosian hell. Contrasting the Donoso's novel *El lugar sin Límites's* previous version of the brothel—run by an older transvestite and his daughter, who had won the bordello from Don Alejo (the landowner)—to the city of prostitution where there are no vicarious sexual transactions around the speculation and negotiation of land, but rather concrete exchanges in which identities are played, like bargaining chips, against the demand of pleasure for each subject. It seems the city—no, the brothel—allows the impulses to be settled in absolutely subjective contracts. These transactions order the narrative and mark the destiny of the characters. Each one responds to the demands of the other and to the modes in which the culture dictates/permits contemporary pleasure. A generic prostitution, sadomasochist, pornographic, incestuous contract provides the guidelines for the exploration of the limits of individual liberty itself. To think about this text is to think about the diverse and unique ways in which sexuality can be lived collectively or personally.

We can conclude that *El Viudo* is one of the texts with the highest ethical value in the writings of the decade, comparable only to the narratives of its generational peers, Pedro Lemebel and Diamela Eltit. From the perspective of the imaginary inquiry, the novel proposes a reflection on the limits and practices of a determined subculture faced with liberalism's regulations. Upon reading, it returns to the reflection on paraphilias and their effect on the regulation of psychic orders in the postdictator context.

If we stop in this compressed panorama and look at the texts cited so far, in all of them we notice how the figure of the homosexual, despite everything, continues to border on the pariah. Perhaps it is Ramírez's text that with the most narrative luck faces the challenge posed for literature by human sexuality. The texts of Griffero, like those of Arcos Leví, Sutherland, and Simonetti, also remain prisoner to neoliberal narratives already mediated

in the public discourses by the scripts of media and technological assimilation. The homosexuality in them does not exceed the normalizing content that their claim for acceptance sees in the emancipatory index. Homosexuality is nothing more than a simple command for recognition before the biographic mirror of the narratives of market. To talk about the new civil statute for dissident sexuality in these texts is not to challenge the exclusion inscribed in the individual abstract of liberal democracy. On the contrary, it is to confirm the tacit agreement of its condemnation as a species. It is not to transgress the regulatory frame of the law, but rather the modes of producing the subject within humanist, heterosexual narratives, accentuated by the moral restrictions embodied in piety and embarrassment. The discourse of sexuality in Ramírez interrogates the limits of the counterinstinctual systems of regulation that the conservative gentrified moral of the market/state insists on enhancing for the subjectivities of sexual minorities. The right to promiscuity or the recognition of other experiences of freedom benefit even heterosexuality itself.

The Lemebel Citizen

In these first ten years, two other texts by Lemebel, the volume of urban chronicles, *La Esquina es mi corazón*, and the compendium of chronicles, *Loco Afán: Crónicas de Sidario*, greatly impacted the local and international scene.²⁷ The majority of them having circulated between 1991 and 1993 as chronicles published in the defunct magazine *Página Abierta*, they were later recopied in these two books. In the first of them, *La Esquina es mi corazón*, Lemebel uses the nostalgic clacking of a singular narrator, *La Loca*, to draw the circuits of desire in the city. This urban *erotographer*, the proletarian, capital-city-dwelling alter ego of the provincial *Manuela donosiana*, constructs an ethnography of marginal desire against a backdrop of changes in the social fabric. The changes are products of the political repression exercised during the military regime and its continuity in the economic policies of the governments of the Transition. Lemebel's city is seen as the natural scene for the consummation of the fantasies and erotic urgencies of its inhabitants, but also as an unexpected shroud for those who look for monetary compensation in exchange for quick sex in clandestine spaces. The city that is fantasized by the chronicler is not exempt from the memory of the disappeared or the

27. *Crónica Urbana*, Santiago de Chile: Cuarto Propio, 1995, and *Loco Afán: Crónicas de Sidario*, Santiago de Chile: Lom, 1996.

persecuted. In short, it is a fundamental book for understanding how the urban space hosts an ontology of sexuality that goes far beyond its biological boundaries, reaching the boundaries of a haunting past.

The second book by this author, *Loco Afán. Crónicas de Sidario*, presents us with a singular perspective about historic memory, private memory, the memory of a community, and the memories scattered in the past and future. Masterfully written, here Lemebel works with the juxtaposed material of the pandemic of AIDS and the collapse of the Popular Unity.²⁸ In the chronicle that opens the book, “La Noche de los Visones,” Lemebel warns about the fratricide of the civil war of ’73, while that very same year served as an initial harbinger for the coming of numerous HIV infections in the following decade. In this way, united by the loss of life, the homosexual and leftist communities celebrate the last night of freedom for bodies during a New Year’s Eve that grimly hovers over the following decades. Throughout the following twenty texts of this burlap memorial patched with the rags of the dying, Lemebel reviews the strategies of resistance of the homosexuals, the HIV-positive, and the *terminales* inside the perverse logic of fantasizing a future without future for the transvestite communities. Because the nonheterosexual minorities are not subject to reproductive biopolitics, but rather delivered to his *Loco Afán*, Lemebel highlights the inconsistency of the ordering of the proletariat, homosexual subculture in accordance with the consensus that the mercantile normalization has dictated for their middle-class bourgeoisie peers. If it is true that his chronicles embody the negativity of modernity, the threat that the social norm itself constructs around him as a sign-border of his fragility, they are also a claim for political compassion for minority subjects, as Edelman has discussed in his book *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Let us say that this means raising an ethical argument that proposes to replace the “social good,” with the “best” for each individual to the furthest extent possible.²⁹ This way, the sentimental illusion of the bourgeois family and its continuity as a species are found in the parody camp of pregnancy or the transvestite maternity of characters like Loba Lamar or Berenice, representing the denaturalization of their deviated desires for the future. In these chronicles, by way of the emphasis on the linguistic artifice, in addition to proposing a sensibility that puts life on the side of art, Lemebel wields an insistent

28. The verses in the epigraph to the text warn us about this relationship and also about the foreign income (body, capital, military intervention). “The plague came to us like a new / form of colonization by contagion. / It replaced our feathers with syringes, and the sun / with a frozen drop of the moon in the AIDS colony” (3).

29. See also Lee Edelman. *Homographesis. Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

demand for the ethical imperative of seeing the humanity in everything we have before us. The colossal and baroque grotesque is the stylus that digs in the interstices of his gay language in order to assert that those before us in the reading are not monsters or depraved but subjects that fantasize with the impossible possibilities of their normalization: a normalization that breeds in their bodies the deformity of their incapacity to belong, just as things are today in the liberal, heterosexual West.

Knowing full well that the plague is an errant lightning bug throughout the suburban slums of Santiago, a dangerous light that replaces the dim streetlights of its alleys. The fading darkness that barely revealed the misery of rag cloths, cardboard boxes and rubble where Regine, high heeled, trolled. The crazy woman that tripped, half drunk, half afflicted by the AZT, which cost so much to get. (Loco Afán, 25)³⁰

The volumes of chronicles by Lemebel, *De Perlas y Cicatrices: Crónicas Radiales* (1998), *Zanjón de la Aguada* (2003), *Adiós Mariquita Linda* (2004), and the latest published, *Serenata Cafiola* (2008), repeat the same pact of the chronicler's gaze with the strategic amnesia of public memory—state or media-mercantile. Lemebel brings it on himself to reconstruct them—or rather, to document them in the fiction of memory blurred by his poetic telling. From the little outcast stories of his protagonists, the Lemebel autograph of *Adiós Mariquita Linda* respins an erotic ethnography of the homosexual, proletariat margins and its paths to prostitution. In his third book *De Perlas y Cicatrices*, Lemebel knits a twofold accusation: first, against the neoliberal media and its complicity with the regime, and secondly, in the form of a victims' memorial that documents the excesses committed by the military regimen against the anti-Pinochet political dissenters. It is not only the memory of the state genocide, and it is not just the ravages of the AIDS pandemic that is articulated in his first two books; it is about unmasking the collaborators and aids of the dictatorship that are present in the media. It also produces biographies of women, those whom in the *ojo coliza* of their narration become fundamental actors in the small fight of the cross-dressed socialist realism in *Zanjón de la Aguada*. In *Serenata Cafiola* he tells radio stories through the melodramatic pact of boleros, rancheras, salsas, cumbias, and even rock in a pedagogical function. In an interview in the newspaper *La Nación*, he commented:

30. Translated by Craig Osterbrock.

Cafiola means pimp, taxi boy, but it does not exist in the feminine, the woman “caficha,” can be the brothel owner, the bitch, but it is not the same as a pimp. It is a word from Buenos Aires that I wanted to install. Cafiola seems like the name of a novel; in fact, the book was going to be “Cafiola and other rhymes,” as a radio program. Once a friend was with a guy and I told him: “Well, did you fuck him?,” and he said: “No, I just put on some music for him.” And this means to talk, to never make it to the bed, that is the genesis of the book, to make verses, to make stories.³¹

His novel *Tengo miedo Torero*, poorly received by critics, who pigeonholed the author as a chronicler, is without a doubt one of the few in its genre in Chile. It is a novel made by readings supplied by the feminine genres of the newspaper love serials and the sentimental novel. Radio and cinema-going culture is accumulated in it and marked by the popular accent of the proletarian listener. The novel is a pastiche that, like a magnetic field, attracts and repels consecrated forms of expression that are volatilized upon coming into contact with the parodic embroidery of Lemebel’s writing.

This writer did not leave other genres at the margins. He also rewrites the issue of perverse subjectivities in the key of the historical novel, such as the already mentioned cross-dressed *bildungsroman* by *La Loca del Frente*. In this story, the protagonist learns to hide guns, to take messages, to be human mail in order to finally make himself a “male comrade,” committed to the historic project that interpellates him: ending the dictator. He does not underappreciate the sentimental pink rose, with which the melodramatic pact will take in the tragic destiny of the homosexual love between Carlos and *La Loca*. Each frame of the narration, each focus remains installed in the space of interior evocation, in which reality imaginedly becomes its double. This strategy allows him to expose intimate dimensions of a particular experience: a homotextuality that rises from the referential plane in perverse allegory, in reading machine, certain interpreter of the keys that tie eroticism, sexuality, and power in contemporary times. We can read this way not only in Lemebel but also in two major authors of the Chilean contemporary novel, José Donoso and Mauricio Wacquez. It is unforgettable when the narrator of *La Loca del Frente* becomes delirious and becomes the listener to his own story in which he describes the fellatio/breastfeeding, phallus/mother in which he is wrapped. In the following quote, once again the shroud that receives the body that is going to disappear stands at the mouth, the loving crypt:

31. Published Sunday, September 7, in Culture, *La Nación* Sunday. Interview by Javier García.

There he was handed over drunk as a port whore, so that the bleary fingertips of his gaze would caress him from a distance, in that touch of his eyes, in that breath of his eyes vaporizing the intangible kiss in his mongrel nipples, violet, moist, under the cotton transparency of his shirt. There, just a meter away, he could see him with legs open, solid in the stylized hump of the groin tossing his teenage stump, offering him this reptile gloved by the rough denim holstering his athletic thighs. He looks like an Indian god, lulled by the jungle's palms, he thought. A dreaming warrior that takes a break in combat, an unavoidable temptation for a madwoman thirsty for tender sex like her, hypnotized, crazed. (106)

The Next Ten Years

The arrest of Pinochet in London marked the second period for the transition in Chile. With his departure from the political scene, the political parties of the ruling coalition were forced to abandon the cohesion that human rights had provided these years of government. Other themes, like education, health, and fuel prices, topped the agendas while undermining the strength of the conglomerate against a relentless, supervisory Right. In a context of greater openness and with concrete achievements in the legal arena, sexual minorities also entered into a new stage.³²

An interesting volume is that by writer Carlos Iturra.³³ With *Paisaje Masculino*, this narrator consolidated his fame in the short story genre.³⁴ In thirteen stories, Iturra presents a look at homosexuality in Chile, the taboos associated with it, and the social reactions in times of AIDS inside the strict margins dictated by bourgeois realism. The stories deal with the late state intervention of sanitary help in the AIDS epidemic, while the HIV carriers take refuge in negation or compulsive revenge of infecting others. Later, in *Pretérito Presente*, Iturra insists on the same topics. The context is always the same, that of the terror of condemnation and heterosexual social ostracism.³⁵ One of his last books, the short fiction stories collection *La Paranoia de Dios* (2010), revisits the representation of the homoerotic desire—this time in a kaleidoscopic examination of Chilean prejudices, contradictions, and lies. We can locate along this same line of reflection the novel by Alejandro Mon-

32. The abolition of sodomy as a crime in 1998 is the primary legal achievement.

33. Carlos Iturra. *Paisaje Masculino*. Santiago de Chile: Sudamericana, 1998.

34. His next work, *Pretérito Presente*, achieved the recognition of critics and the Municipal Award of Literature in 2005.

35. In the last book of Carlos Iturra, *Pretérito Presente*. Santiago de Chile: Catalonia, 2004.

tes, *Autoflagelación* (2005), a bizarre reading of adolescent bisexuality, and other texts such as the novels *Primeros Juegos* (1998) and *Fiesta de Hombres Solos* (2000), by Victor Bórquez; the stories *Vidas Vulnerables* (1999) and the novel *Madre que estás en los Cielos* (2004), by Pablo Simonetti; *Las Heridas de la Carne* (2001), by Francisco Ibáñez-Carrasco; the novel *Después de Todo* (2001), by Juan Pablo Sutherland; the novel *El filo de tu Piel* (2006), by José Ignacio Valenzuela; the novel *Quédate por la Noche*, by Nelson Acevedo (2006); the most recent novels by Simonetti, *La Razón de los Amantes* (2007), *la Barrera del Pudor* (2009), *La Soberbia Juventud* (2013), and his last work *Jardín* (2014); *El amante sin Rostro* (2008), by Jorge Marchant-Lazcano; and *La Trilogía de las Fiestas* (2008), by Rodrigo Muñoz.³⁶

I should mention four novels that were produced abroad and narrated from the exile of their protagonists.³⁷ The first of them is the monumental *Epifanía de una Sombra* (2000), by Mauricio Wacquez, unjustly deprived of canonical consecration. The second is a unique novel, *Corazón tan Puto* (1998), by novelist Martín Guiraldes, which renovates the panorama of social realism. The third, the narrative text of José Ignacio Valenzuela, *El Filo de tu Piel*, addresses the experiences of HIV carriers. And the fourth, as an epilogue to this account, is the novel by Jorge Marchant-Lazcano, *Sangre como la Mía*.

Epifanía de una Sombra is an unparalleled novel in Chilean literature. Homologous only to *El Obsceno Pájaro de la Noche*, by José Donoso, or to *Patas de Perro*, by Carlos Droguett, for its conceptual density, Wacquez's novel enters in line with what could be called a novel of contemplation or a philosophical disquisition on the metaphysics of time and space. Both categories are in one way or another related to the subject. The first, time, exists only as experience in that the subject perceives his movement through the change that this exercises on his self. The second, space, exists only in that it is possible to be conscious of it; it exists in that I occupy it. In addition, in *Epifanía*, the natural orders attract not only the reflection of the narrator but also the obsession of the author. This cannot avoid the power of the divine gaze, a determining force of human destinies expressed through the study of passions in the novel. A treatise of the soul, no less than of body and nature, this novel—and his entire work—offers us one of the most sophisticated texts produced in the Chilean narrative of the twentieth century.

Less abstract than the Adolfo Couve of *El Balneario o la Comedia del Arte*, Wacquez maintains with this author a melancholy coloratura similar

36. The majority of these books are commercially motivated by popular consumption of sexual transgressions or the behavior of socioeconomically privileged characters.

37. The same occurred with the incomparable *Epifanía de una Sombra*, written in Spain and published postmortem in Chile in 2000, by Mauricio Wacquez.

to the stylistic treatment of memory and sickness. Both memory and disease are understood as required experiences of modern self-reflection. *Epifanía* develops a history in which the sexual passions of its protagonists are mixed with the rigorous social stratification of Chile. Through the intrigues between the protagonists, we glimpse his theory on the construction and reproduction of power. Sexuality appears in Wacquez as one of the expressions of humanity and animality. His characters act inside social protocols, encouraged by their erotic impulses, immersed in the sceneries of Valle Central. Each body is a landscape for a passion. The love of men, the incestuous desire, the urgent ardor of masturbation, rapes consented to by family secrets, and a subjectivity that explores the sadomasochists' agreements as a means of learning all conform to the horizon that this novel unfolds in the end of the twentieth century. The work on sexual power in the biblical myth that incarnates the character of the Bautista is notable.

The novel *Sangre como la Mía*, by Marchant-Lazcano, also works the key of memory, but it is inseparably linked to AIDS. Narrated in two voices and in two historical epochs separated by a generation, Marchant-Lazcano constructs one of the best novels of the first decade of the twenty-first century. He not only presents an excellent technical bill, in which his years as a television writer are an added value, but he also explores how Chilean society reacts and has reacted to the theme of sexual minorities. The novel retraces the complex web of intersubjective relations associated with sexuality, gender, and social class. On the anecdote that joins Daniel and Jaime, Lazcano proposes a devastating examination of the mechanisms inbred by those that circulate power in Chile, when these are confronted by a non-hegemonic sexuality and a supposed threat for the hierarchical stability of the privileged classes. Marchant-Lazcano reviews in the city that which José Donoso does in the background with the Azcoitía family. If in *El Obsceno Pájaro de la Noche* Boy embodied abnormality within the scientific range of phenomenon and the monster registered the curse of interclass mixing, in Marchant-Lazcano homosexuality is located in the HIV-positive condemnation in the midst of the dictatorship. There is no doubt that this way he reedits the sentence of the species with this hateful bitterness of Chilean social classes, terrified before a future in which one of their own “baje de pelo.” Both a spurious alliance with the cleaning woman and the misstep of a nephew, in *Sangre como la Mía* Juliani's nephew with “the son of the nanny,” are inadmissible. Marchant-Lazcano's question is how to reproduce the Chilean caste, the political power that it holds, and the economic future that its nuptial ceremonies consecrate, if those chosen do not yield to the guidelines of the Catholic bourgeoisie. The novel is constructed around the “closet”

of initiates for whom AIDS has transformed into the new family secret. Marchant-Lazcano shows how impossible it is to stop the advance of desire, how ruthless the disease has become whose lack of treatment reignites the fires of social condemnation that for centuries have tormented literary naturalism. It is not only to live with the certainty of an “opportunistic death” but it is also to live as a foreigner in your own body. The exile of the disease is to live like an outcast inside the homosexual communities, who recognize through the redistribution of fat produced by the retrovirals those fortunate ones who can afford treatment. From the seasons of homosexuality, this novel tells us about and uncovers, in the imaginary of Hollywood cinema, the constant presence of a hagiography of “freaks” and deviants. Their camouflaged identities have served as an enlightening pedagogy of the understood spectators of Santiago’s old cinemas. The legacy of the text is to learn to be a homosexual as a possible way of life. Reading the encrypted codes left by the previous generations is perhaps the gift of this novel.

With this I end the brief tour of the narrative production of the bi/homosexual thematic in the Chilean literature of the past twenty-five years. In it, it is clear that the narrative wagers speak of characters present in multiple ways. If it is true that the constant is to represent these subjectivities as “abject,” it is no less true that they have gradually been gaining their citizenship. We should, however, acknowledge that the same thematic is richly registered in other cultural expressions like poetry, theater, cinema, and the visual arts.

The Collapse of the Tower: Sadomasochism and the Social Bond

So far in my interpretation I have highlighted two authors, Jorge Ramírez and Mauricio Wacquez, who distance themselves from the regulatory, multicultural, and patriarchal literary canon. Summarizing the observations made so far, we remember that the crisis of symbolic-discursive inscription of the subjects has left us faced with a desolate map of identification offers for the vintage, enlightened, modern subject. In its place are the combined offers of the ultracapitalist struggle to situate the consumer as a spontaneous ally to the new processes of socialization installed by the new model. After years of authoritarian, developmentalist culture, reoriented by the transitional governments’ moral pastoral, Chilean subjects find themselves in a different subjective register. With the traditional forms of subjective organization lost, individuals search in phantasmatic forms for their models and resources. It is precisely these that we will explore in the two novels mentioned above.

The discourse of these works is unique in its approach to subjectivity and sexual identity. Both present characters whose identities appear severely at odds with the prevailing cultural offer put forth by the neoliberal market. Each novel, in its own way, works as an eccentric model for the new, manifold forms of subjectivation of individuals, the construction of the social bond, and alternate ways of fulfilling enjoyment in contemporary societies. In the first text, we see how the discursive production of the individual subjectivity results from the tension between “a collective action, a social conflict, and power relations” (Martuccelli 29).³⁸ The narrative space combines the lack of an ideological collective horizon with the demythification of authority and the law. In addition, we witness the subsequent collapse of the private into the public through the intertwined actions of the libidinal economy, which functions under the format of submission, imposed by the demands of the sadomasochist contract underlined by sexual trade.

Taken together, all of the novels eventually “reinforce the split structure of disavowal: I see now that X was not true, but all the same, it is true in a way” (Rothenberg 10). Having lost faith in the imaginary coverage that maintains the social structure, the protagonists of *El Viudo* will reinstate the subject’s sense of commitment by installing it in situations of resubjectified solidarity, where the necessary “distance between unconscious desire and the fantasy” has completely disappeared as a barrier for transgression. (Feher-Gurewich 199). The subjects’ faith in the guarantees of the ideal are moved toward its most abstract dimension, that of the exercise of sovereignty as a principle of identification and recognition in neoliberal democracies. Sovereignty for the subject in this context appeals to its unconscious dimension, to its fantasmatic self, as a phantasy place where the subject feels no threats: he is the master, and his totalitarian new self, which sees itself as an instrument of a distant god, will lead him to perceive his acts as though dictated by this Other. The perversion self-imposed by this historical interpellation will explain why he does not feel responsible. He is only following the neoliberal dictum in which he bears the guilt of provoking discomfort to his sexual partners, as an object for the other’s will of jouissance. The contractual relationship that was previously stated in legal terms by reducing his unconscious desire to something other than merely speaking from within the subject is now on the surface as a new law: The Law of Enjoyment as a Prohibition. As Žižek says in *How To Read Lacan*:

38. Translated from the following: “una acción colectiva, un conflicto social y de las relaciones de poder.”

What characterizes modernity is no longer the standard figure of the believer who secretly harbors intimate doubts about his belief and engages in transgressive fantasies; today, we have, on the contrary, a subject who presents himself as a tolerant hedonist dedicated to the pursuit of happiness, and whose unconscious is the site of prohibitions: what is repressed are not illicit desires or pleasures, but prohibitions themselves.

At this point, we need to remember how to connect the concepts of perversion and *fantasma*, or phantasy, in Lacanian terms: “for Lacan the phantasy [*fantasma*] is the support of the drive. Strictly speaking, perversion is an inverted effect of the phantasy” (Žižek 89). To be clear, perversion is the inversion of the phantasy (*fantasma*), in that the subject becomes the object, the object little-a, while for the *fantasma* the object is external to the subject.

It is the subject who determines himself as an object, in his encounter with the division of subjectivity. [. . .] It is in so far as the subject makes himself the object of another will that the sado-masochistic drive not only closes up, but constitutes itself. [. . .] the sadist himself occupies the place of the object, but without knowing it, to the benefit of another, for whose *jouissance* he exercises his action as sadistic pervert. (Žižek 92)

In other words, the subject does not exist for the phantasy (*fantasma*), but it is always there by means of dreaming and daydreaming, overdetermining the subject by his object. This object frames the split subject in a repertoire of imaginary articulations available from the dominant culture. Memory, understood as a symbolic supplement in this work, is not acting on the subject's choices, leaving him to the mercy of his instrumental “empty” acts. To illustrate this point, we can look at Patricio's transvestite performance of Ernesto's mother. The horror of this act, for Ernesto, when the signifier of the mother interdicts his sadomasochist fantasy, shows us the importance of the symbolic, affective weight of memory. Memory will always confront the perverse subject with his inability to be inscribed by the symbolic. The paradoxical acts of remembering and forgetting will always be prohibited to him since his only attachment to language and morality is to use it for a purpose, not to reflect upon it. This was exactly the case with the Chilean transitional government, where the reconciliation process privileged facts and accountability over the punishment of those responsible for the human rights violations. Memory was only an archival instrument, not a twofold conscious exploration of the subjectivity of those involved.

At this point, I would like to note that along with the line of reflection that we are following in this work, there is a very rich corpus of other kinds of narrators and narrations ordered around the child figure and incestuous practices. Although in this work I have moved away from that line in order to not confuse these models with those present in the public discourses, very popular in the same period studies, I will mention them as a counterpoint: in particular, the texts of Lina Meruane, Andrea Jęftanovic, Beatriz García-Huidobro, Nona Fernández, and Jorge Guzmán.³⁹

In the novels that I will present here, the contrast lies in the coincidental similarity with the well-known “Spiniak,” “Soto Tapia,” and “Hans Pozo” public pedophilia cases.

Public/Private Sexual Contracts

The novels studied here share the trait of being exponents of the erotic narrative genre. They are narrations in which a large part of the plot is driven by the erotic-sexual adventures of their protagonists. These novels, like many others in the period, align with the movement for the exaltation of the intimate sphere: in particular, that intimacy that is tied to the erotic choices of the subjects. Their appearance coincides with the cultural force of movement for the “revelation” of the country’s secrets. I am referring not only to those of the archive of torture, but also to those of the entire society.⁴⁰ The confusion between private and public life was total. We were faced with two ways of ordering public space, ways that had been introduced by the economic model itself: mercantile regulation versus “privatized” self-regulation of the imagination. What works for the press in Chile in the moment also works for the subject now and before 2000.

One of the more commented-on cases is that of businessman Claudio Spiniak. Spiniak, a prominent businessman of Jewish descent, was arrested by the police in a routine procedure. His arrest was to uncover one of the most notorious media scandals in Chilean postmodernity. From that September

39. The novels are, respectively, *Cercada*. Santiago de Chile: Cuarto Propio, 2000; *Hasta ya no ir*. Santiago de Chile: Cuarto Propio, 1996; *Escenario de Guerra*. Santiago de Chile: Alfguara, 2000; and *Con ojos de Niño*. Santiago de Chile: Lom, 2008.

40. This phenomenon is on par with the changing role of the Chilean press in the past ten years. During this time lapse, it has become a relentless inquisitor on moral issues. In particular, the armed forces, the church, the government, and management have been the most affected social actors. Investigative journalism became the subjective mode symptomatic of the new individual.

30 of 2003, accusations against the businessman took shape. The legal figure of “illicit association” for purposes of the sexual recruitment of children and adolescents to form part of a network of sexual services was launched by the principal informative media sources of the country. In the subsequent witch-hunt, politicians, religious leaders, judicial officials, government representatives, senators, and parliament members were all involved. The moral “raid” against the deviants reached all corners of the closet, from which it was necessary to get rid of the country’s “bad weeds.” Only Claudio Spiniak was proved guilty of the charges, while the accusations against members of different political parties and businessmen (Julio Dittborn and Andrónico Lucksic) and the Argentinian ambassador Spinoza Melo were dismissed.⁴¹

The plot of *El Viudo* (2010) begins exactly the same as the numerous testimonies cited by Pablo Vergara and Ana María Sanhueza in their investigative journalism book *Spiniak y los demonios de la Plaza de Armas*. Here are a few examples of the testimonies:

His name is Julio López Rojas and his life has been a journey to change his name and transform himself into someone else. At thirty something, he had called himself “Charlotte” and “Bastián”; he has dreamed of being a *prep* and was the favorite of a millionaire, a fan of coprophagy. (19)

Torres has been prostituting himself for some time in the sauna. In addition to taking clients, he sometimes administers the Calderón gambling house. He is 24 years old and arrived in Santiago three years ago, from Angol in the VII region. (21)

Abazolo is 23 years old and has been homosexual for six. He has been prostituting himself and dancing for men for some months. He is the oldest of the Parral brothers, in the south. (23)

Milton Ariel Rodríguez Bastías is called “El Coto” and the first night he had with Spiniak, in June of 1997, they cheated him of 30,000 Chilean pesos. He demanded the money without knowing that “El Coto” was hot-tempered—and he barely got back 10,000. He kept the money, but in a few days he found out that in reality the sessions of sadomasochism with Spiniak paid better. He is a craftsman, or at least that is his line of work, the kind that sets up in fairs to sell earrings and necklaces. (25)⁴²

41. See Francisco Martorell’s book *Impunidad Diplomática*. Planeta, Argentina 1993.

42. The extensive research is published in an intriguing book, which gives the details of the investigation together with an analysis of the social and political situation that was

Each of the testimonies cited coincides with Patricio's profession and the year of the novel's publication, 1997. Patricio is one of the more than thousands of migrants who, during the second transitional government, hopefully abandoned the countryside in order to go try their luck in the city. The majority of them work in temporary occupations and ended up forming part of the extensive male prostitution network in existence in Santiago. Located in the historical center of the city, the networks are governed by pimps whose center of operations is the Plaza de Armas, in front of the old cathedral. The sign of the square of the first modernization and the epitome of civic life of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is now the nocturnal plundering of the proletariat excesses, of the unemployed/urban migrant.⁴³

The novel presents a peculiar reading scene from its first pages. Amid the fervor that the texts of the "New Chilean Narrative" had achieved, *El Viudo* positions itself for the demythification of the city of Santiago, the closure of the appeal to historical discourse, and the renovation of the love genre. From the speculative, interclass negotiations of *Martín Rivas*, *Casa Grande, Amasijo*, and *La Mujer de Sal*, the Chilean novel had not returned to the amorous codes as a metaphor of social mobility.⁴⁴ Ramírez retakes that tradition, placing two men at the center of his commentary. With the conventions of the prestigious historical genre and sexual gender broken, the novel explores, with exquisite delicacy, the subtle sadomasochistic contracts that circumstantially arise between the protagonists of the story.

If before social mobility implied marriage, the new forms of sexual contracts play on the edges of that old convention. I do not mean to naively assert that prostitution is an unprecedented phenomenon, but rather that the codes of subjective interpellation that are present in the novel represent a new movement of inflation of individual subjectivity over the collective destinies. Ernesto represents, as does Sade, the sovereign's liberal hypertrophy. He holds the power given him by his co-officiants, Sandra and Patricio, for whom the interpretation of the roles of the S&M agreements represent their own form of collective inclusion and exclusion. Ernesto is the ideal of the era. Just like Spiniak, he represents the absolute success of self-orientation. His power lies in that contemporary, social subjectivity which itself has made the

unleashed. The book was published by the Diego Portales University through the School of Journalism.

43. For further readings, see Guzmán de Luigi, Juan Andrés, *La Extraña Muerte de un Soldado en Tiempos de Paz* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Lom, 1998); Halpern, Daniel, *El Pecado del Rucio: Las Claves del Crimen de Hans Pozo* (Santiago de Chile: Catalonia, 2007).

44. See Doris Sommer in *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

offer of social availability increase. The perverse does not act alone; it acts upon the Others' desires, making itself a sounding board for what is normally "out there." Patricio and Sandra constitute the outside of the modern subject that Ernesto embodies. Both lack containment supports. In the case of Patricio, we know that his formal education has failed and that he does not claim any religion, nor is any party militancy mentioned as a characterizing feature. Sandra seems more or less represented by the same coordinates, to which a powerful sexuality is added, an intense autoeroticism to which Patricio will succumb as an object. Both "perverse" teenagers, dehistoricized in their circumstances, will enter in Ernesto's game of sadomasochist domination, providing him with "fantasy scenes" whose articulation is never fully realized. Patricio himself is impotent, while Sandra prefers coprophagy and anal sex.

The novel completely denaturalizes love discourse and its social rhetoric to discover in its place the modes of the production of contemporary subjectivity. In it, subjects have lost all affective capacity since the formation of the social bond has been interrupted by the continuity of the link with the Real. Unable to circumvent the influence of the attraction toward the maternal absolute, the transvestite fantasy prevents affectivity between the lovers. The figure of Ernesto's mother covers Patricio phantasmatically until he completely accepts it as his Ideal. This is the same gesture with which the young man ends his life. The choice to elaborate the transvestite identity offered outside the social game (the sadomasochist contract in the text) by Patricio's fantasy denounces the inconsistency of other discursive possibilities. The production of the transvestite subject is an indication not only of his imaginary task but also of the closing of the era's traditional ideals. In exchange, this passage in the novel opens us to a space of reflection on the ethical limits of the exercise of will for the "subject of choice." The sovereignty over the enjoyment and the social effects of its normalization seems to constitute itself in a problematic core for the liberalism of rights.

The novel has clearly taken us to the failure of the production of the protagonists as subject, not just because the era's and the I's ideals fail, but also because the objectification that it does to Patricio, Sandra, and Ernesto reduces it to its purest phantasmatic condition: the red dress and the wig of Ernesto's mother together with the lack of penile erection. Patricio surrenders to enjoyment, transforming the figure of the mother in the only way to become a subject. As a prohibited subject, Patricio has not been able to share his fantasy with anyone. Although from the first moment of the relationship he tries to make Ernesto participate in it, Ernesto denies the fantasy. Then, there is no real possibility of constituting himself in the symbolic field of the amorous imaginary. Patricio's desperation comes from trying to

recompose his own fantasies over his loss, whatever this has been in the biographical course or sadomasochist ritual simulation. The ritual staging of the mother, much like those of his masculine sacrifice in the scenes of collective rape, crumble just like the tower. Patricio cannot sustain the grin or the static gesture of rape. In the end, hanging is the only way of degrading the real and its ecstatic replacement. In consummating the last act, suicide, Patricio is able to share the transitory and fatal ecstasy of orgasm. With this, he denounces his retraction from the liberal, symbolic discourse, in which everything seems real and everything seems possible, in order to show it in its false consistency. Patricio's body, cross-dressed as the mother of Ernesto, hanging in the middle of the room and illuminated by a lamp, confirms the warning that Bruce Fink holds in his essay "Perversion" for the coming of the subject:

Prior to construction, there was no place to stand. No ground, and thus no possibility of questioning or wondering. After the construction the child can call everything into question without ever cutting out the ground from beneath his feet. He may, at the extreme, come to wish he had never been born, but at least there will be a place from which he can formulate that wish! That place is the subject. (60)

Patricio has not been able to speak from the dead body's ventriloquism or from the positions of the sadomasochist contract. Once he kicks the stool that Ernesto has given him, upon which a model poses for a fashion magazine, body, subject, and ideal fall into the void, united in the drive for the last enjoyment. With this gesture, Patricio has freed himself from the symbolic support of his identity, permitting the primal fantasies to possess him into their object. Neither the photograph of the model leaning on the stool nor the transvestite performance are able to keep him on the side of life.

In the sadomasochist ritual we perceived a similar situation. Ernesto holds the power handed over by the other participants. The instrumental performance of the roles of Sandra and Patricio ensures a space of agreement that quiets the feeling of unease that the lack of symbolic inscription produces in the participants of the rite.

Each of them has reached the enjoyment of freedom from the neoliberal dictum, that of being responsible for constantly choosing. Each of them, separately, but inside the same sadomasochist theatre, is capable of experimenting with the mutual connection through the rules of the game, while for the reader, the perverse discourse of the Other is revealed. These "perverse subjectivities," in the discourse, shown in the public telling of their crimes

by the narrator, are suggested as the source of their redemption. Victims of the sadomasochist game, their fall at the end offers the possibility of identification for the reader as “sinner.” At the same time, on another subjective level, the same scene is offered as a stage-symptom of collective enjoyment. The parties in the contract have broken the tension that builds the social bond. Their inability to move away from the subject-object dyad impedes them from freely assuming and abandoning points of identification between them and their enjoyment. Contrarily, they are constantly forced to enjoy. This enjoyment, that of the fantasy of infinite instrumental choices that is offered to them in the intersubjective theatre of sadomasochism, is also that of the entire society. Nevertheless, we see, at the end of the novel, how the fantasy collapses:

“Now,” said Ernesto.

Patricio let himself down, slumped over, getting a moan out of Ernesto. Later, he straightened his back, impaled, he supported his feet on the floor and gripped his finally erect instrument, big, hard; like never before . . . “There you go” said Ernesto to Sandra. She got closer. She stood in front of them both; Patricio sitting on Ernesto. Sandra opened her legs and touched Patricio with her pubic hairs; she rubbed them in his face. Patricio limited himself to stick out his tongue and leave it still and firm. Sandra moved at will, clinging to Patricio’s hair. Ernesto offered her his hands, she took them, she flexed her legs in order to softly sit on Patricio’s thighs and openly offer him her flesh. He, still erect, moved it, looking for Sandra’s wet, hot and red opening. She let herself down and felt completely full, run through. Together, the three reached the summit of enjoyment in one sharp and brief spasm . . . Exhausted, Sandra fell to one side. Patricio threw himself headfirst to the rug and Ernesto remained face up on the chair. The tower had collapsed. (127–28)

Just like the Tarot card that predicts the catastrophe, “The Tower” collapses symbolically, leaving the subjects on their own. Without the ability to negotiate with any discourse that collectively grounds them, *la petite morte* produces the fantasy of unification and simultaneously dissolves it. What becomes evident is that we live together by mere circumstantial necessity, incapable of going beyond the limits of the incarnate others. The fantasy of individual freedom as compensation against this anxiety is what reveals to us the structure of perversion. Sandra, Patricio, and Ernesto fall into pieces. These fragments, pieces of the tower structure exploded by the transitory of orgasm, stage the fragmentation of the human body as well as the subjectiv-

ity. A second look on the same scene reveals another dynamic. The libidinal law of the market economy leads us to submit ourselves to the dialectic of supply and demand. Prisoners to the compulsion to choose and satisfy a desire that always remains even beyond the fleeting fantasy of satisfaction, the subjects fetishize contracts whose objectives are the accumulation of goods and services and self-satisfaction. The sadomasochist theatre exemplary serves for us this purpose. In it, the subjects find discursive refuge. Through this, they can be disciplined while showing themselves to be against laws of subjection. The series of mechanical, instrumental, and technological resources made available to the fantasies replicates the offer that culture makes to individuals.

However, the ongoing negotiation of individual freedom protected by the division of roles is nevertheless bound to fail in the end. There is no other option for recognition in the erotic pedagogy of the pornographer. In writing about individuals, the categorical imperative of enjoyment is also inscribed in its lack of an opposite sign. The subjects stop being ends in order to simply become means for the fantasy to that which they have abandoned themselves in the search of satisfaction.

Santiago's Melancholy

Despite his thirty years of narrative work, Mauricio Wacquez's 2004 book, *Epifanía*, has gone virtually unnoticed in Chile. In the majority of cases, the accusation of "evasionist" reflected the disappointment that his literature was not associated with the process of the military dictatorship. The sentence was that he was "immune to the Chilean political situation."⁴⁵ I argue that his work is related to this time. Just like the previous novel, the narrative fabric gives us an exceptional dwelling of the forms that mix into the social discourses that feed a certain contemporary subjectivity in Chile. Wacquez, just like Ramírez, complies with this condition. In both works, like the visual works examined in chapter 3, the task of condensing the enunciation of one subject in particular is kept, that of intertwining "the social discursivities, the superimposition of the social ideal and the ideal of I" (Araujo, *Dignos de su Arte* 18). The purpose of this work is to investigate the peculiar conditions of this configuration, to think about its restrictions and the tensions that they provoke for the construction of the social world.

45. Anna Houskova uses these terms for the narratives of Adolfo Couve and Mauricio Wacquez.

The figure of perversion, both thematically and structurally, perfectly serves this purpose. So far I have maintained that perversion permits us to name the phenomenon detected in our readings. Perversion is the tendency toward subjective retraction that I have called “ideological limbo,” a product of the fall of the historical discourses, the decline of state and ideology, the privatization of imagination, and the dissolution of social bonds that this imaginary institutionality held as present. Given this scenario, I proposed in the two previous chapters that a certain uneasiness began to be noticed symptomatically in the proliferation of certain subjective configurations, both in public and symbolic discourses—art, literature, film, and theater. I am talking about the peculiar, subjective, postauthoritarian wager in Chile. In it, the subjects appear “taken down” from the historical continuum. They are subjectivities unanchored from the national memory. Their only handle is formed by the participation that they have as “judges” of the stagings of power and the social actors involved in them.

The media is the privileged sphere in which the circulation of domination is dramatized for citizens. In some instances, these have been configured as private testimonials, supposed system investigators who call for transparency in the regulation of the law. The demands of these subjects, simultaneously consumers and police, are based on the refunctioning of the virtual and journalist screen. Today, the media functions as public marketplace, the neo-version of the public. It is there that the senses for politics and social life are offered and negotiated. Invested with the inquisitor’s grammar, the consumer-police order, register, interrogate, accuse, judge, and condemn or absolve the protagonists of the perturbed social life that excludes them. What is unique is that this hypervigilant social subject of global capitalism does not perceive this cultural position in any degree as an identifying offer. Contrarily, it goes back to an intimate I that provides it with its ideal subject. This is, we must understand, a private/familiar fiction, one degree more of fictionalization that increases the distance between the discourse of social institutionality and the imaginary itself. The imaginary discourse intensifies the self-reflexive condition detached from the intrinsic instrumentality of the institutional imaginary. We should note that we are in the presence of two imaginaries that occur in parallel in the life of the subject, uniting the public and the private in one place, but in position of mutual ignorance. Both are cancelled. Both are fleeting images.

The following happens: the place of convergence of the fleeting opposites is the place where the drive of the imaginary itself sustains the subject’s independence from any other discursive, mediatic offer. That is, in this place, the subject simply can neither remember nor recognize its subjectivity in the

public, mediatic offer, because this is inscribed in an exterior that discredits it and in which he himself is reduced to fiction, a simple witness/consumer. The dynamic that I have just described thins not only the function of the institutional imaginary, trivialized by its overexposure, but also its ethical-moral role in the reconstruction of the social fabric. This puts the mediatic public into question; read many times as the negation of the generational link, or as a defense against the historic weight of the past, it is understood in this work, rather, as a reaction against the inability to form social bonds in the absence of an offer of a narrative ideal with which the subject can identify himself. An offer of ideals that can legitimate itself in an external account no longer exists. The subjects are forced to take refuge in the interstitial space that separates the imaginary of the drive in the Real. The result is perversion.

The perverse subject is now proposed as one more possible configuration. In this configuration, communicative technologies and political-economic neoliberalism entered to engrave the tensions between market and subject. We can add to the previous discussion that of the self-determined, autonomous, and independent subject that plays its production without the performatic-enlightened-self-reflexive dictum. The perverse subject, on the other hand, positions itself in the imaginary dimension of its possibility of consolidation; this is configured as a projection of the desires of the Other, its object, and not only as a result of the support of the other. This subject is, in essence, that which possesses the absolute capacity to summon that which the human detracts; that is, that which permits it to interpellate-update sovereignty inside of the realm of imaginary power. This is what Bruce Fink claims in his capital "Perversion," upon reminding us what Lacan called in this quality of the subject "the will to jouissance" (38).

The novel that illustrates this dimension is *Epifanía de una Sombra*, published posthumously.⁴⁶ It gives the account of the unique life of a social class and an entire country through the main character: the Chilean-French *dandy* Santiago Warni. Organized in sections separated by typographical signs, in its more than three hundred pages the novel reflects on the limits of individual liberty and the failure of the containment of the different normative systems that regulate it. The particularity of this text is that it speaks about the period that concerns us without explicitly referring to it. The variables previously described for change in the construction of subjectivity in this novel are present by the negation of the historical circumstances. The establishment of a utopian paradise between Ñilhue, Santiago, and Calaceite (Spain),

46. Trilogy of Obscurity. It was Mauricio Wacquez's project that remained unfinished due to his death. *Epifanía de la Sombra* is the first volume of the series.

between the first third of the century and the last, that is, between the two major modernizations of the country, and also between two social revolutions, that of Balmacedismo of 1891 and that of Allendismo of 1970, especially determines it. Halfway between the countryside of the central valley and the modernization of the capital, the novel questions a universal condition of representation. In it, the very essence of humanity grazes the psychoanalytical definition of perversion. Sexuality and the imaginary delirium completely dominate the narrative plot. The repertoire of experiences lived by the protagonist in his rural early childhood and adolescence, in the midst of summers surrounded by cousins and workers, contains all sorts of erotic registers. The stories of Warni include multiple adventures in which women and men are satisfied by the mastery of his penis. The novel is, in itself, a manual for the stud. The sexual adventures are innumerable, and consequently in this approach I will specifically deal with those that Brian Dendle qualifies as “beyond adolescent curiosity and boasting to evoke a world of horror, one in keeping, indeed, with the mythic dimensions of sexual violence, dominance and subjugation so powerfully explored in *Frente a un hombre armado*” (165).⁴⁷

Parallel to the principal story of this *bildungsroman*, the story of a crime is developed, that of “Vicho” Olavarrieta, described by the narrator by means of the unease his presence generates as it grows. The narrator says, “Bird more than boy, flower more than bird” (43), “the little and graceful boy had become a vigorous and slender teen, of a brutal and seductive beauty that revolutionized the feminine world and that the masculine world despised because it provoked unacceptable desires in it” (99), “the most desired, the most sought after by women and students” (258).

These two constants, present in the combination of the erotic novel and crime or murder genres, will also mark the production of the subjectivity of the time that we are interested in delimiting in this work. Wacquez’s novel, just like Ramirez’s and a score of other texts, will combine the sexuality-crime dyad as a narrative support for the stories, a reflection of the public discourses filled with the rhetoric of “antisocial violence.”⁴⁸ It is about not only criminalizing deviant conduct but documenting the files of these individuals through their publication in crime reports and tabloids. They are the delinquent symptom of these subjectivities.

47. This novel deals with the same themes that we have been discussing, but its date of publication places it outside the realm of this study.

48. The rhetoric of antisocial violence replaced that of Marxist chaos during the dictatorship and the first years of the transition. It came to be replaced with the “antisystemic violence” led by the Mapuche and sexual minority groups and the uprising of the students.

What both genres have in common is the deregulation that the individual suffers as a consequence of his “deviant nature.” Both textual types present us with thematizations of the perversion of social life. There are two normative discourses problematized. First is that of the police or crime novel, that of the transgression of private property—including life—and the right to the material enjoyment of it. Secondly, in the erotic novel, there is the right to individual enjoyment over the normative, social contracts of sexuality.

In this latter, Wacquez twists the issue of sovereign power, and just like the protagonist of the novel *Hasta ya no ir* (1996), by Beatriz García-Huidobro, uses the body of teenagers to demythify the drama of sexuality and display the exercise of pulsional freedom in an individualistic way. Unlike Wacquez’s males, García-Huidobro’s female teen uses prostitution as a means to empower herself after losing her mother. The girl’s subjectivity is presented completely detached from the economic transaction and devoid of inner conflict due to her awareness of how neoliberal bonds work. Wacquez, on the other hand, places three male teenagers in the oligarchic rural setting to show the sexual contracts created by the relationships of Andrés and Santiago and Santiago and Vicente. He explores the manner in which the young men enter into the dynamics of sexual dependency, interchanging the positions of victims and perpetrators according to their class and kinship statuses. Deregulated by the sexual drive, their freedom portrays the intrinsically perverse “nature” that Freud would define as an original condition of every subject. The bond among them is performed here through a sadomasochistic sexual theater. Both writers, however, share an interest in exploring the disaggregation of the collective subject to look closely into the phantasmatic world of the subjected I.

In another passage of the novel, the masochist relationship takes center stage. We are confronted with the figure of rape. This is also recurrent in the novels of the period.⁴⁹ One of the most interesting scenes is that featuring the narrator and the mythical figure of the saint of the stigmata, The Baptist. The narrator is found locked in his room recovering from the sickness that afflicts him. At this point, we do not know if it is Santiago Warni’s meningitis or the delirium of the sixty-year-old writer that defines writing as the activity of those that “fill with blood, sperm, and black bile the thoughtful, divine creation” (85). Be it one or the other, the scene occurs between the cross-arms. The anal penetration of the teenager-writer is performed on the windowsill, amid the mystic ecstasy, lubricated by the blood that flows from the stigmata of the well-built man. Just like the linguistic stream of the writers, The Baptist penetrates the body of his victim with vital fluids.

49. See Whitebrook.

Epifanía, in the key of Freud, works the theory in which the polymorphous, infantile sexuality will develop in adult life as an atavistic remnant in the form of perversion. Renouncing incest and fratricide will be the central points of the original pact of civilization. How, then, can we reconcile this contractual renunciation, when the modern forms of liberty tell us that we can remove that ancestral agreement thanks to the new value that liberty acquires in the liberal model? If the new liberty is not symbolizable, that is, if the contracts constantly change, in what way will they regulate the inherent lack of the society of progress? Liberalism itself has failed in the repression inherent to the beginning of reality. The presence of impulses that escape socialization would permit the appearance of a “perverse core, consisting in a wish to transgress the human condition as it is delimited by the Oedipus complex, constitutes a ubiquitous feature of human psychic life” (62), just as Joel Whitebook maintains.

Sick of Memory

The first excess is that of memory. As we have seen up to this point, memory plays a primary role in the structuring of the Ideal of the subject (the same social bond). Unlike the earlier novel, in *Epifanía*, the threads of memory will transform into the axes of the narrative. A superficial reading would say that memory has recovered its leading role in the Proustian parodic gesture that the novel exhibits. Nonetheless, the use of this sense is faulty. Memory also appears devastated here. Its downfall is not from the overexposed type of technological mediation required by the televised memorial of consensus. Nor is it that of administrative statistics. We are faced with a memory symptom of the time: a sick, injured, stunned memory. Just as amnesia is the lack of memory, its excess also summons its annihilation. Santiago Warni, the protagonist, awakens the remembrance as the *pharmakon*.⁵⁰ In Derrida, the ability of the conscience to integrate content yields. Like the medicine that cures in its excess or in its dearth destroys, the voided memory has become subject for indolence. Communicating with its object in forms of negation or of lack, the symbolic material of memory is disfigured in the illusion. Memory makes everything it touches elusive. In the same way, the perverse

50. See Jacques Derrida, *La Farmacopea de Platón (La Diseminación. Caracas: Editorial Fundamentos, 1975)*. It refers to the category of *pharmakon*, understood as a substance that can cure the loss of memory. It is also a poisonous drug. Derrida's analogy with the properties of literary discourse implies the perception of it in its abilities to “infect” or “cure.”

opens a space for the epiphany. As Giorgio Agamben claims in *Estancias: La palabra y el fantasma en la cultura occidental*, sorrow has become melancholy. The rational inability to control the incessant discourse of interior phantasms characterizes the melancholic.

Useless in its effort to organize the wandering through the spaces of memory, the indolent sick person falls prey to “the erotic derangements of black humor,” suffering the condemnation of being his own object of enjoyment (*Estancias* 47). Wacquez’s narrative leads us to the end of the realm of infancy, at which time the “sickness” that has affected Santiago will take the place of the sexual drive. The narrator tells us that throughout his adolescence, “the awakening of Santiago was a real epiphany, the epiphany of the shadow. The pressure of the swollen meninges on the brain still lasted a while but was not an obstacle for the procession of cars to return him to Ñilhue” (63). Since that feverous moment, dream and sexuality will superimpose themselves in the daily life of the puberty of Santiago and his friends, Andrés and Vicente. The disease is the way in which infancy continues its pulsional course, the new form in which the body embraces the changes that desire provokes. Santiago suffers from “infancy.” The neutrality of the classes he assists, in which modern culture struggles for its proclamation in the middle of the planted fields of the large landholders, ends each time it clashes with the bodily expressions of erotic urgency.

The innocence of a piano lesson will give way to the eruption of an incontrollable erection unleashed by the boy’s frolicking with the instructor’s daughter. Little Rebecca masturbates Santiago, who will immediately be prisoner to “a minute of death, fever, and agony that threw him against the bricks outside, and the heat and sweat in his hair would be the same as Rebecca’s” (61). Both drives united, the erotic and that of death, the subject adopts the disease as an identitary mask. Unlike the collective assumption of innocence that diseases like typhus or cholera had, “sexual disease” is one also of the soul.⁵¹ Close to the categories of hysteria or neurosis, Santiago’s suffering makes him a symptom of the period. It is not the symptom of the necessity to be deciphered, as in the hysterical semiotic of the binaries owner-slave or patient-interpreter, expressed in the muteness of spasm or convulsion, but rather in the imperative that someone order the “mental miasma” in which he lives (68). Hallucinatory memory is seen not only as an expression of delirium but also as the test of the most extreme individualism.

This condition is already in the foundation of the Christian philosophy of Saint Anselm, the inspiration of Wacquez, which claims that absolute realism

51. See Sontag.

is impossible to admit because of the peculiar imaginative condition of the subject. This latter, in the doctrine of Saint Anselm, would correspond to the notion of substance, discarding the idea of “person,” a rational, natural, and political entity. Thus, call it substance or desire, memory functions for the narrator of this text as that which “gives it all over: gagged, twisted, all full of imagination, whose limit is time itself, the center and he himself, closed in his scab, individualized, shackled, as philosophy tends to say, to existence” (12). The thesis of the novel coincides, then, with two positions that see the necessity to control this dimension of human existence, in which moral responsibility for the control of the imagination is fundamental for social life and the good arrival of the individual. Having used the word *perversion* since the fourteenth century, with emphasis on the repression of behavior—that is to say, on the moral (theological) or political action—Saint Anselm’s feudal, premercantile thesis does not incorporate the notion of sin when talking of the confinement of man to his poetic capacity, but rather stresses the metaphorical power of discourse inherent to the subject. Having shifted the discussion from the realm of probability to that of possibility, the separation between the symbolic-personae and the imaginary-personae reinforces our reflection. Of course, this dictum confirms two basic propositions of this work: the constitutive universal condition of perversion and the exasperation that the political and economic liberalism has made of it in the contemporary world.

Freedom has changed its sign. It is no longer about rationally discerning how our acts might affect others. Rather, it is about understanding how secularization has made freedom a contractual right with legal bargaining power each time two individuals actualize the full civil enjoyment of rights. Understood this way, mutual consent between adults for whatever action/behavior escapes the scope of the moral counterdrive. Just as Wacquez’s novel proposes, infancy is a territory that is disputed by the law. Becoming a subject of law implies the civil maturity of the individual with the consequent sanction over the behaviors of infancy. The debate over the age of sexual consent or of full rational discernment over one’s acts has produced a disturbing readjustment of the minimal conditions for considering a crime punishable in Chile.

Epifanía displays an endless series of transgressions. The entire pornography industry rests on this assumption, which opens another chapter of research outside of our purposes in this book.

Conclusion

THE STARTING POINT of this work was to offer a look over Chile that could account for a series of changes occurring in the public and private sphere of the past twenty years. The transition to democracy did not happen only in the agreements signed between civilians and the military to repay historic debts. It was also immersed in one of the most extreme modernizations occurring in the country since the '40s. The conditions of Chileans' material life changed substantially. By recovering the freedom of thought and suspending the state of emergency implicit in the constitution for decades, social action was oriented toward making the free market principles of the neoliberal model their own, which materially implied a change in the capacity of access to enjoyment, even when not that of rights. This enjoyment was translated into an increase in the economic capacity of indebtedness and consumption. The abstract promise of private capital concluded with a permanent mortgage of salaried bodies, defined by contracts restrictive of full citizen enjoyment. The value of personal choice became the abstract measure of social success of the model. Moreover, in the macro culture, the imposed model reformulated demographic distribution, definitively changing the physiognomy of cities and towns. The telephone and electric cables and lines disappeared from the national pupils. The rows of birds suspended like a horizon line retreated to the invisible, digital, high-speed cables of personal computers with public access. The humble sparrow familiar in inter-urban bus and train stations was now a luxurious toucan in the Dominican

Republic or Cuba, offered on-screen at 150 Chilean pesos for three minutes. Virtuality took the national habits of resolving conflicts and weathering the next presidency into the coffeehouse or the cookout on the beach. Daily life became faster. Emerging neighborhoods, new physiognomies of economic stratification, changes in the organization and access to public networks of assistance, and finally, the political economy of the third millennium for the country launched radical changes in the individual and the collective for one of the most conservative societies of the continent.

The “English” of Latin America were in the midst of what the champion of the Right, Joaquín Lavín, defined as “The Silent Revolution”: “thousands of Chileans making free decisions, with all the information available, in a country connected to a world that advances at supersonic speeds . . . a housewife that shopped at an *Almac* supermarket in 1974 could choose between 5,500 products, today her possibilities reach 15,500 different items” (7).

If most attempts to address the entrance of the free market social model into Chile have worked with the impact on the public of this operation, this investigation, however, starts from a different assumption, extracted from the symptoms of a unique malaise expressed in another public corpus. In the last two decades, the transition between two modes of production, the changes induced by it, and the resulting social readjustments have seen a sustained increase of the mediatic visibility of citizen subjectivity. They have seen not only its imaginary referents, those that I define as privatized in this study, but rather those of their behavior. These have also been privatized, but in another way. The specific judgments or scandals known as “Colonia Dignidad” (1997–2003), “Claudio Spiniak” (2003–2005), and “Hans Pozo” (2006–2007) appearing in the press between 1991 and 2005 had in common the manifestation of protagonists involved in different sexual trafficking in which the paid sexual contract of service clearly reproduced the laws established by the regulated economy of the dynamics of supply and demand.

This fact, apparently related to crime patterns, woke up in me the idea of thinking about how the private sphere of imagination has been affected and studying which were the changes produced as a consequence on the subjects’ subjectivity. Supported by the works on the reflections produced by sociology of the individual, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and queer theory, I concluded that it was possible to approach the problem from the angle of the formation of individual subjectivity. For that, and based on the premise that culture is that which offers social, subject ideals to individuals, I decided to ask about the solidity of symbolic narratives. What was on the market in the moment of

this crisis when the individuals' private sexual preferences became an object of public scrutiny? Was there something else with which to identify oneself beyond celebrity biographies and the local crime pages? What individuals and paradigms began to be offered as symbolic referents for the individuation and subjectification of Chileans?

In an earlier time, memory narratives, with all their variants, had constituted the required referent for the transition from authoritarian to democratic culture made available to Chileans. Behind them, ideology constituted a solid imaginary dam upon which to inscribe not only citizenships but also subjectivities. The majority of narratives were ratified in public documents, first those of the victors and the vanquished (the political constitution and the reports of the three human rights commissions); others formed daring symbolic interpellations for the state, requesting a definition; and still others folded into the documental function of family testimony. One way or another, all of them were given the task of reconstructing the social fabric and, in all of them, the vehicle of reinterpretation of the past was the fictionalization of its place in the world after the trauma of the dictatorship.

These narratives were privileged tools for constructing the necessary moral grounding for the protection of transitional governments. I have qualified them as those of the "pastoral." A proof of this is the liturgical modulation of the reconciliation with its political double, in which the consensus necessary for the governing institutional continuity made a place of powerful identification for a society in which the validity of Catholic doctrine is more than evident. A sign of the presented manipulation is the "secret" that impedes the real disclosure of the Valech report until 2054.¹ It is clear that the narrative of confession impregnates the prohibition of informing, what in reality constitutes a censorship. This way, memory is formed as a powerful agent of political normalization, seen as a propaganda resource and ideological mediation, as well as providing, like genre, a communicative pact of mutual interpellation between citizenship and state, while also being a privileged one of the generational competition amongst co-citizens.

State and media combined to take the theme of memory by assault. The public discourses and symbolic narratives were met with the same strategy, repeating the same gesture. The script consisted of exhuming history's bodies in order to find the truth of their experience, sealing the discussion from both the past project of socialism and military intervention. Neither were ever

1. Testimonies have been classified and will be kept secret until 2054. The first version of the report was published on November 29, 2004.

publically debated. In its place, the “reconstruction of the scene,” the exhumation, the investigation, the interrogation of witnesses, and an entire police rhetoric took the mediatic delivery of the memory off the trauma of the dictatorship. The political became a mediatic show; the historic trauma, a crime; the public discussion, a search for the killer. This is the essential resignification that the business-state achieved. Moreover, this great triumph sustained the overlap of the memory accounts with those of the exaltation of intimacy, both being put on the screen.

The retelling of this process is explained in the first chapter. There I work with the idea of a change in the offer of the construction of the ideal subject proposed by the media. This produced its effect in the processes of individuation and subjectification for citizens. The available referents in the mediaticized-modernity-market were all the stories whose condition of transience responds to the logic of the times that had marked the historic and ideological manipulation. The fleeting consumption of these accounts works as a perishable offer, and consequently, is not assimilable for the subject. The question of the show is, “Did he kill or not?” Any answer resolves the crime, and the magic is that it cancels all possibility of continuity. Once resolved, what sense does it make to go over it again? In front of this dynamic of mediatic velocity and its chain substitutions, the subject rules against it and says, “This is not my place.” The disposable present is a nonplace as an offer of the symbolic. It is a place in which you cannot remember.

The fundamental thesis that the first two chapters of this investigation articulate proposes that, before the thinning of the exposition of memory accounts, substituted by the memorial rhetoric and confused by that of intimacy, this offer ended up being discarded by newer generations. The government of the national-global has replaced the agency of collective memory with that of media culture. This last point is already not understood as the pragmatic, political use of local resistance but rather as the space of the offer of symbolic consumption and accumulation of capital.

This way, it has ended up producing a narrative void, an effect of the audiovisuals of the instantaneous. For the subject, this has a fundamental transcendence. Lacking or disbelieving the offers produced by mediatic culture, in relation to the subject ideals, nostalgic memory of other historical moments provides some support narratives. This movement of nostalgia or the postmodern melancholy of Fredric Jameson and Jean François Lyotard is seen as covered in blood in our case study. This is not only the lack of historical consistency of the offered narratives, or the reelaboration of these as simulated, disposable ideals in the screen of the subject, but something

more serious: the subject is seen impelled to reimagine the offers made by culture. This process puts him on symbolic open ground, since his process of identification will now depend exclusively on its possibilities of the ideal I. Without an offer of cultural ideals of subject, the I is left only with itself as an ideal. Isn't this what Agrado, Almodovar's transsexual character,² meant when he asked himself, justifying the money invested in his plastic surgeries along the path of reassignment, if there is something more true than what one desires to be?

In this context, the figure of the perverse allows us to observe this change in cultural analysis in the processes of subjectification, where the offers to be presented to the ideal I, paradoxically, are no longer maintained in exterior narratives but in phantasmatic images of these on the interior of the individual itself. The culture of the millennium has taken the inflation of the I to its highest degree. Now, in the extreme sovereignty the post-Sadean subject no longer exhibits the liberal exercise of autonomy in the body theater of the other but rather in his own. This post-Foucauldian subject no longer perceives the effects of biopower on his material self, but rather the perverse subject is constructed as an object of his own ideal I. The I is no longer subject but rather object. The fantasy completely replaces symbolization in order to install the empire of desire on the conscience. Lacking the performative resources of recognition that memory provided, the subject can only produce itself in relation to the always volatile and inconsistent offer that its desire imagines. The transcendence of the instrumental, organizing gesture of the previous modernity yields in front of the impulse to place the perverse as the origin and support of the reproduction of capital. Cynical and perverse consciousnesses combine in the coincidence of being the privileged modes of contemporary social organization.

Chile turns out to once again be a test case on the continent. It allows us to observe how, and in the best possible way, we are in the presence of a process of construction of the social bond based on the changeable nature of desire and the objectification of the subject offers. The supreme self-reflexive gesture, the mercantile sovereignty has come to constitute the agency-space of the transformation and elaboration of the social bond. As Zygmunt Bauman clearly proposes, today the "rationality of consumption society is constructed on the irrationality of its individual actors" (231). There is no doubt that this is the corollary of the immediate loss of memory. Without it, the words no

2. The character was interpreted by Antonia San Juan in the film *All about my Mother* (1999).

longer remind us. Along with the coming of the perverse as a cultural offer, the market-choice culture hints at a new hegemony. My imagination in you has made you an object of your own enjoyment. Is it worth it to ask about the nature of the constitution of the new social bond? I hope that this is the possibility of a return to the human.

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