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Reading Promotion, Conflict Negation and Peaceful Conviviality: The Uses and Hopes for Literary Education in Chile

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This article inquires into what sort of socioemotional education and what understandings of empathy are formulated when pleasurable literary reading is encouraged and celebrated in neoliberal cultures. Through an analysis of four official educational documents nationally distributed in Chile, we explore the relations and intersections of discourses and affects about literary and socioemotional education. We posit that literary education and reading promotion are encouraged as means of socioemotional and citizen education and that this formation is characterized by a subordination of the affective and the emotional to the logics of the rational and disembodied. We read these documents alongside theoretical work on cultural politics of emotions and the uses of emotion in political cultures to highlight how reading promotion is presented as a tool to manage difference and foster peaceful resolution of conflicts. We relate these hopes sets on fiction reading to a celebratory cult of conviviality and happiness in neoliberal cultures and relate this to the recent —and ongoing— social uprising in Chile. In this article, we argue that when empathy is superficially addressed in relation to fiction reading, structural injustices are reproduced.

Key terms: literary education, socioemotional education, conflict, Chile

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Introduction

In educational contexts, celebratory discourses about reading fiction abound. Education and psychology research have extensively argued that reading books from early childhood onwards is one of the most relevant predictors of social and educational achievements (Hodges, 2010; Clark & Rumbold, 2006). Listening and reading stories would help children develop imaginative and divergent thinking—that is, thinking that generates a range of possible ideas and/or solutions. But even more emphatically, reading is considered a privileged tool that can be used to work on the education of emotions (Nussbaum, 1990, 2010, Nikolajeva, 2014) is strongly linked to the development of empathy (Hogan, 2011; Vermeule, 2010; Zunshine, 2006; Kidd & Castaño, 2013; Nikolajeva, 2014) and considered to be a privileged tool to “work” on socioemotional literacies (Riquelme, Munita, Jara & Montero, 2013). The celebration of the benefits of reading fiction spans, therefore, from social research inquiring into indicators of academic achievement to different speculative texts by literary scholars on how the reader’s ability to identify with the characters assists the development of empathy, as a cognitive capacity to understand other people’s perspectives (Nussbaum, 2003; Ginsberg & Glenn 2019; Kozak & Rechia, 2019). Psychologists Kidd and Castaño (2013) did an ambitious quantitative study published in *Science* where they support the claim that those who read literary fiction³—that is, critically acclaimed fiction—score better in empathy tests than those reading best sellers or non-fictional accounts⁴.

In this article, we critically inquire into this celebration of reading fiction for socioemotional education inquiring into how it entangled in the making of difference the production of conviviality “as a device of both inclusion and exclusion” (Hernando-Lloréns

³ By literary fiction we mean written pieces of fiction, imaginary and not based on facts stories in written form.

⁴ This study has shed considerable doubt on this claim: Panero, M. E., Weisberg, D. S., Black, J., Goldstein, T. R., Barnes, J. L., Brownell, H., & Winner, E. (2017). No support for the claim that literary fiction uniquely and immediately improves theory of mind: A reply to Kidd and Castano’s commentary on Panero et al. (2016). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 112(3), e5-e8. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000079>

2018, 523) as formulated in state educational documents that promote reading at Chilean schools. We focus at the intersections and relations of discourses about literary and socioemotional education in documents issued by the Chilean Ministry of Education and the Chilean National Council on Culture and the Arts reading them in relation to a context of pressing demands for inclusion and justice within the Chilean sociopolitical and educational systems (Carrasco & Flores, 2019). We write this article after a powerful social revolt has taken the streets in Chile. The protests have been triggered by the civil disobedience of high school students who organized under the motto “Evade, Don’t Pay” refused to pay their subway fare after a rise in its cost and detonated a series of other political actions. The Chilean popular revolt has been characterized by its reach and endurance, the lack of articulate political figures, and for the state violence against protesters⁵. Protestors have employed extreme and violent political strategies such as burning buildings, lighting fires in the streets, throwing rocks at the police, destroying public property, and looting. They have manifested their rage against the state and economic corporations by attacking particular symbolic spaces: subway stations, political parties’ buildings, pharmacies that had been accused of monopolistic collusion, supermarkets owned by a US economic corporation, privatized highways, and the like. After years of enduring being a laboratory of neoliberalism—imposed during the military dictatorship in the 1980s (Klein, 2014)—and after numerous unfortunate humiliations by ministers of the government, the president, and other politicians⁶, rage spread like wildfire. This social upheaval has been unique in its use of affective and emotional repertoires that make visible how inequalities and structural injustices have been

⁵ The National Institute of Human Rights (INDH) has opened 5 judicial causes to sue the state for the murder of 5 people at the hands of the police and military, while also another 22 have died in the context of revolts. (to see this and more go to INDH, December 12th, 2019).

⁶ Multiple phrases and actions made by politicians have caused indignation. For example, after people complained about the subway fare hike during peak hours, the Minister of Economy said “*Anyone who gets up early will be helped. Anyone who leaves earlier and takes the subway at 7 in the morning has the possibility of a lower rate.*” (to see this and more phrases go to El Desconcierto, October 19th, 2019).

normalized in Chile (Authors, 2019). While this happened, baffled politicians and academics have struggled to grapple with what they see as a lack of emotional control with which the protests have been characterized (e.g. Peña, 2019, October 20). These efforts to control emotions, discontent, and produce citizens who orient themselves to a peaceful conviviality resonates with the implications of our analysis on the promotion of reading literary fiction in Chilean schools as control mechanisms in relation to affects.

Our inquiry is framed within a research project⁷ in which we combine different methodological approaches to draw a cartography of possible intersections of emotions, literary encounters, children, adolescents, and adults. This particular article responds to one strand of this project in which we analyze the documents that are delivered to public and private schools to promote book culture and fiction reading. Assisted by Sara Ahmed's conceptualization of the cultural politics of emotions and Chantal Mouffe's agonistic theory, we explore how discourses about reading literary fiction are connected to discourses about emotional education. The data production and analysis were conducted before the Chilean Revolt, yet the strong entanglements of emotional and (un)justice repertoires articulated while we write this article color the findings and orient our arguments.

An Affective Research Focus

In this article, we inquire into how reading promotion and literary education are linked to ideas of socioemotional education in Chilean public educational policy. We inquire into this relationship of socioemotional education with fiction reading analyzing four documents that are oriented to (and delivered to) schools and school libraries. We take documents that have a general focus, as opposed to those created for a particular school grade or educational

⁷ Anonymized project.

models: *Bases curriculares de 7º Básico a IIº Medio*⁸ (Ministerio de Educación, 2015), *Otros Indicadores de Calidad Educativa*⁹ (Ministerio de Educación, 2014), *La Comunidad que Lee*¹⁰ (Ministerio de Educación, n.d.), and *Plan Nacional de Lectura*¹¹ (Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, 2015). Our interpretative orientation to these texts focuses on understanding their “affective practices” (Wetherell, 2012). We take the term “affective practices” as an understanding of the emotional as a praxis, a production in movement, in which the discursive is entangled. Scholars related to the so-called “affective turn” (Clough, 2008) have led a lengthy debate on what ‘affect’ is and does; in most cases the term affect refers to precognitive, embodied practices (Snaza 2020; Massumi, 2015; Boler & Zembylas, 2016; Zembylas, 2006). We take Margaret Wetherell’s definition of “affective practice”:

to extend to some of the new thinking available about activity, flow, assemblage and relationality (...). Practice conjures forms of order but recognizes their ‘could be otherwise’ (...). Affective practice focuses on the emotional as it appears in social life and tries to follow what participants do (Wetherell, 2012, p.4).

Instead of aiming to define what the different emotions mean in the documents, we ask what these concepts are *doing* there. In other words, what kind of repertoires —or available possibilities— are produced when certain emotions are named or performed in the texts. We follow here an attention to the cultural politics of emotions as opened by Sara Ahmed (2004) when she asks how particular concepts, images or ideas that represent emotion stick to us and move us. We take this to our analysis of the “affective practices” in the revised documents exploring how different emotions mentioned or represented there affected us as readers and researchers. We also interrogated the four official documents following Jackson and Mazzei’s

⁸ *Curricular Guidelines from 7th to 10th Grade*

⁹ *Other Indicators of Education Quality*

¹⁰ *The Community that Reads*

¹¹ *National Reading Plan*

proposal of “plugging in with theory” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012), a postqualitative approach to data analysis in which researchers read pieces of data and questions in relation to theoretical concepts keeping attention to what does not fit a theoretical explanation. “Plugging in with theory” connected the data production with our theoretical orientations and the convoluted Chilean context at the time of the analysis. Theoretically, we were oriented by Sara Ahmed and Chantal Mouffe’s approaches to emotional and political cultures.

Feminist scholar Sara Ahmed (2004) describes how in hegemonic discourses the emotional and the affective are produced as a force that would impede cognitive abilities. Ahmed argues that emotions are presented as a “lower form of speech” (194) that manipulate subjects; reason is presented as its opposite and as the desirable and masculine form of addressing the world. Ahmed argues that emotions are modes of control and describes how those who orient themselves towards the so-called ‘positive emotions’ —such as happiness, contentment, joy, hope— and away from envy, irritation, and disgust are meant to expect more out of life. Ahmed (2004) relates this production of the emotional culture to the hegemony of the modern colonial project and the naturalization of structures of power in which certain lives matter more than others. In this frame, justice would be molded as “a form of feeling, which is about ‘fellow feeling’ (...), a capacity to feel for others, and to sympathize with their pain” (p.195). Who do we feel pity for is at the core of today’s candent political struggles and of intellectual reflections.

Some cultural scholars have been reading the orientation towards happiness as an exercise of injustice. “The happiness promised by the nation is what sustains investment in the nation in the absence of return, a ‘happiness’ that is always deferred as the promise of reward for good citizenship,” argues Ahmed (2004, pp.196). Berlant (2011) elaborates on how the fantasy of having a good life and the promise of upward mobility is built upon the

rejection of crisis and precarity. Critical psychologists have also been warning of the risks of a rather superficial celebration of happiness and joy. Cabanas and Illouz (2019), for example, describe how the growth of the well-being industry and its promise of happiness becomes increasingly individualistic and unfair.

We understand this contemporary social orientation towards happiness alongside the social production of violence and conflict. Some of the core reflections by Mouffe are centered on how the suppression of conflict is instrumental to reproduce unfair relationships. With focus on political theory, Mouffe criticizes how liberal political cultures seek superficial consensus and are increasingly unable to deal with conflict. In a similar vein to Ahmed's (2012) criticism of superficial multicultural discourses that negate difference and impose narratives of national unity, Mouffe shows how antagonisms are repressed in the contemporary celebration of identity politics (Mouffe, 1997, p.392). She critiques the cultural politics of recognition in which difference is supposedly integrated into a peaceful new social order yet antagonisms are suppressed.

Mouffe develops a notion of justice for the 21st century. This notion is based on the right to be conflictive and to involve passions in political discussions. She explains that "violence will never be eliminated (...) and democracy should not be oriented towards the establishment of consensus" (Mouffe, et.al., 2014, p. 763). She proposes to mobilize passions and conflicts for democratic objectives (Mouffe, 2002, p.616) and seeks systems of difference in which the starting point is the recognition of the multiplicity within each subject and the contradictions this entails. In this way "its acceptance of the other does not merely consist in tolerating differences, but in positively celebrating them, because it acknowledges that, without alterity and otherness, no identity could ever assert itself" (Mouffe, 1997, p.388). Mouffe's post Marxism is critical of discourses on tolerance. Tolerance appears to be

a means for the regulation of aversion in which the one that tolerates keeps a position of power and is not forced to think or feel different but just to refrain from expressing rejection (Brown, 2006).

Surveying what Emotions and Calls for Peaceful Conviviality Do

The documents analyzed emphasize the importance of the affective and emotional in education for conviviality or peaceful coexistence. The *Bases Curriculares* defines education as a “lifelong learning process that covers the different stages of people’s lives and that aims to achieve their spiritual, ethical, moral, affective, intellectual, artistic, and physical development” (Ministerio de Educación, 2015, p.25). This “affective development” is understood within the frame of “respect and value of human rights and fundamental freedoms, multicultural diversity, peace, and national identity” (Ministerio de Educación, 2015, p.25). Affective development, therefore, is produced as related to notions of inclusion and recognition yet it appears to be welcome only when it takes a conflictless form. We may argue that multiculturalism here speaks of a desire for assimilation. Later in the document, it is stressed that “affective development” is necessary to “live together and participate in a responsible, tolerant, supportive, democratic, and active way in the community, and to work and contribute to the development of the country” (Ministerio de Educación, 2015, p.25). The connection of the country’s development with words such as ‘work’ and ‘contribution’ appears to complement the previous note on national identity with notions of economic productivity. The emphasis in conviviality appears to be instrumental to an organization of ideal subjects to the common goal: the development of the country.

The promises of tolerance, responsibility, and development that we may trace in these documents appear to be at odds with what Mouffe calls “the right for antagonism” (Mouffe, et.al., 2014, p.757). Mouffe does not inquire into how an affective education for conflict

would look like, but we may open the question up to whether it may involve new understandings on the relations between justice and emotions. The relations between these two have been recently addressed during the Chilean uprising in numerous references to the “uncontrolled rage” of protesters. An affective education for conflict needs, therefore, to enable possibilities for antagonism, for the expression of injustice, and for the expression of pain and difference. The emotional repertoires of happiness and the rhetoric of peace that erase conflicts indicate a hierarchy of abilities, knowledges, and desires in social reproduction.

The *Bases Curriculares* indicate that an integral development of the student would require to “become aware of the other, (...) acquire the necessary skills to conduct interpersonal relationships (...) with heterogeneous groups, with respect and empathy” (Ministerio de Educación, 2015, p.19). Students need to “value the unique character of each human being and, therefore, the diversity that manifests among people” (Ministerio de Educación, 2015, p.27). If we read these requirements alongside the elements previously identified, we understand how valuing diversity is meant to organize ideas about empathy. When empathy is linked to the notion of respect and understandings of difference that stem from the uniqueness of each human being, structural injustices go unnoticed. Mouffe delves into how this dominant trend in liberal ideology, this rationalist and individualist approach, renders us unable to understand conflict. Her take is one in which hopelessness is assumed. She insists that there are several “conflicts that never will have a rational solution” (2013, p.315). Valuing diversity and empathy without delving into how they are linked to the inequalities that make the social becomes a liberal effort that covers the very surface of injustices.

Tolerance, respect, and peaceful conviviality are explicitly promoted in educational documents across continents. Social sciences and humanities research have been critical of this boom and have insisted that it facilitates the reproduction of a social order and complicity with structures of power (Ahmed, 2000; Brown, 2006; Zembylas, 2011). We need to close read the well-intentioned hopes that are put forward in these documents. For example, *Otros Indicadores de Calidad Educativa* stresses that teachers should generate “welcoming environments where all students feel protected, accepted, and valued” (Ministerio de Educación, 2014, p.22). Teachers need to ensure students are treated with “respect, attention, and affect.” (Ministerio de Educación, 2014, p.22). Teachers are asked to care for their students, not only as curriculum learners. Yet, how can we think about these notions of care in relation to structural injustices and privilege? As Matias and Zembylas (2014) argue, sometimes benign emotions —such as pity and care— hide expressions of disgust for the other. Puig de la Bellacasa (2017), another critic of superficial notions of caring, explains that “caring” for and being affected by another is composed of three necessary elements: labor/work, affect/affections, and ethics/politics (p.5). Under this view, the question of how to be empathic is replaced by one of how to care for others. According to the author:

we must be careful not to become nostalgic for an idealized caring world: caring or being cared for is not necessarily rewarding and comforting. A feminist inspired vision of caring cannot be grounded in the longing for a smooth harmonious world, but in vital ethico-affective everyday practical doings that engage with the inescapable troubles of interdependent existences” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012, pp.198-199).

She invites us to explore normative and moralist understandings of caring. Caring is more than just an affective ethical commitment: it implies the material participation in sustaining interdependent worlds, forms of engagement that need to face resistance, exhaustion, and controversies (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012, pp.198 -199). Instead of promoting an empathy

that is based on that ability to recognize identities and positions, an empathy that is fostered by the cognitive abilities of the mind, Puig de la Bellacasa asks to produce other ways to care. How can teachers produce this caring? They may start by opening spaces in which conflicts may be expressed without coming to quick resolutions.

We find different arguments on the importance of peaceful conviviality and how schools should provide students with the tools and the training to learn to value differences and solve conflicts. *Bases Curriculares* states that students need to “learn to relate with others, to value differences, solve conflicts, and take care of their environments” (Ministerio de Educación, 2015, p.28). It is also expected that students resolve “interpersonal conflicts in a constructive manner. (...) interactions and a positive resolution of these conflicts are fostered so that peaceful conviviality is favored.” (Ministerio de Educación, 2015, p.346). Conflicts are presented as being between people, which takes us again to a liberal humanist understanding that pervades the conceptualization of difference as resulting from the uniqueness of individuals. Conflicts are not to be linked to structures, environments, or social norms but to people who need to take responsibility for them. In the documents we are called to find ways to establish “commitments and agreements that safeguard the interests of all involved parties.” (Ministerio de Educación, 2015, p.346). What would it mean to think about ethics and justice if conflicts need to take care of the interests of all the involved parties? What does the idea of parties do? we feel that striving for peaceful solutions without considering unequal subjectivity positions would lead to further injustice.

The Uses of Literary Reading for Socioemotional Education

As reviewed here, ideas about the development of the socioemotional appear in different documents and programs, yet it is remarkably linked to the Language curriculum and, within it, to literary education:

The study of literature is the building block of the curriculum as it allows us to perceive the diversity in the world, a condition for the development of an open and inclusive society. In synthesis, literature plays a key role in the nourishment of humanity, as it favors the critical examination of one's self and of one's own traditions. It contributes to understanding other points of view and promotes the ability of students to see themselves not only as citizens belonging to a group, but also, and more importantly, as men and women linked to all other humans (Ministerio de Educación, 2015, p.35)

Reading and studying "literature" is considered the "building block" of education for diversity. It develops readers' socio-cognitive skills used to think about mental states, both our own and those of others. The idea that literature increases socio-cognitive skills and produces empathic citizens has been well developed from humanist perspectives as that of Nussbaum. She has battled for the inclusion of literature in the curriculum, arguing that reading realist novels is key to the development of the moral imagination of the contemporary citizen (Nussbaum, 2010, 2003). Yet Nussbaum's defense of the benefits of literature has been precisely questioned in how literature is related to the cognitive development of empathy or compassion (Maxwell, 2006). Cognitive empathy is set apart from the capacity to feel with others, affective empathy.

Literary reading appears in the documents as having agency in the production of sentient citizens who are able to understand other points of view and recognize how differences may be channeled in an "open and inclusive society." We find these ideas further developed in the document *La comunidad que lee*:

We know today that frequent reading may improve, in diverse ways, the life of people. It increases opportunities for academic success, access to good training opportunities and jobs, [and] participation and influence in the community. It also favors self-confidence, family and social bonds, and the ability to imagine and build. (Ministerio de Educación, n.d., p.6)

In this document, reading is presented as a means for improving life. Moreover, it is celebrated as an ability with many educational outcomes, centrally, affective outcomes such as improving participation in the community and the development of social and family bonds. *La comunidad que lee* stresses how reading is key for the “emotional development of children” (Ministerio de Educación, n.d., p.89) and asks adults to curate “literary quality” in the books they offer children. Literary quality is defined as literature “that generates emotional richness, which gives way to expressiveness and reflection in children” (Ministerio de Educación, n.d., p.79). “Emotional richness” is presented as something that produces excitement, amusement, or humor in the reader (Ministerio de Educación, n.d., p.79). Literary quality is, therefore, strongly bound to emotional repertoires. “Richness” is related to what are generally considered positive emotions — excitement, amusement, or humor— rendering absent other possible definitions of emotional repertoires that could give way to expressiveness and reflection such as sadness, rage, fear, hope, or compassion. Can we speak of emotional impoverishment if we bring forward other sets of emotions? Can we read this desire for excitement, amusement, and humor in the frame of discourses for development and progress? we argue that the answer to this last question is yes. Frequent and pleasurable reading is meant to increase the chances of having access to good “trainings and jobs;” the evoked progress and success is that of a productive worker. The use of the signifiers “trainings” and “jobs” situate us within educational paths that are oriented towards employment. These signifiers may be directed at a reader to whom no successful future has been promised. Becoming a frequent reader may be a mode of self-improvement, a lifeline for those otherwise excluded from happy futures.

Learning (Not) to Feel in Literary Education

The socioemotional education and ideas on students’ “emotional development” are related to the rational comprehension of emotions, which are ‘trained’ in literary education.

For example, the section on literary education in *Bases Curriculares* establishes that students should be able to recognize, describe, and assess “persuasion strategies used in texts (use of humor, presence of stereotypes, appeal to feelings, etc.)” (Ministerio de Educación, 2015, p.64). Readers are called to recognize appeals to feelings but not to experience them. Emotions are presented as “persuasion strategies” that can manipulate readers’ reasoning. This understanding reproduces the conceptual divide between emotion and reason as well as its underpinning asymmetry: the emotional is seen as obscuring reason, and reason is needed to take distance and impede emotional contagion. This resistance to feel with the texts may be related to a shortcoming of the experience of the aesthetic encounter. To put it in Deleuzoguattarian terms, readers are trained to resist arts’ “collective machine of expression” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983), their opening up to “becoming-other” (Grosz, 2008, p.23). Students are not meant to be affected, but rather to become self-contained subjects. For this to happen, the literary is also stripped off its disruptive force or at least portrayed as the opposite of Sontag’s (2013) frequently cited phrase “real art has the capacity to make us nervous” (p.4). Training of what we call the “un-sentient citizen” needs continuous repetition, and this is achieved through literary education.

In an educational activity suggested in *La comunidad que lee*, teachers are encouraged to ask students to identify and explain “in which ways the author shows the feelings of characters” (Ministerio de Educación, n.d., p.99). An anthropocentric concept of feelings and representation is articulated here. Feelings are not collective and social, but rather attached to characters, who, themselves, do not feel but respond to ways in which the author represents them. The emotional is, again, subordinated to the rational.

This primacy of the rational over the emotional becomes clearer if we look into how these documents deal with conflict in fiction. When reading, students are expected to

recognize “the conflicts of the story, the role each character plays in them, and how the actions of each character affects those of other characters” (Ministerio de Educación, n.d., p.4). Students are, therefore, trained in the recognition of conflict as a collision of actions and points of view of characters, not of forces, vibrations, social intensities, or other forms of non-human agencies that get assembled with human lives.

Additionally, we find traces of conceptualizations of emotions as social and contagious and of reading as provoking emotional responses even if this is not represented as a good thing:

In promoting reading, be aware of contagiousness. By preparing the reading in advance, the adult has already experienced the emotions that the work awakens and will represent them with his voice and attitude. It is not necessary to act and even less to overact. (Ministerio de Educación, n.d., p.92)

Adults are asked to distance themselves from being the readers by preparing for it so that emotions are not experienced firsthand. This may be a subtle indication of how the orientation towards emotions is one in which the idea of fair measure and/or rational control pervades. Mouffe explains that in liberal political frameworks “everything that has to do with passions, with antagonisms, everything that can lead to violence, is seen as archaic and irrational” (Mouffe, 1997, p.385). Literary texts may present scenes of violent passions, but whatever emotion is aroused, it needs to be subsumed under the logic of reason.

The regulation and control of emotions in relation to education and childhood has been studied by education researchers and critical psychologists such as Erica Burman who argues against “emotional literacy agendas” (2009). Burman refers to the proliferation of discourses *about* emotions in which feelings are only superficially recognized so that they allow us to navigate relationships and accumulate social capital for one’s own betterment.

Burman, as other authors, has argued against the celebration of resilience in contemporary discourses around education and vulnerable populations because of how it holds individuals responsible for overcoming injustices that could be characterized as structural.

The Production of the Ideal Student

Literary education for affective development reproduces particular emotional subjects. At times this is explicit, as when it is argued that frequent reading fosters “soft skills, such as empathy, self-control, discipline, and perseverance, thus enriching self-esteem and social relationships.” (Ministerio de Educación, n.d., p.29). The desired socio-emotionally adapted subject would orient itself towards peaceful conviviality. We find in these documents more ‘promises:’

A student with good academic self-esteem and motivated with school life is less likely to commit vandalism or crime, to be a victim or victimizer of bullying, to consume alcohol and drugs, to repeatedly be absent or to drop out of the school system, or to get involved in risky sexual practices. (Ministerio de Educación, 2014, p.18)

The student who has been trained in this socioemotional development is able to sort out the different problems life brings and is resilient to difficulties. Additionally, the text suggests that the academic profile of the student protects him or her from events that would force students to leave school. Academic achievements obscure other dimensions of schooling — the affective, the social, the creative. We may read this again in relation to the promise of the good life as one in which economic status is achieved (Berlant, 2011).

We do find plenty of references on how literary reading assists the socioemotional development of students by allowing them to express their emotions (Ministerio de Educación, n.d., pp.102-103). Literary encounters are considered spaces “of socialization

because bonds of peaceful conviviality are created around the emotions that are shared (...) [strengthening] one's belonging to a community that reads." (Ministerio de Educación, n.d., p.90). Moreover, literary reading orients students to "understand, interpret, and evaluate the information contained in texts to use it according to their needs and achieve their objectives, (...) be freer and more human, and therefore probably more satisfied and happier." (Ministerio de Educación, n.d., p.27). This final goal of literary emotional education, as we call it, responds to liberal humanism. In it, interdependence and collectivities are overshadowed; moreover, happiness is individualized and reading is not related to possibilities of making us angry or rebellious. Happiness, therefore, is only offered to those who are able to follow this individual engagement with the emotional.

Reading promotion documents only refer to pleasurable reading in which no emotional turmoil is triggered. Literature is purged to ensure that the promise of happiness is a pacific one. The documents ask school teachers to:

Avoid promoting books that propose violence as a system of life or response in the search for solutions; books that seek to indoctrinate, or that leave no way out or [abandon] hope. (Ministerio de Educación, n.d., p.80)

Violence and conflict are negated, and hope is presented as a surface with no cracks. All negative affects or "ugly feelings" (Ngai, 2005) are to be put aside in the humanist liberal project of pleasurable reading for a resilient and submissive citizenry.

Discussion

This article traces the relations between socioemotional education and literary reading in official Chilean documents making an argument on how such connection is oriented towards a management of difference in which ideal citizens are produced (while others get implicitly excluded). In this orientation, peaceful conviviality is invoked as a desired object

of education. Peaceful conviviality appears as an orientation in which difference may only be superficially recognized and structural oppressions are obscured, it produces a togetherness that excludes what falls out of the normative orders of the ideal (reader) citizen. Literary education is meant to educate the emotional, and emotions are meant to be subsumed under the rational organization of the world. Readers are taught to distance themselves from literary texts in order to analyze their strategies: good, critical readers will feel with literary characters; rather, they are trained to understand the authors' textual strategies in representing feelings and emotions to learn to deal with the emotions of others in real life. Learning emotions this way appears to be a form of producing the ideal subject as one that may only superficially connect with his/her own emotions and with other citizens.

The reader's critical distance to the text embodies the humanist philosophy in which reason prevails. In the liberal humanities, the human subject continuously states an independence from other human and non-human forces, especially from affects that would obscure logical reasoning. The community that reads (as in the title of one of the documents) is, therefore, not quite a community, but rather a group of independent human subjects that orient individually towards citizen selves. This may be read in the frame of Ahmed's conceptualization of "happy objects" (Ahmed, 2010), the objects that circulate, promising that they will produce happiness if we orient ourselves in the correct ways towards them. The student who reads literature for pleasure will achieve academic success and many other forms of social and affective well-being. The students who reads will be able to overcome antagonisms and conflicts in life by managing orientations towards those happy objects (academic achievement, economic success).

Literary pleasurable reading is meant to produce conviviality. What forms does this promise take? How is conviviality assembled with difference, exclusions, and (in)justice?

The idea of learning about other perspectives is stressed, but is there an indication of how literary or aesthetic texts may produce disruptive feelings? In these documents, art is stripped of its potentials for producing unconformity and instabilities. Conviviality appears to be based on a superficial empathy that covers exclusions and violence. In the article “Stealing the Pain of Others: Reflections on Canadian Humanitarian Responses”, Sherene H. Razack (2007) calls for attention to who benefits from the production of empathy and how should the privileged —the Westerns in her account— be able to pay up for having benefit from that pain instead of empathizing with it.

The events triggered in October 2019, the “Chilean Unrest,” allow us to open up reflections on how these educational state documents may relate to the reproduction of emotional repertoires of submissiveness and passivity in relation to injustices. The orientations and guidelines analyzed produce and norm orientations towards empathy, diversity, and emotions, orientations that appear to be instrumental to the production of liberal understandings of happiness and conviviality. The popular revolt exceeds those frames. Protestors have been placed and place themselves as the opposite of this ideal (empathic) citizen: rational dialogue has gone out of the window, while collective rage, frustration, and other “incorrect” affective intensities transverse and infect different layers of the social during the conflict. Politicians and different authorities are stunned by the popular revolt, and have been unable to explain or take adequate actions in regard to it. The neoliberal and humanist perspective in the analyzed documents work to reproduce particular forms of correctly affected subjects: one that is resilient and able to resolve conflicts peacefully. Protestors, on the contrary, refuse to dialogue and explore other possible artistic and not quite communicative forms of expressing demands: massive concentrations, *cacerolazos*¹², riots,

¹² A form of protest in which protesters make their discontent known by hitting pots and pans to make noise.

barricades, graffiti, and artistic performances to challenge. Indigenous symbols are used in protests as to show that traditional epistemologies are challenged.

How can we link this popular revolt with the entangled curriculums of socioemotional education and literary education? Ahmed (2004) proposes to dislocate affective norms to produce justice away from discourses on peace. She argues that “the emotions that have often been described as negative or even destructive can also be enabling or creative, often in their very refusal of the promise of social bond.” (Ahmed, 2004, p.201). Ahmed and other authors (Ngai, 2005; Berlant, 2011; Lee et al., 2020) point out a need to unlock uncomfortable feelings to move the political axis and create new possible communities. In education research, this has been pinned down in reflections on the possibilities opened by anti-oppressive pedagogies of discomfort (Kumashiro, 2002; Boler, 2005; Lee et al., 2020) or the need to subvert normative affective relationships of us/them (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008; Zembylas, 2019). “Inhuman literacies” or “literacies against the state”(Truman, 2019; Snaza, 2020), that is, literacies that refuse to follow the liberal humanist order, could work just as the social uprising has, unsettling and disrupting the “happy object” of pacific conviviality. It may be that only then we will be able to understand new entanglements of the social in which excluded social groups are allowed to name conflicts.

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