

The Female Bildungsroman in The Summer of Flying Fish (Marcela Said, Chile, 2013)

El Bildungsroman femenino en El verano de los peces voladores (Marcela Said, Chile, 2013)

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Abstract

The perspective of the child and the adolescent in the Latin America cinema not only provides an insight to the individual process of development but also serves as an intriguing national allegory. By examining the parameters and themes provided by the genre which deals with the growth of the protagonist from youth to adulthood—Bildungsroman—, Marcela Said's movie The Summer of Flying Fish (2013), explores the learning path and the rebellion experienced by the adolescent subject in the context of socio-economic and cultural tensions between the Chilean middle class and the mapuche communities. In our reading, the adolescent's social and emotional trajectory could be considered a symbolic failure, not only on the personal level but on the socio-cultural one. Through suggestive stylistic techniques, Said suggests the different manifestations of uncertainty, helplessness, and inability of the young female adult to defy the sociocultural, patriarchal, and bourgeois system to which she belongs.

Keywords

Chilean cinema, contemporary Latin American cinema, female Bildungsroman.

Resumen

La perspectiva infanto-juvenil en la cinematografía latinoamericana asume funciones significativas no sólo al revelar los intersticios del joven en desarrollo, sino como alegoría de la problemática en la construcción de imaginarios nacionales. A partir de las pautas y temáticas que provee la historia de formación—*Bildungsroman*—, la producción de Marcela Said, *El verano de los peces voladores* (2013), explora la experiencia de aprendizaje y rebelión del sujeto juvenil en el contexto de choques culturales, sociales y raciales entre la clase media chilena y la población marginal mapuche. Sin embargo, esta trayectoria educativa da cuenta de un potencial fracaso en la esfera personal. Mediante un estilo sugestivo y evocador, Said consigue reproducir los niveles de incertidumbre, postración e inhabilidad de la mujer adolescente para luchar contra el sistema sociocultural, patriarcal y burgués al que pertenece.

Palabras clave

Cine chileno; cine contemporáneo latinoamericano; Bildungsroman femenino.

1. Introduction

The child-adolescent presence in Latin American cinema has taken on a role of reflection and denouncement of conditions of exclusion, marginality and social injustice. Not only that, stages of evolution and crisis that constitute the essence of the stories of childhood and adolescent education in cinema and/or literature also serve to metaphorize certain phases of national transformation¹. In her study on the child in post-dictatorship Argentine cinema, Sophie Dufays argues that the destination of the child protagonist is allegorical of the historic situation of the national community in which it is inserted (2014:98). The child is not only considered the future of the nation, a potential adult that will carry the behaviors and thoughts of previous generations, but is also the latent embodiment of change (Browning, 2001:2)². In the context of Chile, the cinematographic production of Marcela Said (Santiago, 1972), *The Summer of Flying Fish*³ (2013), allows one to examine the state of the nation from the character evolution typical of the *Bildungsroman* genre, in which the multi-faceted process of maturity, learning and integration of the young protagonist into society is analyzed. The individual development of the young adolescent female in the film implies an awakening of conscience to the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic differences that the Mapuche otherness establishes⁴.

Throughout Chilean history, the Mapuche people have operated within the colonial structure of order in which they have been made invisible and classified as racially inferior while at the same time the state has legitimized via legislative strategies, the confiscation of their lands and violation of their civil rights (Gómez-Barris, 2016: 92). These minority communities, victims of geographic displacement implemented in the 19th century, by way of the Pacifying of La Araucanía and reductional policy, have been systematically exploited and given negative stereotypes and socially undervalued. The progressive exclusion of the Mapuche that began during colonization, including repression and dispossession implemented during the dictatorship, to the most recent conflicts of the neoliberal era,

continues exposing them to institutionalized forms of racism and a lack of consensus for a national Chilean multicultural project (Richards, 2010: 66-89).

Despite the Mapuche subject having varied between exoticism, victimization, terrorism, and barbarians in the national imaginary, more recently there has been a deliberate tendency to seek to remedy said stereotypes in favor of resolve the inequality in intercultural relationships and daily exchanges in Chilean society. These attempts to recognize the legitimacy of a Mapuche collective identity opposed to the historical amnesia of the conservative elites is reflected for instance in the report *Pueblos Originarios y sociedad nacional en Chile* (2013), or in the indigenous presence in other contemporary artistic works like the productions *The Summer*⁵ and, the most recent, *Mala junta* (Claudia Huaiquimilla, Chile, 2016) whose fictions shed light on the on-going historical conflicts of ethnic-racial and political nature.

The first full-length film by Said expands the confines of Mapuche representation enabling a sociopolitical interpretation of the nation from the *Bildungsroman* format. Said educational stories serve to present and understand the power structures that are exhibited, to a lesser degree, in different generations, family dynamics and in conventional socio-cultural relationships. In the study on the literary implications of the *Bildungsroman*, Marianne Hirsch observed the double character—biographical and social—of these stories in which society becomes the antagonist (1979: 296-8). In order to conform to a sense of identity and as part of the goals of socialization, the adolescent subject needs to conciliate its own individual identity with the conditions pre-established by the collective. Not in vain, the centrality of the Mapuche conflict in *The Summer* will expose the complex relation with the otherness, the disparate social interests and the cultural dissonances the adolescent subject must face throughout her education. This confrontation, on occasions traumatic and hostile with the environment, brings us to consider the following questions proposed in order to understand the representation of young peo-

ple in Hispano-American cinematography: "Are family and state values questioned via the perspective and voice of young protagonists? How does the representation contribute to the ethical and moral debates in societies that have suffered violence, intolerance and injustice?" (Seminet & Rocha, 2012: 2, translated by author).

The focalization of the young people on the big screen in *The Summer* is fundamental for the process of exteriorizing open antagonisms in contemporary Chile and thus offer, from an alternate and marginal perspective, a possible turning point to rethink the prevalent social processes and practices. However, that gradual process of social awareness that characterizes the Bildungsroman genre will not be exempt of limits and failures, especially when referring to the multifaceted development of the feminine subject. In this article we track the process of social and emotional adaption of the young protagonist in *The Summer* following some features assigned to the feminine Bildungsroman within the context of systematic inequalities in the Chile multicultural and of the intrinsic limitations of the woman to rebel against the normative circumscriptions of gender, socio-ethnicity, politics and culture.

2. Between the personal and the collective: new modes of narrating reality

Chilean cinema recently exhibits a refocusing on the subjectivity and in the individual identity that shows socio-cultural, aesthetic, and ideological changes that society has experienced in the last decades. Cavallo and Maza coin the term *Novísimo Chilean Cinema* to refer to this different generation of filmmakers of the new millennium (2011:14).⁶ This type of emerging cinema claims directors that share the experience of having been formally trained in the art of cinematography, the reiterated concern for the personal space as territory of conflict and the treatment of topics such as family fragmentation, the trauma of substitute families, the alienation of orphans

and the building of loyalties with strangers (Cavallo & Maza, 2011: 15). In addition, Urrutia perceives a similar change in Chilean cinema which he calls centrifuge cinema, which "seems to not believe in anything and lends itself to the display of some images (movement, landscape, body, light) that are empty in content (in terms of discourse and allegory) and expressively ambiguous" (2013: 16). This tendency to move away from the center and towards "weak events and risky relationships", largely distanced from an explicit conflict and without great local references, therefore, is going to generate introspective productions in which the subject and space are more important (Urrutia, 2014:19-20). The consensus of the critique regarding this "exhibition of the personal" or "rhetoric of the individual" gives way to a liberation of the ideology or reference given for instance to the *New Chilean Cinema* of the 1960s (Saavedra, 2013: 21).

Without losing sights of these strong winds of change, we discuss *The Summer* as a production that is positioned in the political realm, while at the same time exploits certain aesthetic and stylistic features associated with the concept of "centrifuge cinema", "the personal dimension" and the "novísimo spirit". Not only that, Said constitutes a break from paradigms of classic cinema in terms of temporary, spatial and narrative use, but in contrast to other recent emblematic productions, *The Summer* does not ignore the sociopolitical context and ethnic-racial tensions that are found both visible and invisible in the national imaginary and in the discursive practices. Instead, thanks to this politicized backdrop, the young protagonist's character development is treated. In other words, the geo-political sphere is the catalyst based on which the limits between the personal and the collective, the intimate and the political, the Mapuche and the no Mapuche will be debated. Or, as Saavedra suggests, upon reflecting on contemporary Chilean cinema, the figures of the personal—its expression, definition and language—could also be interpreted as an ideological discourse resulting from social phenomena and cultural discourses, for example, of the dynamics of neoliberalism and globalization (2013:16).⁷

In *The Summer* there is a tandem relationship between the personal and the collective where the reflexive character of the drama requires a reformulation of the socio-political and ethnic factors infiltrated by the ambiguities of the subjectivity and the landscape. In addition, it formally responds to structures preferred by signature cinema where the classic line between cause and effect is destroyed, there is a preference towards the strategic use of sound and voice, and there is a strong tendency toward the suggestive detail, less conventional angles, the strangeness of the frame, imperfect insinuation and arbitrary cuts.

The drama in *The Summer* is presented from the perspective of the adolescent Manena (Mane) (Francisca Walker) who, with her parents, Francisco (Gregorio Cohen) and Teresa (María Izquierdo), goes on vacation to their country house located in a wooded area in southern Chile, in which the surrounding areas are inhabited by Mapuche communities. Francisco, owner of the property titles of his indigenous workers — whom they call “don Francisco” — is obsessed with exterminating the carp fish that “infect” the artificial pond that he has made on his land. To get the results he wants he uses the services of a young Mapuche Pedro (Carlos Cayuqueo) who secretly takes on an active role in the collective resistance against the oppression of the landowner. Don Francisco, on the other hand, restocks his ammunition: he uses dogs trained to attack, dynamiting the lake to kill the carps and installing electric fences to prevent the Mapuche from hunting on “his land”. If on one hand, the relationships that the *wingka* (white man) establishes with the land is utilitarian and non-solidarity with the environment, in the Mapuche cosmology (people of the earth), nature is integral to the meaning of community life. As a result, the imminent class between these two visions of earth and the environment in *The Summer* will give way to an undeclared war that will not take long to claim lives.

During this summer of risky relationships, Mane explores her erotic desires towards Lorca (Guillermo Lorca) — a family friend who is vacationing with them — while she discovers the “other”

that Pedro embodies. Through him, there is a knowledge of the Mapuche culture that emphasizes a struggle for the land and free access to its resources. The landowners from the city and the Mapuche communities represent two different worlds that coexist, but whose pacts are about to break. This conflict escalates when sporadic power outages begin at night, the mysterious death of animals and fires in the forest as part of the “signs” that the Mapuche send to defend their dignity and right to the earth. The climax of the conflicts between the inhabitants and don Francisco occurs when the watchman on his property fires his gun lets the dogs loose, seriously injuring a Mapuche. This incident does not worry don Francisco. However, the Mapuches’ discontent is unphased and, from a fictitious servility, such opposition will lead to another forest fire followed by the strange death of Pedro, whose body is found covered in a sheet. Mane manages to recognize him because of his unique, hand-painted tennis shoes.

This climax of violence is contrasted with the serenity of the image at the end of the film: Mane, eyes shut, floating peacefully in the pond. It is a puzzling and personal ending, but at the same time is flooded with symbolic reverberations. Thus, *The Summer* uses a suggestive style provoking that, many of the conclusions the viewer makes, are based on intuition, deduction or ambiguity. Once exception to this vagueness will be the building of the relationships of gender and power, given that they will be clearly defined and will operate according to the patriarchal, colonial structures tied to the historical struggles of the Mapuche.

3. The southern landscape or the juxtaposition of signs, sounds and differences

In the narrative of *The Summer* the landscape serves a role that is poetic and allegoric that is related to the educative process of the adolescent, who goes acquiring awareness of herself, her body, and her environment. In fact, when referring to 21st century Chilean cinema, Villarroel

discovers a thematic link with the imaginary of the local, the country's own problems, symbolic places and collective memory (2005: 155). This presence of the landscape is confirmed in *The Summer* because it is "a symbolic place", from which a range of differences and conflicts stem that go from the subjective to the social, from the economic to the ethnic-racial.

Expanding on this preponderance of the landscape, current cinema subscribes to a movement towards the outside that shows a new relationship between subject and space in which the character becomes passive or simply contemplates and nature acquires its own, independent life, beyond servicing or merely containing the characters (Urrutia, 2014: 16 y 109). Nevertheless, despite in *The Summer* the landscape is autonomous and imposing, it is also a political locus that frames the conflict, influences, molds and polarizes the development of the characters. Chile's southern landscape is presented as a device for personal contemplation in the Mane emotional development and also evokes the dangerous volatility of the intercultural relations the country has experienced from its colonial era to present day. More specifically, the space highlights the values in relation to the earth, resources, community solidarity that separate the human groups and their motivations.

Likewise, the social concerns in *The Summer* are expressed via a symbolic language and space that juxtapose the personal with the collective, the expected and the shown, the visible and the invisible, the perceived and the occurred, the Mapuche and the non-Mapuche. The film's evocative style indirectly links the landscape, sounds, individual and political. One example is when at the beginning of the film fog rolls across the screen and when it dissipates it reveals a silhouette (Pedro) using a net to take fish out of the pond and later leaves rowing a boat. Another cut takes us to Mane smiling walking her dog through the dense forest when, suddenly, she loses sight of it. Panic takes over her, you can hear barking. Seconds later, now back at the house, her father scolds her and asks Ester, the Mapuche housekeeper, to tell her about the dangers of the forest. This

staging is not by chance as it puts both Pedro and Mane in the vortex of the differences and conflicts that are still unknown to the viewer based on a connotative landscape that adjusts the emotional decibels of the filmic narrative.

As these first sequences come to show, there is a rhetoric of fear of the woods, to be afraid of the hidden "outside", that is connected with the Mapuche. The mystery and fear, that the outside landscape transmits, is summarized in the saturation of close ups that focus on the concerned and questioning facial expressions of Mane. Hence, the ghostly fog and the unpleasant use of sound and impenetrable quiet of the outside articulate a sensorial framework *in crescendo* waiting to be detonated—like dynamite— by the dehumanizing and predatory maneuvers of globalization and the other powers at play. Behind a pristine landscape the loose pieces of a fragile balance are revealed, que lies, for example, between the land owner and his employees, between the adolescent mentality and sexual desire, between trust and suspicion of the authority, between confrontation and retreat in the face of a crisis and between the valuation of the environment of behalf of the original inhabitants and the "legal" property owners. In fact, the geographic territory for the Mapuche implies belonging to a community (Guerra, 2013: 125). In contrast with this mentality, for the landowners of the film, nature is under his demand, in a kind of tyranny that extends to the Mapuche inhabitants and employees.

The disintegration of the gears of the colonial system is also foretold by signs from nature. Hence, the unsettling presence of animals: a dog trapped in the water, a bird impacting the windshield of a car, a dead sheep's head, sounds from animals that cannot be seen or that hang lifelessly from trees become obvious signs that is something is coming. Moreover, during Mane's walks through the forest, an exercise that repeats, there are small revelations that fill the character with questions: she discovers Lorca there with a girl (who could just as well be his sister or cousin) and secret hunting of animals on behalf of the Mapuche. One must note the

use of a *travelling* shot lasting over a minute of Mane moving alone through the thick fog of the forest. It's a representative sequence of her distressing *pathos* the precedes the disappointment of her known coordinates. These walks are imperative in the psycho-emotional advance of the adolescent subject: doubtful and unbalanced, unable to "see it" all, but sensing that she is not "seeing" it all. In the analysis on the function of the child narrator in literature, Andrea Jęftanovic sees in that "incomplete cognition" and "partial comprehension of the facts" the perfect strategy that offers to the child a distinction and a range of possibilities in the face of power structures (2011: 30). In addition, Ann Kaplan in *Looking for the Other* gives observation a cognitive power in which "seeing constitutes the way a child learns about the culture to which it belongs. Thus, he learns that seeing, that avoiding seeing, what is visible, what is invisible, who controls the perspective, who is object of observation. The subjects in a culture also constructed as capable of "seeing" or no" (1997, xvi).

For this reason, in adolescent learnings it is fundamental to challenge those parameters of what is accessible and what is off-limits from the perspective and, above all, in the challenge to surpass them there is the principle of resistance and the potential change. Until now, Mane's reality is restricted to a partialized field of vision that gradually goes expanding as she discovers that which being plotted behind the back of the authority. Like the night when she sees the passing of the trucks filled with logs, a silent but conclusive massive extraction of trees that suggests the inequality in terms of resource distribution. Likewise, the visual and auditory obstructions in the film suggest the incapacity to have access to a reality different from one's own. Mane's said lack of vision—whether in the form of darkness, fog or in the most figurative sense, ignorance—is also shown in the car scenes or while moving on foot through the forest where you cannot see fully what the lens captures. This type of takes propose a discourse of the incomplete in which the camera is eloquent.

Another way to show the reality outside or the Mapuche otherness in *The Summer* is by sound effects. Sound is complementary to the visual and it is also essential to sensorial taking out and shaking of the world of the young protagonist. Chion (1993) has coined the term *audiospectator* to refer to the importance of the *audiover*. There is an added value that comes from the union of sound and image, producing a "audiovisual illusion". To facilitate the interpretation of the rights of passage and the diegesis of the characters in *El verano*, one must review the presence of what Chion calls the *word-emanation* or the background voices. Although these voices are not necessarily heard or understood, they are linked to the emotions and are fundamental in terms of expressing a psychological environment like is done with rarefaction (long silences), multilingualism (use of foreign language), *la palabra inmersa* (chiaroscuro of conversations) and the loss of intelligibility (mumbling).

The sounds in *El verano*, on occasions of enigmatic origin, contribute to create an affective atmosphere that tightens the links between the otherness in conflict like is done with the use of multilingualism. It is evident that the dialogue of the locals in the Mapuche language—which occurs without subtitles or dubbing—accentuates cultural and linguistic alienation of Mane, who listens without understanding (as well as the viewers) the conversation of Pedro with the members of his community.⁸ In addition, in other instances of the film *la palabra inmersa* and the loss of intelligibility, just as defined by Chion, makes for the voice to fade out, losing definition and clarity and, therefore, adds to the complexity of the audiovision and emotional effect on the spectator. When don Francisco and Mane arrive at the scene of the "incident" at the end of the film where the police are informing the father of what happened to Pedro, the impenetrable dialogue of this scene is bothersome. This dialogue should be crucial for the spectator to hear, but only a word here or there is discernable. This scene exploits the use of sound of "negative images", or in other words, noises that only produce an image that is not presented itself (Chion, 1993:179). Paradoxically, the

desire to understand the mumbled dialogue of the police generates a sense of urgency in the spectator, that seconds later, makes sense upon seeing the body of Pedro lying there and which Mane seems to anticipate with her upset facial expression.

In general terms, the expressive language of the visual and sound elements in *The Summer* transmit, obliquely and at the same time cumulatively, the sociopolitical and ethnic knots of the plot such as: the struggle for natural resources, access to the land, the complexity of colonist relationships and, finally, paying the price with life itself, like in the case of Pedro, the search to repair the injustices that the elite landowners perpetuate in the rural surroundings. The environment, with its setting and sounds, is placed at the center of the historic disputes put up by the Mapuche and, simultaneously, reveal the affective and psychic states of the young Mane, making way for a development that is not only emotional but also social and ideologically characteristic of the *Bildungsroman*.

4. Feminine *Bildungsroman*: Routes of rebellion and disappointment

The Summer uses the *Bildungsroman* structure to show, via the educating of young Mane, the spaces of ethnic and economic tension between the Mapuche and the bourgeoisie land owners. In the characterization of Buckley (1974), the *Bildungsroman* is composed of a series of factors that include the focus on childhood, the generational conflict, leaving home, city education, living out romantic adventures and the desire to search for one's personal identity and artistic vocation (18). In *The Summer* contains some of these features like leaving the city to facilitate an education on the Mapuche otherness, that will irreparably change the direction of the ethical-ideological concerns and dilemmas of Mane, and challenge the statutes of the colonial patriarchy from a marginal position.

In her study on educational stories, Julia Kushigian (2013) warns of the importance of the

Bildungsroman in the Latin American novel as a model of collective development for marginalized and often times feminine subjects in favor of a moral and rebellious vision on social, individual and collective movements (16). In this sense, the learning process of the adolescent subject in *The Summer* will serve to expose some pending issues from the national discourse using the enclave of the father-daughter relationship, where for the first time the limits and terms of the patriarchal authority and its hegemonic ideology are tested. Thus, the transgressive character of the feminine *Bildungsroman* is fundamental to reveal the repressive mechanisms imposed by the generic system prevalent in society (Lagos, 1996:35).

Despite its constrictions, the child-adolescent subject develops unusual mechanisms with which it puts into motion resistance strategies when facing the power structures. When referring to child narrators in literature, Jeftanovic states that they are offered the place that history still does not recognize of them and gives them a dominating perspective that exercises violence to destroy the order they inherited (2011:31). Plus, the power of the child narrator is defined on the basis of his limitations in regards to the adult conscience, given that "there is always going to be a possibility of alternative discourse" used to "inscribe a resistance, a "reverse" discourse of language and tyrannical ideologies" (Jeftanovic, 2011:29). In *The Summer* it will be Mane who will present a threat to the traditional paradigms upon questioning the nature of the ethnic-political and gender order that were familiar to her. It could be said that the resistance led by Pedro in the face of tyranny exercised by don Francisco is parallel to the challenge to the paternal authority by Mane inside the home. In her universe the reins are held by men. Plus, they are at the head of the political discussions, arrogant, empowered, capricious and full of prejudices towards the Mapuche minorities. Bourgeoisie women are summarized by the sickening passiveness of Teresa, her mother, whose tastes are made to look ridiculous, is carried away with her frivolities and depends excessively on her employees. Facing the woman trained on social graces of yesteryear represented by Teresa, Mane must

represent another generation which rejects these practices and contexts. Now, the power to become an antithesis of the patriarchal conduct is a particular challenge for Mane if we consider the disadvantages female protagonists face in educational novels: "While the hero learns to be an independent adult the woman must learn to be submissive and to depend on the protection of another for her survival. As the aspirations of the young lady are obstructed by society, the protagonist is destined to disappointment" (Lagos, 1996:34-5).

The thematic motive of "disappointment as destination" operates in *Mane* on various levels: the romantic disillusionment with the young man from her class, breaking up of the figure of the *father of the family* and the appearance of the practices of ethnic and socio-environmental injustice. In many senses, she reproduces the model of the individual-society interaction of educational novels in which "the main character does not control his destiny, but rather reacts to his circumstances" (Albin, 2003:23). The circumstances of endemic justice discovered by Mane confront her with a code of values seen before as static and normalized. Cinematographically, the repetition of two shots between father and daughter in clear visual antagonism, reproduce the disconformity that puts said *status quo* to the test. This rebellious attitude is proven when Mane questions —from inside the car— the aggressive arrest of Mapuche inhabitants by local police, to which father responds issuing an ideological judgement: "they had to have done something wrong, if not, the cops wouldn't be there taking them out of their homes. It can't go on, they are out of control". This pattern of key events for this story repeats on three occasions: the arrest of Mapuche neighbors, the strange encounter with a neighbor on the highway on a rainy night and the finding of Pedro's body. The automobile becomes the border that divides the factions, producing a false sense of security for the landowners that only makes worse their socio-ethical short sidedness of the oppression they exercise over the Mapuche otherness.

The friendship between Pedro and Mane becomes crucial given that, as Kushigian (2003) war-

ns, learning is carried out via cultural maturity, or recognition of what is different from one in that process of interaction with the Other. What is possible is a better understanding of self and that Other, creating a combination of dissonance and harmony in each process stage (23). In that interaction with the other there are limitations preestablished by the socio-cultural and economic positioning that are expressed in a song that Pedro shares with Mane:

Hopefully you can understand the things that are never the color that they appear, that in general people almost don't care about if you don't have anywhere to eat lunch, no matter how much I look at the horizon I never manage to see what they often see, hopefully you can understand.

As detailed in the song, the issues of vision and understanding are expressed in the symbolic language of nature and the filmic motives of the fog and lack of visibility. The revealing of reality —ending the ambiguity and fog— reaches its climax upon Pedro's death, victim of the capitalist bourgeois oppression represented by don Francisco.

Towards the end of the film, Mane pauses captivated while looking at the little blond girl whom she is playing with. Is she the model of Lorca's picture? Is it perhaps his cousin or sister? What is certain is that the lens continues to focus on the little girl as if through that taciturn contemplation there can be found a sinister warning. It is no coincidence then that this scene precedes the visual impact of the cadaver of Pedro moments later. Furthermore, the neuralgic violence contained in this encounter with Pedro's corpse is foreshadowed in one of Lorca's paintings which portrays a girl dressed in white in front of a gingerbread house surrounded by raspberries that simulate blood and the mutilated body of a cow hanging by its feet. Another one of his paintings is the sketch of a girl with blond hair lying on white sheets with a serenely yet absent facial expression. The last image of Mane floating in the water is similar to the second girl in the bed, lying face up and abandoned to the pleasure of the stillness and the inertia and, why not, of death and the contingent crossing of borders (Images 1 and 2). What do these angelical and impassive girls re-

present? Are they a warning of the violence that resulting from the affections of Mane or is it the border of innocence lost and the entrance to an adult world of insuperable and historic inequalities?

Image 1. One of the paintings of the girls of the young Lorca.



Source: Jirafa films.

Image 2. Final scene of Mane floating in the lake.



Source: Jirafa films.

In either case, the final image of Mane in the water can be interpreted as a culminating phase in the process of feminine education. From the symbolic language point of view, immersion in water means "return to the preformal, with a double meaning of death and dissolution, but also of rebirth and new circulation, since immersion multiplies the potential of life" (Cirlot, 2003: 69). The body of Mane in water—in position of erotic content and suggestive laxity—

could imply the crossing of thresholds that represent the death of innocence and the beginning of adulthood. At the same time, that indecipherable inaction that the position of the protagonists suggests could be seen as a passive submersion into disenchantment and, in the worst case, to social conformity or the ideological colonialism that her parents propose. In that case, this attitude of confinement to the known order would confirm one of the differences with the masculine model of the Bildungsroman, that details the restrictions of the feminine protagonists: "While the hero grows, matures and develops, the heroine experiences a regressive development. If adult age means independence and autonomy for the man, for the woman—on the contrary—it is the synonym of oppression and subjugation" (Lagos, 1996:35).

To compensate the incongruity between the challenges and the expectations between both genres, the narrations of feminine education seek to break with the conservative model of conduct imposed on girls via various strategies, such as the use of irony or the different degrees of alienation in the protagonists, such as mental illness, physical illness, suicide or death (Lagos, 1996:35-6). Alienation would present the education of the feminine subject in terms of a "decrease growth" or a "regressive development" in contrast with the progressive development of the boys (36). In other words, the incapacity to rebel against what is social expected on behalf of feminine subjects translates then into a "feeling of suffocation, of lacking air and a sense of belittlement like that which characterizes patients of mental institutions" (in Lagos, 1996:35-6). In a general sense, partial diving in water of the final image in *The Summer* could be seen as an extension of that "feeling of suffocation" of the feminine subject that struggles to find her voice despite all adversity and that could align with the ironic strategies of the educational stories that denounce the obstacles imposed on women in a patriarchal society.

5. Conclusion

As we have established, adolescent coming-of-age stories work to diagnose the socio-economic, political, and cultural dynamics of a nation. Therefore, if the educational process of an adolescent girl in *The Summer* allegorizes unresolved aspects of contemporary Chilean society, such as intercultural relationships and political repression and the topic of Mapuche resistance, what can we deduce from the pessimist resolution of the conflicts in question that culminate in the violent death of a Mapuche activist and the visceral disappointment of the adolescent? This ending refers to the apparent failure that critiques of the *Bildungsroman* emphasize in both the young girl as well as in marginalized characters whose expectations are left unsatisfied. Nevertheless, the new strategies of the *Bildungsroman* rewrite and redefine the hero's success including in the middle of tragedy, destruction, and death (Kushigian, 2003:30-31). Thus, even when *The Summer* ponders in question the possibilities of surpassing the discrepancies between what the protagonist desires and the social models to choose, it is necessary to contextualize the supposed failure considering the intensity of the antagonistic, socio-cultural, and colonial forces which they face. If the failure is part of the feminine learning itinerary, the young girl will learn to navigate the contradictions of her surroundings and the historic disadvantages of her positioning.

The paralysis que evokes Mane's lying with her eyes shut—immediately after Pedro's death in what should be an awakening of social conscience—points to the discovery of the entrance to an adult reality of discrimination, injustice, despotism, exploitation and negative prejudices towards the Mapuche. At the same time, that poetic and intimist image bring us back to the protagonist of the self as the starting point of the other conflicts that characterize cinematographic productions in Chile as of the year 2000. This problematic subjectivity could form part of the category of disenchanting personalities in which, according to Saavedra, given the political disillusion, the individual is shown as the only one capable of articulating a discourse (2013:26). For this reason centralization of Mane at the end is

emphasized, suggesting that social aspects are negotiated from the individual standpoint, even when the success of the rebellion is suspended like her body in the water.

Thanks to the suggestive and ambiguous language that characterizes of new Chilean cinema, *The Summer* interrogates the position of the adolescent subjectivities marginalized in unfavorable conditions that at the same time question the challenges of the Mapuche minorities as part of the historic arguments of the Chilean nation in regards to effective integration of their indigenous peoples. Finally, *The Summer* attempts to dismantle the official patriarchal hegemonic discourse, even when the real possibilities of rebellion are compelled by the notable weight of socio-ethnic, political, and economic factors.

Notes

1. The coming-of-age story is a literary genre that is found in post-dictatorship Chilean narrative as well as that of the new millennium. Works like *Palomita blanca* (1971) by Enrique Lafourcade, *La Beatriz Ovalle* (1977) by Jorge Marchant Lazcano and others more recently like *Vidas ejemplares* (1994) by Sergio Gómez, *Mala onda* (1991) by Alberto Fuguet and *El jugador de rugby* (2008) by Óscar Bustamente form part of this *Bildungsroman* literary tradition. Regarding the notion of the coming-of-age story it is worth mentioning the study of Rodrigo Cánovas on the contemporary Chilean novel which groups 3 different types of narrators—divergent in their styles as well as in their modes of approach to reality—but according to the critic are united by a common denominator of orphanhood that at the same time comes from the historic rift caused by the military takeover of 73.

2. All translations from English to Spanish were done by the author.

3. From this point on, the film will be referred to as *The Summer*.

4. In the same way as in previous works by Said such as the documentaries *I Love Pinochet* (2001),

Opus Dei, una cruzada silenciosa (2006) and El mocito (2010) investigate controversial and unresolved aspects of contemporary Chilean society such as the socio-historic and psychological consequences of the post-dictatorship.

5. The Summer addresses the "Mapuche issue" at a moment in which both indigenous people cinema as well as worldwide socio-environmental concerns are at a high.

6. According to the editors, signs of this generation began in March 2003 with the premiere of Sábado by Matías Bize and in June 2004 with the exhibition of Y las vacas vuelan by Fernando Lavanderos (Cavallo & Maza, 2011:15).

7. In the words of Saavedra: "The full-length films that focus on the personal sphere are not separate from social context upon referring to private lives. On the contrary, the private life becomes the main story of a society that uses the personal sphere as defense of its interests" (2013: 42).

8. This is a technique similar to that which Paz Encina achieved in La hamaca paraguaya (2006), Claudia Llosa in Madeinusa (2006) and La teta asustada (2009) and Jayro Bustamente in Ixcánul (2015) in which the dialogues in native languages work to create an atmosphere of mystery and cultural difference cultural that will be unavoidable and satisfy an effective symbolic strategy.

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