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“Hablo por mi diferencia”

The Rebirth of Lemebel

From *Los incontables* to “Manifiesto”

A Thesis presented by

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Abstract of the Thesis

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All of Lemebel’s works have been studied, analyzed, and critiqued, while *Los incontables* has been either forgotten or unheard of, which is why I attempt a queer reading of these texts. This investigation reaches beyond a need to “rescue” more of Lemebel’s works than he has chosen to do by himself; they are analyzed as destabilizing tools of subversion. At the same time, a reworking of Lemebel’s stories written and published during Pinochet’s dictatorship gives testament to a form of memory hitherto little explored, one that rewrites the official story of the military regime of Chile from the perspective of the sexually deviant and socially marginalized. *Los incontables* gives voice to the sexually marginalized, those with no History on either side of the battle. I also explore the author as in transformation, analyzing *Los incontables* and “Manifiesto: Hablo por mi diferencia” as works that mark his convergence from Mardones to Lemebel, a political act of resistance against national hegemonic structures of repression.

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Introduction

“Eran tiempos difíciles y, travestido de gata cuentera, podía pasar. Después esa gata se transformó en La Loca, se metamorfoseo desde el cuento a la crónica. Allí está ahora sobre un par de tacos-agujas, acechante” (Blanco and Gelpí 152).

In an interview with Fernando Blanco and Juan Gelpí, the now renowned Chilean author, Pedro Lemebel¹, expresses his transformation from Mardones (the author’s paternal surname and original pen name) to Lemebel (the author’s maternal surname and current pen name), a metamorphosis that extends beyond the change from the paternal name, Mardones, to his maternal name, Lemebel. This change of name gave birth, according to Lemebel himself, to a new alliance with the feminine, the homosexual, the travesty, and the *haucho*² (Blanco and Gelpí 152). This politically strategic move also carried out his change in writing style from fiction to *crónica*.

Under the pen name Mardones, Pedro Lemebel published, in 1986, his first book of short stories, *Los incontables*. The book was published by the feminist underground press Ergo Sum³. While now he is internationally recognized for his *crónicas*, among them the well-known *De perlas y cicatrices* (1998), *Loco afán: crónicas de sidario* (2000), *La esquina es mi corazón* (2001), and *Adiós mariquita linda* (2005), Lemebel began his writing career with the genre of short stories, winning first place in the Concurso nacional de cuento Javier Carrera in 1982 for the short story “Porque el tiempo está cerca.” The author’s change in genre from short story to

¹ From this moment onwards, I will refer to the author solely as Lemebel (except for the in-text citations, which will coincide with the surname the author has used to publish the particular piece of work cited). My choice to utilize the author’s maternal name is born out of respect for the author’s current political choice and his affiliation with the feminine.

² *Haucho* derives from the indigenous word that means orphan; person lacking parents or care; in Quechua, “huajcha” means orphan. Lemebel’s act of renouncing an allegiance to his father materializes his feeling of marginalization to the political and social world, which has casted him out during the military dictatorship and the democratic transition, making him an orphan of father and Nation.

³ Pía Barros (1956-) began the editorial Ergo Sum with the publication of the first “book-object” in November of 1985 in Santiago de Chile. Quickly, Ergo Sum became “one of the most innovative illegal editorial initiatives” (Gomoll and Olivares 2). A year later, Ergo Sum published *Los incontables*. Along with Pedro Lemebel, authors like Ana María del Río, Carolina Rivas, Sonia González, Lilian Elphick, Andrea Maturana, Alejandra Costamagna, and Lina Meruane began their writing careers in the workshops of Ergo Sum. For further information refer to: Gomoll, Lucian and Lissette Olivares, Eds. “Writing Resistance in Crisis and Collaboration.” *Exhibition Catalogues*, Museum and Curatorial Studies, UC Santa Cruz, 2010. 1-18; Griffin, Jane. *The Pedro in the Closet, Or, the Untellable Stories of Pedro Mardones Lemebel*. Diss. University of California, Irvine, 2009.

crónica, along with his change in surname, was justified as a political and strategic change later in his career, a shift established during the democratic transition in Chile⁴ and following his participation in the performative and plastic arts with “Las Yeguas del Apocalipsis⁵.”

Lemebel situates his earlier works as constrained by the hegemonic writing style of fiction because, according to the author, fiction cannot assume the role of testimony the way that testimony literature and *crónica* has been able to accomplish. Also, the author claims that fiction is not as accessible to the masses as the *crónicas* have proven to be, since mainstream publishers have commodified literature and made it inaccessible to the poor and illiterate (Masiello, “The Unbearable” 461-62). There are also the obvious constraints set by an atmosphere of violence and panic under dictatorial rule, but I argue that the stories in themselves are powerful tools of denunciation. Lemebel has expressed in various instances that the genre of *crónica* offers him a freedom that fiction has not been able to provide; I argue, however, during the military dictatorship, the short story, which in Latin America since the 20th Century was created as an opposition to the traditional genre of the novel, allows Lemebel a freedom that would not have been possible to enjoy if he had been writing *crónicas*. Lemebel’s actions to reach a relatively broad audience beyond the literary circle, to reach the margins of society, and the illiterate, only became possible through his use of mass media during the democratic transition. For example, we have witnessed this through his use of radio (broadcasting readings of his *crónicas* in radio stations like Radio Tierra before their publication) and his writings in feminist and homosexual magazines like “The Clinic,” “Página Abierta,” “Punto Final,” and most recently in “La Nación” (a weekly column entitled “Ojo de loca no se equivoca”). These actions are what Lemebel terms “planfeteo” of his works; in other words, spreading them without the intervention of traditional publishers (Gómez Lizana, “Entrevista”). We can conceive this as a return to an oral tradition, the forms of expression that predate the notion that only the written word can provide testament to memory and History. Lemebel’s return to orality not only destabilizes the written word, the narrative, the novel, and History, but enters in a game of allusion with the genre of testimony literature. This new genre, a genre that historically has hybridized with the novel and journalism depends on the figure of the witness, the appearance of non-fiction, and the recourse to personal memory (González Cangas 163). Lemebel argues that fiction and the short story underestimate this hybridization, but through the dissemination of his early short stories through the small publishing house Ergo Sum, Lemebel forges a strong political action analogous to this act of “planfletear” (Griffin, *The Pedro*).

An analysis of his early short stories collected in the volume *Los incontables* as the beginning of a literature of denunciation, desire, and of the marginal leads me to locate Lemebel

⁴ In Chile, the democratic transition began in 1988 with the presidency of Patricio Aylwin. This officially ended the military dictatorship and opened the doors to the democratic government. When I refer to ‘democratic transition’ from here onwards, I refer to Nelly Richard’s understanding of this period, one which began prior to this date and generated a hybrid between repression (military violence) and modernization (entrance in the global market). This is also a period marked by what Richard terms *consenso* (Richard, “La problemática” 227-28).

⁵ Along with Francisco Casas, “Las Yeguas del Apocalipsis” (1987-1995) was a collective that publicly performed over 800 events around Chile. These performances denounced heteronormative constructions of sex and gender, hegemonic constructions of power, and the disastrous violence committed by the dictatorship. In form of performance, photography, video, and installation, it resisted official language and normative forms of expression.

within a queer aesthetic practice. Queer theory derives from a re-appropriation of the term queer, a pejorative expression of homophobia. It was adapted by academia in the 1990's as a theory that questions sexuality as a category of identity. Queer theory has expanded Foucault's inquiry of the epistemology of all sexual identities, Derrida's theory of the instability of binary oppositions and Butler's content of the false imaginary of the univocity of sex and gender. A queer reading of Lemebel's present works would involve concepts of transgender performativity, inciting Butler, as a border-crossing, ambiguous, and therefore, destabilizing discourse (De los Ríos 137; Kulawik 102-05; 109; 112). At the same time, my argument is that Lemebel already includes sexually ambiguous characters in *Los incontables*, which deconstruct all hegemonic relationships, both hetero and homosexual, as well as, provides a severe critique of hegemonic constructions of power based on heteronormative binaries of oppression (passive/aggressive, male/female, and dominant/subordinate).

Through my readings of the critical literature written about Lemebel and of multiple interviews with the author, I trace an insistence in categorizing his work under the label of "homosexual" literature (Urtasun 202; Maristany, "Marcando"; Pérotin-Dumon). Lemebel's strategic change to *crónica* allows him to fluctuate between labels such as fiction versus non-fiction and literature versus what her terms "literature bastarda." Like Lemebel himself states, journalist call his work 'literature' and members of the literary field call his work '*crónica*': "En ese intermedio se mueven mis letras y aparentemente se mueven bien. Mi escritura es una mezcla de estilos, un género bastardo, un pastiche de la canción popular, la biografía, el testimonio, la entrevista, las voces y los susurros de la calle" (Lojo, "Mi escritura"). According to the author, the *crónica* offers Lemebel a freedom unavailable with the constraints of other more neatly defined literary genres like the novel and the short story. For the author, the *crónica* is an ambiguous genre because it fluctuates between fiction, testimony, and journalism among other genres. My argument is that Lemebel's short stories from *Los Incontables* written during Pinochet's dictatorship and not only those which he chooses to 'rescue' and use in more recent works (such as "Bésame otra vez forastero" y "El Wilson") which can be considered queer resistance, a resistance against labels, identities, and the nation as a community⁶.

As I substantiate my argument of Lemebel as a queer author from the onset of his literary career, I focus particularly on Deleuze's and Guattari's theory of *devenir femme* (becoming-woman) delineated in *A Thousand Plateaus* (2007). According to Masiello, *devenir femme* is an abstract concept of "woman" because "anyone who traverses the neat order of the state is per force a nomadic figure, a contraband subject, approaching the position of 'woman'" ("Plazas" 206)⁷. In other words, becoming-woman and all other subjects of becoming (becoming-animal, becoming-child, ect.) are minoritarian subjects that oppose the majoritarian state of dominance represented by a patriarchal power force. Therefore, since patriarchal structures tend to be hierarchical and vertical, all that is outside of their power is in opposition to this force and

⁶ By communities I am referencing Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1991). All communities are imagined because its members are not necessarily engaged; rather, they are constructed through hegemonic agencies of power.

⁷ The theory of *devenir femme* has also been extensively portrayed in Néstor Perlongher's work. He has taken Deleuze's and Guattari's theory to explain the transitory position of male prostitutes in São Paulo, Brazil. In "Los devenires minoritarios" (1991), Perlongher translates, explains, and applies the main principles of *A Thousand Plateaus* in the Brazilian context.

therefore, is also fluid and nomadic (Deleuze and Guattari 294). Lemebel has used his literary career to testify the memories of the dictatorships of the Southern Cone and post-dictatorship proceedings by incessantly fighting against a normalized heterosexual matrix of power through the strategic use of his sexuality and language in his work in order to speak on behalf of the voiceless (i.e. the *huachos* of the Nation). In Lemebel's most recent works, the author utilizes the parodic performance of the travesty to oppose the heterosexual binary system of sex and gender. His performances showcase the arbitrariness of gender, the traces of this arbitrariness present in linguistic constructions, and in the larger framework of the Chilean culture (Kulawik 104). In *Los incontables*, as I will expand in the following chapters, the author includes sexually ambiguous characters to question the hegemonic constructions of sexuality. His tales also portray heteronormative relationships as violent matrixes of power and denounces how both the military dictatorship and the leftists revolutionary movements utilized heteronormativity to further oppress minoritarian subjects.

Therefore, I am interested in reading these earlier works in comparison to his more famous and recent writings in order to show how the former already contained a solid critique of the heterosexual/patriarchal matrix and of the feminine/masculine binary system of sex and gender. Even when the author's style of writing in these early short stories is not the identifiable neo-baroque, they already contained many of the themes and perspectives of his latter works⁸. Lemebel "rescues" some of his short stories written during Pinochet's military dictatorship and uses them as part of his *crónicas*; short stories such as "El Wilson" and "Bésame otra vez forastero"⁹ are rescued as those in which "ya estaba potenciado el tornasol sexuado de mi crónica"¹⁰ (Mateo del Pino, "Cronista"). Although Lemebel's current readers may uncritically perceive his characters as sexually ambiguous or gender-variant, tragic, fabulous, or tragically-fabulous *locas* always at the margins, an analysis of the characters presented in *Los incontables* will show how they provide a fierce critique of the heterosexual matrix as a violent, racist, and exclusory structure; a structure also reiterated both by the patriarchal dictatorship and revolutionary leftist movements.

In "Ella entró por la ventana del baño," I argue that Lemebel portrays la Chola, the tale's protagonist, as a sexually, gender, and human/animal ambiguous character in order to represent her as a figure always caught at the intersection of gender, race, and class and therefore, always

⁸ Neo-baroque is a style that flourished in the second half of the 19th Century, which imitates the baroque. It was a reaction to the rigidity of European academia and was quickly adopted in Latin America by Severo Sarduy (Cuba) and later by Néstor Perlongher (Argentina), Carlos Monsiváis (Mexico), Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá (Puerto Rico), and Pedro Lemebel (Chile). Representation via exuberant, ornamental, and artificial language becomes a tool of denunciation because language can transcend its role of communication (Kulawik 112).

⁹ "El Wilson" is the only short story analyzed in this essay that is not actually part of *Los incontables*; it was published in 1989 (?) in the Ergo Sum anthology, *Cuando no se puede vivir del cuento*. Both "El Wilson" and "Bésame otra vez forastero" were re-released in *Adiós mariquita linda* (2005). I will not analyze the versions that appear in *Adiós mariquita linda* because my focus is to analyze the author's work specifically during the dictatorship and although a comparison would be fruitful, the current versions have been adapted to Chile's current state.

¹⁰ By 'tornasol sexuado,' phrase taken from an interview of Pedro Lemebel (Mateo del Pino, "Cronista"), I reference Lemebel's *crónicas*' renown excess, transvestic tones and subjects, and parodic language, which rupture official culture through their neo-baroque style (Kulawik 112; De los Ríos 137-39; Maristany, "¿Una teoría?" 21; Pérotin-Dumon).

in opposition to the patriarchal structure that oppresses her and ultimately causes her violent death. In light of Deleuze's and Guattari's theory of *devenir femme*, la Chola can be described as a character always in the process of 'becoming-woman.' Consequently, she is placed in opposition to the referent 'man,' in which man is the central point in the binary system of oppression. Deleuze and Guattari describe 'man' as a referent in the dichotomies: "male-(female), adult-(child), white-(black, yellow, or red); rational-(animal). The central point, or third-eye, thus has the property of organizing binary distributions within the dualism machines, and reproducing itself in the principle term of opposition; the entire opposition at the same time resonates in the central point" (292). This same binary system of oppression present in patriarchal structures of power is portrayed in "Una noche buena para Santa," "Espinoza," "Bésame otra vez forastero," and "El Wilson," in which, I argue that by portraying deviant sexual relationships as oppressive binaries that merely mirror hegemonic constructions of sexuality, Lemebel is denouncing the structure itself. Butler explains that reverting back to the binary system of oppression does not offer a solution, but rather strengthens the system that will further subjugate the 'other' within the binary; she states, "It is neither a simple 'turning of the table' in which women now wage violence against men, nor a simple internalization of masculine norms such that women now wage violence against themselves" (172).

In "Monseñor" there is a denunciation of the violence committed at the hands of the military regime and the participation of the Catholic Church. Both institutions are patriarchal structures of power that prohibit deviant sexuality in order to successfully assume power over subordinate subjects. Ultimately, these institutions fall into the same deviant violence they condemn; this was particularly present in the violent acts of Pinochet's regime. In "Wilson," Lemebel also subverts the role of woman and gives agency to female sexuality in a public/male space in order to undermine the patriarchal matrix of power. The military regimes of the Southern Cone conferred their power and justified their violence by serving themselves of this patriarchal matrix of power. The dictatorships established that the political and national enemy was the 'other,' in other words, any and all that were not associated with their morally, politically, and socially conservative view of the country. In practice, the military represented the interests of the oligarchic and bourgeois sectors that formed the regime or aided the regime in entering the international financial sector (Tal, "Imaginando"). This patriarchal structure, which mirror the binary system of oppression (dominant/subordinate, superior/inferior, and male/female) marginalizes not only the political subversive as the regime conferred, but all those considered an 'other' (the sexually, racially, and/or economically marginalized). These, Chile's *huachos*, are the anti-heroes that Lemebel includes in *Los incontables* in order to use deviance as that which represents the marginalized.

Lemebel refers to his first published book in various ways in his interviews, but in an interview for *Peru21*, he makes the most straightforward comment: "Yo no ficciono; odio la ficción. Antes, en plena dictadura de Pinochet, escribía cuentos. Y me resulto tan falso hacerlos, que me decidí por este 'género bastardo', que es la crónica, que me quedo como anillo al dedo" (Luns, "Vivire aca"). Therefore, why make such a strenuous effort to go back and re-read the first work of Lemebel when, himself, his readers, and critics have decimated their importance? In *Los incontables*, there are more than just a couple of stories that already have a "tornasol sexuado" so notable in Lemebel's recent works. Like previously stated, according to Lemebel, fiction is a limited form of writing within the literary canon because it assumes that there is no

need for a real basis to the narrative as opposed to the *crónica*, which presupposes a witness with a voyeuristic eye to testify. At the same time, fiction as testimony is considered one of the few sensible forms to express memory since it allows for a play with language through figurative forms of speech (irony, satire, metaphor, symbolism, allegory) that can articulate that which is considered unspeakable (Richard, *Residuos* 31). Memory is an intricate process always resisting being forgotten or conglomerated into one unanimous voice called History. Since the early 19th Century, testimony literature began to find ways to experience memories and sensations that had not yet been articulated or had been consciously forgotten by History. Therefore, testimony literature became the most sensible way to “practice memory.” Here, I borrow Nelly Richard’s term in which she suggests that art and literature are the only sensible ways to get involved in the complex symbolism of memory through formulating a language that opposes the mechanized language of the *consenso*¹¹.

This idea of “practicing memory” that Richard proposes is present in a few of the stories that make up *Los incontables*. Beginning with “Ella entró por la ventana del baño,” the narrative of la Chola functions as antimemory. Since la Chola is a character always in the process of becoming-woman, as I previously stated and will expand on in a later chapter, her testimony becomes a discourse in opposition to official History because it is minoritarian and perceived as irrational—an antimemory. According to Deleuze and Guattari, all that is not majoritarian (male, white, dominant, and rational) is therefore, minoritarian and its discourse is an antimemory that History has tried to exclude. “History is made only by those who oppose history (not by those who insert themselves into it, or even reshape it)” (295). In “Una noche buena para Santa,” I explore the position of the *huacho* in which the *huacho*’s quotidian life, based on violence, abuse, and deviance is paralleled to the violence, abuse, and deviance of the dictatorship, subsequently disrupting History. This same sense of dislocation from the Nation, experienced by the *huachos* (a name denoting those with no citizenship), is also represented in “Bramadero.” In this story, we see that the Nation as a community can only be imagined through the creation of a univocal History, which although fictitious, is necessary for the successful function of the State. Through a destruction of documentation, “Bramadero” denounces this expression of documented History and is then replaced with Prometeo’s incoherent memory of his father and family. On the other hand, in “El camión de la guardia,” I explore the female memory, one different from antimemory which is feminine only because it is in opposition to the patriarchal image of the male. Here, female memory is formulated through a defiant utilization of the female sex in order to reclaim a position in History. Finally, in “Bésame otra vez forastero,” we encounter minoritarian memory through the character of the *vieja*. Only through her, can the narrator present his story, the story of the *vieja* herself, and of all the members of the *barrio* who have come and gone.

Aside from the works that comprise *Los incontables*, I focus on “Manifiesto (Hablo por mi diferencia)” also from the same year, 1986¹². I chose to include “Manifiesto” because, for

¹¹ Nelly Richard’s concept of *consenso* is defined as a process established post-dictatorship to normalize the social under the ideals of integration purported by the neoliberalism regime that followed. It became a tool of forgetting the violence committed during the dictatorship by distorting memory and establishing a mechanization of consensus thereby formulating an official story of the Chilean dictatorship (Richard, “La problemática” 227-28).

¹² I focus here on the year 1986 because it is an eventful and important year for Chile and the military regime. It was known as the “Año decisivo” because the leftist revolutionary movements had proclaimed

one, it is one of the most well-known pieces by Lemebel, one included in *Loco afán: crónicas de sidario* (2000), but also accessible in any website that has access to his works or parts of them. Aside from its political affiliations, I read Lemebel's work as an artistic expression and therefore, its alliance to the fiction of Lemebel (*Los incontables* being the only pieces of fiction the author has written) allows us to mitigate the rigid borders of the genre of fiction. In "Manifiesto," we are presented with a critique of the leftist movements in Chile that reinforced a hegemonic and patriarchal construction of power based on binaries of oppression. Lemebel critiques this and demonstrates that since these practices are promoted by the military regimes, an introspective analysis from the left of their racist, sexist, and exclusory practices would not only help the revolution, but provide a better future for the Nation of Chile. Lemebel demonstrates that an imitation of these structures in other political governments would not change the Nation; rather, it would continue a legacy of oppression under a different name. In other words, Lemebel questions the genre of leftist manifesto writing itself by writing one as a militant response to the leftist revolutionary movements. He denounces how in their fight for a classless society, leftist organizations lost sight of their exclusory practices and the manner in which they reverted back to violent hegemonic constructions of power asserted by the military regime.

What does a queer reading of *Los incontables* accomplish for us now? While the rest of Lemebel's works have been thoroughly studied, analyzed, and critiqued, *Los incontables* has been either forgotten or unheard of, perhaps because of Lemebel himself¹³. Then why is a queer reading of these texts necessary when all his other works have already been received as destabilizing tools of subversion? This investigation reaches beyond a need to "rescue" more of Lemebel's works, even those he has chosen to marginalize himself. A queering of fiction opens up the possibilities to reconsider authors who have been using fiction as a means of expressing memory in order to deconstruct its boundaries from within. In other words, since literature from various genres have been utilized as a recourse to an unofficial memory and a denunciation of both the military regimes and the revolutionary movements of Latin America, a queer reading of *Los Incontables* will provide a critique of other structures present in other works that critique the regime. At the same time, a reworking of Lemebel's stories written and published during Pinochet's dictatorship gives testament to a form of memory hitherto little explored, one that rewrites the official story of the military regime of Chile from the perspective of the sexually deviant and socially marginalized. While most post-dictatorship literature dealing with the Pinochet years uncovers the untold stories of torture, political subversives, and the disappeared, *Los incontables* gives voice to the sexually marginalized, those with no History on either side of the battle.

this year the end of the regime by launching ceaseless attacks throughout Chile and attempting to kill Pinochet in September. The latter attack was unsuccessful, killing 5 and injuring 11 people accompanying Pinochet. For further information refer to: Cañas Kirby, Enrique. *Proceso político en Chile: 1973-1990*. Chile: Editorial Andrés Bello, 1997. This event is also present in Lemebel's only novel, *Tengo miedo torero* (2001).

¹³ Jane Griffin affirms that "Critics have not included these publications [*Los incontables* and "El Wilson"] in their study of Lemebel partly because their precarious nature has resisted institutionalization, making it difficult for academics to access them. Another reason they have been overlooked is due to the fact that they were written under the name Mardones, which most people do not recognize as Lemebel" (*The Pedro*)

Chapter I: From the short story to the *crónica*: The beginning of Lemebel

Since Lemebel's work with "Las Yeguas del Apocalipsis" (1987-1995), a collective that publicly performed over 800 performances around Chile, there has been an intense critical focus on the author for those interested on contemporary Latin American, urban, and/or marginal literature. Lemebel's popularity is in part due to his strategic choice of writing *crónicas*¹⁴. This genre has always been closely related to Latin America since it marks the beginning of Hispanic literature in the Americas. The *crónica* was considered the only form of historical documentation by the Spanish crown and it became imperative, in the 16th century, for the crown to have "official" records of the explorations in the New World. These original *crónicas* were initially a log by a crown's officer of everything he and his soldiers encountered and did. The genre soon developed an intense personal component. According to Fernando del Castillo Durán in his *Las crónicas de Indias*, "La crónica debe ser, por propia definición, un relato puntual, si no diario al menos sí periódico, de sucesos vividos y contados, a través de esa misma experiencia, por el autor...Ella misma es principio y fin" (52). Beginning in the late 19th Century, the meaning of *crónica* began to change to signify a blend between fiction and journalistic writing. Latin American authors such as Carlos Monsiváis (Mexico), Jaime Sáenz (Bolivia), and Pedro Lemebel (Chile) began to re-appropriate the genre of *crónica* within the context of an emergence of the modernist prose and the rising prestige of the press. This "new *crónica*" thrived throughout the 20th Century and grew dramatically beginning in the 70's until the present day. This unbreakable tie between the *crónica* of today and its origins during the time of the *conquista*, results in a genre that exercises a "permanente búsqueda de identidad, de la certeza de saberse mirada y contada desde la herida de la conquista, de la necesidad de encontrarse a través de un modo de narrar propio que traduzca la memoria y la necesidad de (re)construirse desde sí misma" (Lanza Lobo 40). Lemebel has embraced this genre because, as he states, it offers him the flexibility of writing at the threshold between journalism and fiction as well as, serves his voyeuristic eye (Lojo, "Mi escritura").

At the same time, Lemebel has been insistent in his denunciation of an elitist literary canon that has always rejected marginal authors and/or subjects (be they sexual, racial, social, and/or economic renegades). Lemebel states that any and all literary success he has received is counteracted by his acceptance in the literary field with 'giggles': "...la catedral literaria se yergue sobre las plumas del closet; a mí me aceptan con una risa torcida, debe ser porque la crónica marucha no compite con los géneros sacralizados por el canon literario" (Costa, "La

¹⁴ *Crónica* (chronicle) is defined as "a usually continuous historical account of events arranged in order of time without analysis or interpretation. Examples of such accounts date from Greek and Roman times...These were composed in prose or verse...The word is from the Middle English *cronicle*, which is thought to have been ultimately derived from the Greek *chronos*, 'time'" (Encyclopedia Britannica, "Chronicle").

rabia”). By *crónica marucha* Lemebel refers to his personal approach to the genre of *crónica*, a genre that satirizes the 16th Century development of the genre and therefore questions the canon from within. The elitism of the literary canon is already explicitly portrayed in Angel Rama’s *La ciudad letrada* in which, Rama explains, the development of the Latin American city and the literary sector, composed of clergymen, lawyers, professionals, and intellectuals, are exposed as protectors of power and executioners of orders inspired by principles of elitism and hierarchical structures (25). This is the reason why Lemebel began his literary career writing fiction and publishing it through an underground feminist editorial, Ergo Sum, and later changed to writing *crónicas*, a genre which cannot be fully rejected by the canon because it is not considered a direct threat to the integrity of the elite. Lemebel’s change later in his career is proof of his incessant exigency to denounce all hegemonic structures of power, the same structures that limited his access to the literary canon, disallowed him a publicly political voice both during and after the dictatorship, and has categorized him under the univocal category of homosexual.

The epigraph that heads the introduction to this essay consists of a quote from Lemebel taken from an interview in which the author explains his change from fiction to *crónica*. The quote selected, one from various instances in which the author is asked about his writing preference, is particularly revealing in my opinion because it does not directly condemn the genre of short story as he has done on other interviews, but rather, he terms his change a transformation: “...travestido de gata cuentera, podía pasar” (Blanco and Gelpí 152). Indeed I would like to understand his preference for the *crónica* as a transformation, one facilitated or perhaps better yet, inflicted by the introduction to a democratic government. As Lemebel expresses this transformation, he explains that in the years he published *Los incontables*, the only way to pass (in other words, publish and have a public/political voice) was by disguising himself in the genre of short story. This allowed him a space in which to be politically active since Lemebel’s identity as a homosexual excluded him from public view. This leads me to take particular interest in the author’s short stories in order to demonstrate how they are the author’s beginning attempts at deconstructing hegemonic constructions of power both in the military regime and leftist revolutionary movements.

Lemebel’s choice of publishing *Los incontables* through the editorial Ergo Sum demonstrates a critique of the literary canon traded later for the political use of the *crónica* and the “planfleteo” of his works prior to publication¹⁵. Ergo Sum is an underground feminist editorial that was born out of the non-commercialized workshop sessions held by Pía Barros in the Chile of the 1980’s (a space for literary, artistic, and political production as well as, conscious-raising). The publication of these “book-objects” (photocopied pieces of paper stuffed in envelopes, boxes, or burlap sacks) represent a strong attack against the literary establishment, even though they have not received mainstream attention even after the democratic transition. These “book-objects” also subverted the censorship of the dictatorship and questioned the mainstream publishers that commodify literature within the global capitalist system. These

¹⁵ The correlation between Lemebel’s choice of utilizing modes of mass media post-dictatorship and his underground self-publishing with Ergo Sum during the dictatorship is extensively delineated by Jane Griffin in *The Pedro in the Closet, Or, the Untellable Stories of Pedro Mardones Lemebel*. Diss. University of California, Irvine, 2009. Griffin states that there is a direct connection between the two forms of literary distribution, a relationship not explicitly made by Lemebel himself, but undeniably linked.

mainstream publishers construct the citizens as consumers rather than as intellectual and political producers (García Canclini 15-16; 19-20). This process of consumerism provides an illusory sense of power and agency over one's actions and confers an imaginary participation within the Nation, forming subjects as citizens, binding as a community through a common fetish over commodities (Masiello, "The Unbearable" 468). Ergo Sum's workshop sessions deconstruct hegemonic constructions of literature by recreating literature as a collective effort, rather than an authoritative production. Ergo Sum has also strategically chosen the symbol of Venus as the emblem to the editorial, a symbol commonly known as the icon of woman and the feminine, which interrupts the patriarchal structure society and the male-dominated literary canon have established (Gommel and Olivares 13).

Lemebel's choice to disseminate his *crónicas* in mass media venues such as radio stations (Radio Tierra) and magazines ("The Clinic," "Página Abierta," "Punto Final," and "La Nación") is a response to the commercialized publishing houses' inability to reach a broader audience and cater to the economically challenged and/or the illiterate. Mainstream publishing houses have become interested in showcasing the "global experience on the manifestation of local culture" in order to ensure sales rather than becoming concerned with overtly political discourses (Masiello, "The Unbearable" 462). This is the reason behind the act of "planfleteo," it returns to an oral tradition long forgotten, before narratives became domesticated, commodified, and consumed. It resists "official" language and documented History as the only residue of memory.

Al recorrer los pliegues del choque cultural entre conquistadores y originarios o entre elites ilustradas y bajo pueblo, ciertamente la oralidad aparece como una resistencia cultural que niega a domesticarse. Occidente, a través de su historiografía que ve el documento como 'monumento'—base única 'de lo que ocurrió'—ha combatido la plasticidad de la oralidad, no sólo porque entraña el peligro de la subjetividad perpetua, lo evanescente e inestable, sino porque es incapaz de soportar la verdad científica y mantiene una peligrosa alianza con la memoria (González Cangas 163).

A form of expression that reverts back to an oral tradition reminds us that memory is an intricate process that is constantly fighting forgetfulness; at the same time, it struggles to formulate sensible language with which to express itself. Although written texts, aside from documented History, have served to testify different forms of memory (for example, artistic and literary expression), they can also transform into representations of long forgotten oral expression. In other words, fiction's power to transform language through the use of symbolism, thus seeking to express the unspeakable (articulating memory), also functions as a new form of testimony. Through his association with Ergo Sum, Lemebel aims to return to that orality that defies mainstream literary distribution and consumption. After all, the mission statement of this feminist press expresses its desire to create a new form of publishing that allows feminine voices, long silenced by the patriarchal literary canon, to be heard while at the same time, their form of distribution of the texts allows for them to be accessed by the masses (Gommel and Olivares 3).

Lemebel has always been socially conscious of his position within the literary circle, one in which he has been excluded not for his sex since he is male, but rather for his gender performance, a performance that exposes his deviant sexuality. Lemebel is aware of this gender performance and the way in which it defines his sexuality to others: "...pero yo siempre he

actuado desacatadamente. Si yo no tuve que salir del closet; nací fuera” (Matus, “Juego”). By performance, I mean queer theory’s discourse on identity and the manner in which the traditional performance of all identities purports a univocal identity as such. In this case, a homosexual identity is perpetuated via a performance of the feminine; in other words, if such a performance of the “incorrect” gender were not present, nobody would question the individual’s sexual identity (Salamon 179). Butler has expanded on the idea that performativity as the repetition of gestures falsely produces the imaginary certainty of identity:

In other words, acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core...but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts... generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications*...sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means (185).

This is what brought about Lemebel’s change in name, his way of affiliating with the feminine, the gender which has defined his gender and sexuality in the public sphere. “El Lemebel fue un gesto de alianza con lo femenino, inscribir un apellido materno, reconocer a mi madre huacha desde la ilegalidad homosexual y travesti” (Blanco y Gelpi 152). This affiliation with the marginal gender of the feminine marks for Lemebel a social and political bringing forth of consciousness. The paternal name symbolizes the social pact that defines each subject’s position within a patriarchal structure of power. By changing his name, Lemebel is answering directly to the legality of naming and subverting the symbolic order that the state exercises over its subjects through the tradition of holding the paternal name as a symbol of property (Urtasun, 207). It also speaks to his alliance with the travesty and the travesty’s act of naming him/herself in a re-appropriation of famous female names (Madonna, Sara Montiel, María Félix, Marilyn Monroe¹⁶) (Urtasun 206). This “camp¹⁷” move can be imagined as a performance of a performance in which the travesty mimics the “campy” femininity of famous female stars as a way to represent “womanhood” or epitomic femininity. “The notion of an original or primary gender identity is often parodied within the cultural practices of drag, cross-dressing, and the sexual stylization of butch/femme identities” (Butler 187). At the same time, as Butler also argues, these parodies reveal that all gender is parodic and can only be sustained through parodic performances of gender (185). Therefore, the parodic transvestic representations of famous females, appropriated via the act of naming, are a performance of a performance. This excess of performance “can never simply *imitate* or *mimic* some original practice, persona, or type, for they are always in

¹⁶ Identity formation through the tradition of naming the child is expressed in several of Lemebel’s work as is demonstrated in “Los mil nombres de María Camaleón” in *Loco Afán*. Through a vast list of female names at the end of the *crónica* that range from La Coca Cola to La Ahí Va to La Depre-Sida, Lemebel portrays a “zoológico gay” of identities that denounce the “marca indeleble del padre que lo sacramento con su macha descendencia, con ese Luis junior de por vida. Sin preguntar, sin entender, sin saber si ese Alberto, Arturo o Pedro le quedaría bien al hijo mariposón que debe cargar con esa próstata de nombre hasta la tumba” (62).

¹⁷ Camp is an aesthetic sensibility closely related to kitsch. The term appeared in 1909 and it designated all that is exaggerated, theatrical, and effeminate, but by the mid 1970’s it also began to compromise artifice, mediocrity, and the perverse. The most well-known essay on camp is Susan Sontag’s “Notes on ‘Camp’” (1964) in which she outlines 58 theses that codify “camp” as a sensibility.

excess of their target...transvestic performance is multiply transversal” (Lancaster 14) and therefore, can demystify the univocal “origin” of gender of both female femininity and transvestic femininity.

I aim to establish a comparison between Lemebel’s use of Ergo Sum to publish his work as a political subversion to his strategic change to the *crónica* and his change of name from Mardones to Lemebel. Ergo Sum’s project provided Lemebel with a space for political intervention since Lemebel’s sexual deviance limited his acceptance within the public sphere. By public sphere, I mean both the military regime and the leftist revolutionary movements. The military had access to all media and public venues while the leftist organizations, although heavily censored and in danger of persecution, also had access to public demonstrations¹⁸. At the same time, though Lemebel has decimated the political importance of the short story through its expression in fiction, it must be noted that the genre of short story arose in Latin America as a response to the traditional genre of the novel during the 20th Century. This was a response to the then established and renowned genre of the novel, prestigiously substantiated through the “classics.” The genre of the short story was characterized by its somber and grotesque characteristic (for example, Franz Kafka) and later paved the way to more ambiguous genres that delegitimized the novel. Post World War II gave rise to the testimony, which blurred the lines between novel and journalism (for example, Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel) as well as, the Latin American boom of the 1970’s, which ruptured the relationship between time and narrative traditionally characterized by the novel (for example, Gabriel García Márquez and Julio Cortázar) (Baquero Goyanes 133-36). All these new emergent literary genres commenced a focus on popular culture and the popular subject as a reversal of the elite intellectual, which although disdained the popular subject, claiming they truncated the Nation’s progress and ascend to European standards, the figure of the *roto* flourished (Masiello, *The Art* 28) through fiction and new literary genres like the short story.

Literature has been changing from the early 19th Century’s philosophy of *l’art pour l’art* to objective realities reinforced through fiction and in which readers are not only enjoying these texts, but experiencing memories and sensations through them. Testimony literature began to predominate in Latin America in the 80’s and 90’s, with a strong presence of memory; this was not a rigidly historical narrative, but rather it was a free creation or re-creation of History and memory (Mateo del Pino, “Chile, una loca” 17-18). After the military dictatorships of the 70’s and 80’s in Latin America, there was a need to narrate the events that the democratic transitions that followed had attempted to disregard. Therefore, testimony literature became the most sensible venue of expression because testimony implies a witness and participation in historical events; at the same time, it authenticates a collective memory (Franco, “Going Public” 71). In other words, this new ‘collective memory’ defies History since it attempts to encompass a collective memory by ironically conglomerating narratives to create one consensual story called History. Virginia Gil Amate explicates how literature in Latin America began to represent an affective system of stories that subverted absolute truths through fiction:

Las obras editadas en los últimos años nos muestran una tendencia a convertir el texto en análisis, del que nunca se extraen verdades absolutas en lo que atañe a objetivar la realidad,

¹⁸ The latter statement is prevalent when, in 1986, Lemebel interrupts a leftist demonstration in Santiago to read his “Manifiesto (Hablo por mi diferencia).”

pero del que saldrá reforzada la ficción no ya como manifiesto vanguardista que se reserve su podio de honor para ésta, ni como sistema con el que inventar historias para deleite de los lectores, sino como muestra de que la ficción se filtra en todas las manifestaciones humanas (sean recuerdos, sensaciones, conversaciones, ect.) y es, sin ninguna duda para estos narradores un método de conocimiento (qtd. in Mateo del Pino, “Chile, una loca” 18).

Therefore, fiction cannot be downright discredited as a genre which does not possess a witness, which cannot speak of a historical reality and respond to an “official story” (no more or less fictitious than literary fiction). When asked “¿Y el oficio del escritor?,” Lemebel responds, “Efectivamente, eso era cuando me llamaba Pedro Mardones y escribía cuentos. Usaba mi nombre legal como una chapa, y escribía narrativa como testimonio frente a los atropellos de la dictadura. En esa época publiqué los *Incontables*” (Blanco and Gelpí 152). This demonstrates that Lemebel is cognizant of the change of fiction throughout history and the potential it has to represent memory and unwritten/un-official History in an attempt to respond to the rigid limits set by the literary canon on these genres.

The possibility of the *crónica* within mainstream venues was only feasible for Lemebel during the democratic transition and the commodification of books as well as, easy access to mass media. Recently, there has also been an augmenting fascination both within academic and public realms with sexuality, same-sex desire as a political/legal issue, and deviant sexualities. “Ahora las vocales mestizas, trolas, callejeras, cuneteras entran a la academia por la puerta del servicio y ponen su culo sucio en el salón letrado. También no se puede desconocer que hay una calentura mercantil por estos temas, donde cierta morbosidad de lo políticamente correcto mete su espéculo curioso” (Costa, “La rabia”). Rather than undermining the importance of the use of fiction during the dictatorship, we can analyze these short stories as texts which blur the lines between fiction and testimony and irremediable act against the dictatorship. We can also read these as texts that re-write the “official” story of the Chilean dictatorship. The “official” story of the Chilean dictatorship was a discourse formulated through what Nelly Richard terms “la democracia de los acuerdos” (*Residuos* 27). In an attempt to forget the atrocities committed during the dictatorship, Chile followed a strict model of *consenso*, a process that forced diverse memories to become one unanimous voice. *Consenso* was built through a mechanization of language and a hyper-documentation of data. Hence, what narratives emerged or can emerge to counteract this elevated stage of forgetfulness? Richard suggests that only new forms of expression in the arts and literature can truly “practice” memory; the latter is a process that implies getting involved in the intricate symbolism of memory by appealing to figures of speech such as symbolism, metaphor, and allegory. All of these create a sensible representation of memory that fights against the standardization of memory produced by market transactions (31). *Los incontables* is therefore pure representations of memory.

Ángeles Mateo del Pino describes Lemebel’s texts as Works that act “...[para] refrescar la memoria histórica de su país” (“Chile, una loca” 21). *Los incontables* works as a fictional cartography of the city that draws the reality of Chile during the dictatorship and demystifies the quotidian life of the forgotten and/or silenced. Lemebel’s literatura as testimony is

Escritura íntima que indaga en la problemática social, rastreando para ello las huellas de un pasado que es a la vez voz personal y eco de la experiencia colectiva...Sus [Lemebel] textos

se convierten en testimonio, documento y memoria de los desmemoriados, de aquellos a los que se les negó la posibilidad de pronunciarse al ser relegados a una oralidad en baja voz por temor a ser escuchados; también, de esos otros que perdieron el habla y el derecho a la palabra al optar por el silencio y el olvido (Mateo del Pino, “Chile, una loca” 21).

Testimony itself acts to trace memory, attempting to demarcate the lines between History and mythic history, an excessively intricate process. This is because History can be mythologized the same way as myth can be turned into History, into reality. Memory is always in transition and testimony not only bounds different forms of memory, but publicizes these, transforming the individual into political (Huysen 40). Therefore, fiction does not necessarily imply that memory or testimony cannot be employed; memory is socially malleable and pre-destined to be imagined, transformed, and consumed.

Chapter II: *Los incontables*: A Resistance against Heteronormativity in Pinochet's Chile

“If sex is repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression. A person who holds forth in such a language places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power; he upsets established law; he somehow anticipates the coming freedom” (Foucault 6)

Los incontables is a compilation of seven short stories written by Pedro Lemebel and published towards the end of the Chilean military dictatorship (1973-1990). Though all these short stories were written as a response to the regime's brutally, many of the stories are particularly written to narrate the lives of the multiply marginalized during the dictatorship. In other words, much of the literature that was propagated in the post-dictatorship period in the Southern Cone provided an outlet for the testimony of the victims and survivors of the regime, but they tended to disregard the economically, racially, and/or sexually marginalized, assuming that their peripheral identity was an apolitical position¹⁹. From this perspective, I contend that *Los incontables* functions as a testimony giving voice to all those, whose stories have literally been ‘untold.’ Through the portrayal of deviant sexuality, the author denounces all structures of power that define, limit, and prohibit certain forms/expressions of sexuality and denounce deviant sexuality as that which is not only immoral, but also dangerous to the integrity of the Nation and the military regime.

The first short story in *Los incontables*, “Ella entró por la ventana del baño,” is set in the periphery of a city, reminiscent of Santiago, in a neighborhood long-forgotten, a place where there are unannounced blackouts and the wires from the electric posts dangle onto the street. The main character, la Chola, is a “female” cat that is brutally tortured to her death, electrocuted by the men of the *barrio*. La Chola embodies all of those whom God has forgotten. The author writes, “...a la virgen, posando para la foto, no le interesan los gatos muertos” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). In this citation, we can ascertain how the “gata,” which throughout the entire story represents only the character of la Chola, is transformed to the plural and generalized noun, “gatos,” to symbolize all of those whom are not protected by institutionalized forces (in this case, the Church, portrayed in the story through the image of the Virgin Mary). Therefore, la Chola's

¹⁹ Osvaldo Bazán explains in *Historia de la Homosexualidad en la Argentina*, that the leftist movements in Argentina “desconfiaban de los devaneos nocturnos, de las amistades, del deseo sexual. Tal como habían enseñado los higienistas de principios de siglo, estos lunfardos no eran confiables, eran débiles y delatores. Y con la justificada paranoia por el tema de la seguridad, en un momento en el que cualquier dato en manos del enemigo significaba tortura y muerte de los propios, vieron en cada maricón a un soplón” (qtd. in Preatoni, “Contradicciones”).

multi-dimensional depiction allows for a play with gender and sex, a representation not possible with a readable male/female character. Throughout the story, the sexual/emotional relationship between la Chola and the narrator is also kept ambiguous. Lemebel's present recognition as a *neo-barroso* writer makes it unlikely for his current readers to imagine la Chola as a female character. *Neo-barroso* (neo-muddy) is a play on *neo-barroco* (neo-baroque style). Susana Inés Souilla in "De cronistas y de poetas" defines the term as a rhizome, "un gesto que se resiste a las definiciones taxativas. Frente a las connotaciones esplendentes de lo barroco, lo neobarroso apuntaría a aquello que se deshace más de lo que brilla, o que se deshace en su mismo brillar, a lo blando, a lo informe que puede, de un modo proteico, ser diferente y lo mismo, sin fraguar, y también a lo tradicionalmente concebido como lo rastrero y lo popular." Therefore, we can state that la Chola, for Lemebel's current readers, is either understood as ambiguous because she is multi-dimensional and she has the capacity to represent the socially, sexually, and economically marginalized or she is a *loca*, a flamboyant queen. Through the use of the metaphor of 'cat' and the change in grammatical gender ('gato' to 'gata'), I argue that Lemebel's character of la Chola of 1986 represents a strictly ambiguous character and not necessarily in terms of transvestism, but rather as a character that is representative of various minoritarian groups.

The character of la Chola is also a response to the image of the *indio/cholo* in Latin America. *Cholo* is an ethnic slur created by *criollos* in the 16th Century to mean an indigenous person of Latin American descent. It was first used in the *Comentarios reales de los Incas* (1609-1616) by Garcilaso de la Vega. The marginalization of these three subjectivities in the cat: female, indigenous, destitute, hints that Lemebel is aware that marginalization happens at the intersection of sex, race, and class²⁰, a first-hand experience for the author since Lemebel is a "cholo," a homosexual, and from a low economic background. The protagonist's identity as a *chola*, as a victim to violence, as well as her identification as a "loose woman" allow for an ambiguous nature to the character and one that permits this character to incorporate all marginalized identities found at the intersection. José Javier Maristany argues that Lemebel's current and more mainstream work "reclama una política de la diferencia anclada en la propia historia chilena, en sus destiempos, en la cosmética travesti, en la condición indígena y popular de los sujetos que no podría ser reabsorbida por los modelos hegemónicos metropolitanos" ("¿Una teoría?"); at the same time, it is my claim that these are also visible and pertinent to his work during the dictatorship and the stories of *Los incontables*. Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile as well as those in the Southern Cone did not only target political subversives (all those who spoke or acted against the military regime), but all those who were arbitrarily considered subversive (for example, the poor, the sexually deviant, and/or the *indio/cholo*).²¹ The sexually

²⁰ By intersectionality, I am referencing the feminist sociological theory that suggests that multiple dimensions of identity categories work simultaneously to contribute to systematic inequality. These dimensions of identity include among others sex, race, class, disabilities, and age. Third wave feminism has argued that Western binary structures of oppression (dominant/subordinate, good/bad, superior/inferior, and male/female) have homogenized women's oppression forgetting differences of race, sexual preference, class, and age. For further information refer to: Andersen, Margaret L. and Patricia Hill Collins, eds. *Race, Class and Gender: An Anthology*. 5thed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Thomson Learning, 2004.

²¹ Particularly in Cuba, Castro's regime followed antigay policies, which included the formation of work camps for homosexuals called UMAP (Unidades Movilizables de Apoyo a la Producción). The Cuban poet, writer, and playwright, Reinaldo Arenas (1943-1990), is testimony to the discrimination in Cuba

deviant where specially targeted because they defy patriarchal order, an order which structured the military regime and which the regime needed in order to maintain the system of power that kept it afloat. Michel Foucault in *The History of Sexuality* exemplifies the ways that the State has repressed the sexually deviant. Foucault links the emergence of the bourgeois in the 19th Century and Capitalism to the repression of deviant sexualities. If the State functions by maintaining a hierarchical structure of power intact, any sexuality that questions that structure needed to be censored and illegitimated (3-4; 120-21). Hence the dictatorship's insistence on silencing, targeting, and persecuting those that were considered sexually deviant even if they were not considered political threats. With no excuse for their persecution, the government argued for their immorality, because in reality, sexual deviance signified to the State that all other structures could and would soon be deconstructed.

The character of la Chola can also be understood through Deleuze's and Guattari's theory of *devenir femme* (becoming-woman) as a character always in the process of becoming. Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* thoroughly develop this idea of becoming (becoming-animal, becoming-woman, becoming-child, ect.) not as a resemblance, imitation, limit, or identification (i.e. it is not the imitation of femininity by the homosexual in order to "become-woman"), but rather, becomings are molecular or minoritarian blocks that are always in proximity, but opposite to the other. In other words, there does not exist a becoming-man because man "is majoritarian par excellence...when we say majority, we are referring not to a greater relative quantity but to the determination of a state or standard in relation to larger quantities...majority implies a state of domination" (292). Therefore, a becoming, in this case "becoming-woman," is always minoritarian (molecular) and always in an attempt to traverse the majoritarian force, "white, male, adult, 'rational,' ect., in short, the average European, the subject of enunciation" (292). In conclusion, la Chola's presence in the story as a character always in the process of becoming-woman destabilizes the patriarchal order represented by the narrator and Melo as well as, the patriarchal structures promoted by the military dictatorship. This destabilizing force that la Chola represents reinforces her presence as an ambiguous character that does not need to adhere to univocal representations of identity because she is a being always in opposition to that which is truly rigid—the dominant force of patriarchy.

"Ella entró por la ventana del baño" is also a story of denunciation against heteronormative relationships whether they are heterosexual or homosexual. Due to la Chola's ambiguous identity, after all she is literally a cat and figuratively encompasses multiple deviant identities, her relationship with the narrator cannot be solely assumed as a heterosexual relationship. What is clear is that the relationship between the masculine characters (i.e. the narrator and Melo) and their lovers, girlfriends, and all other female characters is one of violence and abuse. The narrator describes how he forces himself on la Chola when she refuses his advances:

...con tus resoplidos de hembra virgen, escualida, estrecha, que me dice que le duele, que es muy grande, que mejor otro día, que viene gente, que no quiere, porque el dolor le borro la calentura, la curiosidad de tener un macho, recién cumplidos los catorce, pero yo no le doy tregua; y para que aprenda, la quiebro en el pasto y no me importa que grite; pues así

against homosexuals. He himself was incarcerated for "ideological deviance" (in other words, his sexuality). In *Arturo, la estrella más brillante* (1984), Arenas describes the schizophrenic and torturous plight in the work camps (Foster 66-72).

tiene que ser, a la violenta al puro estilo heavy-metal loca, con sangre, con mucha sangre, que me mancha los pantalones... (Mardones, *Los incontables*)

All heteronormative relationships revert back to the binaries passive/aggressive, dominant/subordinate, and male/female that account for the systematic oppression of people (Lorde 114); hence the language the author uses in this passage to depict the binary *hembra/macho*. The narrator's '*macho*' reaction to rape her is considered rational and acceptable behavior within a patriarchal and misogynistic society that promotes violent and oppressive heteronormative relationships of power. These binaries are social scripts which members of the society learn to adhere to through social and homosocial interactions (Gagnon and Simon 19). The narrator is constantly pushed into a masculine role (mostly through his homosocial interactions with Melo), a role based on violence, dominance, and unabashed promiscuity. For example, Melo at one point yells at the narrator, colloquially speaking, to "man-up:" "...que arranque, que no sea guevón, que no me caliente por la Chola, que hay muchas gatas todavía, muchas minitas que descartuchar. ¿No soy hombre? ¿Entonces para qué te haces leso?" (Mardones, *Los incontables*). Although la Chola is portrayed as a strictly feminine character in the previous citation because she is placed in a subordinate position, she is constantly compared to the feminine character, Marcelita, the narrator's girlfriend whom he goes to beg for forgiveness for having given into his sexual temptations with la Chola; therefore, the relationship between la Chola and the narrator can actually be considered a deviant relationship that imitates a heterosexual binary structure. In conclusion, deviant sexualities do not guarantee an escape from this violent binary male/female since these relationships are at risk of resuming the binaries that structure heteronormative relationships. All imitations, Butler affirms, can "become domesticated and rearticulated as instruments of cultural hegemony" (189). Through the portrayal of oppressive heterosexual and deviant sexualities, this story articulates a denunciation against all heteronormative relationships that repeat these destructive binaries of power.

The second short story in *Los incontables*, "Una noche buena para Santa," narrates the story of Santa Claus²² on his journey back to the North Pole and how he dies of a heart attack while an orphaned girl masturbates him on his sled. "Una noche buena para Santa" takes on the task of sexualizing a personage considered "pure," that is, the childhood figure of Santa Claus. It portrays him as an old, sexually impotent man, rejected by a prostitute, and unable to endure a sexual interaction with the orphaned girl. At the same time, we witness how the only manner in which the orphan girl has access to a "childhood" and childhood illusions (Christmas being a bourgeois fantasy) is, ironically, through a frustrated sexual experience with Santa Claus himself. This sexually deviant interaction disrupts the "accepted" heterosexual relationship between a man and a woman because Santa Claus is supposed to represent an asexual character and the orphan girl is merely a child. Therefore, this disruption subverts all hegemonic relationships of

²² Santa Claus is a North American figure developed from the fusion of the Dutch Sinterklaas and the English Father Christmas, both Christmas gift-givers. Since the 20th Century, popularized by the 1934 song "Santa Claus is Coming to Town," Santa Claus was said to make a list categorizing children as 'naughty' or 'nice.' As for this essay, although Santa is a gender ambiguous word in the Spanish language because the grammatical gender of the noun allows for that ambiguity, I appropriate the male gender to the character not only because the author has chosen to do so, but because the character assumes the hegemonic characteristics of masculinity.

sexuality because it portrays that it is not only homosexual relationships that are condemned for their deviance, but rather that any and all relationships that do not adhere to the heteronormative model of sexuality (masculine man with a feminine woman, married, consummating in a private space) are considered deviant. At the same time, like I will later argue in “Monseñor,” Lemebel also criticizes the hypocritical nature of ‘pure’ and ‘moral righteous’ figures that the regime intended to create to distinguish themselves from the left and excuse their brutality as moral behavior. Foucault explains that further prohibition and criminalization of sexuality was carried out through determining more rigid ways to define normative sexuality. One major preoccupation therefore, became the fight against onanism²³ in children. The sexuality of children came under scrutiny and severe prohibitions against the existence of child sexuality were reinforced (Foucault 30-31). Therefore, this story also reveals the social structuring of prohibitions, since the orphaned girl whose lack of childhood no longer makes her a “child,” demonstrates that those at the margins are not necessarily exempt from adhering to normalized sexualities, but rather, they are always considered deviant. Also, these prohibitions demonstrate that criminalization and irrational prohibitions are subjective constructions that ultimately falter when supposedly moral, righteous, and pure figures are exposed as sexual and deviant personages.

In “Espinoza” we see a more explicit expression of queer desire. Though it is unfulfilled and frustrated, Lemebel produces a space for a queer desire that functions to denunciate the hegemonic and patriarchal structures promoted by the military regime (extreme right-wing party and the Church) as well as, the leftist revolutionary movements. In “Espinoza,” the narrator becomes enamored of Antonio Espinoza, a seventeen-year old that has moved to the city in search of a better life, which he believes, will be accomplished once he can afford a silver bicycle and win a cycling tournament. The story begins with a dream sequence in which the narrator fantasizes with Espinoza, “...y luego otra calle con el sol neutro de los sueños y dos bicicletas y dos niños con cuerpo de hombres, mirándose con tanto amor sobre los pedales, con una fiebre vegetal raspando la escarcha de los años...” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). The mere fact that the author creates an available space for a homo-affective desire (let me note that it is not necessarily a sexual interaction—“mirándose con tanto amor” is as far as the encounter takes us), demonstrates a strong criticism against homonormative representations of sexuality as a strictly sexual paradigm that mirrors the heterosexual binary system of oppression. Although an emotional/physical reciprocity is only possible in the narrator’s fantasies, the narrator is persistent to portray that Espinoza’s reality, his relationship with his wife Patty and his dream of having a silver bicycle that will change his life for the better, are also mere illusions. “...porque era tan joven, tan ingenuo que no sabe, que no entendería, que era una mentira oscura ese sueño de bicicletas, ese paisaje zumbante remontándose sobre los techos susurrándole: Espinoza, Espinoza, Espinoza...” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). At the same time, the space for dreaming, fantasy, and illusion are subversive because queer desire has the possibility to flourish. In this sense, fiction plays an imperative role in formulating a deviant space of expression during Pinochet’s military regime.

²³ Onanism refers to masturbation or auto-eroticism. It derives from Onan in the *Book of Genesis*, the second son of Judah. Onan died because when he was asked to provide Tamar, his sister-in-law whose husband Er had died, with offspring, he withdrew before climax and spilled his semen. Therefore, he was accused for the unborn children that could have been born from his sperm.

Aside from the narrator's dream-like state, Espinoza reciprocates feelings of love when he has just won the cycling tournament and is in a drunken stupor. "...medio borracho diciéndole a su mujer que tenía que darme las gracias, que le faltaba yo para ser feliz, y de no ser por la plateada y mi apoyo tantas veces y me abraza y llora baboso de alegría mojándome el cuello" (Mardones, *Los incontables*). Although we must take into account that this is merely recounting of the narrator's memories, we see a homosocial relationship that when contra-posed with Espinoza's failed marriage, gives way to a homosexual affection. Espinoza is able to confide in the narrator, overlooking, whether consciously or unconsciously, the narrator's love/lust over him. As Espinoza narrates his failed marriage, he says, "...su angustia contándome que no le iba bien, que después del triunfo ya no tenía metas, que no pasaba nada con la Patty porque se había dejado estar... así mismo la encontró un día llorando y nunca antes le vio tan gorda, tan hedionda a carne que se cocina por dentro y los fermentos la fueron hinchando de pensamientos malos..." (Mardones, *Los incontables*). Although the failed heterosexual marriage (until this moment portrayed as an ideal relationship) fails and gives way to a more intimate relationship between Espinoza and the narrator, the sexual relationship between the two men cannot be realized either because their relationship, although subversively deviant, mirrors the heteronormative matrix of oppression that Espinoza and Patty's relationship represents. Espinoza is always dependent on the narrator for monetary and emotional support since the narrator gifts him the bicycle he always wanted, helps him train for the tournament, and covers his shifts at work to give him more time to train. Without such dependency, a relationship between the two characters would be unlikely or even unimaginable. When Espinoza decides to leave and break away from both relationships, the narrator is aware that his role as the provider becomes dispensable; with reproach he says, "¿De qué va a vivir Espinoza? No sé, ese no es problema suyo me dijo, y siguió caminando derecho. Y más allá de la esquina Espinoza siguió escuchando su voz amariconada de abuela..." (Mardones, *Los incontables*). Through Espinoza's and the narrator's relationship, we see the binary passive/aggressive, subordinate/dominant respectively perpetuated. Therefore, we can conclude that this story is a queer denunciation of the hegemonic structure of sexuality that oppresses and limits both hetero and homonormative identities. If Espinoza gave into the narrator's nurturing yet possessive nature, the relationship between the two men would reiterate the binary that ironically defines homosexual relationships as deviant interactions.

The short story, "Monseñor," is a blatant denunciation against the institution of the Catholic Church as the main promoter and protector of the military regime. In most dictatorships of Latin America, the Catholic Church was the right-hand of the military, protecting and concealing the atrocities that were being committed. At least in Argentina, this practice was publicized through Horacio Verbitsky's groundbreaking account of the deaths committed at the hands of the military, "confessed" by Argentine naval officer Adolfo Scilingo. In *Confessions of an Argentine Dirty Warrior*, the Church is depicted as the main accomplice to those crimes. Common practice was for priests to visit military posts and confess the men, forgiving them for anything they had done under the command of the military (18; 30-33; 71). Lemebel alludes to this practice in "Monseñor," stating that the main character, Monseñor himself, cannot separate himself from the command of the government because "bendigo las armas de la brigada antisubversiva" (Mardones, *Los incontables*). The author chooses to portray the corrupt position of the Church by creating an irremediably sinful Monseñor that, caught between his tormented memories, breaks his promise of celibacy in order to take advantage of a frightened virgin that

takes refuge in his room. This image of a hyper-sexualized “man of God,” since the Monseñor cannot think of anything other than sex and even becomes haunted by images of the Virgin Mary around his room coming to life and disrobing for him, subverts the imaginary of heteronormative sexuality. “...lo persiguen las vírgenes, que se despojan de sus túnicas, se bajan de los altares, y se lanzan a buscarlo en el desierto de la noche, todos esos largos años de solitaria abstinencia, no puede alcanzarlo la pesadilla, por eso Luzbél toma cuerpo en las damas de verde, de rojo, de amarillo dorados al fuego de los cirios...” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). Ironically enough, the one man that defines morality, cannot escape the oppressive atmosphere he himself has helped to create. Considering Freud’s theory of dreams that states that dreams are ‘wish fulfillments’ that our unconscious cannot bring to a conscious surface unaltered and therefore, surfaces in dreams through distorted versions. The opening lines of Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams* reads: “...There is a psychological technique which makes it possible to interpret dreams, and ... if that procedure is employed, every dream reveals itself as a psychical structure which has a meaning and which can be inserted at an assignable point in the mental activities of waking life” (35). Therefore, Monseñor’s ‘hallucinations’ can be interpreted as his desire for a sexuality he himself denies and is truncated by the prohibitions the Church sets, here represented by the figure of Luzbél (Satan). In this manner, the author utilizes prohibited sexuality to denounce oppressive structures of power that they themselves have prohibited in order to constitute the paradigm of power they entail to be successful.

The story takes place during a violent uprising against the military dictatorship, which we can associate to the year 1986 in which the book was published. In Chile, the year 1986 is considered the “Año decisivo” because the leftist revolutionary movements had decided to launch ceaseless attacks against the government in an attempt to end the regime. The most well-known attack was against Pinochet himself, although this attack was unsuccessful. Monseñor, in an attempt to save a frightened girl he hears screaming outside his window, brings her inside his room and takes advantage of her fragility and position of subservience. The passage that outlines the end of the story is a tangled web of soothing lines the Monseñor whispers to the screaming girl about God, while at the same time slowly undressing her. “...Dios es un mar calmo le repite y arrastrándose a su lado le coge las manos; están juntos flotando en la marea de la corte celestial hecha pedazos; así horizontalmente adherida el miedo, la carne parece más tierna, palpita en esa virgen de carne y hueso salvada del desastre, Dios es un océano sin límites hija mía le murmura temblando...” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). This passage demonstrates the binary of oppression dominant/subservient that allows for the Monseñor to take advantage of the girl. This violent act is paralleled to the violence outside that is caused by the political subversives, in other words, the leftist revolutionaries. Therefore, in “Monseñor,” the author denounces both structures of power perpetuated by sexual deviance and political violence as destructive and unbeneficial to the Nation.

“Bésame otra vez forastero”²⁴ is the last short story that compromises *Los incontables* and as the stories get increasingly sexual this culminating story is the most sexually explicit. It tells the

²⁴ “Bésame otra vez forastero” and “El Wilson” were re-written by Lemebel many years later and included in *Adiós mariquita linda* (2005). Though they have been extensively changed, key points remain. “Bésame otra vez forastero” is also the title to Daphne Du Maurier’s novel (*Kiss Me Again, Stranger* (1952)). Rumor has it that Du Mauier was bi-sexual and that, although her father was extremely homophobic, he had engaged in an incestuous relationship with Du Maurier.

story of an old dilapidated woman who is known in the *barrio* for luring young boys into her house and turning them into “men.” The narrator of the story is one of the many men that has had his first sexual experience with the *vieja*, and he remembers her many years later after her death when he thinks he can hear her heels clicking down the pavement as she calls at the men: “guachito, verga, los susurra, ya pues mijito, les grita, oye cabro, cómo tenís el pajarito” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). The grotesque demeanor of the *vieja*, devirginizing the young boys who frightenly enter her home, criticizes normalized sexuality. Through the sexual relationship that the *vieja* has with these boys, we see a subversion of structures of power. The relationship of power portrayed in “Bésame otra vez...” is one in which the *vieja* seems to hold power over the “innocent” virgin boys. “...la dulce compañía de los liceanos vírgenes, que llegan solitarios a ofrecermé la fría piel de su sexo; aquí está la abuela milagrosa, que acaricia con su garra de seda el palpito de la sangre en los prepucios...” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). As Foucault explains, all relationships are relationships of power and the one who dominates is the one, in this case, who has experience and the one that can take pleasure from having that power:

Power operated as a mechanism of attraction; it drew out those peculiarities over which it kept watch. Pleasure spread to the power that harried it; power anchored the pleasure uncovered...The pleasure that comes of exercising a power that questions, monitors, watches, spies, searches out, palpates, brings to light; and on the other hand, the pleasure that kindles at having to evade this power, flee from it, fool it, or travesty it (45).

Foucault explains that relationships of power are perpetuated in order to result in pleasure for both subjects. Therefore, in the story, the *vieja* takes pleasure from having the power to seduce the young boys who give into her and their own sexual desire. This relationship is therefore, subversive in that the marginalized character is an agent of both power and pleasure.

Although the sexual interaction between the narrator and the *vieja* may seem to return agency to the marginalized character of the *vieja*, the violent depiction of the man over the *vieja* denounces this structure of power neatly defined in the binary male/female, dominant/subordinate, and aggressive/passive. “... y él acepta y le baja los pantalones y le dice, toma vieja, comételo, mámatelo, así, sin dientes, boquita de guagua, mamita, sigue no más, vieja de mierda, así, suavcito, más rápido, cuidado, que viene, viene un río espeso a inundarte la pieza” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). Both these matrixes of power, whether the *vieja* has sexual power over the boys because they give into the desire they attempt to suppress or the power that the boys have over the deteriorating woman are oppressive and therefore, condemned to violence and failure in “Bésame otra vez forastero.” In the introduction, I incited Butler who argues that deviant sexualities that mirror heteronormative relationships are not subversive just because they have been re-contextualized; “It is neither a simple ‘turning of the table’ in which women now wage violence against men, nor a simple internalization of masculine norms such that women now wage violence against themselves” (172).

“El Wilson” is the only short story included in this essay that is not actually part of *Los incontables*; it is actually included in an Ergo Sum anthology entitled, *Cuando no se puede vivir del cuento*. Due to the fact that it was published by Ergo Sum towards the end of the dictatorship and also under the author’s paternal surname, I include it as part of my analysis. This story

relates the narrative of el Wilson, a poor, uneducated son of a *desaparecido*²⁵ who, struggling to find a job, winds up working as an exotic dancer. I contend to analyze this story as one of queer expression because it denounces heteronormative matrixes of oppression and it subverts the subject of woman within that matrix of power. As el Wilson prepares to “interview” for the position, he is asked to undress and is then directed to move from side to side for inspection. “‘Que pase y tome asiento’, de perfil, de frente, de pie, músculos, sácate la ropa” (Mardones Lemebel, *Cuando no se puede*). This scene subverts the position of woman as the sexual object to be gazed upon by the male, but because el Wilson is in a position of subservience, he takes the position of “woman” in the eyes of the manager that gazes with “esos ojos anfibios lamiéndote el esqueleto” (Mardones Lemebel, *Cuando no se puede*). This representation of the heteronormative matrix of power is rejected by el Wilson the moment that he refuses the manager’s sexual advances: “entonces se acerca y la mano que resbala que aprieta, que cree, entonces lo rechazo y le digo que se chante, que yo solamente bailo” (Mardones Lemebel, *Cuando no se puede*). The rejection of a homoerotic encounter should be understood as a queer subversion of power in which the subordinate subject refuses to partake in an oppressive relationship of power. Therefore, the compulsory reiteration of heteronormative constructs is rejected. The refusal of a homoerotic relationship is subversive because homoeroticism does not guarantee an equal relationship just because both subjects share the same sex and because it disrupts compulsory heterosexuality; rather, it denounces any and all heteronormative sexualities like the one presented in this story with the portrayal of a feminized Wilson and a masculinized power figure, the manager.

At the same time, “El Wilson” is located in an overtly heterosexual environment. El Wilson is asked to perform in the “Martes femeninos,” meaning, he must perform for “solteronas, tías, y hasta abuelitas que entre trago y trago me sacan la ropa a tirones, con la mirada turbia de las mujeres solas frente al falo” (Mardones Lemebel, *Cuando no se puede*). These women engage their sexuality outside of the home and the marriage to inhabit a sexualized public space commonly reserved for the male. Foucault delineates the privatization of sexuality during the rise of the Victorian bourgeoisie in which, he explains, “A single locus of sexuality was acknowledged in social space as well as at the heart of every household, but it was a utilitarian and fertile one: the parent’s bedroom” (3). Therefore, the woman’s expression of a publicized sexuality disrupts the binary female/male and a seemingly univocal private/public paradigm delineated through gender scripts as a way to oppress women, their sexuality, and sexual agency. At the same time, it directs the argument to the Chilean regime in which the paradigms male/females and public/private was forcibly perpetuated since the regime alleged that women played a reproductive role while men played a citizens role in order to help the success of the Nation (Franco, “Going Public” 66). The regime argued that in order to balance an atmosphere of violence and a brutal reality in the public sphere, the private sphere needed to maintain an enhanced ethical value, which forced women into the home (Franco, “Going Public” 68). In

²⁵ *Desaparecido* means “disappeared” and it refers to the forced disappearance of political subversives during the dictatorships of the Southern Cone (although this is common practice in other Nations). Specifically in Chile, all political dissidents were censored/banned. According to the “Rettig Report” (*The National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation Report*), a total of 2,279 people disappeared (were killed) during the military regime of Pinochet for political dissidence. According to the “Valech Report” (*The National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture Report*), 31,947 were tortured for the same reason.

conclusion, *El Wilson* and the other stories analyzed in this chapter formulate a strong and insistent critique by Lemebel of the heteronormative practices that are present in the Nation and the regime whether they be perpetuated in hetero or homosexual and/or social relationships.

Chapter III: *Los incontables*: The Unofficial Story of Chile's Dictatorship

“La memoria es un proceso abierto de reinterpretación del pasado que deshace y rehace sus nudos para que se ensayen una y otra vez sucesos y comprensiones. La memoria remece el dato estático del pasado con nuevas significaciones sin clausurar que ponen su recuerdo a trabajar, llevando comienzos y finales a reescribir otras hipótesis y conjeturas para desmontar el cierre explicativo de las totalidades demasiado seguras de sí mismas. Y es la laboriosidad de esta memoria insatisfecha, que no se da nunca por vencida, la que perturba la voluntad de sepultación oficial del recuerdo mirado simplemente como un depósito fijo de significaciones inactivas” (Richard, *Fracturas* 135)

In Latin America, testimony literature has functioned not only as a written venue of expression against the violence committed during the dictatorships, it also functioned as a response against historical hyper-documentation; the latter is a compilation of data that has called itself History and which has merely resulted in a desensitized articulation of memory. From here on out, I will refer to History/official History interchangeably as that discourse which the Nation has produced. It is a discourse formulated through documents (or a hyper-documentation of these) that attest to the “facts” of the past in order to obliterate the many transitory voices that will be called memory throughout this essay. When I incite memory, I refer to the definition provided by Nelly Richard and expressed in the epigraph of this chapter. Memory, here, is that which cannot ever be satisfied, meaning, it can never be recapped into one consensual discourse and because it is transitory, it resists a static History (Richard, *Fracturas* 133-38). Ironically, in its repetition, History did not grant agency to the countless members that constituted the story of the Nation. This also brought about dissatisfaction with official History, born from an inability to ‘move on.’ Politicians were acting as if the process of mourning the dictatorship was easily attained through forgetting and then transitioning into a democratic government. Therefore, *Los incontables* is an appeal against violence and the reinforcement of those hegemonic structures of power that exiled, from the official History of the country, those people deemed political subversives as well as, the racially, sexually, and economically marginalized. The stories collected in this volume offer testimony that gives voice to these ‘untold’ memories that official History has forgotten because their narratives disrupt the organized and univocal voice of the *consenso*. Nelly Richard has written extensively about the democratic transition in Chile, describing it as a process in which the government incessantly tried to forget what took place during the dictatorship by hyper-documenting testimonies in order to desensitize language, expression, and voice and formulate one unanimous recounting that would reconcile the Nation and allow it to transition smoothly (*Residuos* 28-35). At the same time, art and literature have served as forms of expression that provide an outlet for those stories

that refuse to be forgotten by desisting conglomeration. These new forms of expression resist through their incoherent, uncomfortable, metaphorical, allegorical, and disruptive representations, expressions that serve as sensible forms of memory that give voice to the forgotten and the marginalized. Although Lemebel's post-dictatorship work is known for doing just that²⁶, *Los incontables*, a work written and circulated during the dictatorship itself, functions as the one piece that provides agency to all those silenced during the regime, including his own authorial voice.

“Ella entró por la ventana del baño” is a story of memory and one that narrates the lives of those at the periphery, in other words, the forgotten. It tells the life and death of la Chola that, as I argued, represents the socially marginalized; at the same time, the story also testifies the lives and deaths of the victims of the military dictatorship. Testimony literature is accentuated by texts that break the limits of language to express, through a play with language (irony, satire, metaphor, symbolism, allegory), that which is considered unspeakable (Richard, *Residuos* 31). It is a direct response to historical documentation and a hyper-documentation of data that narrates the atrocities of the survivors (i.e., *The National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation Report* and *The National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture Report*), but in the end, all of these “historical” texts ultimately desensitize memory. “Compilation of data, however, is not yet the memory of the dictatorship. Memory far exceeds any factual recounting, however important the latter may turn out to be as an initial juridical or political step. The memory of the dictatorship, in the strong sense of the word, requires another language” (Avelar 64). By ‘another language,’ Avelar is alluding to literary figures of speech (metaphor, irony, satire, ect.), which have the power to express that which has no language. In other words, although memory of trauma is inexpressible because language cannot convey to an audience the experience itself, literary figures of speech can approximate the experience without assuming that its narrative is enough to heal the subject as History has assumed to have done with its official discourse. La Chola's death, described in morbid detail, reminds us of this ‘factual recounting’ that official reports such as the Rettig and Valech Reports published, but Lemebel's use of metaphor, la Chola as an animal, allows for the author to appropriate language and create a new and non-official form of memory. The narrator describes la Chola's death through the following passage: “...celebrando la talla del Melo que tiró un gato mojado a los cables, de la cola, zumbando el animal, a los aires, al choque brutal de la corriente, por un momento se eriza, se retuerce y más oscuro de lo que era me doy cuenta que es la Chola” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). The mere fact that it is narrated through the use of metaphor, this antimemory is a more sensible testimony opposed to all the ‘factual recounting’ that it resembles. La Chola's citizen status as an animal automatically discounts her from historical documentation of History, but the author is able to forge a space for la Chola that is resistant because it initiates a new narrative voice with which to tell the story, a story otherwise obliterated from History.

²⁶ Angeles Mateo del Pino analyzes Lemebel's *crónicas* as a space to reflect on memory, history, and imagination. He reads these as texts that serve as therapy for the subject, that which helps him/her not forget because the reader is forced to remember through his/her narrative. Mateo del Pino writes, “Con todo ello, la crónica es documento, ejercicio sano—terapia—de un sujeto que no quiere olvidar, ni que olvidemos... Se erige así una escritura que es toma de con(s)ciencia, compromiso, memoria, testimonio y documento de las múltiples problemáticas que aquejan a la sociedad y, por consiguiente, al individuo, lo que no es más que una forma sana y lúdica de trazar y revelar un panorama histórico...” (“Chile, una loca” 18).

In the previous chapter, I used Deleuze's and Guattari's theory of *devenir femme* to argue that la Chola's ambiguous character derives from her position as a deviant being always in opposition to the patriarchal order of man. Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* further explain that, since majoritarian members of society dominate, they, therefore, constitute History and although minoritarians have memories, they can only express them during the process of becoming. Therefore, "*Becoming is an antimemory*" (294) and although History tries to disregard these antimemories, becoming is also transhistorical (296) and ultimately is always in a position to forge an oppositional narration. Consequently, la Chola is always becoming-woman because she defies the rational through her aberrant presence both as a "gata" and a sexual object. She also represents all that is not "man," i.e., male, dominant, white; in other words, she is always minoritarian. By way of Lemebel, la Chola's antimemories subsist and therefore, can defy the official History of Chile.

"Una noche buena para Santa" is a story that documents the lives of the orphaned (*huachos*) of Chile, those who do not have access to the fantasies/illusions of characters like Santa Claus. By *huachos*, I do not only mean those without familial parents, rather I mean those that have been excluded from the Nation's historical recounting because their narratives disrupt History. It articulates the stories of *huachos* who have lost their childhoods and that instead, like the orphaned girl of the story, "quiso ser muñeca para tener el pelo rubio y las pestañas arqueadas y salir a la calle con la mirada limpia y zapatos nuevos, siempre quiso alguna cosa que nadie tenía para darle porque era una piojenta muerta de hambre que deambulando por las calles y los tarros de basura, cantando en las micros con su voz ronca de semen y tabaco" (Mardones, *Los incontables*). In other words, it narrates the illusion of having a bourgeois life-style, a life that mirrors a *mestizo*/white/European life ("pelo rubio") with access to material possessions ("zapatos nuevos"). Therefore, this story can again be considered one of forgotten/unarticulated memory. It relates the story of an "animal agazapado" (Mardones, *Los incontables*), a story otherwise forgotten under the shadow of an official History, if not for the author's persistence to narrate. If, even after the dictatorship and during the democratic transition the government became interested in homogenizing the stories of the dictatorship by neutralizing memory through the use of mechanized language, there were still voices that were completely silenced. This is because they were and are still considered *desbordes* (excesses), which threaten the mechanized *consenso*. The *huachos* that Lemebel references in all his works, both during and post-dictatorship, attempt to give voice to those *desbordes* that the democratic transition fought to silence, neutralize, and forget. Nelly Richard in *Fracturas de la memoria* demonstrates that all these *desbordes* had to be completely silenced for the *consenso* to function successfully. These *desbordes*, she explains, include

Desbordes de *nombres* (la peligrosa revuelta de las palabras que diseminan sus significaciones heterodoxas para nombrar lo oculto...); desbordes de *cuerpos* y de *experiencias* (los modos discordantes como las subjetividades sociales rompen las filas de la identidad normada por el libreto político...); desbordes de *memorias* (las tumultuosas reinterpretaciones del pasado que mantienen el recuerdo de la historia abierto a una incesante pugna de lecturas y sentidos) (133).

In this story, the orphan girl is considered an excess at all levels. She not only ruptures the consensual model of History, but narrates a memory of deviance that History has fervently attempted to normalize by suppressing any inclusion in its official discourse.

The stories of the *huachos* of Chile are officially forgotten because for one, they are necessary to successfully follow-through with the process of *consenso* previously explained as well as, because the lives of these “animales agazapados” are always indifferent to violence, since violence is a quotidian aspect in the lives of the marginalized. The “huerfana más triste del mundo” (Mardones, *Los incontables*) is impervious to the old man’s death. Her reaction to his death is not sympathy or surprise towards the violently absurdsce, rather, “...cuando aún no ha conseguido ni un peso y su estómago es una bolsa hinchada de fermentos que gruñe por comida, por eso el tabaco le lleno de humos y el hambre la hace imaginar cosas, por eso mismo se pone de pie y refregándose los ojos muerde con el bostezo la madrugada fría que la retrata sin color...” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). A text that relates the quotidian life of the orphaned of the Nation, the apathetic reaction to violence and death, testifies to a violence not yet considered History because it has become commonsense. Therefore, it subverts the ‘transitory’ violence of the dictatorship.

“Bramadero²⁷” is a story about sacrifice in which the author uses the mythical figure of Prometheus²⁸ to narrate the story of a son whom sacrifices himself for his father and through his father, all mankind. In the story, Prometeo’s father pleads his son to pretend ignorance when the guards come looking for him. “...mañana no lo reconoceré en la foto que me muestre el policía, seré más tonto que nunca, padre para que se salve...Adiós hijo, cuídate Prometeo que vienen tiempos difíciles; hazte el imbécil lo más que puedas...” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). Prometeo acts faithfully and as he pretends to have no memories of his past, his father, or his lineage, his memories, in actuality, begin to fade; towards the end, the ultimate sacrifice is that of memory and a historical past. The fact that Lemebel recurs to Greek mythology to narrate a story of familial sacrifice suggests a parallelism between colonization and the military regime. In other words, the same way that Latin America was colonized and indigenous memory was obliterated, the military regime obliterated the lives and memories of those at the periphery, all those that did not conform to a modernized and Europeanized Chile. The only way to survive was by integrating one’s entangled memories into the univocal memory of the State; in other words, either one surrendered or one sacrificed any sense of personal memory in order to become part of a community. By community, I mean Benedict Anderson’s concept of imagined community in which Nationalism is built through an imagined paradigm of comradeship and unity even when the members that encompass this community cannot live in affinity. Anderson states that, “Finally, it [the Nation] is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings” (7). Through a univocally imagined narrative of the past, the Nation has been able

²⁷ *Bramadero* translates to tethering post, a place where animals are tied to in order to be trained or killed.

²⁸ Prometheus, in Greek mythology, is the Titan who stole fire from Zeus and then gave it to humans. For this, he was punished by being bound to a rock while a giant eagle eats his liver everyday just to have it grow back the next day. Aeschylus is accredited for writing the Greek tragedy, “Prometheus Bound,” based on the figure of the “Champion of Mankind.”

to imagine all of its members as ‘united’ and therefore, also univocal. Although the reality of any Nation implies a recognition of inequality and multiplicity, the Nation must imagine itself as a community through a consensual narrative of its past in order to live as a community and call itself a Nation.

At the same time, “Bramadero” is not only a story of sacrifice in which Prometeo surrenders everything, a past, a life, and a memory for mankind and the survival of his father; “Bramadero” is a story that deconstructs official History by destroying documented memories over one entangled, confusing, tumultuous narration that becomes the life of Prometeo himself. Prometeo is asked to destroy all documents and photographs that testify to the existence of him and his family: “...bota estos papeles donde nadie los encuentre, porque un certificado de nacimiento con ese apellido es una sentencia de muerte...huyendo de Bramadero, no sé cuántos días, cuántos caminos crucé en la noche, que es como un círculo negro de años, huyendo, quemando fotos y papeles...” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). Here, documents and photographs, representative of accumulated data that attests to History, is destroyed in order to, ironically, silence peripheral memories. The latter includes that of Prometeo and his father, whom, we can deduce, is a leftist revolutionary sought out by the military regime. At the same time, although documented History cannot exist in this story, it seems that neither can Prometeo’s convoluted narration since the military men quickly get frustrated with his incoherent responses and leave: “‘Es inútil, no reconoce ni a su madre.’ ‘Está demente, mi cabo, vamos andando’” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). Although the Nation seems to disregard Prometeo as a citizen or even as a subversive worth interrogating, it is the destruction of documented History (birth certificates, documents, and photographs) that construct a space for a new narrative that, although incoherent and frustrated, is able to narrate the story of Prometeo.

“El camión de la guardia” is a story about female memory. Traditionally, history has been a male-dominated discourse in which the female voice is completely obliterated because it is considered irrational and incoherent (Deleuze and Guattari 292-94). This story alludes to the power of this irrationality since the story of the protagonist, Mercedes Quilodrán, is one of rage and vengeance, but at the same time, it is one that can disrupt official History. This story not only attempts to rescue female memory, but also that of the mother. In mourning for her dead son Francisco, Mercedes pursues vengeance. This expression of memory for her fallen son reminds us of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in Argentina.²⁹ Jean Franco in “Going Public: Reinhabiting the Private” explains that although women have always been banned from political and public discourse, particularly during the military regimes, in Argentina, “These women, known as the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, not only gathered together in a public place but used their marginalized position to reclaim the *polis*. They created an Antigone space in which the rights (and rites) of kinship were given precedence over the discourse of the state” (67). These women’s invasions of the public space not only disrupt the Nation’s official discourse, but

²⁹ The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo is an association of Argentine mothers whose children “disappeared” during the Argentine military regime (1976-1983). They gathered in the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, wearing white scarves and quietly holding up enlarged photographs of their children (or grandchildren) in protest of their disappearance. Their last annual March was in 2006, but they still gather to fight against other social injustices. This was a militant response to the regime that refused to take responsibility for these disappearances and after the fall of the regime, refused to give the names of the political detainees that were detained, tortured, and/or killed during the regime.

demand that the Nation re-write History and integrate all those stories that have been forgotten and/or disregarded. In “El camión de la guardia,” Mercedes also appropriates the public through the use of her position as a woman and mother. She attaches explosives to her abdomen to give the illusion of a pregnancy, the only biological state that would allow her to climb aboard the military truck she plans to attack. “Pero ahora en plena intemperie el sol pegaba duro, quemaba su falda de ordinarios cuadros azules, que a la altura del abdomen se ensanchaba en esa protuberancia sin forma y demasiado arriba para ser un embarazo” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). Mercedes serves herself of her position as a woman and mother in order to seek vengeance for the death of her son. The fact that she uses her fertility for this act of violence disrupts the image of the woman and the mother (both woman and mother as citizens of the Nation) since it is assumed that the role of the woman as citizen can only be accessed through her role as a mother. Here we can think of the image of Gabriela Mistral³⁰ in Chile in which, Licia Fiol-Matta explains, “Mistral identifies reproductive motherhood as the goal of education of women, figuring the idea of education or pedagogy as the equation that unites woman and state and justifying her intervention in the national discourse... ‘*In my opinion, perfect patriotism in women is perfect motherhood*’” (74). This conservative view of womanhood and citizenship that was perpetuated through the figure of Mistral is still present in Chile and is that which the character of Mercedes agitates.

This female memory is one that is caught in a constant process of mourning, a state identified with the feminine because it is considered irrational and disruptive of the organized public. Idelber Avelar explains that according to Plato,

Mourning is for the polis an unwelcome, perturbing enemy of wisdom, requiring from philosophy a regulative and subduing intervention...The philosopher’s wisdom bounds mourning, organizes the system of accepted reminiscences, blocks the public display of grief...The control over mimetic practices is thus coextensive with the development of a number of official rites through which one attempts to curb the display of mournful grief, primarily identified, in Greek thought and art, with women (113).

According to this logic, the female state of mourning cannot be subdued and due to its irrationality, cannot be accounted in History because it is incoherent and illogical³¹. At the same time, its perpetual expression demands recognition in the public space (i.e. the presence of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo). It is also one that serves itself from affects, such as hatred, that extend beyond the State’s power to suppress. “A esa hora nada parecía erecto, todo proyecto se

³⁰ Gabriela Mistral (1889-1957) was a Chilean poet, educator, and diplomat. She was also the first Latin American to win the Nobel Prize for literature in 1945. She played an important role in Chile’s education system, and became recognized as ‘La maestra de América’ (Schoolteacher of America) by supporting a conservative role for women in the Nation as mothers and educators. Licia Fiol-Matta attempts to ‘queer’ the figure of Mistral in *A Queer Mother for the Nation* (2002), arguing that not only Mistral’s ambiguous sexuality (claiming she was a closet-lesbian), but her contradictory life-style, made her the epitome of mother for the Nation because a patriarchal State needed a queer mother. Since mother is always private, the only way to reconcile a public mother figure was by having a queer mother like Mistral.

³¹ Hence the indissoluble connection between mourning and poetry. According to Plato, poetry dominates mourning and this relationship of power disallows mourning to pass, disrupting the order of the polis. (Avelar, 113-14).

derretía perdiéndose el entusiasmo y la memoria. Qué poderoso era el calor...Pero aún sobre esa manta de estío ella no iba a flaquear, no desertaría en su empresa de muerte. El odio se desborda una sola vez, si no, después viene la resignación...” (Mardones, *Los incontables*). This hatred that mourning cannot surpass is the reason why female memory is always discounted in official History, but it is also this intense emotion that is the only sensible affect that accounts for the insistent acts of remembrance: “memoria insatisfecha, que no se da nunca por vencida” (Richard, *Fracturas* 135).

Both in “Bramadero” and “El camión de la guardia,” the protagonists take on the role of the anti-hero. They are not there to win or be victorious, there is no way to escape their peripheral position, which is why they choose to utilize their subservient position in order to resist their oppressor. By assuming the role of the marginalized, one can then resist against one’s oppressor. “Sólo parece ser posible hablar de la Historia (con mayúsculas) cuando se lo hace al sesgo, soslayando los hechos...La memoria es, en todos los casos, una forma de desafío a las versiones exitosas de la historia y se sostiene por un ejercicio de resistencia: afirmarse en el rol de perdedor es asumir el recuerdo y proponer un espacio—imaginario, en la literatura—a la esperanza de justicia” (Amar Sánchez 31). In “Bramadero,” the character of Prometeo allies himself with the position of the mentally challenged in order to be able to evade interrogation and can therefore, formulate a narrative that is as incomprehensible and convoluted as his premise. Prometeo is the intimation of anti-hero, a position he utilizes to confront documented memory and transform it into affective representation of past and present. In “El camión de la guardia,” Mercedes epitomizes the role of anti-hero by assuming the ultimate position of womanhood—that of the mother. She serves herself of her subservient condition in order to insert herself in the story, a motion that will avenge the death of Francisco and through this, will interject them both into History.

In “Bésame otra vez forastero,” the narrator of the story recounts the story of the *vieja* and reconstructs his narrative through recourse of his memory of the past. The memory of the *vieja*, accorded through his belief of hearing her heels still clicking against the pavement, allows for his memories to resurface to a time in which this prohibited and deviant space was still available and in which his own life was able to flourish in between the peripheral space of the *vieja*’s home.

A los años de ella, se fue juntando el tiempo que dejó la calle desierta...el otoño y sus tacos...retumbando siempre en mis oídos su taconeo suelto en el baile de la amanecida. El barrio se hizo viejo esperando su final. Pero ella observó con sus redomas de suero, la sucesión de todas las generaciones: de la abuela muerta al padre anciano, también muerto...Antes de ayer, ayer, hoy, ahora, aquí, hablando con temor ahora, porque estoy hablando de mí...solamente me da ánimo saber que pronto escucharé su caminar por la calle, porque así regresa todavía (Mardones, *Los incontables*).

She represents past and present for the narrator, she is literally and figuratively both memory and unofficial history—the ultimate representation of antimemory. This representation of memory disrupts all forms of History because she survives not through documents, photographs, or official testimonies, but rather through the childhood memories of the narrator, memories that are contrived constructs of sex, abuse, and deviance. Although she is dead, she exists through him

and through him, the memories of all the generations she witnessed live and die. The quotidian life for the *vieja* is the memory of the *barrio*, one of seduction, aberrance, and violence.

Chapter IV: “Manifiesto (Hablo por mi diferencia)”: The Final Steeping Stone in the Transformation Mardones to Lemebel

A manifesto is a public declaration of principles or intentions, primarily of a political nature, but since the rise of the avant-garde movements of the early 20th Century, there also arose the artistic manifesto.³² Towards the end of the 19th Century, Latin America witnessed numerous productions of political as well as artistic manifestos, both of which acted as emancipatory texts that spoke out against the colonized metropolis and questioned conservative genres of literature. Following the post-war period and the Cuban Revolution, the 60’s in Latin America resulted in a period of prodigious production of manifestos that reformulated utopic societies (Mangone and Warley 31-33). I categorize Lemebel’s “Manifiesto (Hablo por mi diferencia)”³³ as an artistic manifesto, appropriating Carlos Mangone’s and Jorge Warley’s definition of the artistic manifesto as

un texto nuevo que se pone en circulación, siempre desde una posición marginal al arte oficial...acentúa ciertos recursos del género como la teatralización de las ideas, la creación de neologismos, la violencia sobre el público neutral o conformista a través de la injuria directa, del sarcasmo de la ironía...a diferencias de los manifiestos políticos, el manifiesto artístico a partir de la posguerra se disimula en mayor o en menor medida...En realidad aparece una actitud antimanifiesto, entendida como el rechazo a las convenciones formales y temáticas de los textos anteriores (75).

Lemebel’s intention when presenting his “Manifiesto” in 1986 was to denounce the exclusory practices of the leftist movements in Chile utilizing the same form of expression they themselves employed, in other words, their utilization of the manifesto. What Lemebel later calls his ‘homosexual manifesto’ (García, “No soy la Eva”) not only disrupts traditional forms of expression, but also the utilization of the manifesto itself. This disruption is immediately felt with the use of the possessive pronoun “my” rather than the common “we” that is common of political manifestos. The manifesto’s title already delineates this change; Lemebel clarifies that he is speaking about *his* difference and not necessarily anyone else. At the same time, it is clear that although the author is talking about his personal experiences,—“Tengo cicatrices de risas en la espalda.../ No sabe que la hombría/ Nunca la aprendí en los cuarteles/ Mi hombría me la enseñó la noche” (*Loco afán* 96)—he is inciting a change for a future that extends beyond his lifetime—“Y no es por mi/ Yo estoy viejo/ Y su utopía es para las generaciones futuras” (*Loco afán* 97). Excluding all leftist’s affiliates from his utopia as they have excluded him even when

³² Manifesto derives from the Latin *manifestum*, which means clear or conspicuous. It was first recorded in English in 1620 in Nathaniel Bent’s translation of Paolo Sarpi’s *History of the Council on Trent*. The most well-known manifestos today are *The US Declaration of Independence* (1776) and *The Communist Manifesto* (1848).

³³ Although I am reading Lemebel’s “Manifiesto” from the perspective of its original enunciation in 1986, I would like to note that it has been re-published as a *crónica* in *Loco afán* (2000).

they speak of a false “we” in their manifestos and through the dramatization of the genre of manifesto, Lemebel accomplishes the creation of a political space from which to affirm his ideals as well as, satirize the leftist’s political position. The latter accomplishment berated the leftist position since the leftist revolutionaries ironically fought the military for being exiled while they themselves promoted the exclusion of the sexually, racially, and economically marginalized.

In reading Lemebel’s “Manifiesto” as a transformation, we can understand that Lemebel is designating himself as a politically active citizen even if he is not recognized as such by the Nation. He is choosing to obviate his identity as a writer and elects his “Manifiesto” as the text which will frame his words from within a political framework. He begins the text by stating: “No soy Pasolini pidiendo explicaciones/ No soy Ginsberg expulsado de Cuba/ No soy un marica disfrazado de poeta/ No necesito disfraz/ Aquí está mi cara/ Hablo por mi diferencia” (*Loco afán* 93). In Chapter 1, I explicated that Lemebel did not think of *Los incontables* as having political agency, which was what led him to dismiss the genre of short story as a political tool and appropriate the *crónica* (portrayed here through his repudiation of the Italian poet Pasolini³⁴ and the American poet Ginsberg³⁵). Therefore, we can analyze the “Manifiesto” as that which will remove the ‘disfraz’ of fiction and speak from a more visible/public and political place.

I position Pedro Lemebel’s “Manifiesto (Hablo por mi diferencia)” at the end of this essay for two reasons. The first reason is of a chronological nature. Lemebel most likely published *Los incontables* before he presented his “Manifiesto.” I am dubious because, although both were publicized in 1986, he presented his “Manifiesto” in September of that year during a leftist demonstration in Santiago and actually, there is no exact date of publication of his stories because Ergo Sum does not carry specific dates of publication of their works; at the same time, it is a safe assumption that *Los incontables* was produced and published before September 1986. The second reason that I place this text at the end of the essay is to emphasize this text as both an ending and a beginning in the author’s political and literary career. Lemebel’s “Manifiesto” as an end and a beginning is described by Florencia Preatoni as: “...el resultado de años de padecimiento segregacionista, es el resultado de años de incomprensión o, peor, de ninguneo hacia una minoría por parte de la izquierda que no era capaz de ver que la sexualidad también es un lugar desde el que se hace política” (“Contradicciones”). I read the author’s “Manifiesto” as the beginning to his later transformation from Mardones to Lemebel and through this change, also a transformation in strategies of denunciation. Let me note that this text will also lead to his participation in the “Yeguas del Apocalipsis,” which is also a move from fiction to new forms of expression as well as, a transition that will lead to the choice of writing *crónica*.

In an interview, Pedro Lemebel describes his “Manifiesto” as a weapon in battle: “El Manifiesto ha sido mi caballo de batalla, lo leo siempre en público y a veces con la Internacional de fondo. También hay una cita al Manifiesto Comunista, pero mi Manifiesto homosexual reclamó y reclama una suerte de dignidad dentro de la izquierda chilena” (García, “No soy la

³⁴ Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922-1975) was an openly gay film director, poet, and writer. He was a member of the Italian Communist Part (PCI) from which he was expelled after being charged with the corruption of minors and obscene acts in public.

³⁵ Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997) was an openly gay American poet. He was known for travelling to communist countries to promote free speech, but was routinely expelled as was the case in Cuba from which he was deported for protesting the persecution of homosexuals.

Eva”). And indeed it is a direct response to the blatant exclusion Unidad Popular showed towards homosexuals in Chile³⁶. The leftist revolutionary movements in Latin America followed the Marxist-Socialist-Communist subscription, which claimed that homosexuals were socially nonproductive and were merely a creation of upper and middle class decadence (Foster 62). Therefore, homosexuals were treated as criminals, political subversives, and/or mentally ill. The Cuban journalist, Carlos Franqui, describes Castro’s regime by stating that “en la Cuba castrista la lucha no era revolucionarios vs. contrarrevolucionarios, era machos contra maricones” (Perlongher 30). This atmosphere of exclusion and violence was what led Lemebel to present his “Manifiesto,” dressed in drag and wearing heels, during a leftist revolutionary demonstration in Santiago. Lemebel’s choice of drag establishes a rupture for the leftist demonstration because the author portrays a highly political speech while establishing gender performance; in other words, the representation of macho men and meek women is deconstructed and is no longer the only place from which to make politics. On the other hand, one’s marginalization, a result of one’s gender invariance, actually strengthens one’s potential and political stance.

Denouncing the leftist claim that their exile from the Nation as subversives has been an agonizing and violent process, Lemebel reminds them that being economically, racially, and/or sexually marginalized is a quotidian battle in Chile. “Pero no me hable del proletariado/ Porque ser pobre y maricón es peor/ Hay que ser ácido para soportarlo” (Lemebel, *Loco afán* 93). Here, Lemebel deconstructs the idea of the proletariat that the left defended while incessantly disregarding other marginalized subjects or assuming that their sexuality defined other aspects of their social life³⁷. The exclusion of the racially, economically, and sexually marginalized as political citizens aggravates the situation because the Nation stops fighting for democracy, socialism, or dictatorship the moment the poor, the *indio*, the *huacho*, and the homosexual is exiled or disregarded as a non-political. “Como la dictadura/ Peor que la dictadura/ Porque la dictadura pasa/ Y viene la democracia/ Y detrasito el socialismo/ ¿Y entonces?/ ¿Qué harán con nosotros compañero?” (Lemebel, *Loco afán* 93-94). Therefore, Lemebel incites a grander revolution, not one in which the upper classes fight the lower classes and the left fights for a classless political system, but rather one in which all structures of power are disentangled and reformulated so that these oppressive forces are not reproduced in new political systems. In other words, the solution is not a transition from dictatorial rule to socialism or democracy, but rather a change to a political system that includes all subjects as citizens while taking into consideration that identities are established through intersectional dimensions in which categories are merely established for oppression, exploitation, and exclusion³⁸.

³⁶ Unidad Popular was a coalition of political parties in Chile that supported the candidacy of Salvador Allende in the 1970 presidential election. It compromised most of the Chilean left: the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Radical Party, the Social Democratic Party, MAPU, and the Christian Left.

³⁷ Proletariat derives from the Latin *proletarius*, which means a citizen of the lowest classes. It is defined as the lowest of the social classes within a society structured by an economic class system. In this essay, I am referring to proletariat as defined and utilized by Karl Marx: “...the term proletariat designated the class of wage workers who were engaged in industrial production and whose chief source of income was derived from the sale of their labour power” (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2011).

³⁸ The failure to smoothly transition from a corrupt dictatorship to a democratic government, a failure previously outlined by Nelly Richard in *Residuos y metáforas* (28-29), is portrayed in Lemebel’s later work, specifically in *La esquinaes mi corazón*, in which he denounces the neoliberal system that is currently in place in Chile. “Pareciera entonces que cada nacimiento en uno de estos bloques, cada pañal ondulante que presupone una nueva vida, estuviera manchado por un trágico devenir...Herencia

Therefore, “Manifiesto” can also be understood as one in which Lemebel establishes a new identity for himself and in which he disavows all that will no longer define him as a subject, an artist, and a citizen; as a result, this move brings him power of agency, something that had been denied to him by the political movements that had dismissed him as a strong political citizen of the Nation. Towards the middle of the text it reads: “La gente comprende y dice:/ Es marica pero escribe bien/ Es marica pero es buen amigo” (Lemebel, *Loco afán* 95). Here, Lemebel understands that his identity has been defined solely based on his sexuality and therefore, any political/literary work he produces is identified from within that framework. I would like to incite the Argentine Manuel Puig because he has explicitly denounced any affiliation to the category of homosexual or his placement within a homosexual literature arguing, as queer theory has done, that any identity of sexuality is violent and exclusory and perpetuates the formation of ghettos based on one’s homosexuality. “Por lo tanto la identidad no puede ser definida a partir de características sexuales, ya que se trata de una actividad justamente banal. La homosexualidad no existe. Existen personas que practican actos sexuales con sujetos de su mismo sexo, pero este hecho no debería definirlo porque carece de significado. Lo que es trascendente, y moralmente significativo, en cambio, es la actividad afectiva” (“El error gay”). Puig articulates the ideals perpetuated by queer theory today: an identity based on one’s sexual preference is only formulated by power structures to segregate those considered deviant. This is the reason behind Puig’s refusal to frame his work from within his sexuality and although Lemebel has aided himself of his sexuality and gender performance to deconstruct these same formulations, we witness, in “Manifiesto,” a disavowal of any identification with homosexuality as an identity that will define his work, subjectivity, and/or agency.

In the previously developed citation by Puig, the Argentine author imagines identities based on ‘actividades afectivas;’ in other words, a utopian world³⁹ in which all categories of sexuality (both hetero and homo) are abolished and in which one chooses a partner affectively. Lemebel refers to a similar utopian future for Chile, in “Manifiesto,” when he proclaims: “Y no hablo de meterlo y sacarlo/ Y sacarlo y meterlo solamente/ Hablo de ternura compañero/ Usted no sabe/ Como cuesta encontrar el amor/ En estas condiciones” (*Loco afán* 95). Here, the sexual act of penetration is dismissed and redefined as a purely affective act. Heteronormative sexuality has been normalized through the edification of sexuality as a heterosexual act based on the physical act of penetration with a fetishization of the genitals. This normalized sexuality can only be successfully diffused through the construction of unnatural sexuality (the unnatural arrangement of bodies and genitals during the physical act of sex) to oppose normalized representations. Gagnon and Simon explain that

neoliberal o futuro despegue capitalista en la economía de esta ‘demos-gracia.’ Un futuro inalcanzable para estos chicos, un chiste cruel de la candidatura, la traición de la patria libre” (35).

³⁹ I word this as utopian because Puig himself understand this change as utopic. He states later in his essay, “De cualquier manera, pienso que es imposible prever un mundo sin represión sexual. Me esfuerzo en imaginar como resultado una gran disminución de la llamada homosexualidad exclusiva y una gigantesca disminución de la llamada heterosexualidad exclusiva. Y nada de esto tendría ninguna importancia: todos estarían demasiado empeñados en su propio goce para preocuparse en contabilizarlo” (“El error gay”).

the natural also exists in opposition to the unnatural...In large measure our distinctions between the *natural* and the *unnatural* in sex behavior is directly based on the physical activities in which people engage when they are doing what are conventionally described as sexual acts...It is perhaps startling to consider that when we think about the sexual, nearly our entire imagery is drawn from the physical activities of bodies...We have allowed the organs, the orifices, and the gender of the actors to personify or embody or exhaust nearly all the meanings that exist in the sexual situation (4-5).

In other words, the normalization of sexuality that Gagnon and Simon describe above is deconstructed by both Puig and Lemebel the moment that they reappropriate the significance of sexuality as a physical act of heterosexual genital penetration and create an affective exchange between subjects. This transforms the act of sex, the “meterlo y sacarlo/ Y sacarlo y meterlo,” into a banal operation, one that because it can be demystified, is not actually natural.

In “A Resistance against Heteronormativity,” I analyzed “Ella entró por la ventana del baño,” “Una noche buena para Santa,” “Espinoza,” and “Bésame otra vez forastero,” as stories in which Lemebel condemns the binary matrix of oppression distinguished by the binary male/female. I explained that binary oppositions have been established to subordinate femininity and have also served as the basis to all dichotomies: white/black, rich/poor, and dominant/subordinate. Andrew Edgar and Peter R. Sedgwick define these binary oppositions as the root of women’s oppression, stating that they are “A particular feature in the existence of binary oppositions predicated on the...polarity of the sexes which work to undermine the feminine” (97). These binary oppositions account for a gender identification within a social spectrum that both the military regime and the leftist movements in Chile used in order to reinforce their exclusory, violent, and oppressive practices. The military regime, moralistically safe-guarded by the Catholic Church, utilized these structures in order to perpetuate the dominant/subordinate paradigm that kept them afloat. On the other hand, although the leftist movements condemned this matrix of power that perpetuated the opposition bourgeoisie/proletariat, they served themselves of the dichotomy *macho/maricón* in order to claim that certain gender incongruences produced labor decadence and therefore, could not benefit the revolution. Lemebel condemns these strict gender binaries to question the binary matrix as a whole: “¿El futuro será en blanco y negro?/¿El tiempo en noche y día laboral sin ambigüedades?” (*Loco afán*94). Due to the simplistic appropriation of categories that these oppositions employ, they are oppressive not only because they have to assume an ‘other’ to function, but because they disregard all identities formed at the intersection of social paradigms.

Not only does Lemebel critique univocal gender identities perpetuated through oppressive binaries, but he attempts to redefine these identities by blurring the lines that define them to the point of misrecognition. In a culture in which gender roles are neatly defined as masculine (aggressive, strong, dominant) and feminine (passive, weak, subordinate)⁴⁰, Lemebel questions

⁴⁰ Gagnon and Simon describe these gender scripts as social dichotomies taught during childhood and rarely deconstructed later-on in life and therefore, exercised from generation to generation. “The primarily negative and dichotomous informational inputs of parents to the child are rarely revised by parents. The primitive form of moral conditioning which constructs only black and white labels for behavior maintains itself independently, since the parental figures, who create these early labels for the

the hegemonic definition of masculinity (“*hombría*”) when he writes: “No sabe que la *hombría*/ Nunca la aprendí en los cuarteles/ Mi *hombría* me la enseñó la noche/ Detrás de un poste...Mi *hombría* no la recibí del partido/ Porque me rechazaron con risitas/ Muchas veces/ Mi *hombría* la aprendí participando/ En la dura de esos años” (*Loco afán*96). “*Hombría*” for Lemebel is not a homosocial learning process, rather it is an arbitrary signifier that is defined as “*hombría*” or negated as such by hegemonic social structures. Jean Franco recognizes Lemebel’s effort to address the leftist’s segregationist policies and actions stating that Lemebel’s “Manifiesto,” “was a reproach to the old leftists who had failed to understand that their machismo had allied them to reaction. The manliness (*hombría*) of the military may not, Lemebel argued, be superior to the ‘manliness’ of the gay men and transvestites who confront mockery and aggression everyday on the city streets” (*Inside the Empire* 273). For Franco, “*hombría*” is learned by a quotidian confrontation with violence that the leftist participants could never comprehend and that Lemebel reproaches in “Manifiesto” as he expands and redefines “*hombría*.” Lemebel not only reproaches the leftist’s traditional definition of “*hombría*,” a macho behavior learned through homosocial interactions between heterosexual men in the military, but his reappropriation of the term demystifies the category as an intrinsic and viable signifier.

I intend to end this chapter and this essay with the last few verses of Lemebel’s “Manifiesto.” The author’s closing verses induce a new beginning for Chile and for the leftist movements. I understand them as an ending to a stage in the author’s literary and political career and as the beginning to a fight for a new Nation. This new vision pleads for the reconstruction of the left through an introspective analysis of its ideals and proclamations. Lemebel’s “Manifiesto” ends with the following lines: “Que la revolución no se pudra del todo/ A usted le doy este mensaje/ Y no es por mí/ Yo estoy viejo/ Y su utopía es para las generaciones futuras/ Hay tantos niños que van a nacer/ Con una alita rota/ Y yo quiero que vuelen compañero/ Que su revolución/ Les dé un pedazo de cielo rojo/ Para que puedan volar” (*Loco afán*97). Throughout the entire text, Lemebel questions the left’s ideals as an all-inclusive, classless society demonstrating their contradictory, violent, and exclusory practices. Towards the end, he proposes not that the left disintegrate and like the dictatorship, disappear, but rather, that they introspectively analyze those positions that are violent and exclusory in order to comprehend that subjects at the intersection of social paradigms are being discounted.

protosexual experience of the child through direct action as well as indirection, are rarely reassessed or newly judged until quite late in adolescence, if at all” (33).

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