

Young and Queer: Politics of Memory and Sexuality in Contemporary Chilean Cinema

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Recibido: 12 de mayo de 2021 / Aceptado: 08 de junio de 2021

Abstract. This article discusses, through the analysis of three LGBTQ+ films, *Wild and Young* [Joven y Alocada] (Marialy Rivas, 2012), *A Map to talk* [Mapa para conversar] (Constanza Fernández Bertrand, 2011) and *Another Love Movie* [Otra película de amor] (Edwin Oyarce, 2010), the role of queer subjectivities in revising the Chile's recent past through queering the bildungsroman genre. The coming-out of the younger generation questions the moral and ethical consistency of the older generation by exposing them to their own ethical and ideological fractures as subjects co-opted by the neoliberal system; and at the same time, as involuntary accomplices of the revolutionary failure of Allende's Popular Unity government. The article's discussion of the formation of new social bonds, ethically consistent with the younger generation's desires and horizons of meaning, and their exploration through the figure of the "perverse queer teen," completes the proposed analysis of the new social and intersubjective contracts present in Chile today.

Keywords: Queer film; LGBTIQ+ memory; Chilean cinema; perverse teen; bildungsroman.

[es] Jóvenes y alocadxs: Políticas de memoria y sexualidad en el cine chileno contemporáneo

Resumen. El presente artículo discute el papel de las subjetividades queer en la revisión del pasado reciente de Chile por medio del análisis de tres películas de temática LGBTIQ+: *Joven y Alocada* (Marialy Rivas, 2012), *Mapa para conversar* (Constanza Fernández Bertrand, 2011) y *Otra película de amor* (Edwin Oyarce, 2010). La revelación (coming-out) de la identidad sexual y de género de los representantes de las generaciones más jóvenes redefine el género del *bildungsroman* de modo de cuestionar la consistencia moral y ética de la generación mayor exponiéndolos en sus fracturas éticas e ideológicas como sujetos cooptados por el sistema neoliberal, a la vez que, definiéndolos como cómplices involuntarios del fracaso revolucionario del proyecto de la Unidad Popular del gobierno de Salvador Allende. La formación de los nuevos lazos sociales junto con los procesos de individuación son explorados por medio de la figura del "adolescente perverso queer," un sujeto éticamente consistente con sus deseos y horizontes de sentido cuya presencia desestabiliza

Palabras claves: Cine queer; memoria LGBTIQ+; cine chileno; perversion; bildungsroman.

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Cómo citar: Blanco, F. A. (2022). Espacialidad, género y nación. La elegía gay y la función social del discurso funerario en la poesía de guerra de Emilio Prados, en *Estudios LGBTIQ+ Comunicación y Cultura*, 2(1), pp. 81-90.

1. Introduction

1.1. Perverse Teens?

In 1999, with the advent of a second democratic government in Chile after 17 years of dictatorship, radio broadcasting star DJ Roberto Artiagoitia (b. 1969-), aka *Rumpi*, collaborated with director Cristián Galaz (b. 1958-) on the film adaptation of his popular radio show *Chacotero Sentimental* [*Sentimental Teaser*]. On this successful radio program, listeners call in and provide a public confession, or else give public testimony about their sex lives and romantic issues. The host acts as a satirical priest-judge and gives advice and comfort by playing a song on the radio which functions as a parable for the anguished/guilty sinner. The analogy between

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revealing a secret, coming out of the closet, and discovering the truth regarding the whereabouts of the thousands of disappeared persons can be found in each of the film's three storylines, proving the power of the social-imaginary narrative of memory and its ethical dictum in the public sphere, while at the same time showing that intimacy and the affects have been completely mediatized (Blanco, 2015, pp. 2-12). Father-daughter incest, a working class couple with financial troubles, and a love affair between an ex-secret agent and a lower-class bombshell reflect on the regulatory system of sexuality and its regime of domination from the perspective of transgression during post-dictatorship times, showing the intersection of the politics of memory and sexuality in the newest generation of Chilean filmmakers. Hence, the movies' plots act as twofold cinematic metonymies for the collision of the public (i.e. that sphere which belongs to the domain of the state/citizenry) into the private (i.e. that realm which belongs to the interiority of the subject) within the family-nation narrative depicted by the film, highlighting and revealing the repressed public burden of memory embedded in the private sexual secrets of the individuals.

The main focus of my analysis in this article centers on those Chilean cinematic narratives from the 2000's in which "perverse teen figures" (understood in the Lacanian sense as individuals for whom the the law and social norms are fraudulent) will permit us to reflect on the changes in the normal processes of structuring the social bonds, coping both with the recent neoliberal past, as well as the transitional governments and newly recovered democracy, and moving forward in pursuit of one's own sexual and social identity. The article proposes the exploration of the familial and national secrets in two directions. On the one hand, *Wild and Young* [Joven y Alocada] (Marialy Rivas, 2012), *A Map to talk* [Mapa para conversar] (Constanza Fernández Bertrand, 2011) and *Another Love Movie* [Otra película de amor] (Edwin Oyarce, 2010), show the ways in which a whole generation of adults was co-opted by the military regime (1973-1990) and lured into the fantasy of the economic neoliberal conceptions of freedom, family values, and social contracts, forcing them to live and work in the *closet* of oblivion. While at the same time, their queer offsprings' coming-out in these new democratic times (1990-2010) open the so-called Pandora's Box (Stern, 1998). The collision of a myriad of different narratives about the recent past buried by the religious-moral dictum of the transitional governments exposes the members of the older generation as passive accomplices, something that scholar Michael Lazzara (2020) has discussed at length in his book *Civil Obedience: Complicity and Complacency in Chile since Pinochet*. Both secrets – the private sexual life of the younger generation and the ethical judgement of the historical responsibility of their elders – form the backbone of the contemporary Chilean democratic landscape.

For my analysis I draw from Jacques Lacan's psychosexual development theory, particularly using his definition of social bond and its connection to the linguistic and symbolic representation of the ideal self. The distinction between the ideal ego and the ego ideal linked to the literary conception of the *bildungsroman* helps me to propose that for the Queer Subject the Lacan ideal ego, the normative heterocis narratives mandate to be emulated by the social imaginaries, conflict with the ego ideal, which is the result of the combination of cultural and individual expectations. All the movies selected in this article share the same narrative structure, with the coming-out as a climactic moment marked by the confrontation between the queer youth and the so-called revolutionary elders in which the queer subject, consistent in their identity position, question the historical failures and the ideological inconsistency of their elders. As this dynamic unravels in the plot, family secrets are revealed, and the past is opened for scrutiny showing that the ethically consistent self is the queer-youth self as opposed to the facade of the revolutionary ego ideals (Lacan, 1977)

Even though these "perverse teen figures" are depicted in these movies as young adults who are openly defiant of their parents' sexual and moral values and their hidden past, paradoxically, they negotiate their generation's cultural rules as figures of complicity in ignoring the shameful in order to protect their consumption of sexual and political rights. Queer female figures here act as markers that can be interpreted in at least two different ways: first, as a sign of the moral deficit that some scholars say characterizes our contemporary societies; or, alternatively, as indices for a new way of organizing social contracts (bonds) and their excess of enjoyment. The explanation of this paradox lies in the fact that the individual is always debating (or negotiating) between the social norm and their own behavior (individual ideal versus one's impulses), as regulatory systems look to maintain social equilibrium. However, the two central issues for regulating enjoyment, clearly depicted by these films are the apparition of the New Religious Right's discourse and the persistence of traumatic memory narratives and the repression of sexual identities. These issues, which are embodied by the rebellious adolescent female characters, introduce a third element to be considered. These "queer fallen angels" represent a different path. They are meant to challenge the boundaries of their parents and more importantly to criticize their inconsistency in the public and private arenas. As post-revolutionary generations, their goal is to expose the failure of the utopian revolutionary ideals of their parents by conducting a public trial of the survivors (their parents) who are perceived as traitors who escaped and chose neoliberal safety and comfort instead of immolating themselves as *real heroes* as the Revolution would have asked of them. On the other hand, these perverse teen characters are more interested in experimenting than in inscribing themselves as fixed identities in correspondence with social neoliberal ideals. These "queer heavenly creatures" are testing the moral waters in search of the fractures or holes that their elders have cosmeticized through decency, education, accumulation and neoliberal labor. As a predictable consequence of this role, young and queer male and female adolescents

are perceived by adults as deviated subjects and as threats to the consistency of their inner selves, set apart from the Christian heterosexist norm by their sinful sexual drives. Therefore, the adults have no problem morally judging the younger generation. These youth characters perceive their parents as frustrated and repressed adults who have given up the revolutionary life they once aspired to: a life where their heterosexual drives worked in sync with their ideology. Their failure is understood by the younger adults as a consequence of the lack of ethical consistency of their elders as a generation lost to the values of the neoliberal system.

On the other hand, the queer-*bildungsroman* narrative provides them with the promise of fulfilling their multiple identities and roles by allowing them space, within their often-tumultuous development pathways, for choosing various and dissimilar objects of enjoyment without canceling the bourgeois regulatory system. Therefore, these queer coming-of-age narratives serve a pedagogical function, preparing these teens to join the new democracy as queer subjects, without acknowledging the risk of being colonized by neoliberal rules and values.

It is also important to remember that the political transition in Chile was confirmed and sustained by Catholic values which replaced legal processes of justice with a conveniently twisted implementation of reconciliation, compassion, and forgiveness (Moulián, 1997). The queer identities of the teens prevent them from becoming absorbed by these national narratives of “mercy,” avoiding the trap of state manipulation that leads to oblivion.

Queer sexuality also acts here as a powerful tool for filmmakers to explore and construct alternative narratives of the Self that encapsulate a queer emancipated and counterhegemonic future, distanced from the heterocis master blueprint but still subjected to anti-LGBTQ+ violence. The support received from the Chilean film industry through the state cultural apparatus (Fondos de Cultura Visual) led to the proliferation of lesbian, gay, and ultimately transgender visual narratives such as the films *Naomi Campbell* (2013) and *El diablo es magnífico* [*The Magnificent Devil*] (2016) – both by Nicolás Videla – as well as the Oscar winning movie *Una mujer fantástica* [*A Fantastic Woman*] by Sebastián Lelio (2017).

The generational conflict between parents and children serves to illustrate the enormous variability of the ways in which the individual constructs social bonds outside of the patriarchal heterosexual template, highlighting the change in the traditional pedagogical heteronormative model of life narratives such as the *bildungsroman*. The revolutionary socialist search for justice and the liberal democratic fight for equality share the same model: an ideal collective hero that represents the emancipated fantasies of the heterosexual community. The queer-*bildungsroman*, on the other hand, explores a multipositioned sexuality and the fluidity of gender identities depicted by more dynamic and experimental queer coming-of-age plots.

In contrast to classic conceptions of the exceptional individual—as a hero-victim who incarnates a social fantasy of identification or as a male leader who carries the fate of his people with him—these queer anti-hero teens compensate for their lack of cultural ideological models. They establish themselves as queer- “heroes” by constructing their own novel epics of intimacy, which are based on defying the limits and boundaries of the macronarratives of the people (elders or conservatives) whom they taunt in exchange for the *petite histoire*. The sexualised self of these characters is set in opposition to the societal and familial structures heavily organized around military honor and liberal economic values. This dynamic is visible in the movies discussed in this article through the many examples of queer sexual encounters and the critical rejection of these encounters (embedded within desiring bodies) by their parents. The social fabric on the screen in these films seems to be constructed from a series of random sexual choices rather than from the cautious thoughts of the exceptional heroic subject typical of previous political projects. In this respect, these “perverse teen figures” deconstruct the canonical *bildungsroman* narrative inherited from their parents, queering the process of socialization, the modes of production (capitalism and socialism), and the moral fabric that supports this neoliberal democracy.

1.2. *Neo-naturalism* in Chile

It is important to acknowledge that the use of queer subjects in film and other cultural narratives (theatrical plays and novels) are not the only aesthetic approach to the intergenerational dialectic between past and future political narratives. This article will now discuss the cultural regimen of visibility for other intersectionality marginalized subjects, with the aim of introducing a material reading as essential for a more complete understanding of the period and the analysis of queer subjectivities.

During the 1990’s, a great number of Chilean films with adolescent themes would bring representations of intimacy to a more popular stage, relegating the historical past to a mere background or anecdotic reference. As Laura Podalsky (2011) has pointed out, “by the 1990’s other [critics] would designate contemporary youth as a ‘lost generation’ - a product or residue of the long years of dictatorship - and characterize youth culture, whether discussed in terms of the proliferation of video arcades and mall culture or the practice of ‘zapping’ as the most trenchant signs of the triumph of neoliberalism” (p. 102). The moral scrutiny of the past and its political manipulation during transitional times which characterized previous years would be cancelled; instead, we would see a group of Chilean filmmakers interested in exploring the role played by youth within the new neoliberal socio-sexual contract in Chile, their aspirations and ideals caught between the structural narratives of the past and the new neoliberal imaginary in which they live. The regulatory moment of the “im-

pulses” in “the interstices of a violent past and an uncertain future,” as Carolina Rocha and Georgia Seminet (2012, p.17) have indicated, is the main conflict in every single movie selected for this article. Sexuality is now a moral battleground in the new definition of human rights and adulthood in a country haunted by its past and fantasmatic future.

Two movies, *Johnny 100 pesos* (1994), a political thriller directed by Gustavo Graff-Marino (b. 1955-), and the acclaimed and successful Gonzalo Justiniano’s (b. 1955-) coming-of-age drama, *B- Happy* (2003), brought more than 200,000 spectators to theaters with plots that revolve around adolescent proletarian lives and their struggles to survive in the newly neoliberal arena. Although these films do not explicitly explore queer identities, they still rely on the proletarian teen subject as a vehicle for social criticism, highlighting the idea that futurity is embedded in class struggle. Whatever the importance of social issues for Johnny and Kathy (the main characters), they are secondary to the exploration of the new ways in which subjectivity is produced for these ‘second-hand’ subjects who are treated as living-trash ready to be disposed of by the system. The first movie shows us an adolescent raised during Pinochet’s rule who struggles with his own helplessness as a *huacho* (a child of a single mother), due to issues of unemployment, police corruption, and recently implemented neoliberal policies. His symbolic inscription follows the dictum made by the “Darwinian criminal template” in which he can only be part of the social fabric as an outcast.

Alicia Scherson’s acclaimed *Play* (2005) rapidly became an icon for the adolescent video game culture in Chile, changing the cultural grammar of Chilean cinematography. The film portrays a nomadic persecution through which we explore different neighborhoods of Santiago. A female character, Cristina, goes after Tomás to return his briefcase to him. The Hitchcockian artifact known as the MacGuffin acts as a trigger for the progress of the narrative. Using the *bildungsroman* genre as a rhetorical device in this case, Cristina reflects on the struggles for social mobility among rural immigrant youth in the capital as they search for jobs and love. The lives of two strangers allow her to think about the identity of the capital of the country and its inhabitants. Santiago responds to Cristina’s democratic gaze, turning the movie into a naturalist tool to explore issues of class, gender, and urban heterosexuality. Scherson constructs a class-scape urban movie.

In the same year that Alicia Scherson released *Play* – 2005– Sebastián Lelio (b.1974-) released *La Sagrada Familia* [The Sacred Family]. Filmed as a quasi-home-made video-drama in which improvisation rules, the movie is a parody that cites Passolini’s famous film *Teorema* [Theorem] (1968). In this movie we observe the catastrophic consequences of the visit of the son’s first formal girlfriend, Sofia, to his beach house during Easter. She destroys the precarious family balance, using her sexual power to confront the members of the family with their more obscure desires.

Curiously many of the novels, movies, visual exhibits, and theatrical plays of the 1990’s and 2000’s coincide in their interest in the intimate stories of their outcast protagonists. This feature is present in the milestones marked by the theatrical trilogy, *Trilogía testimonial*, containing the plays, *La manzana de Adán* (1990), *Las historias de la sangre* (1991), and *Los días tuertos* (1993) performed by the theater company, El Teatro de la Memoria (directed by Alfredo Castro). The goal of these projects is to present, in an allegorical manner, a new approach to the ethics of memory and oblivion, showing punishable behaviors of love and passion among deviant and criminal subjects as recorded in prison and psychiatric archives. The films *Caluga o menta* [Toffee or Mint Candy] (1990) and *El chacotero sentimental* [Sentimental Teaser] (1999) explore juvenile proletarian subjects and their secret pasts of urban intimacy. Finally, the iconic *bildungsroman*, *Mala onda* [Bad Vibes] (1991), and the book of chronicles, *La esquina es mi corazón* [The Corner is my Heart] (1995) examine the sexual encounters of bourgeois and proletarian youth framed by Pinochet’s dictatorship.

In all the previous examples, the traditional crime page seems to cede its success to cover stories that highlight the exaltation of the criminalized and sexualized body. Along with it, the capital city tabloids insistently take interest in pedophile crimes related to infancy and adolescence. The moral horizon of the country is projected not only over the commemorative memorials of human rights violations but also over the bodies of the future: children and adolescents. This is yet another case of the phenomenon of the exaltation of intimacy which has served as background for the discussion so far.

2. Methodology

The three films in this analysis were selected because they each represent a variation of the Chilean “children’s narratives” or the “second-generation narratives” in which the political memory of the country’s recent history is made visible via tense dialogues as scores are settled through the uncovering of family secrets. The queer teens complain about the silencing of the past, the abandonment of the family, and the active or passive complicity of their elders, while revealing their sexual identity without concealment or cover-ups. Each of the films presents a similar narrative in which adolescents “come out of the closet” to paradoxically bring their parents out of their own ideological confinement. The films show how the processes of subjectivation of adolescents respond to the cultural offerings marked by neoliberalism, especially in the conception of freedom, understood as freedom of enjoyment.

The analysis utilizes the Lacanian category of perversion to characterize the process of the subject's individuation informed by the Neoliberal narratives and the ways in which these subjects operate within the framework of the economic imaginary, producing new social contracts.

3. Contemporary Queer films and Filmmakers

Queer films in Chile talk about different issues but all of them are embedded in two main genres, coming-of-age stories or coming-out narratives. The sexual drive and its regulation; homosexual desire and cultural homophobia; bisexuality and its cultural denial; transgender individuals and their ostracism; irruption of a lesbian subject as a main character; violence and repression are all depicted in this new generation of filmmakers. Far away from the Christian Catholic demonization of sexuality of an old transvestite in a rural brothel as is depicted by Arturo Ripstein's film, *The Place Without Limits* (1971), these films represent sexual minority subjects and non-conventional heterosexual subjects as individuals belonging to a new social fabric where self-determination and autonomy (in a neoliberal fashion) are beyond the traditional hetero-normative roles and places for perverts and "freaks" like La Manuela, the main character in Ripstein's film adaptation of Chilean closeted gay writer José Donoso's novel, *El lugar sin límites* (1966). These queer subjects are empowered, self-confident, self-oriented, and erotically ambiguous. However, most of the films embed this powerful queer image within a melodramatic plot in which the sexual drive of their protagonists compels the character to their death.

In the canonical filmic treatment of teens' lives, as Gilad Pavda (2004) has pointed out, "youth films often feature themes as painful adolescence, confrontation with the older generation, the contrast between socialization and selfhood, erotic pubescence, confusing infatuation and the formation of sexual identity" (p. 355). In the Chilean case, we witness a generation of filmmakers for whom sexuality and memory are conflated in a different way that characterizes their plots: the collective traumatic past of their parents is a burden that needs to be grappled with their own interrogation of heterosexual phallogocentric economies.

The bisexual, homosexual, lesbian, and lascivious heterosexual teens depicted in these movies are good examples of the new type of social bonds in contemporary Chile. In addition they are accustomed to talking about the generational gap and the ways in which one can reimagine the connection with older relatives. Familial rules are questioned by emancipated teens looking for their own place within the adult world. As we said before, coming-of-age stories go along with coming-out stories on the screen. Visibility is the principal means of their social inscription. Science, hand in hand with communicative technologies, has produced a narrative of sexuality that, independent of the object of enjoyment, is presented to us as a liberated and resolved paradigm in which there is no longer space for the revolt caused by the confrontation of the subject with consumption and statistics.

3.1. *Queer Chilean Stars*

Joven y alocada [Young and Wild] (2012) is the first feature film by Chilean filmmaker Marialy Rivas (b. 1976-). Out as a lesbian, Rivas belongs to a generation of filmmakers who were born during the late 1970's and 1980's and lived their childhood and early adolescence under Pinochet's dictatorship.² Her movie tells the story of a young bisexual evangelical woman who, torn between the burning fires of religious fervor and youthful sexual energy, defiantly chooses pleasure over continence. The plot is simple on the surface. Daniela, a seventeen-year-old girl who is obsessed with sex and is dating the good-looking and virtuous Tomás, falls for a gorgeous female co-worker, Antonia. Her well-to-do (both in the socioeconomic sense of her having high social status and in the sense of sexual fulfillment) "pussy in flames" [mi *choro* en llamas] dictates her actions, thus posing a serious threat to her eternal salvation according to the precepts of her evangelical family. Notice here that Daniela's identity is not at risk. She accepts her religious background; her social status is unquestioned and unproblematic since her identity and her sexual drives are completely in consonance with her actions. It is in the confrontation with the adults where she catalyzes their despair and inconsistency. Her parents, her adult co-workers, and some of the TV station supporters are under her moral and ethical scrutiny- both of their political past and their private secrets. Through her behavior she reveals the existing deep cracks between a Freudian heterosexual maturation and the new norms imposed by a newly recovered democracy grounded in neoliberal narratives and fantasies of choice. These new norms allowed Chilean (queer) citizens to become part

² She has directed two other short films *Blokes* (2010) and *Smog* (2000) co-working with Sebastián Lelio (b.1974-) formerly Campos). Rivas is considered part of a new generation of Chilean filmmakers which include names such as Marcela Said (b.1972-), Alicia Scherson, Play (b. 1974-), Matías Bize (b.1979-), Sebastián Silva (b. 1979-), Cristián Jiménez b.1975-), and Pablo Larraín (b. 1976-) who was responsible for the historical dark saga of Pinochet's rise and falling *Tony Manero* (2008), *Post Mortem* (2010) and the Oscar nominated *No* (2012). Also considered part of this new generation of Chilean filmmakers are non-mainstream directors such as queer filmmaker Edwin Oyarce *Otra Película de Amor* (2010) and Bernardo Quesney, *Efectos Especiales* (2010).

of this new regime of visibility, benefitting from apparent recognition and belonging to the public sphere but not being granted any additional political rights.

To illustrate the point, growing up in a highly technologized, global, virtual space where blogs, virtual chat rooms, and social media apps constitute a parallel universe to the recently inaugurated Chilean democratic society (in which the parents are still coping with the guilt and legal consequences of 17 years of dictatorship), these youngsters' coming of age moment is not interpellated—in Althusserian terms—by a social political collective engagement. On the contrary, the new conception of freedom and the predominance of neoliberal narratives of individualism amount to a diffusion of individualistic behavior, producing what I have identified as a *perverse subject* who only responds to their internal drives as part of the new social requirements set by the neoliberal ideology (Blanco, 2009, p. 46). We can see Daniela turning herself into a marketable brand on the sexual market of the blogosphere; at the same time, the real Daniela (Camila Gutiérrez) cashes in on her fame and revenue. As Davin Heckman (2008) has pointed out:

The postmodern “coming of age” is radically different not just in its construction of identity through an assemblage of surfaces and images, but also in its ambiguous relationship with its purposes. The reality genre appears as a representation of what it really is, but it also implies its own satire by exposing the flaws of “real people” and the flaws of “representations of real people. (The Genre and Its Origins)

In this regard, two features, framed by the neoliberal regime of visibility just discussed, must be underlined. First, these queer subjects are elaborating their own selves by relying on their impulses and desires – what Jean-François Lyotard has called “libidinal economy” (1974) - rejecting the traditional idea of the classic *bildungsroman* in which the process of social adaptation is based on the self-creative energies and material conditions of the historical moment. On the other hand, this parody of the genre allows the filmmakers to introduce a different view of the inherited “structural memory scene,” following Dominick LaCapra’s idea of “structural narratives” (LaCapra 2001, p. 41). These young queer subjects claim that “the past, present, and future of modern society are doomed” if you anchor all the speculations about reality - as has occurred in Chile - in a state-narrative that has been imposed as salvific. What it means to be human in this context, as Žižek (1995) suggests, is to follow the mandates of your culture to enjoyment.

These web-landscapers have found the natural nourishment for their social inscription and personal enjoyment in these new cybernetic languages. Their generation differs in aesthetics and political terms from the previous one in that they are looking to reality through the lens of sexual agency instead of the violation of human rights narratives that helped to recover democracy and gave support to the transitional governments thereby liberating themselves from the imposition of the traumatic past. By canceling the imaginary line between generations obsessed by the struggle for the representation of the historical violent past, driven by what I have called a “structural memory scene” (Blanco, 2009, p.32) this generation liberates itself from the compulsion to remember by using the genre of the *bildungsroman*, relearning how-to live-in democracy and move forward. Rivas’ movie can be seen superficially as a device for exploring both how all characters are interested in the experiences of growing up and how these subjects come to terms with their own sexuality. However, her film, and especially the main character – a fictional depiction of a real blogger, Camila Gutiérrez (the co-writer for the filmic version which was inspired by her life) – work as powerful tools for exploring the new social scenario in contemporary Chile.

The second movie *Mapa para conversar* [A Map for a Talk] (2011), by female director Constanza Fernández, revolves around the lives of three women interconnected in a family triangle: a mother, Ana, remembering her past as an actress and complaining about her daughter Roberta’s issues, which she explains as a mere sexual confusion: “you like to swim in all types of pools” [te gusta bañarte en todas las piscinas]; a daughter, Roberta, fighting for custody of her only child and struggling with her parents’ reaction to her “coming out” to the family; and her new female lover, Javiera, whose intellectual and artistic drive will confront all of them with their inner secrets and fears. The distinct schizophrenic split in conservative Chilean society spills over into the modern values and choices made by a bisexual young woman and single mother and her new lover, a cynical and absurdly melancholic artist who runs a post-porn web page. An unexpected situation — a sailing-picnic trip in the beautiful Algarrobo Bay, the boat adrift and isolated in the middle of the ocean, leaving the party stranded in a storm—generates the appropriate space for the three women to reveal to each other their own pasts, their dissatisfactions, and traumas, unfolding the plot of the Chilean memory of the last 40 years. Stories of exile, disappearance, generational frustration, torture, and repression are the threads of the past that are retold, fueled by alcohol and the claustrophobic setting. Roberta, Javiera and Ana represent in a very symptomatic way basic components of psychic life as well as of their personal ideal selves. The mother, Ana, embodies the social ideal for a modern adult woman; professional, independent, autonomous, powerful, conservative, and sexually active, she acts as a mirror - of the old traditional Chile - for the two younger adolescents, presenting herself as an ideal and consistent “I” to emulate. Javiera, the daughter of a “disappeared political prisoner” on the other hand, is presented to us as “pure experience.” She makes her living designing porn web pages exhibiting the new moral values that neoliberal democracy has created. Her isolated and independ-

ent “I” remain untouchable, safely sheltered by her own choices. What she is going to elicit is the profound and irreversible inconsistency of the social ideal in Ana. She forces her to accept her sexual advances but most intimately she challenges her in personal terms. Javiera proves to be alive by resorting to pushing Ana to her own limits. Roberta, meanwhile, acts as the censor and judge of these experiments. She is the one who is elaborating what is presented as “raw material” to us. Her character gives meaning to the events using the common sense available to her as a modern woman and mother. Roberta is not only in command of the boat but also, as the narrator of the story, in charge of providing a coherent meaning to the different images and versions of the world created by Ana’s and Javiera’s interactions. In this way, this modern queer Odysseus guides her previously isolated family safely back to the shore and restores their functionality there.

The third movie was released during the inaugural months of the right-wing presidency of Sebastian Piñera. *Otra película de amor* [Another movie of love] (2010) by Edwin Oyarce (aka Wincy Conectado) (b.1981-) is a coming-of-age film set in suburban Santiago and the central coast. Telling the love story of two teen friends, the film depicts the virgin Diego and his old schoolmate Sebastián involved in a seduction game captured by the homoerotic gaze of Diego’s camera lens. In their journey to the beach they find a third party, a woman looking for friends at a nearby campsite. Gabriela will act as a catalyst between the two men and allow them to explore their own sexual boundaries in a pauperized working-class environment.

While these films in Chile and abroad have been perceived by critics as part of a trend that focuses on narratives of intimacy, little attention has been given to the gendered authorial voice and its negotiation of social inscription (queer teens) and the role played by technology and media in the redefinition of the social bond. The reception of the films has highlighted the choices of local settings embedded within a global aesthetic that emphasizes universal topics such as, romantic disappointment, personal dissatisfaction, problematic sexualities, and nihilistic individualism to make them more marketable for international audiences.

The three films that I comment on in this essay show how political and social bodies are normatively organized around sexuality by the state, the church, and the school-system. This issue is of paramount importance, since this is the way in which a culture regulates its organization, regimenting individuals according to the practices in which they are involved, the objects that they choose for those activities, and the ends that they pursue in the Foucauldian tradition (Foucault, 1976). The overlapping of the discursive levels of culture with the material forms by which individuals become part of it, underlines the discussion about representation and the paradigms for producing a functional political subject in the prevailing social matrix. I ask to what degree it is possible to conceive of sexuality and the experiences associated with it as a central factor in the processes of individuation, in which the individual’s psychic replica is able to mediate between the Self and the social world in multiple and diverse ways. As evidenced by these three films, this is especially true in that sexual identities are not the central issue but rather the interrelation between the social norm, the “queer” subject, and the world through exploration of the subject’s own limits. The purpose of these “queer fallen angels” then is to articulate the necessary dialectic tension between the “knowledge-how” available for the “functional” subject in relation to its own bonds to the social ideals, unfolding the inconsistencies of adulthood.

4. Results of the analysis of the movies *Wild and Young* [Joven y Alocada] (2012), *A Map to talk* [Mapa para conversar] (2011) and *Another Love Movie* [Otra película de amor] (2010).

4.1. On the Queer Social Bond: Perverse Teens

In a careful reading of autobiographical texts written in the early 1920’s in Peru, scholar Kathya Araujo (2010) advances a very helpful notion of the subject. She considers the subject as an artisan of its own self in relation to the discursivity that it receives, while also with the materiality with which it must cope. The second element that she discusses is the preeminence of the normative social function in the production of subjectivity, confronted with the subject ideals associated with a specific historic period. Both features lead us to believe that a look at the form of a subject’s construction responds to the modes in which this is elaborated and produced, “a deduction made from the analysis of the attributes that appear linked to what people are or should be in social discourses” (p.16). It follows from this idea that in the formation of subjectivity certain cultural offers will prevail over others, even when these will be of a combined form. Since the nominal model—for example, the modern consumer, the autonomous liberal individual—offered by culture has failed, we find ourselves with something that Judith Butler (1993) describes as “any effort to order the subject through a performative capturing, whereby the subject becomes synonymous with the name by which it is called is doomed to fail” (p. 163). We can see this process at work through the subversive characters Daniela and Javiera. Seen from another point of view, the theory of the ‘subject ideals’ that Araujo presents, following Žižek (1995), framed by the Real-Imaginary-Symbolic triad, reintroduces the idea that subjects seek an identification in culture’s offers to put themselves in the place of their “ideal I” (p. 17). An ideal corresponds to the figuration expected of an individual in society. In the theory of dominant ideology, this offer works on the recognition that individuals make of their collectively represented, ‘natural’ desires (popular, as Marx would say). In each of these cases,

the authors coincide in emphasizing that the subject, in one way or another, is recognized or not in certain cultural spaces. This is true both in the intersection of social ideals (figures of discourse) with those of the I, and in the proliferation of partial identities that supersede them, like those produced by market narratives.

Perverse teens are not understood in this analysis as the result of an altered conduct, but rather as a natural stage of the psychic maturation process. We now speak of having a new space in society that does not depend on the attributive components or the constructivism of sexual difference for the subject. It is this position as “queer fallen angels” that enables them to relocate themselves according to the variability of cultural change in a determined historical moment. Looking at the last ten years of the political-institutional reconversion of the nation tells us about the subjectivities that accompanied them, allowing us to understand the role played by the new economic, technological, and the new neoliberal cultural conditions. Technology, globalization, consumerism, and democracy, yoked with sexuality and the free market, are intertwined in the new social contract available to the young citizens in the country.

In a post-Oedipal Western society these “queer angels” can be perceived as the last ethical resort available to transgress—through an illusory possibility of liberation—the subjected individual reality imposed by the liberal economic model and its renditions. As a result, such radical action provides to the subject the fantasy of an individual liberation, portrayed in these movies in terms of sexuality and lifestyle. Tomás’s virginity is challenged in terms of fulfilling the masculine ideal, but this supposedly liberating rite of passage acted out upon Daniela’s request is going to fail. Religious ideology will overshadow his fantasy. Žižek in *The Ticklish Subject* (1999) defines perfectly what these “perverse teens” do in these films: they are “ordering you to be free: they exhort you to dare” (p. 392) without further expectations in terms of identity.

One of the most conspicuous and radical examples is that of the *pokemones*, a sub-culture of teens in Chile who do not consider emotional bonds in favor of sexual experimentation in public places. These teens—whose aesthetic is inspired by the Japanese anime culture—call their sexual collective encounters *ponceo*. Trading partners multiple times, as well as engaging in anonymous rounds of oral sex and same-sex interactions are part of this new credo. “*Ponceo* is about having fun,” said one of the members of this urban tribe (Steinberg, 2008, para. 1). Two elements characterized them in a country of heavy cultural mores: sexual rebellion and consumerism. Transitional times are over, and appealing to metaphorical resources, in which full anonymity was replaced by an open agora composed of an unknown public trough resorting to the blogosphere audience, is no longer needed. This is exactly what happens in the interactions that Daniela will have with her blog readers and what Javiera does through her post porn web page and even what Lola – the prostitute on the TV screen—does when she invites Sebastián to have a tropical affair with a super muscular blond-haired hunk. These female queer subjects dictate to other women, and to a less degree, men about how to “call to the unconstrained and unrestrained transgressions” (Žižek, 1999, p. 391).

As Gilad Pavda (2004) has pointed out, “youth films often feature themes [such] as painful adolescence, confrontation with the older generation, the contrast between socialization and selfhood, erotic pubescence, confusing infatuation and the formation of sexual intent” (p. 355). In the Chilean case we witness a generation of filmmakers for whom the past is a burden that needs to be overcome—not in historical terms but rather in libidinal terms. They are—through these characters—challenging what Žižek (1999) calls the “authoritarian personality structure” (p. 391). Adults like Daniela and Roberta’s mothers, who find satisfaction in compulsively following the law, repressing strong sexual urges, and heavily fearing irresponsibility, are now, for the first time, listening, through these adolescents, to their “passionate attachments” long repressed by the new economic order. A moment of social regulation based on the combination of a “traumatic structural narrative”—as of memory—connected to a particular discursivity: economical neoliberalism.

The LBGTO+ and lascivious cis teens depicted in these movies are good examples of the new type of social bonds, or their non-existence, presented to us as pure negativity. The youth characters are a powerful force determined to defy the boundaries of the repressed, to put adults on the verge of their own consistency and to highlight the “new [public] intimacy” in Chile. One important thing that needs to be noticed is a change in sexual politics. These movies are aimed to appeal to an “emerging marketplace of empowered female audiences” (McNair, 2002, p. 121). They are also used to talking about the generational gap and the ways in which one can reimagine the connection with their older relatives. Family rules are questioned by emancipated teens looking for their own place within the adult world. As we said before, coming-of-age stories go along with coming-out [stories] on the screen. Visibility is the principal means of its social inscription. Science, hand in hand with communicative technologies, has produced a narrative of sexuality that, independent of the object of enjoyment, is presented to us as a liberated and resolved paradigm in which there is no longer space for the revolt caused by the confrontation of the subject with consumption and statistics. These “queer perverse teens” don’t need to solve any issue with their own identity; they are out there empowered by their cinematic agency to tell the adults, male and female, “yes, you may.”

Who is this new generation? In a study conducted during the first decade of 2000, collected data shows that 89% of the youth believe in God; 56% of these youth believers are Catholic, but only 19% go to church regularly. They declare that they want to get married and have a family—with 35% of them opposed to homosexuality, considering it a deviation. 63% come from divorced parents. The study also reveals that 92% of teens or

young adults (Romero pp.87-89) consider themselves highly motivated and autonomous individuals ready to achieve success in a modern and democratic meritocracy. The survey ends the myth of teens needing to be cataloged into one of four distinctive urban tribes, as Doris Cooper (2007) discusses in her book *Ideology and Urban Tribes*. Goths, Emos, Pokemones – mostly low-middle class teens- and Peloláis – *blondish-whitened* middle upper-class teens – don't appear here as stable, collective identities. On the contrary, we find a very “heterogeneous group” “that shows a line of continuity with their parents’ generation, sharing their modern values but not their moral or cultural ones.” (p. 23)

5. Provisional Conclusions

In this article, I wanted to discuss the role played by the figure of the “queer perverse teens” within the new social fabric in Chile. Through our discussion we have proposed certain interpretations that can explain their functioning on and off the screen. Beyond what is accepted as the main features of the contemporary Chilean cinema these movies in our reading have highlighted: a) a displacement from the ideal collective subject typical of the revolutionary 1960's -1970's to an individualized subject that is characteristic of the neoliberal 1980's-1990's; b) the symbolic and subjective consequences of a wild economic modernization process built up by technocrats that reshape the ways in which subjectivity is going to be understood and exercised by the citizenry; c) an aesthetic mediatization of intimacy that replaces the interest in public political affairs ; d) the figure of perverse subjects -“queer fallen angels”- as regulators and markers of the worthlessness of “decency” and “productivity”; and e) the value system of the queer youth is, as Žižek puts it, a call for enjoyment, denouncing the fragile and repressed traditional order defended by the older generation.

Secondly, these queer teens cannot be perceived as struggling with their sexual identities. On the contrary, they don't care about it. They just want to experiment with their adult peers and witness how they lose control over their existence as if they were mere video game plots where the notion of the authentic is missing and restored by these video-operator female teens.

My third point centers on female agency. In each one of the movies we see the empowerment of women as cinematic characters acting upon their sexual agency and as marketplace consumers understood as an audience. And not only that, but we see the men as puppets, little marionettes that can be manipulated by these neo-Navokovan “Lolitas” beyond their social obligations and boundaries. Women are constructing new, incredibly powerful rites of passages to redefine the limits of gender and at the same time reshaping the social and memory narratives inherited from the 19th century *bildungsroman* and the “traumatic memory scene” from the late 20th century in Chile.

Some argue that these cynical and perverse female teens are thinking through the lens of mere sexual impulses, fiercely taking the initiative for any sexual contact; that these figures are just re-embodiments of the cis-male social anxiety triggered by the feminist movement, i.e., castration. I prefer to think about these characters as social healers, subjects that are liberating the adults from their wounds of memory and helping to put the repression back in the hands of Ego, enabling the subject to choose again not between good or bad but the authentic human experience.

6. Acknowledgements

This article is indebted to many people. First, I would like to express my gratitude to my research assistants Craig Osterbrock and Andrei Bucaloui for their impeccable work in proofreading the English version of this piece and for their insightful suggestions. I would also like to thank my wife Bernardita Llanos for her thoughtful reading of the preliminary version. And lastly, I would like to thank my son Federico Blanco for the final editing.

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