

CHAPTER 1

Cuiring the Birth of the *Modern(a)* Nation-State in Chile and Peru

The colonial experience of Latin America located the region on the margins of the large imperial systems. The fate of the inhabitants of this multiple and diverse space has been affected by this relationship of dependence and has had a special impact on the Indigenous populations, deemed from the start as archaic and dangerous. During the nineteenth century, models of cultural and political modernization generally became synonymous with the elimination, extermination, and violent coercion of the “barbaric” masses of Indigenous peoples by oligarchic local and national elites. Whereas this model was compromised during the processes of independence and the foundation of Latin American nations through the implementation of various republican projects, during the twentieth century a model of modernization was designed that aspired to integrate these very same populations as exceptions within the nation-state.

This was due to the fact that by the first decades of the twentieth century, Latin American economies were subordinated to centralized capitalism—dominated by the most industrialized nations—as underdeveloped countries and producers of raw materials. As the process of denationalization of the means of production gained pace, the notions

of nationality and national identity were redefined and the models of government reshaped, which in turn had an impact on Indigenous peoples.¹ This situation intensified after the Great Depression of 1929 and the political instability in the region as an effect of economic transformation, which modified the productive structure and political landscape, as it demanded greater state intervention (Moraña, *Literatura* 13–14).

The different reactions of the countries in the region to this crisis and the changes that were introduced since the mid-twentieth century shaped the period of modern nation-state formation in Latin America, also known as the era of “national populism” (Tulio Halperin Donghi, Fernando Henríque Cardoso, Octavio Ianni). This era began around the time of the Great Depression and continued until the collapse of the communist bloc in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a period that would witness the violent realities of the Cold War, the political and cultural effects of the Cuban Revolution, and the violent counterreactions such as the military coup against the Chilean president Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973.

In this era, it was commonplace for nation-states to actively integrate and institutionalize the people—the common populace or the popular/subaltern sectors of society—as the originary ground from which to consider the contours of national history, national identity formations, and national modernization. This project conceived “the people” (defined broadly to include nonelite sectors) as the core of the nation, which would unite across class boundaries in a political project rooted in a shared nationalism. What was at stake in the shaping of modern Latin America, then, was the elevation of the “people” to the heart of the political life of the nation. This elevation, however, resulted in a potential hegemonic formation that aimed to synthesize all the nation’s demographic and cultural differences through the re-creation of a national identity.

The process of integration and institutionalization of the “people” was carried out through the consolidation of elite-controlled populist states that strengthened the role and presence of the state in the daily life of the nation. At the same time, the “people” were imagined and

ethnicized as if they constituted a natural community, having identical origins, culture, and interests. This process is what Etienne Balibar has called “fictive ethnicity.” Balibar explains that the constitution of “the people” is accomplished by generating a “unity” as the basis and origin of political power. The community of people instituted by the nation-state—which would have to be rethought in the case of the modern Latin American nation-state—is what Balibar calls “fictive ethnicity.” In the process of nationalization, through this “fictive ethnicity,” the populations incorporated into the nation can be presented as if they had always constituted “a natural community, possessing a common identity of origins, culture and interests” (96). Some groups cannot be included within the “fictive ethnicity,” since they cannot be homogenized, or cannot be incorporated into the unifying common project and destiny. As Gareth Williams points out,

the terms of state capitalism (and of course socialist) hegemony came to be predicated on the people’s ability to reproduce itself continually as a national community, as a single-willed “national-popular” community, and therefore as a constituted synthesis of multiple racial, ethnic, regional, and cultural (but rarely gendered) identities negotiated from within, and reflected directly through, the nation-state’s relation to regional and national territory, as well as to the promise of national capitalist development. For this reason, the production and institutionalization of the people . . . came to be negotiated (often violently) from within populist state configurations that were considered by social elites to be the condition of possibility for the articulation of positive equivalences between diverse populations. (*The Other Side* 5)

The modern process that naturalized social and political belonging was shaped around the configuration of normative languages and identities positioned against those identities that were not considered normative, in order to set the foundations and the limits of the hegemonic field of the modern nation-state. In this regard, Mabel

Moraña notes, “The question about the elements that will constitute the continental ‘identity’ and the ‘essence’ of nationalities had been an active part of nineteenth-century thought. . . . In the 1920s and 1930s, the same essentialist strategy served the different projects co-existing in that period, as a way of rethinking the concept of ‘the popular,’ in an attempt to provide genetic and anthropological explanations of the origins of nationalities” (*Literatura* 6). We see a willingness to produce strongly territorialized and state-managed fixed national identities, resuming the nineteenth-century nationalism that mobilized a discourse of citizenship as a status that could be defined legally or culturally. Thus, the notion of citizenship was understood as related to identity and sought to identify the attributes of good citizens to determine which individuals could be incorporated into the notion of citizenship and which ones could not (Canaday 8).

As the political theorist Lisa J. Disch notes, “Otherness is immanent to citizenship,” because citizenship helps create “internal differentiation and hierarchy” in the way some individuals are incorporated into it while highlighting their subordination or “degraded status” (Disch 382). In the Latin American case, the populations considered nonnational and “different” from the models of established national normative identities—conceived as homogeneous collectives—were subordinated and integrated into the nation as exceptions. Otherwise, they were taken as emblems of forms of belonging that were incorporated into the nation without actually being part of it, at the same time that they were taken advantage of in the pursuit of independence, unity, and progress. Rather than as classes, these populations were depicted in the modernizing process as subclasses or subaltern formations. This was the case, for example, of Indigenous populations and subjects practicing dissident genders and sexualities.²

This chapter discusses how the modern Peruvian and Chilean nation-states produced a nationalist discourse that sought political dominance and hegemony via the creation of a discriminatory national identity that subordinated and excluded those considered “different” because of their race, ethnicity, sexuality, or gender expression. It looks at how the construction of this identity pervaded cultural pro-

duction, especially literature. To this end, the chapter explores two novels that demonstrate the limits of this national project: *El lugar sin límites* (1966) (*Hell Has No Limits*, 1999) by José Donoso, and *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (1971) (*The Fox from Up Above and the Fox from Down Below*, 1990) by José María Arguedas. These novels look at the costs of modernization in the case of two small regional villages, Talca in Donoso's novel, and Chimbote in the work by Arguedas. The study of these texts demonstrates that the modernizing nationalist discourse in Chile and Peru purposely excluded Indigenous people, effeminate men, homosexuals, prostitutes, the mentally ill, Afro-descendants, and others, because these subjects were perceived as threats to modernity's momentum.

Reading these canonical novels is necessary now, as Chile and Peru celebrate two hundred years of independence and rethink or reaffirm their conceptualizations of the national subject and dissident genders and sexualities within such conceptualizations. As I explained in the introduction, literature has always been a privileged means for disseminating and supporting nation-state formations. Therefore, in this context, reviewing the cultural representations of dissident genders and sexualities is relevant, especially in canonical literary productions such as the novels mentioned above.

In Peru, as Antonio Cornejo Polar has pointed out, Indigenous subjects became the emblem of modern Peruvian national identity and were used to promote the ideology of national progress, popular incorporation, and transculturation. The work of José María Arguedas reproduces this will of the Peruvian nation-state. As we will see in my analysis of *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*, the novel alleges that Quechua or Andean Indigenous cultures condemn gender and sexual dissidence because it violates the ideal of harmony supported in the Andean worldview or *cosmovisión*. In this way, *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* suggests that gender and sexual dissidence would never be able to be practiced in the Andean or Quechua world, and therefore dissidence is an urban vice. Arguedas thus places the Andean or Quechua world as a reproducer of hegemonic masculinity, erasing and denying the past of the original Andean or Quechua cultures in

which the practice of a nonbinary gender and sexuality was welcomed, as I will discuss further in chapter 2. Following Diego Falconí, this discussion allows me to “recontar el canon de otra manera, a través de formas aún no del todo masticadas en la tradición académica andina” (32), by suggesting that because of his way of perceiving gender and sexual dissidence and its relationship or nonrelationship to the Andean or Quechua world, Arguedas reproduces not only the Peruvian nation-state effort to fabricate a modern national identity but also the colonial will to control the production of subjectivity in the Andean world, specifically with regard to gender and sexuality.

In the case of Donoso, my analysis of *El lugar sin límites* allows me to discuss how the rejection of male effeminate homosexuals during the re-creation of modern Chilean national identity has been extended to the Chilean LGBT community, where *travestis* are, as Claudia Rodríguez explains, “the most excluded” (“Se resiste” 22) because of their indeterminacy of gender.

Finally, as we will see, the rearticulation of a national identity was understood across the political spectrum of both countries almost entirely in racial and ethnic terms; gender and sexuality were not included since heteronormative ideals were taken as the default standard. Anything that deviated from this standard was suspect. As John Beverley has observed, hegemonic nationalist discourse in twentieth-century Latin America was designed generally to suture the gaps and discontinuities within the corpus of the so-called national people rather than to allow heterogeneity and multiplicity to function as the real grounds and origins of national political life (Beverley 308). Heterogeneity, in other words, was celebrated as long as it did not disturb the nation-state’s promotion of normative national identities.

The Peruvian Nation-State and Its Unfulfilled Promises

As the historian Cecilia Méndez notes, the state in Peru was ideologically based on the project of a “republic without Indians.” While the independence process had enabled the criollo elite to become the dominant social group over an Indigenous majority, the first years of the republican period in the nineteenth century, immediately after

the independence wars (1820–1826), did not in any way alleviate the discrimination and marginalization that the Indigenous had endured during the three centuries of Spanish colonization (Méndez 206–7). The Peruvian republic established a national identity that excluded and ignored a large mass of citizens—the Indians—who had been promised they would be included as equal under the category of “Peruvian.”

At the beginning of the twentieth century, as the country’s economy was relying more heavily on external markets, the Peruvian oligarchy started to address the problem of national unity and the need for the social and cultural regeneration of the country as a response to the hegemony crisis it had suffered in the decades after the War of the Pacific (1879–1883). In the midcentury, industrialization brought about the consolidation of a national bourgeoisie and other elites whose interests were closely linked to the existence of an internal market, as well as a significant increase in the migratory flow from the Sierra to the Peruvian coast. These transformations ideologically diversified the worldview of the middle sectors (Stein 51). At the same time, proletarian organizations were strong and peasant uprisings were coordinated throughout the country forcing the state to modify the institutions that channeled popular participation. In light of these processes, unity within the country became both an economic and a political problem that had to be solved in favor of “inward-oriented” development plans and the consolidation of national capitalism (Moraña, *Literatura* 39).³

By the time the global economic crisis erupted in 1929, as Aníbal Quijano pointed out, the Peruvian ruling class was disjointed and there was widespread popular discontent, the state depended wholly on foreign credit and was strongly under the power of economic colonization by American imperialism, and the Peruvian army had adopted the role of defender of the economic, social, and political domination of the commercial landowner bourgeoisie (271). Faced with this puzzling situation, many *criollista* and indigenista political and cultural proposals were put forward that sought to rethink Peruvian national identity as a way to promote national unity and the modernization of the country. The great intellectuals of *criollismo*, such as José de la Riva Agüero and Víctor Andrés Belaúnde, among

others, addressed the Indigenous question as a vindication, albeit with a paternalistic perspective.⁴

At the same time, other proposals put forward the recuperation and dissemination of the image of the Indigenous as a way to redefine the paradigms of the national cultural. One of these proposals was that of the Peruvian Aprista Party (APRA), which postulated the concept of Indoamérica, a “country-continent” characterized by *mezclaje* and its dependent condition. APRA’s anti-imperialist program focused on the interests of the middle class, which it considered to be the main victim of the dominant system.⁵ In *El antiimperialismo y el APRA* (1928), for example, Victor Raul Haya de la Torre argues for a subordination of the claims of workers and peasants to the interests of a national bourgeoisie linked to foreign capital. APRA’s proposals aspired to solve the issue of national disintegration, but, as it lacked a solid economic basis, it resulted mostly in an idealist and moralizing discourse.⁶

APRA’s populist discourse incorporated ideas expressed by thinkers such as the former seminarian Manuel González Prada, a descendant of an aristocratic family who was one of the first to question the oligarchic system. In his famous essay “Nuestros indios” (Our Indians), González Prada argued that the Peruvian population was divided into two groups “those of mixed blood [*encastados*], who tend to dominate, and the native Indians, who are dominated” (192) and stated that Peru could not exist as a democratic republic as long as it continued to marginalize its Indigenous populations. For González Prada, “The real Peru isn’t made up of the groups of American-born Spaniards and foreigners living on the strip of land situated between the Pacific and the Andes; the nation is made up of the masses of Indians living on the eastern slopes of the mountains” (49), as he mentioned in one of his other texts, “Discurso del Politeama” (1888).

The political, economic, and social situation of Peru described above, which also involved peasant mobilizations, the Indigenous question, the increasing participation of different urban sectors in Peruvian national life, as well as the influence of the Mexican Revolution and the Russian Revolution, resulted in a reconceptualization of

Peruvian Indigenous culture, traditionally regarded as “a real obstacle for progress” (Rama, “José María Arguedas” 22) or, in any case, as the definition of a prehistory buried by the impact of Spanish domination. Indigenous culture was being understood as the matrix from which to rethink Peruvian national identity as a way of promoting national unity and the modernization of the country (Moraña, *Literatura* 44). This process, however, as Gareth Williams suggests, served to “inscribe, translate, and domesticate the nation’s outsider . . . into totalizing modes of representation and self-constitution” (*The Other Side* 43).

In this political and social context, cultural indigenismo became a powerful resource around which national unity was organized. The cultural production of these years, especially in the literary field, sought to affirm a new collective national identity for the country and, at the same time, the creation of a new cultural subject in Peru.⁷ These cultural products showed an inclination toward the representation of dominated or marginalized social sectors and to the portrayal of social conflicts through the use of new ways of representing the national subject, who was, most of the time, male, heterosexual, and Indigenous. Antonio Cornejo Polar comments in this regard:

In the complex and difficult process that leads to the definition of national identity; a political and intellectual operation emerges that remains in the charge of the social elites: to produce an image of the Indian, both for society and for the Indian himself . . . within this order of things national identity requires the conversion of an exclusive “we”—in which only the elites, their allies, together with their self-image, interests, and desires, fit comfortably—into a widely inclusive, almost ontological, “we.” The true protagonists [the Indians] . . . are obliged to insert themselves into the process. On the way, they lose parts of their condition and mutate in order to gain access to the newly adopted ground. (*Escribir en el aire* 186)

As Williams points out in his analysis of this quote, Cornejo Polar acknowledges in these few lines the exclusions and impositions that this

process has produced, resulting in what Williams calls a “transcultural fictive ethnicity” as a discourse for the reconstruction of Peruvian national identity (Williams, *The Other Side* 40). We must analyze, then, how this transculturation enabled, precisely from the cultural field and especially from the field of literature, the creation of a “fictive ethnicity,” inasmuch as it responds to and is productive for the state’s desires for popular incorporation, legalization, and control. In this regard we can define transculturation as an inclusive and unifying force, as an attempt to consolidate the hegemony of the nation-state in Peru throughout the twentieth century. Transculturation was part of the efforts of the creole elites “to transcend colonial history through the neutralization, idealization, and depoliticization of class and ethnic antagonisms with transcultural fictive ethnicity as its primary goal, trope, and/or rhetorical foundation” (Williams, *The Other Side* 47).

If we go back to Balibar’s definition of the concept of “fictive ethnicity,” we can understand how the transculturation process was a privileged vehicle to create a fictitious identity in Peru, since the formation, incorporation, and reproduction of an effectively integrated subject was sought, that is a de-indianized, mixed, or transcultural subject, as the main figure of Peruvian national identity. The term “transculturation” was first coined in the 1940s by the Cuban Fernando Ortiz. He defined transculturation as a process comprising several phenomena: deculturation (the loss of cultural elements), neoculturation (the creation of new cultural elements), and acculturation (the adoption of cultural elements from the other culture) (98).⁸ For Ortiz, transculturation implies the process whereby two cultures merge, be it through peaceful conflict resolution or through the violent imposition of one culture onto another. Moreover, Ortiz explains that “the word transculturation better expresses the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another because this does not consist merely in acquiring another culture . . . the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as a deculturation” (102). As Ortiz states, the process of transculturation implies the loss of a previous culture but also the inscription of the dominated culture into the dominant one. Regardless of its

promise of joining, transculturation always entails a losing party when the dominant side assimilates its Other. Transculturation implies the sublation of difference in the transcultural subject.⁹

Throughout the twentieth century, transculturation functioned as the specific cultural discourse that the ideology of modernization adopted in Latin America, incorporating and affirming the popular, the people, or the masses, but always and exclusively as a subordinate position within the articulation and construction of the national cultural market.¹⁰ Nowhere is this clearer than in José María Arguedas's posthumous novel, *El zorro de arriba y zorro de abajo*. An analysis of this book will allow me to point out the limits of transculturation, as well as the limits of Arguedas's project and the Peruvian nation-state's will to fabricate a national institutionalized "we," where, as Antonio Cornejo Polar has signaled, the Indian was placed as the emblem of the Peruvian modern national identity and was used for the promotion of the ideology of national progress and popular incorporation. As this analysis allows me to show, the novel alleges that Quechua or Andean Indigenous cultures condemn gender and sexual dissidence because it violates the ideal of harmony supported within the Andean cultural worldview or *cosmovisión*. Arguedas thus reproduces not only the Peruvian nation-state effort to fabricate a modern national identity but also the colonial will to control the production of subjectivity in the Andean world, specifically in regard to gender and sexuality.

An "In-Between" Demon Who Speaks in Christian and in Indian

Peruvian modern national identity was negotiated and promoted actively from within literary, intellectual, and university circles. Under these circumstances, indigenismo became an essential component of the artistic, ideological, and scientific production that reflected and stimulated the social turbulences of a very conflictive period. This period constituted the political surface of a complex economic and social process marked by a fast capitalist modernization under US imperial dominance and the resulting intensification of class struggle (Cornejo Polar, "Sobre literatura" 13). Moreover, literary indigenismo

worked as a highly powerful cultural machine for presenting, negotiating, and governing the symbolic terms of national unity and universal cultural difference in the Andes. Indigenismo elaborated a discourse that appeared to resist the onslaught of modernity on Indigenous culture and traditions and contributed to the project of cultural and identity recovery and reconstruction without renouncing the utopia of an egalitarian progress that could cancel the racial and class divisions brought by modernity itself.

For Ángel Rama, indigenismo capitalized on the ideological ambiguity and the very general meaning and scope of principles of social justice, and the vindication of the rights of marginal sectors to put forward an opportunistic agenda in which the Indigenous question was included as a “point of reference” but which would never manage to climb the social ladder and transcend the parameters of the lower middle class (Rama, *Writing across Cultures* 98). Rama objects to the fact that this mestizo literature “did not do justice to the true complexities of Peru’s social structure” (124) with regard to present-day Indigenous culture, and rather perpetuated the perspective of the dominator on the dominated cultures.¹¹

In a similar vein, José Carlos Mariátegui argued that indigenista literature could not provide a faithful version of Indigenous peoples. Rather, it tended to create an idealized and stylized rendition because, in his view, indigenista literature was still a literature written by mestizos. This is precisely why it is indigenist and not Indigenous. If an Indigenous literature finally appears, Mariátegui noted, it would be when Indigenous peoples themselves are able to produce it (274). Under this definition, the work of José María Arguedas and César Vallejo would be considered indigenista, as both of them were mestizos and not Indians writing about the value of Indigenous traditions as well as the need to redeem the Peruvian Indian.¹² Furthermore, the work of both authors was invested in the development of a national peoplehood and the fabrication of a national institutionalized “we” grounded in common cultural frameworks and languages. The problem with these literatures inserted in the indigenista project, though, was that they tried to “give a ghostly appearance” to difference and

deny conflict, suggesting the existence of amalgamated identities that would enable the implementation of specific political and cultural agendas (Cornejo Polar, *Escribir en el aire* 251). It seems convenient now, to review Arguedas's work, as he was the great representative of indigenista literature in the twentieth century. Moreover, Arguedas's intellectual project developed in the context of a strong movement that sought to redeem the Peruvian Indian as well as Andean culture and traditions. This redemption, though, denied the practice of dissident genders and sexualities in these traditions and considered such practices the result of urban bad habits.

Arguedas published six novels, three collections of short stories, one short story published as a pamphlet, poems, and several anthropological studies. Even though he wrote one of his most celebrated novels, *Los ríos profundos* (1958) (*Deep Rivers*, 1978), during the period known as the "boom" of Latin American literature, he was always marginal to this group of narrators. Arguedas's work circulated along channels that were different from those of his contemporary peers.¹³ We could affirm that Arguedas was a postcolonial, migrant, transculturated writer in the sense that he spent most of his childhood between two worlds, the white and the Indigenous worlds.¹⁴ Thus, Arguedas, following Rosi Braidotti's definition, would be an "in-between" as he existed in "in-between zones" and expressed in several of his texts the sense of "nonbelonging" to either of them (Braidotti 18–19). Arguedas used to define himself as a permanent outsider (*forastero*); he experienced this condition as disturbing, since he felt as if he inhabited several worlds but belonged nowhere, always detached from a fixed place. Nevertheless, he would often point out that he considered himself to be rooted in the values and traditions of the dominated culture, which was the Indigenous culture. Because of this, he looked to reclaim this culture, always on the margins, but also considered by Arguedas as a space of resistance.

Although Arguedas recognized that he was what we could call an "in-between" subject, because as we have mentioned before and in his own words, Arguedas thought about himself as "not an acculturated man; I am a Peruvian who, like a cheerful demon, proudly speaks in

Christian and in Indian" (*Primer Encuentro* 269). He did not embrace such an "in-between" position but rather looked for a way of reconciling this "in-betweenness" by trying to homogenize his own and Peruvian identity through the creation of an ideal that placed Indian culture as the emblem of the modern Peruvian national identity.

From his first stories, included in *Agua* (1935), Arguedas addressed the question of the Indian seeking to redress the way Indigenous peoples were being represented in literary texts. In the *Primer Encuentro de Narradores Peruanos*, he stated: "I began to write when I read the first narratives about the Indians; they described them in such a false way . . . in those stories the Indian was so disfigured and so mellow and the landscape silly or so strange: 'No, I have to write it as it is, because I have enjoyed it, I have suffered it' and I wrote those first stories that were published in the little book called *Agua*" (40–41). Along with his desire to redeem the representation of the Indian in this first collection of short stories, Arguedas addressed the question of identity. In his case, though, next to the question of "Who am I?" there was the question of "To which world do I belong?" a manifestation of the diverse spaces he inhabited. Arguedas's world was a fragmented one, because in it, two opposite wor(l)ds coexisted. This implied a junction of two different societies and cultures with a long history of antagonisms.

We could consider Arguedas's literary project a long and beautiful attempt to conciliate the two worlds he inhabited. In fact, Roland Forgues states that what characterizes Arguedas's writing is his will to conciliate the Andean and the criollo world, two opposite worlds that for historical reasons, have been confused with two antagonistic social classes (307).¹⁵ This attempt characterizes Arguedas as a "transculturador." His writing aimed at transculturating the dominated Quechua world to the dominant culture of the Western world and provide through literature the integration of both worlds (Rama, "José María Arguedas" 38). Moreover, as Cornejo Polar has pointed out, that self split between two opposite worlds, that quest, through writing, for a space where the self can dwell as one, was transformed in a potential space to forge a collective identity.

In her book *Arguedas/Vargas Llosa: Dilemas y Ensamblajes* (2013), Mabel Moraña asserts that Arguedas's work is "a cultural gesture and an ideological performance whose meaning is inseparable from the historical, social, and political contexts of each stage of his literary production" (5). That is, Arguedas's writing is also a response to or a reflection on these same contexts, which in his case support or reproduce the project of the Peruvian nation-state to create a collective national identity in which the image of the Indian will be intensified.

For Arguedas, literature is a vehicle to reinscribe the possible history of a modern Peru from a perspective that is capable of incorporating elements suppressed by official history (Moraña, *Arguedas/Vargas Llosa* 15). Nevertheless, and as I will now explain, Arguedas's project had some limitations, as it perpetuated the problems of transculturation, which, as we mentioned above, sought to conciliate the Latin American populations with the most general conditions of capitalist modernization by assimilating its Indigenous Other. In the case of Peruvian modernization, it was the Indigenous populations that, through transculturation, lost parts of their condition and mutated in order to gain access to the newly adopted ground. Moreover, and as this section will also show, those populations that could not be assimilated through transculturation were not included in Arguedas's project of a modern Peru. As we see in the analysis, Arguedas approached the question of racial and ethnic Otherness only from the place of race and ethnicity. He did not consider, and he even re-subalternized, other marginalized populations and subjects, such as women, Afro-Peruvian, and LGBT subjects, because he considered them the products of urban bad habits.

In order to contend this, I will focus on the analysis of Arguedas's posthumous and unfinished novel, *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (hereafter referred to as *Los zorros*), because, as has been pointed out by several scholars (Antonio Cornejo Polar, Alberto Moreiras, Mabel Moraña, Ronald Forgues, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Gareth Williams), this novel draws multiple relations with all Arguedas's previous publications. As Vargas Llosa puts it, in the different texts that compose *Los zorros*, "the anxiety that Arguedas experienced towards the end

of his life can be touched, an anxiety that had accumulated through a lifetime . . . in which his personal problems were entangled with the traumas and conflicts of Peruvian society” (16).

Most of Arguedas’s texts, but especially *Los zorros*, express his project in which the Andean masses appear as the group from which to define the function of the national-popular subject as the agent of history and the modernization of Peru. This project considers the Indigenous tradition as having the strength to form the national collective identity that represents the future and the modernization of the country. However, this project also considers Indigenous tradition as heterosexual and gender-conforming. According to Moraña, this collective subject is a plural and heterogeneous identity, an identity of difference (*Arguedas/Vargas Llosa* 154). Difference, though, is understood by Arguedas only in ethnic and racial terms, as I mentioned before. For this reason, I disagree with Moraña when she states that “Arguedas’ project, oriented towards the issue of identity, is not unaware of the dangers of essentialism and fundamentalism. . . . Arguedas avoids all reductionism and tends toward an inclusive and expansive thought, which moves from the primitive to the modern, from the mythical to the historical, from the foundational elements to its multiple historical transformations” (*Arguedas/Vargas Llosa* 156). Moreover, as Cornejo Polar has mentioned, *Los zorros* is a testimony of the unfulfillment of Arguedas’s projects presented in his previous texts or the testimony of a “creator who was affected to the point of immolation by the problems of his country” (quoted in Vargas Llosa 17). In this novel, “the indigenous tradition does not survive and Peruvian society is not reorganized according to those values” (Cornejo Polar, “Hipótesis”¹³⁴) because of industrial progress and the failure of transculturation.

Transculturation or the *Jardín Cielo* of Capitalism

Los zorros was published in 1971, almost two years after the death of Arguedas in December 1969. Some fragments had been published previously. A novel defined by Arguedas himself as a “contained” text, “like a body that’s half-blind and deformed” (Arguedas, *The Fox* 262), *Los zorros* is a work in progress, where the narrative voice

is constantly interrupted by the narrator himself, the dialogues of characters, or the omniscient narrator's reflections. Besides this, *Los zorros* presents Arguedas's suicide as an obsession that is present and has an impact on the novel. Thus, *Los zorros* alternates the fictional story and the personal diaries that Arguedas wrote between May 10, 1968, and October 22, 1969. In the letter he sent to Gonzalo Losada included in the Epilogue of the novel, Arguedas insists on affirming that *Los zorros* suffers from a "real (albeit partial) truncation" and that it is a "disconnected novel" (Arguedas, *The Fox* 261). This is important to consider because, in its form and content, this novel goes against Arguedas's writing project, produced under notions such as unity and integration when thinking about Peru and himself.

Los zorros is intimately bound to Arguedas's life and his writing project. In his words: "So if I can, I am going to try to combine it [his suicide] with the themes chosen for a novel I have finally decided to christen "The Fox from Up Above and the Fox from Down Below"; I shall also mix in all the thoughts I have had in so many instances about people and Peru, even though they may not have been specifically contained in the plan of the novel" (*The Fox* 10). As this quote testifies, *Los zorros* contains the basic logics of Arguedas's work and how it is related to Peru's realities and the hopes and desires he had for himself and the country. As Vargas Llosa contends, in *Los zorros*, "Both the work and the self-destruction of the author are viscerally linked" (298). As my analysis will show, these hopes and desires—linked to the author's self-destruction as Vargas Llosa points out—were not fulfilled and *Los zorros* attests to how this caused precisely the destruction of the author. Already the Prologue to the novel, where the author describes himself as "a modern Quechua individual" (Arguedas, *The Fox* 268), reveals the impossibility that permeated Arguedas's life as much as his writing project. He and his writing engaged in the invention of the Quechua culture as the modern horizon for Peru and Peruvian identity, but the project was probably doomed to fail and the novel is an exploration of this failure.

The main setting of *Los zorros* is Chimbote, a small and forgotten village that is suddenly transformed when it becomes an important center of fish flour production. The novel addresses the social and cultural

changes that its maritime resources brought to Peru. Chimbote is an example of the miracle of national capitalism. Because of this economic boom, Chimbote has become an extremely heterogeneous place, in which men and women of different cultures live and in whose lives the weight of transnational capital dominates.¹⁶ The novel deals with the dynamic between people from the Peruvian coast and the Andes, and uses as its background the myth *Dioses y hombres de Huarochiri*, translated from Quechua to Spanish by Arguedas himself.¹⁷ This myth includes an episode in which two foxes run into each other in Mount Latauzaco. One of the foxes represents the Andean area of Peru and the other, the coast. These two areas are key in the novel as several Indigenous men and women from the Andean region migrate to the coastal village of Chimbote, seduced by the illusion of a better life. This is the case of one of the characters, Esteban de la Cruz, a former miner at the Cocalón mine, who tells his story of migration from the mountains: “Parobamba, little town in the Andes, there’s no hope there: little pig, little sheep, tiny little vegetable plot—one or two of ’em. On big hacienda also silence, obedience, shut mouth. They eat silence up there in the high country, what we call the sierra, friend. In their highlander gut, in the blood vein of the highlander who has already tried Trojillo, Lima, Chimbote—inside his bosom there’s even more silence; graveyard’s all there is when they make him stay in towns up in his home country” (Arguedas, *The Fox* 157–58). As we see, Esteban, as many other Andean men (and rarely women), decides to migrate to Chimbote because he thinks his living conditions will improve there. Working in the coal mine has invaded his body; it has affected his health, and his spit is black from the coal poisoning he got while working in the mine. For Esteban, then, Chimbote represents the space where he escapes the exploitation he had endured, but also the place where he could find the cure to his illness.

It must be noted that Esteban’s poisoning is related to his ethnicity and race, because, according to the novel, Indigenous men like Esteban are condemned to these same working conditions while being exploited and oppressed in the Andes. This also explains why so many people from different areas of the Andean region have found their way to Chimbote, where “the fires and the roots of the world, of the very

butt-end of the earth itself, are made manifest" (Arguedas, *The Fox* 159). Chimbote is a space where social, racial, and ethnic groups from different places meet. They represent different strata of Peruvian society who, like Esteban, migrate to Chimbote hoping for a better future. In the words of Cornejo Polar, as a "cruise ship of races, social classes, cultures, Chimbote is pervaded by deep contradictions" ("Un ensayo" 296).

Chimbote is a site where transculturation takes place. We see Indigenous people from peripheral and marginal areas of Peru arriving at Chimbote, a place considered a center of modernization and progress. Through transculturation, they would be able to heal and get rid of the diseases, the exploitation, and the oppression they left behind when they migrated to Chimbote, the "jardín cielo," a place on the coast where they could live with dignity and recover the humanity they have been deprived of in the Andes.

It is worth exploring Esteban's life further to understand how transculturation works in the novel. His life, according to Cornejo Polar, "is in a way the life of the Peruvian man, a kind of sum and synthesis of what the existence in a vast, complex, and disjointed country can be" ("Un ensayo" 293). This character allows us to see that in Chimbote, "indigenous people, blacks, cholos, and zambos lose their identity and their roots and sink in an unrelenting degradation and alienation process" (Forgues 308) in what implies the process of transculturation. This is the case of Esteban's brother: "Now you take my little brother, beautiful Spanish he talks; when he was a little kid he escaped to Chimbote; now he doesn't wanna talk Quechua. . . . Beautiful Spanish he talks; looks down on his sick market-pedlar brother nowadays" (Arguedas, *The Fox* 144). As we see, Esteban's brother has embraced a new persona now that he lives in Chimbote. He does not speak Quechua, but Spanish. He represents the process of transculturation as his Andean culture has merged with the culture of the coast (Chimbote). In his case, we see the mechanisms of transculturation that Fernando Ortiz expressed, in that the process of transculturation "also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as a deculturation" (Ortiz 19). As Ortiz states, the process of transculturation implies the loss of

a previous culture but also the inscription of the dominated culture into the dominant one, as in the case of Esteban's brother who speaks Spanish and not Quechua. For transculturation to occur, and in the name of modernity, Indigenous culture must be destroyed.

Other characters from *Los zorros* undergo similar experiences, such as *el chanchero* Bazalar, who loses his Andean roots as he is incapable of thinking in Quechua, his native language. Also, don Cecilio Ramírez, who, when Maxwell plays the charango, confesses that he does not understand such melodies from the Andes although they "ease my thought and what's more, sometimes when he [Maxwell] plays with that little blind man, Crispín Antolín, it gives me a grand feelin'" (Arguedas, *The Fox* 244). What we see in the novel, then, are the workings of transculturation, which, instead of uniting the characters from different social, racial, and ethnic strata, separates and divides them, and "definitely eliminates all real possibility of forging the authentic Peruvian nationality that José María Arguedas imagined as the union of the different ethnic groups, cultures, and social classes" (Forgues 108).

Asto, another character from *Los zorros* is also a good example of what transculturation implies. Through a sexual encounter with a white Argentinean woman he can pay, Asto hopes to cease being an Indigenous man: "Me *criollo* . . . from the coast, goddamnit; me from Argentina, goddamnit. Who highlander now" (Arguedas, *The Fox* 42). The novel, then, deals with the problematic discourses of transculturation and its relation to Peruvian modernization and its connection with capitalism and imperialism. *Los zorros* embodies how the notion of transculturation implies making the changes necessary to adapt certain populations to the most general conditions of capitalist modernization, as is the case of these Andean men in Chimbote.¹⁸ As Alberto Moreiras points out, transculturation operates as a regulative machine for the constant adaptation of backward practices and populations to the demands of a centrally driven modernization, as would be the case of the Indigenous Quechua-speaking people of Peru (186). As we see, these men are dispossessed of their essence, their spirits and their bodies have been corrupted as they have erased their Indigenous

history and their language. *Los zorros* thus allows us to look at “the profound mutation that Chimbote’s society is undergoing, a mutation that radically questions the ideas that [Arguedas] had formulated previously regarding mestizaje and social and cultural integration of the Indians and the marginalized sectors of society” (Forgues 314).

The infernal world of Chimbote provides a deformed image of what José María Arguedas had imagined as an ideal for his country in his previous works. This is why what Arguedas expresses in his diaries is so important to understand and, somehow, complete the narrative of the novel. Vargas Llosa even goes further by stating that “what was going to be a novel about Chimbote and fish flour turned out to be that and, simultaneously, a novel about its author and the torments he suffered as he was writing it” (301). Forgues considers that *Los zorros* is a reflection on Arguedas desperation as he sees how reality resists his aspirations and hopes for national and personal unity (309). Here we see the failure of his dream of a dynamic and deep unifying and integrative *mestizaje* or transculturation, as expressed in all his previous work.

We must remember that, generally speaking, the development of capitalist modernization shaped the modern identity of Peru and many other Latin American countries without taking into account the principles of alterity and difference. Difference was understood as “precapitalist,” “feudal,” “residual,” or “local” (Legrás 92). For the logic of modernization, different populations, were (and are) archaic, “as real obstacles for progress” (Rama, *Writing across Cultures* 22). Becoming modern, then, meant “overcoming underdevelopment by loosening the drag of those sectors of the population that were stigmatized as ‘downstream,’ ‘unproductive,’ ‘traditional,’ or, to borrow a term coined by Noam Chomsky, ‘unpeople’” (Franco, *Cruel Modernity* 8). *Los zorros* shows how characters such as Esteban’s brother, Asto, Cecilio Ramírez, and Bazalar try to overcome their “underdevelopment” and become modern by being de-indianized or transcultured in order to be inserted and integrated into the sociopolitical, economic, and cultural plans of Chimbotes’s governing capitalism, while these same men continue to be exploited, as the following quote demonstrates: “A cint for you, a cint for me; eighty for boat skipper, twinty for fishermen; mellion, cool

little mellion for Peruvian foreigner gringo. Just dance, be happy! I'm a screwed-up temporary worker, factory. Eight weeks, then ass kicked outa there! You dancin' early in mornin'—whore, butterfly, scarecrow—is that what ya are?" (Arguedas, *The Fox* 51). Here we can see the payment imbalance as the fisherman, who performs the real work, makes less money. The novel thus presents the Indian as the main victim of capitalist modernization, who, as I mentioned before, by coming down to the coast with the dream of improving his life, loses his roots, his language, and his essence and continues to be exploited.

We also need to recognize that the development of capitalism and the process of becoming modern through de-indianization or transculturation addressed in *Los zorros* through the stories of the characters mentioned above, implied erasing individuals who were also victims of the capitalist modernizing process due to alterity and difference but who were not part of the emblematic population of Peruvian modern national identity, the Indigenous worker. On the one hand, the novel denounces that the bodies of these men are sick, exploited, and suffering; that their bodies have lost their Indigenous identity and roots as well as their morality. On the other hand, the novel ignores the suffering and exploited bodies of women, Afro-Peruvians, and gender and sexual dissidents. The novel's concern is to promote the ideology of national progress through the redemption of the Indian and Indigenous tradition. It promotes this ideology by emphasizing and criticizing the exploitation of the Indianas well as the loss of his roots through transculturation. However, the novel's promotion of this ideology simultaneously affirms the men's heterosexuality and gender conformity while ignoring the suffering and exploitation of these other populations.

Heterosexual Indigenous Men, Yes! Faggots and Negroes, No!

Yo no sé las costumbres d'este lugar.

En mi pueblo nu'hay maricas.

Cada hombre tiene su hembra, hembra desde nacida.

¿Qu'es usted? Ni Dios lo sabe.

—José María Arguedas

As we mentioned before, *Los zorros* is arranged by the alternation of the novel's fictional story and the personal diaries of Arguedas. The confessional chapters of the diaries are connected to the fictional portions of the novel. In the opening of the book, the author explains that his own survival and consequently the novel's existence are linked to the exploitation of the body of a young woman of color, who is not recognized as "different" or a racial Other by Arguedas or in the novel, but as a body that can be validly exploited for the sake of the author and the novel itself as it is being written because Arguedas is alive thanks to the sexual encounter with her. As he points out at the beginning of his First Diary: "For five years my writing efforts were blocked. An encounter with a plump zamba, a young prostitute, restored my 'vital tone,' as the doctors called it. The encounter with that joyful woman must have been just the subtle and very complex touch my body and soul needed in order to reforge the broken link with all the things" (Arguedas, *The Fox* 9). Arguedas opens the chapter by writing about his suicide attempts and his mental illness and relating them to an impossibility of writing. Writing then is opposed to death for Arguedas such as when he expresses that he needs to fight death by writing or when he states "because if I don't write and get published, I'll put a bullet in myself" (17). Here, Arguedas battles against death through the exploitation and consumption of the body of the plump "zamba."

Also, in the First Diary, Arguedas expresses what he thinks of effeminate men. He writes about one of his visits to Chile and narrates his experience at the Chilean "ballet." What Arguedas most notices in this spectacle is that "the huasos [Chilean cowboys] look all decked out and pansyfied (almost an insult to the huaso)" (Arguedas, *The Fox* 15). Moreover, he ties the "pansyfied huasos" with the United States of America, when he identifies "huasos *amariconados* . . . those things that are gringo fabrications for making money" (15). This is important to consider because throughout *Los zorros* the narrative places the United States as the ultimate cause and source of the exploitation of Indigenous men. Relating *maricones* to the United States means that the novel situates them in the role of the exploiter, the enemy, the

opposite of Indigenous men. The latter, throughout the novel, are presented as victims of capitalism and US imperialism, but also as heterosexuals who practice gender conformity. This relation could also point to Arguedas's belief that homosexuality is something that could never occur among Indigenous people. Rather it is something typical of a foreign or urban element. Arguedas's belief, though, echoes popular notions in the 1960s and 1970s about certain cultural elements being implanted by the American empire to demoralize and corrupt the population, such as drugs or, indeed, homosexuality. Arguedas is thus claiming a certain superiority for the oppressed Indigenous people and opposing it to the immorality of the oppressors, in this case, men from the United States.

Moreover, both effeminate men or *maricones* and US capitalism have, according to Arguedas, the big goal of producing money. Thus, he expresses, "All that is for making money. And when isn't there an indispensable urgency about making money these days? What has been pansyified in order to commercialize it will be de-pansyified—the same thing will happen in literature, medicine, music, and even in the way women approach men" (Arguedas, *The Fox* 15). Arguedas thus confirms that for him *amariconamiento* or effeminacy is something produced by Americans that is inherent to capitalism and business. This might explain why he is so harsh when representing effeminate men in the fictional passages of *Los zorros*. In fact, the first fictional chapter begins with an expression of hegemonic/toxic masculinity that condemns the effeminacy of *maricones*:

Chaucato put out to sea in his small trawler, Sampson I, taking his ten fishermen as crew, among them the faggot El Mudo [The Mute] and, as an extra hand on a trial basis, a violinist from the Black Cat, a nightclub where call girls served the drinks. Day is dawning. Chaucato is talking to El Mudo on the bridge: "Mudo, you son of a bitch, we're doin' a man's work here. Havin' a dick's what makes a man different, isn't it? You were born with a dick, ya hear me, Mudo, even if it's just for screwin' yourself. When a man grabs a knife it's not so's he

can take people spittin' at him lyin' down. To row the dory, to haul in the lead and the dragnet, to come in when the sea's rough ya gotta have a dick. Here you're either gonna end up on the ocean or else I'm gonna have 'em stick a hose up your gills.
(Arguedas, *The Fox* 27)

The work of fishermen, according to this example, is the work of men and not *maricones* like Mudo. Being a good fisherman implies being masculine and virile. If Mudo wants to be a good fisherman, he needs to stop being a *maricón*. Moreover, Mudo is presented as a promiscuous character as he has sex with his prostitute mother and her clients. Mudo is specially degraded because of his homosexuality and because he does not speak. He lives in unnatural ways and this is why he is portrayed in the novel as “human filth.” Arguedas’s position toward capitalism seems contradictory; in his First Diary he relates effeminacy to US capitalism and business. Nevertheless, in the fictional portion of *Los zorros* he relates capitalism and business to masculinity and virility. The sea, which is the source exploited, is perceived as female genitalia, “the greatest suckin’ cunt in the world,” that turns the *maricón* into a man: “Whoreson, faggot Mudo; out here I’m makin’ a man outa ya” (Arguedas, *The Fox* 27). Also, businessmen such as Braschi, who “got more power than dynamite in his head, in his ass, in his company” (30), are viewed as very virile and their success is related to this same characteristic. In this sense, we could argue that in *Los zorros*, Chimbote is presented not only as the space where Andean men could hope for a better future through transculturation but also as the space where they could become real men and, therefore, as successful as Braschi, described by another character, Chaucato, as one of the “factory owners” who makes “every little anchovy spawn banknotes, puttin’ fire to the fish with violent iron” (31). Nevertheless, Braschi is also condemned in the novel because he makes Mudo sodomize him.¹⁹ Since Braschi, the capitalist, is meant to be a figure of contempt in the novel, the change of positions vis-à-vis the act of sodomy is particularly suggestive, with the exploiter being penetrated by the same individuals he exploits.

Hegemonic/toxic masculinity and virility are the forces behind productivity at Chimbote, extracting the products from the sea, “the big ‘pussy’ nowadays, the sea of Chimbote . . . the most generous, foul-smelling whore ‘pussy’ there is” (Arguedas, *The Fox* 45). The bay of Chimbote is the “big ‘pussy,’” fornicated by virile men, and described in the novel as “the million-dollar sex” (46). This productivity is presented as positive for the economy of the country and its citizens, as Tarta says to Mudo, “Off of that ‘pu-pu-pussy’ you’re makin’ a li-li-living, fag . . . our country’s li-li-living off of it” (45).²⁰ A parallel can be drawn here between the productivity of the feminized sea at Chimbote and the writerly productivity that Arguedas draws from the body of the young “zamba” mentioned at the beginning of the First Diary. Female genitalia, female bodies are always exploited, made productive economically and literarily.

If *Los zorros* is criticizing and denouncing the exploitation of Indigenous men, it does not do the same with the female subject or the *maricón* when dealing with notions such as productivity. These subjects are not included in what needs to be redeemed in order to establish a modern collective identity for Peru. As José Carlos Mariátegui points out, the effect of unity by virtue of which the people could appear, in everyone’s eyes, as a people, that is, as the basis and origin of national and political power, could only be forged on the grounds of certain fundamental exclusions (313). *Los zorros* directly and clearly addresses and denounces the exploitation of Andean bodies. In fact, as Cornejo Polar states, “In *The Fox from Up Above and the Fox from Down Below* the Andean elements are of such magnitude and have such decisive functions that it is legitimate to think that in that novel, for the first time, Indigenous rationality is the reason driving modernity” (“Un ensayo” 303). Nevertheless, it leaves unattended the exploitation that other “different” bodies suffer.

This takes us back to what we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter about the establishment of groups and populations that were different from the normative models of national identity during the twentieth century. These groups and populations were subordinated and excluded from the modernizing project and were not considered

under the same parameters as those populations that formed the national identity, that is, the heterosexual and gender-conforming Indigenous identity, in the case of Peru. They were not redeemed, protected, or elevated as emblems of national identity but damned to be excluded, and in that exclusion, exploited. As I mentioned before, the modern process of naturalization of social and political belonging was understood across the political and cultural spectrum almost entirely in racial and ethnic terms. Gender and sexuality were not on the table for discussion in the forging of the modern social pacts between the state and the “People” in modern Peru.

Loco Moncada, a Lunatic, a Faggot, a Negro!

The exclusion of women, Afro-Peruvian, homosexuals, and effeminate men from the discourse of the modern nation in Peru does not prevent these same subjects from developing an alternative political language capable of exposing marginalization and oppression—a language that serves as a critique of the formation of modern nation-states based on erasure and marginalization in the process of creating a modern national identity. In *Los zorros*, the character of Loco Moncada would be a good example of this. Not Indigenous but Black, not heterosexual but *maricón*, Moncada, “a truly Chimbotean kind of by-product” (Arguedas, *The Fox* 152) represents a different perspective on Chimbote, one that is counter to the generally accepted representation. On different occasions, we see these characters disguising themselves as fishermen, a Turkish businessmen, a pregnant women. Moncada is constantly affirming an indeterminacy of gender through *travestismo*; he is also an “in-between” subject throughout the novel, since he does not identify himself with one of the two normatively defined gender and sexual expressions (masculine/feminine, heterosexual/homosexual): “Now Moncada was acting the part of the barefooted fisherman. The previous week he had gone around all dressed up as a dandy and had preached in the center of the town. Another time he went out preaching as an Arab shopkeeper, and several months after this event some still remembered the time he had presented himself in the markets as a pregnant woman about to give birth. He had displayed

his abdomen, a fake belly he had a mewling kitten shut up in, and he, Moncada the lunatic, was crying too" (Arguedas, *The Fox* 59). Besides expressing different gender roles such as the ones mentioned in this quote, Moncada represents a fragmented discourse that does not aspire to produce total or fixed meanings. This fragmented and unproductive discourse signals a profound truth or makes something visible that these same total and fixed meanings hide. According to Cornejo Polar, Moncada is a language that is "a kind of mirror in which the harbour is reflected in the only way possible: paralogically" ("Un ensayo" 297). Moncada denounces the injustices perpetrated in Chimbote by the logic of capitalism as can be seen in the following passage. Dressed as a pregnant woman, referring to the father of the fake baby they carry, Moncada says: "His father won't acknowledge him. His begetter was a trawler skipper called Anacleto Pérez Albertis. But in Chimbote the Sogesa Steel Mill workers are the only ones who acknowledge their bastards. With regular high wages, with all the legal deductions, they live in the Cuernavaca section. A real good neighborhood, officially recognized and fancy. They work the night shift and over there the wives manufacture horns better than the factory makes steel rods. Oh me, oh my!" (Arguedas, *The Fox* 59). As we can see, Moncada has a paralogic discourse because it cannot and perhaps does not desire to sustain a productive and fully iterable relation between language, reason, and collective signification. Williams defines Moncada's discourse as "pure subaltern language" (Williams, "Chimbote" 50) taking place in the streets of Chimbote. According to Moraña, this character, with this unproductive discourse, their *travestismo*, and their actions, "subverts the exploitative and disciplining logic of reproductive labor under capitalism with the ludic unproductivity of a turbulent and undisciplined perception of his/her world" (Moraña, *Arguedas/Vargas Llosa* 161). Thus, described in the novel as "a Moncada degenerated to a lower type by African blood and other viruses" (Arguedas, *The Fox* 72) "a lunatic," "quite special and original" (152), Moncada's presence is always disrupting the exploitative logic of capitalism and, compared to other characters, he more systematically resists being brought into its fold.

The novel suggests, it seems, that Afro-Peruvians and *maricones*, while excluded from the integration process of capitalist modernization, are able to observe and make visible certain problems that have deep historical roots. For instance, Moncada allows us to see that although the promise of transculturation in Chimbote announces a better future for those who migrate there, losing their roots, their difference, in order to participate in the glory of “el jardín cielo,” will not even grant them a decent place to rest when they die. Through Moncada’s eyes we witness how the cemetery of poor people is infringed upon and its lands appropriated by those in power:

The madman followed the visitors to the cemetery. There he saw people bringing down crosses from high up to the dune. They were pulling the crosses up out of the sand by bending the uprights way over, and were going down the dune sinking their feet into the sand. Moncada was the only one carrying a cross in the opposite direction, going inward with a large cross at that, one with the little bag and a piece of dirty net hanging from one of the arms. The City Hall, the Beneficiencia, the police and the parish priests had ordered and persuaded the poor shanty dwellers to move their cemetery to some low-lying flatland on the other side of San Pedro’s high dune. (Arguedas, *The Fox* 66)

If we recognize the discourse produced by Moncada—a colored and eccentric person who moves between genders—as a subaltern language, we need to recognize the potentiality of this same language. Moncada’s subaltern language calls attention to the limits of capitalism’s ability to regulate the minds and bodies of social life in Chimbote on behalf of productivity. Moreover, this language signals the historical connections between the Peruvian Republican project and the situation in Chimbote. For example, Moncada expresses, “Here, in Peru shall we say, since San Martín, Don José, there’s been nothing but outsiders, foreigners giving the orders. We’ve been nothing but the servants of foreigners” (Arguedas, *The Fox* 59). Besides this, Moncada

is a good example of a *cuir* character, one whose gaze *cuiriza* the discourse of the normalized social order.

I mentioned that Moncada, like Arguedas, is an “in-between” subject, not because of their race or ethnicity, but because of their indeterminacy of gender and their elaboration of survival strategies and strategies of selfhood that “initiate new signs of identity” (Bhabha 1). Loco Moncada, the crazed “zambo mulato,” though, unlike Arguedas, embraces this “in-betweenness” and thus they see things in a different way. This gesture destabilizes the utopian project, calling into question whether Arguedas himself had doubts about its possibility. For instance, *Los zorros* shows Arguedas “in-betweenness” by exposing two styles, two genres (the diaries, the fiction), two narrators in one novel. Sadly, this “in-betweenness” is unresolved in the novel as it is unfinished, and in Arguedas’s life, as he kills himself before giving the novel or his personal affairs closure. The productivity of an “in-between” position that is embraced and acknowledged will be addressed in chapters 2, 3, and 4.

Protecting Chile’s Racial Purity and Superiority

According to Gabriel Salazar, there is and has only ever been one state in Chile: the state shaped by Diego Portales in the 1810–1837 foundational period. The Chilean state inaugurated by Portales is known as the “tiempo-madre” (originary period) of Chilean politics, characterized by the exaltation of authoritarianism, government arbitrariness, and the repression of civic and human rights as patriotic values. In the first half of the twentieth century, there were two presidents who played a highly significant role in perpetuating Portales’s configuration of the Chilean state, Arturo Alessandri Palma (1920, 1925, 1932), nicknamed the “Lion of Tarapacá,” and Carlos Ibañez del Campo (1927, 1952). Then came Augusto Pinochet, who after the 1973 military coup and the establishment of the military dictatorship explicitly announced that his regime would continue with the state form devised by Portales, which, as Salazar notes, remains untouched to this day (Salazar 15).

The continuity of the Portelian state model is clearly reflected in the way in which both Alessandri and Ibañez del Campo reacted to

the great national crisis of the First Centenary (1910), in which there was a denationalization of the Chilean economy, an explosion of social misery, and the administrative corruption of the oligarchy. This crisis would later be exacerbated by the Great Depression and the collapse of the nitrate industry, which prompted constant mobilizations of nonelite sectors, forcing a dramatic expansion of the entire political system. In the face of this crisis, Chile had to be saved. One of the ways this was done was by resuming the discourse of Chilean racial superiority.

Ericka Beckman explains that the Chilean state developed a sense of nationalist superiority based on the way it interpreted its role in the War of the Pacific (1879–1883), namely, as a righteous struggle against the supposedly “inferior” races of Peru (but also Bolivia) (74). In the years following this conflict, the country was strongly defined by a desire to keep and protect racial purity and superiority, elevating race and ethnicity to a nationalist ideal. Jeffrey Klaiber has pointed out that Chile’s victory in the War of the Pacific “served to confirm, strengthen and even popularize the myth of Chilean racial superiority” (27).

This assertion of Chilean racial purity and superiority became a powerful rhetorical strategy during the modernization of the Chilean nation-state, which started around 1929 and lasted until the early 1990s as a response to the economic crisis that Chile suffered, along with many other Latin American countries. As Beckman states, “Throughout the course of the twentieth century, the myth of Chilean racial superiority within Latin America would not disappear; instead, the truth claims regarding ‘the Chilean race’ naturalized during and after the War of the Pacific would insidiously burrow their way into official state discourse” (86), meaning that Chile became or continued being a racist state. Thus, Chile’s creation (or re-creation) of a national identity relied on the subordination/exclusion to the margins of those who were considered “different” because of their race, ethnicity, gender expression, or sexuality. In turn, this drive gave birth to several discourses that sought to keep and protect the purity and superiority of its “white” race from contamination, given its elevated status as the emblem of Chilean national identity.

As Marcos Fernández Labbé points out, this national racial discourse positioned the Chilean people as endowed with a common heritage—regardless of their position in the productive system—which, together with granting it an identity, represented an asset that should be looked after, or amended when necessary, for the sake of collective well-being. As a racist state, the Chilean state governed with a hierarchy of races, where certain races were described as superior and others, in contrast, were described as inferior, separating out the groups that existed within the Latin American population but also within Chile.

For instance, during the first decades of the twentieth century, Nicolás Palacios, a widely respected turn-of-the-century Chilean intellectual and physician and the author of *Raza Chilena: Libro escrito por un chileno para los chilenos* (2012), expressed that the presence of a large number of foreigners in Chile posed the danger that foreigners would replace the Chilean people, who were being forced to emigrate or endure living conditions that were affecting their reproductive capacity and demographic growth (Barr-Melej 57).²¹ He emphasized that these foreigners belonged to different races and nationalities and in the face of this situation he called for a nationalist response, as their presence would make the Chilean race disappear.²² The pure and superior Chilean race could be contaminated by contact, or even worse, by mixing with these inferior races. On these grounds, Palacios made a call to save and protect the Chilean race. The same happened in Argentina, where immigrants were accused of threatening “national spaces for the production of the new Argentinean subject” (Salessi 186).

Carlos Ibáñez del Campo, the “general of hope,” who was obsessively concerned about this threat to the race, presented himself as the sole leader capable of combating all the evils afflicting the country through nationalism. Those who supported him regarded his work as patriotic, inasmuch as it would save the country from the problems that afflicted it, steering it toward a “new Chile.” Thus, calls for moralizing and depurating the country characterized the governments of Ibáñez del Campo (1927–1931/1952–1958).

Ibáñez del Campo’s first administration has been classified as a dictatorship and as the first police state in Chile. He sought to achieve

order and progress for the country and in the pursuit of these aims he imposed severe measures to prevent and crush dissent, which became de facto politically motivated persecutions. With the authoritarian regime of President Carlos Ibáñez del Campo, the policy of relegation, or internal exile, became a standard state recourse at the same time that all opposition was seen as subversive and contrary to the government's national reconstruction project (Rojas Flores 23).

Ibáñez del Campo was obsessed with eugenic ideas such as “deputation” and “regeneration” and he considered dissident sexualities and genders as plagues that could cause racial degeneration, affecting the purity and superiority of the Chilean race. To protect it, he adopted a number of measures to eradicate homosexuality (but also effeminacy). It must be pointed out, however, that relating effeminacy and homosexuality to racial degeneration was not an invention of Ibáñez del Campo. Around the 1930s and 1940s, these practices were defined as “asocial” and the subjects who practiced them were considered as not contributing to the country's progress. Thus, Ibáñez del Campo's moralizing and purifying crusade was in step with the definition established by the Chilean medical discourse of some social subjects as dangerous because they threatened the integrity of Chile's national unity rooted in racial purity and superiority as its key emblems. Around that time, for instance, male effeminacy and homosexuality were considered, along with alcoholism, drug addiction, and vagrancy, comparable to sexually transmitted diseases or so-called social diseases. Homosexuality was sometimes referred to as a “conduct” but homosexuals were sometimes seen as a species of its own that carried its own singular characteristics and represented a condition of degeneration of the Chilean race. In Argentina, male homosexuals, *travestis*, *invertidos*, *lunfardos*, were considered *subjects from a different species* (Salessi 158) as established by *hombres de ciencia* such as the military psychiatrist Francisco De Veyga and José Ingenieros.

As we see, these considerations around dissident gender and sexualities were not exclusive to Chile. In *Médicos, Maleantes y Maricas* (1995), the Argentinean scholar Jorge Salessi explains that homosexuality, first denominated as *sodomía*, played an important role in the modernization

of Argentina, as *sodomitas* had to be eradicated to preserve the cleanliness of the national body. Salessi explains, “Homosexuality was used in Argentina in order to define and regulate new notions of nationality . . . of the ‘new race’ that should be the consequence of immigration” (180), which was reflected in several literary texts produced by authors such as Carlos Octavio Bunge, who portrayed the dangers that these deviants and degenerates represented for the process of modernization and creation of the new country, the new nationality. Joseph Pierce, who reads the life experience of the Bunge siblings to study Argentinean modernization, explains that “the state project of normalizing culture demanded specific forms of racial identification, gender, performance, and sexuality” (*Argentine* 4).

According to Michel Foucault, sexuality, being an eminently corporeal mode of behavior, is a matter for “individualizing disciplinary controls that take the form of permanent surveillance . . . but because it also has procreative effects, sexuality is also inscribed, takes effect, in broad biological processes that concern not the bodies of individuals but the element, the multiple unity of the population” (*The History* 251). For the Chilean state, homosexuality, deemed a debauched, perverted sexuality, was considered to have effects at the level of the Chilean population, since sexually debauched individuals were assumed to have a heredity that could degenerate the Chilean race. Moreover, as virility was seen as another important feature of the Chilean race, homosexuality and effeminacy qualified as two of its most concrete threats.

Singling out certain conducts as perversions implied that the Chilean state could expand its power and control to new areas, introducing a specific way of governing through the normalization of subjects and of the Chilean population to keep and protect the ideal of national identity rooted in racial purity and superiority. Foucault would define this style of governing the biopolitical: the Chilean state started to define biological areas of control of the Chilean population relating them to racial purity and superiority.²³ Several measures to regenerate and readapt these subjects were implemented in order to protect the country’s well-being and progress. Security mechanisms, then, had

to be installed around these asocial subjects so as to optimize the living conditions of the Chilean population. For instance, in 1928 and 1929, Ibáñez del Campo presented two bills to reform the Criminal Code in which sodomy, that is, the act as such, was no longer penalized, but homosexuals were criminalized because of the danger they posed. During the Ibáñez del Campo administrations, the homosexual became a morally abnormal individual, as he was considered a degenerate. The individual as a homosexual, not his sexual behavior, was thus deemed a degenerate subject who represented a threat to the Chilean population. Consequently, the homosexual had to be eliminated, but this did not always mean killing or murdering him directly, but rather indirectly. Foucault defines this kind of murder as “the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on” (*Society* 256).

The Chilean state opted for the expulsion of homosexuals as a way of indirectly murdering them. An elderly Pisagua local claimed to recall a group of about fifty young men being confined in the internment camp for some months, and the contemporary gay-rights organization of Santiago has cited the persecution of gays in Pisagua as an important marker in their history of repression and struggle (Frazier 168). In this way, Pisagua was prominent less as a political prison camp than as a detention center for homosexual men, certainly during General Ibáñez del Campo’s first presidency and perhaps also during his second term.

Still, little documentary evidence exists on the widely acknowledged policy of incarcerating homosexual men. An exception is a 1942 editorial debate in *El Tarapacá* that discussed the Ministry of Justice’s creation of a special homosexual section in the Pisagua internment camp, where professionals, using the most advanced techniques of psychiatric and rehabilitative care, would “reform” the prisoners. The first commentary in the published debate reacted to this policy and pleaded for its reversal.

During the second government of Ibáñez del Campo, the state materialized its position toward social hygienization by issuing the 11.625

Act, known as the Antisocial States Act, promulgated on September 21, 1954, and published in the Official Gazette on October 4, 1954, aimed at sanctioning homosexual practices.²⁴ By separating homosexuals, the Chilean state was protecting the lives of the Chilean population and ensuring that the purity and superiority of the Chilean race could become stronger and more vigorous. As Foucault would put it when addressing the relation between race and biopolitics, the war against the homosexual was seen as a way of improving Chile's race by "eliminating" the enemy, but also as a way of regenerating one's own race, so "the race to which we belong will become all the purer" (*Society* 257).

It must be said that in the two decades between the two governments of Ibáñez del Campo, there were other presidents who maintained this relationship between race and national identity. Just a few months before the beginning of World War II in 1939, President Pedro Aguirre Cerda delivered a presidential message in which he declared the significance of fortifying the Chilean race, to "make it healthy, allow it to thrive, and provide for it the joy of life." At the same time, he confirmed the commitment of the Chilean state to invest its financial resources to fight "the plagues that degrade our race" (quoted in Fernández Labbé 178–79). In those years, the fight against the degeneration and weakening of the Chilean race was of higher significance.

One of the reasons homosexuality was considered such a menace to the Chilean population and race was its intersexual state, because the above-mentioned Chilean leaders considered intersexuality as hermaphroditism. What we see here, then, is the danger of an indeterminacy of genders, not belonging to a specific gender, "masculine" or "feminine." This is specifically what contributes to the degeneration of the Chilean race and constitutes a menace obstructing progress in the country (Prieto Millán 33). In the case of Chile, male homosexuals thus implied the existence of a sexual difference that threatened the uniformity of the Chilean national identity as it refused to comply with the expectations of its standard identity.

These considerations regarding the male effeminate homosexual are addressed in *El lugar sin límites* or *Hell Has No Limits* by José

Donoso. Besides allowing us to look at the costs of modernization in the case of a small Chilean regional village, Talca, Donoso's novel also demonstrates that Chile's modernizing nationalist discourse purposely excluded men who practiced dissident genders and sexualities (but also prostitutes) as these subjects threatened modernity's momentum. They were a menace to the establishment (or reestablishment) of a modern Chilean national identity based on the purity and superiority of its race.

In addition, the analysis of this canonical book will allow me to discuss how the rejection of male effeminate homosexuals during the re-creation of the modern Chilean national identity has been extended to the Chilean LGBT community, where *travestis*, as Claudia Rodríguez explains, "are the most excluded" ("Se resiste" 22) because of their indeterminacy of gender.

The "In-Between" against Modernization in José Donoso's *Hell Has No Limits*

José Donoso is known for his modernist literary project, which disarticulates the possibility of a realist novel capable of encompassing a vision of totality (Fornazzari 13).²⁵ For José Miguel Oviedo, Donoso hails from the thriving vein of Chilean realism although, as the critic maintains, Donoso enriched and modified realism by introducing forms, topics, and especially obsessions, all of which were initially foreign to the realist model (*Historia* 332). In light of this, Donoso's literary work typically yields two types of critical readings: some emphasize the realism in his work, arguing that it describes the fragility and decadence of the Chilean upper classes by using a locally rooted, transparent language (Hugo Achugar, Hernán Vidal, Antonio Cornejo Polar), while others (Philip Swanson, Sharon Magnarelli, Ana María Dopico, Adriana Valdés) adopt a modernist perspective and posit that Donoso uses radical signifying strategies, exhibits a subversive and experimental attitude toward institutions and language, and rejects totalizing narratives (Fornazzari 15). These two perspectives suggest that Donoso's writing cultivates a tension between two forms: realism and modernism.

Donoso addressed the limitations of the realist form when he mentioned that, even though his first novel *Coronación* (1957) was written in accordance with the canons of simplicity, verisimilitude, social critique, and irony, he already knew then that these features of national taste were not the only means of excellence, and that, quite the contrary, “the baroque, the twisted, the excessive could broaden the possibilities of the novel” (Donoso, “Historia personal” 32). This amounts to what, in the words of Carlos Fuentes, we could name a “desecration and contamination of a sacred rhetoric” (30), in which we can also see a desecration of the sacred national identity through the development of a literary narrative that differs from the realist mode. This is precisely what Donoso does in *El lugar sin límites*, specifically by demonstrating that Chile’s modernizing nationalist discourse purposely excluded men who practiced dissident genders and sexualities. In both its contents and form, the novel resists and negates the ideal of national identity that the modern Chilean state established based on racial purity and superiority, and as threatened by homosexuality.

In the introduction to his collection of essays *José Donoso: La destrucción de un mundo* (1975), Antonio Cornejo Polar has argued that questioning identity has been a constant in Donoso’s work. This trait, Cornejo Polar notes, can be seen especially in *El lugar sin límites*, “which obsessively affirms the doubt about the sense of the identity of the world and of people” (Introducción 9). In this novel, then, and as Cornejo Polar argues, “Human beings become elusive in the multiplicity of their faces, and faces are destroyed as unusable masks, oblivious to any unchanging center” (10). Therefore, besides addressing the exclusion and elimination of men who practice dissident genders and sexualities, I contend that *El lugar sin límites* also resists and negates this exclusion and elimination because the novel affirms, both in its form and content, the possibilities of gender indeterminacy that were negated and punished by the Chilean state.

The narrative center of *El lugar sin límites* is a brothel, a marginal world that traffics in flesh, where old prostitutes live, including a *travesti*, Manuela, and an unattractive girl who runs the place. Japonesita. The novel affirms gender indeterminacy both at the narrative

level and through the treatment of the characters, especially Manuela, who, in the words of Severo Sarduy in his seminal essay on writing and *travestismo* (“Escritura/Travestismo”), embodies *travestismo* as inversion to its limits. Manuela, also known as Manuel González Astica, is presented as a “female” subject for some fifty pages until readers realize that Manuela is a *travesti*. This discovery occurs when the voice of Japonesita appears in the narrative, referring to Manuela as a “male” subject, calling her “father.” Japonesita, then, has a problem with Manuela appearing before her as “female” and not as a father: “Last year, after that Pancho thing, his daughter bawled him out saying she was ashamed of being the daughter of an old fairy like him” (Donoso, *Hell* 57). It is worth mentioning that the narrator of the novel does not refer to Manuela as a “male” subject; when referring to them, the narrative voice always represents Manuela in terms of *travestismo* or gender indeterminacy, showing us that it is the words of others that tend to destabilize this representation of Manuel González Astica / Manuela, as suggested by the following quote: “That morning they had seen the three Fariás sisters step off the train from Talca . . . two younger women also got off, and a man, if you could call him that. The women, watching from a careful distance, discussed what he might be: skinny as a broomstick, with long hair, his eyes were made up almost as much as the Fariás sisters” (74). Cornejo Polar has pointed out that *El lugar sin límites* has an unequivocally open and ambiguous verbal structure (Introducción 10), especially in regard to the voice of the narrator. At the beginning of the novel, we encounter a traditional third-person narrator who very quickly, and inconspicuously, paves the way for the characters’ direct expression, thus becoming the vehicle for many voices. The narrator is interrupted by the voices of several narrator-characters, as we note in the following example in which the narrative voice allows Manuela’s voice to take over: “She ran her tongue over her toothless gums: hot sawdust, and breath like rotten eggs. From drinking so much new wine to hurry the men out and close early. She gave a start—of course!—she opened her eyes and sat up in bed: Pancho Vega was in town . . . last year the beast got it into his head that she had to dance flamenco. . . . You bet! Big brute!

Think I'd dance for you, just look at you! I do that for gentlemen, for my friends" (Donoso, *Hell* 7–8). In the following passage, the voice of the narrator is interrupted by the voice of Japonesita: "La Manuela took hold of Japonesita's lank hair, squinted both eyes and looked at her, you have to try to look pretty, and began to untangle it—what good it is being a woman if you're not a flirt, that's what men like, silly, that's what they come here for, to forget the scarecrows they're married to, and with your hair this way, look, this is how you do it, now it looks nice . . . and la Manuela untangles it for her and here they put a ribbon, don't you have a pretty ribbon?" (55). These examples show that, in the novel, expression is always ambiguous and this makes it difficult to identify whether the narrator or one of the characters is speaking. The narrator does not reproduce the character's words, but rather takes their perspective. These alternating perspectives work in the novel as an interruption, producing the effect of a text with shared authorship. This assembly of voices and narrative consciousness is delivered in a fluid language with hardly any punctuation or pauses, collaborating with the mingling of voices and consciousnesses interrupting each other in the narration. In the following quotation we can see how difficult it is to know who is speaking or to determine the reliability of what is spoken: "Because the moon's out Japonesita said to herself, or maybe said out loud, or maybe Don Céspedes . . ." (158). Thus, the narrative voice is deliberately denying any certainty about the words, whether or not they have been spoken, and if so by whom.

Another instance of textual (and sexual) fluidity can be seen in the passage in which Big Japonesa, after making a bet with Alejandro Cruz, seduces la Manuela, an encounter in which they engender Japonesita. In this passage we see the agglutination of narrative voices and consciousnesses as they are narrating and being narrated with a fluid language. The voice of Manuela is interrupted by that of Big Japonesa:

She likes to do what she's doing here on the sheets with me.
She's pleased that I can't: not with anybody, tell me, pretty

Manuela, tell me not with any other woman before me; pretty Manuela, tell me I'm the first, the only, so I can have you all to myself my pretty little girl, my love, Manuelita I'm going to have you, I like your terrified body and all your fears and I want to destroy your fears, no, don't be afraid Manuela, no, not destroy them but gently smooth them away to reach a part of me that she, poor Big Japonesa, thought existed but doesn't exist and never has, it never has existed despite your touching and caressing me and murmuring. (Donoso, *Hell* 125)

At the same time, though, this fluid language complicates and erases binary genders and identities, transforming them into what Sarduy in the above-mentioned essay equates with *travestismo*. In Sarduy's words, "Transvestism, as practiced in Donoso's novel, may well be the best metaphor for writing: what Manuela makes us see is not a woman who might be hiding a man *beneath her appearance* . . . but the very fact of transvestism itself" (Sarduy "Escritura/Travestismo" 37). In the following passage, the language of Big Japonesa's narrative voice, a fluid and ambiguous language in which more than one narrative consciousness intervenes, becomes a vehicle for gender performativity as Manuel González Astica becomes la Manuela and enjoys the sexual encounter as Manuela. This passage suggests that gender identity is performative and is being constructed through language (John Austin, Judith Butler), inasmuch as the voices, engaged in an ambiguous and mobile language, undo la Manuela's biological gender:

No honey, Manuela, as if we were two women, look, see, our legs wound together, sex in sex, two identical sexes, Manuela, don't be afraid of my thighs moving, my hips, my mouth in yours, like two women . . . no, no you're the woman, Manuela, I'm the man, look how I'm taking off your panties and loosening your brassiere so your breasts will be bare and I can play with them, yes you have them Manuela, don't cry, you do have breasts, tiny like a little girl's, but you have them and that's why I love you. You talk and caress me and suddenly you tell

me, now Darling Manuela, now you can . . . I dreamed about my breasts being caressed and something happened while she was saying, yes little girl . . . and I feel her heat devouring me, me, a me that doesn't exist, and she helps me, laughing with me. . . . I stay, sleeping over her, and she says into my ear; as if in a dream: my sweet girl, my sweet boy, her words muffled in the pillow . . . because what I'm needing so much now no longer exists, that you and that me I'd like so desperately to call to from this corner. (Donoso, *Hell* 126–27)

In this passage we see how language is seeking to erase gender distinctions between the gender binary, not only for la Manuela but also for Big Japonesa. The narrative destabilizes any identitarian consciousness that may lead us to a recognition of the self as “masculine” or “feminine.” As we have already pointed out, Donoso's novel, in addition to including a character who is gender fluid—Manuela—is also written from that same perspective.

So far, we have seen how *El lugar sin límites* addresses the exclusion and persecution of homosexuals by the Chilean state through a disarticulation of language and gender barriers. In what follows, I will also delve into the ways gender politics are linked to a critique of caudillismo and the modernization process, especially through the character of Don Alejandro Cruz, the man who dares Big Japonesa to seduce Manuela. He is a hacendado, owner of the vineyards surrounding the little village of Estación El Olivo, and a congressman for Talca. Cruz is described as follows: “He's like God here in town. He does whatever he wants. They're all afraid of him. Don't you know he owns all the vineyards, all of them, as far as the eye can see? And he's so good that when someone offends him, like the guy who was bothering you, he immediately forgives and forgets. He is either a very good man or else he doesn't have time to worry about people like us” (Donoso, *Hell* 86). For Cruz, the whole village is an economic entity, his economic entity: “Projects, always projects. Now he's selling us land here in Estación, but I know him and I haven't fallen for it yet. According to him, everything's on its way up. Next year he's going to parcel out a block

of his land and he's going to make a town out of it, he's going to sell model homes, he says, with easy payments, and when he's sold all the lots he's going to have electricity brought to town and then we'll be riding high for sure" (86). As Fernando Moreno Turner argues, Cruz's economic power is immense, it is the generator, not only of space but also of human life because, as highlighted in the novel, "They said he was Don Alejo's son. But then they'd say that about everybody, Miss Lila, Japonesita, and God knows who else, every blue-eyed peon for miles around but not me" (41). Cruz's political power is compounded by his political ambitions to become a congressman, for which he also conquers the people's votes through his promises of development (electricity):

He has a wife, of course, a pretty blond, very ladylike, distinguished I'd say, and another woman in Talca and who knows how many more in the capital. And all of them working like dogs for him during election . . . and on election day he even came with a truck and anyone who didn't want to vote was thrown in by force and let's go my friend, to San Alfonso to vote for me, and he gave them money and they were so happy with the whole thing that later on they went around asking when there were going to be more elections. (Donoso, *Hell* 86–87)

As a paternalistic figure, the night he wins the election and Manuela is invited to perform at the celebration party, Cruz, along with other men of the village mock and humiliate Manuela when they "prove" that they are a *travesti*:

The crowd broke into applause as la Manuela dropped panting in the chair next to Don Alejo.

Let's dance, sweetie. . . ."

. . .

La Manuela, head thrown back and body arched, pinned herself to Don Alejo and together they danced a few steps

surrounded by the cheering men forming a circle around them. The postmaster came forward and snatched la Manuela from Don Alejo. They managed one turn around the floor before the mayor took her away from him and more and more came from the circle that closed in on la Manuela. Someone stroked her while she was dancing, another rubbed her leg. The vineyard boss of a neighboring estate tucked up the skirt, and when they saw that, the men grouped around her, trying to carry her off, helped raise the skirt over her head, binding her arms as if in a strait jacket. Embarrassed and choking with laughter, they felt her skinny, hairy legs and lank backside.

“She’s hot.”

“She’s steaming.”

“Let’s throw her in the canal.”

Don Alejo stood up.

“Let’s go.”

“We’ve got to cool her off.”

...

And they pitched la Manuela into the water. The men who were watching her from above, standing between the blackberries and the canal, doubled over with laughter, pointing at the figure that struck poses and danced waist deep in water with her dress floating around her like a wide stain singing “El Relicario.” (Donoso, *Hell* 91–92).

Don Alejo participates in this humiliation in which power and those who hold it undo the performativity of Manuela, especially, as the narration indicates, at that moment in which her flamenco dancer dress, a crucial garment in her process of *travestismo*, becomes a stain. These subjects, who represent the Chilean state, seem to need fixed and immovable gender identities—male/female—as can be seen in their efforts to reveal that Manuela is in fact biologically a man.

This hypothesis is supported, moreover, by Cruz’s bet that Big Japonesa will not be able to seduce Manuela to have sex with her.

Cruz promises Big Japonesa that if she manages to do so, he will hand over to her the property deeds of the house where she runs the brothel, which she rents from him: “I can excite la Manuela no matter how queer he is, there wasn’t one who wouldn’t have given anything to be in la Manuela’s place . . . just try and get that queer hot for you. If you manage to excite him and he performs like a man, fine, I’ll give you whatever you ask for. But it has to be with us watching, and put some action into it” (Donoso, *Hell* 94–95). Big Japonesa replies: “This house” (95).

It is worth mentioning that this bet implies the interruption of a performativity to move to another one, a performativity around the enjoyment of power by attempting to force a stable and fixed gender, that is male or female, on la Manuela. Power, then, is portrayed as that which relies on a stable, fixed discourse of gender, whereas Manuela’s gender indeterminacy defies this possibility. Likewise, this bet involves obtaining land, property, to perpetuate a system based on trafficking in flesh, such as the brothel. Don Alejo, looking through the window while Big Japonesa and Manuela have sex, enjoys the effect of his power to alter sexual roles and determine sexual identities, eliminating the gender indeterminacy that Manuela represents.

Perhaps for this reason, *El lugar sin límites* ends by showing how Cruz betrays Manuela. They must be eliminated because their existence is not suitable for the Chilean state, represented in this novel by Don Alejo Cruz. They are not a subject that can be regenerated to become productive for the state. At the celebration party for Cruz’s election victory, he promises Manuela to protect them from anyone who dares to assault them because of their *travestismo* or their gender indeterminacy, as is the case of Pancho Vega. However, later, when Vega returns to the village and pursues la Manuela in order to physically assault them, Cruz does nothing to prevent it, thus allowing their destruction:

He had to run this way, toward the station, toward the outskirts of El Olivo because there on the other side of the town’s

limits Don Alejo was waiting for him, and he was the only one who could save him. His face ached, his frail ankles, his bare feet cut by the rocks or a piece of glass or a tin can, but he had to keep running because Don Alejo promised he would be all right, that he would take care of him, that he needn't be afraid anymore if he stayed near him, it was a promise, almost an oath, and he had stayed and now they were coming to kill him. Don Alejo, Don Alejo. He can help me . . . before he could move, the men burst through the bushes and fell upon him like hungry animals . . . nothing is left and now la Manuela scarcely sees, scarcely hears, scarcely feels, sees, no, doesn't see, and they escape through the blackberry bushes and she is left alone by the river that separates her from the vineyards where Don Alejo waits, benevolent. (Donoso, *Hell* 152–55)

Several things are at stake in this novel. First the display of a language and a narrative that affirms the subversive role of gender indeterminacy. Likewise, it shows, through the character of Cruz, that the state, with its promises of development and progress, requires the establishment of fixed female/male identities, a requirement that the novel challenges both in its narrative language and its structure. Subjects who, like Manuela, cannot be brought into the fold have to be re-formed and if this is not possible, they must be symbolically or literally eliminated.

The novel, though, also invites us to reflect on the current state of *travestis* in contemporary Chile. In a 2021 Latin American Studies Association (LASA) conference panel where Joseph Pierce, along with Diego Falconí, and Claudia Rodríguez, discussed Pierce's article "I Monster: Embodying Trans and Travesti Resistance in Latin America," Rodríguez noted that in her experience *travestis*, besides being considered monsters by the Chilean state, are also condemned by other LGBT subjects and movements. For instance, she recounted that in the 1990s, just at the end of the military dictatorship, some of her activist *compañeres de lucha gay* would ask her not to introduce herself as *travesti* but as transgender or transexual. According to

Rodríguez, *travestis* are “the most dangerous, the most criminals, the most infected. The most excluded” (Rodríguez, “Se resiste” 22). This might be related to the fact that *travestis*, such as Rodríguez, experience their subjectivity as one that does not represent either the “masculine” or the “feminine,” as stated and limited by normativity, which makes *travesti* subjectivity vulnerable to rejection, denial, and violence. At the LASA panel, Rodríguez also explained that she and other *travestis* modified their bodies, copying the “female” body as an act of survival because in this way they are perceived as women and not as beings who present an indeterminacy of gender.

We thus see that the rejection of gender indeterminacy during the re-creation of the modern Chilean national identity has been extended to the Chilean LGBT community. If *El lugar sin límites* shows us how Manuela must be eliminated because their existence is not suitable for the Chilean state, represented in this novel through the character Don Alejo Cruz, we could extend this reflection to the current realities of the *travesti* in contemporary Chile, even inside the LGBT community. Thus, *El lugar sin límites* allows us to reflect on the processes of normalization happening inside dissident communities, such as the Chilean LGBT community, and the new exclusions occurring inside these spaces that are supposed to be safe.

Horacio Legrás has noted that the historical collapse of the modern Latin American nation-state failed to grant equal citizenship to all its inhabitants (86). This is reflected in the two texts discussed in this chapter, Arguedas’s *The Fox from Up Above and the Fox from Down Below* and Donoso’s *Hell Has No Limits*. Both texts address the fact that the modernization of the Latin American state implied the (re)establishment of a national identity that in Peru implied placing the Indigenous heterosexual man as a symbol of its national identity, thereby excluding other subjects such as women, homosexuals, *maricones*, and Afro-Peruvians. In the case of Chile, we have seen how homosexuals and effeminate men were considered a threat to a discourse of purity and superiority of the Chilean race, the symbol of Chile’s national identity.