

Hatusimé: A Chilean Boy Scout Novel?

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Abstract: From the 1910s-40s, the Chilean Boy Scouts published essays, poems and short stories that expressed an epic cosmivision. *Scoutista* literature culminated with Jacobo Danke's novel *Hatusimé* (1947). Though it is primarily epic, *Hatusimé* concludes with a novel-like worldview when its adventurer succumbs to the angst of his homelessness and drifts into an existentialist modernity. Because the novel genre expresses a modern worldview unharmonious with epic forms, *Hatusimé* conflictingly reveals the limits of *scoutista* literature's ability to explore a modern Chile.

Keywords: Chile, epic, *Hatusimé*, novel, scoutism.

Chilean Boy Scout literature of the first half of the twentieth century conceived and expressed masculine Chilean identities through an epic cosmivision (a heroic, community-oriented, and ultimately optimistic view of the social, material, and spiritual world). This *scoutista* literature was published in Chilean Boy Scout magazines in the genres of short story, essay, and poetry. The primary text under my examination is *scoutista* literature's last major work, Jacobo Danke's little-studied novel *Hatusimé* (1947) which, from its first through its penultimate chapter, embraces the epic paradigm that orients the majority of *scoutista* literature. However, in *Hatusimé*'s final chapter, social exclusion, economic precarity, and spiritual uncertainty arise as plausible risks for the character whom Danke introduces as timelessly Chilean (10). This essay examines *Hatusimé* as a narrative that begins and proceeds in harmony with the epic mainstream of *scoutista* literature, but that concludes in conflict with *scoutista* literature by abruptly shifting to the modern worldview of the novel genre.¹

The Boy Scouts began as a literary production in England in 1908. Before organizing real boys into patrols and troops, British war hero and author Robert Baden-Powell created the boy scout as a character in his instant best-seller, *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship* (1908). Though it posed as a manual, this original Boy Scout text also bore literary aspirations. Amid the text's instructional sections about now iconic Boy Scout activities such as woodcraft, Baden-Powell also included his own literary creations in the genres of campfire yarns, plays, essays, songs, and commentary on Rudyard Kipling and Arthur Conan Doyle, comparing the boy scout character to those

¹ I thank José García Sánchez for invaluable assistance in the preparation of the manuscript.

authors' respective Kim and Sherlock Holmes. While the text treats the concepts of masculinity and patriotism with grave seriousness, it is also a playful book abounding in ironic winks and modern self-awareness. In England and the British Empire, the manual prompted a multitude of boys, and many girls, to make scouting an organization of which Baden-Powell assumed the role of "Chief Scout." The Boy Scouts emerged as a cultural response to an immensely popular piece of literature (Boehmer xiii, Shaw "*Boyscoutismo...*" 52-86). (When referring to the culture—its literature, etc.—and the institution, I capitalize "Boy Scout/s." When in reference to historical or narrated persons, I use the lower case "boy scout/s.)

In March of 1909, Baden-Powell made a three-day visit to Santiago, Chile, where he met with high-ranking military personnel of that nation.² Alcibíades Vicencio, gynecologist and founder of a pediatrics institute, and Joaquín Cabezas, teacher of physical education at the prestigious preparatory academy Instituto Nacional, learned of the sudden appearance of the famed visitor, and persuaded him to deliver a presentation on his Boy Scout program, which took place in el Salón de Honor at la Universidad de Chile on 26 March. In attendance with numerous university students and pupils of the Instituto Nacional was Chilean president Pedro Montt (Rojas Flores 17-18).

The content of the lecture, interpreted by Carlos Silva Vildólsola, demonstrates Baden-Powell's literary inclinations: "Cuando un niño *lee* u oye referir la vida de uno de estos exploradores, *la novela* de estas existencias llenas de intereses, inmediatamente tiene el impulso de imitarla. He aquí el cebo que hemos puesto para traer a los niños y hacer de ellos verdaderos hombres: los invitamos a ser Scouts, exploradores *como esos héroes de romances reales*" (cited in Valencia Baeza, my retranslation to English). In Baden-Powell's view, the Boy Scout identity invited regular boys to become protagonists of narratives like the ones they had previously found only in stories. His distinction between reality and literature (*novelas* and *romances*), is ambiguous. It is unclear whether the referenced lives of explorers are biographical or fictitious. Does his identification of those lives as *novelas* amount to a literary dramatization of reality, or a reference to printed novels? His notion of "real men" further complicates his distinction between reality and fiction, because his invitation to become a scout is at once an enticement to imagine oneself as a character and a summons to a supposedly objective manhood. His differentiation between reality, on the one hand, and novels as a literary genre on the other hand, appears irrelevant; Baden-Powell's creation of the Boy Scout identity was inextricably fused with a literary creation.

In May 1909, Vicencio and Cabezas formed La Asociación de los Boy Scouts de Chile, making theirs the first nation outside the British Empire to create a Boy Scout

² The motives for Baden-Powell's visit to Chile are unclear. Reynolds reports that Baden-Powell was "on holiday" during the time of this journey, but does not account for the destinations of his travels at the time (149). Kiernan refers only in passing to Baden-Powell's 1909 "visit" to South America (219). Rojas Flores provides a thorough history of the Boy Scout organization in Chile from 1909 to 1953, but does not address the motive of Baden-Powell's excursion to Chile.

organization (Rojas Flores 18-19).³ I use the term *scoutista* literature to designate the literary writing, as well as some early speeches, produced and consumed by the Chilean Boy Scouts from the foundation through the late 1940s, when *scoutista* literary output was abundant.⁴ The primary venues for this literature were the institutional magazines such as *El Scout Siempre Listo*, *Dichos y Hechos* (later, *Dichos i Hechos*), *Nuestros Ideales*, *El Scout Magallánico*, and *Boletín Scoutivo*. Much of this literature is original writing by adult Chilean Scout organizational leaders. Often, young Chilean scouts contributed their own compositions to the institutional publications. Because this literature prioritized the cultivation of masculine Chilean identities, to a significant degree, the production and consumption of such texts offered a meaningful form of Boy Scout participation (Shaw “Chilean...” 1-5). While the content of these publications includes how-to guides for paddling a canoe and building a campfire, it also comprises short stories, poems, and essays profoundly concerned with the improvement, and even the redemption of Chilean culture.

Chilean *Scoutista* Literature’s Epic Paradigm

Though the Chilean *scoutista* authors of the 1910s-40s admired Baden-Powell, they did not imitate his style, nor did they entirely embrace his worldview. Eschewing Baden-Powell’s comparatively more playful authorial tendencies, the *scoutistas* favored instead a solemnity that was often sermon-like. Both Baden-Powell and the Chilean Scout authors saw their programs as instrumental in rescuing their respective societies, primarily by restoring what they believed to be degraded states of masculinity and patriotism. Baden-Powell feared that the British Empire could collapse if, as he supposed had been the case in the Roman Empire, its boys did not demonstrate sufficient masculinity and patriotism (Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys* 277). For him, failure was possible; victory depended upon effort. For the authors of *scoutista* literature, however, the triumph of Chile was largely a matter of faith; their writings demonstrate a belief in a struggle toward a destined success.

Scoutista literature can be understood in terms of Georg Lukács theorization of the epic as a literary form in non-modern cultures, in ages for which “the starry sky is the map of all possible paths—ages whose paths are illuminated by the stars” (29). In such epic stories, harmony unites the heavens and the Earth, and links the divine to the human.

³ In the 1960s, a period beyond this article’s focus, La Asociación de Boy Scouts de Chile underwent a process of institutional breakdown (Del Brutto 22-26). Presently, there are two distinct Chilean Scout institutions, La Asociación de Guías y Scouts de Chile, and La Agrupación Nacional de Boy Scouts de Chile, both of which offer programs for boys and for girls.

⁴ In May and June of 2011, I examined every printed Chilean scout publication that I was able to locate in Santiago, Chile. La Biblioteca Nacional and the headquarters of the two contemporary Scout organizations named in the previous note provided the bulk of my primary source material. Alberto Del Brutto kindly allowed me access to his personal collection. Among the documents available to me at that time, texts published after the 1940s were few, and the literary content in those later texts is sparse.

Humankind feels at home in this world in which meaning abounds and can be known correctly. No matter how vast and wonderous all of existence—Earth and the heavens—may seem, humankind experiences it with a sense of completeness, as a “totality capable of being taken in at a glance” (37). This definition allows for an epic categorization of a story, even if that story involves no adventure or particular peril. If an epic hero must set off on a mission, “a long road lies before him, but within him there is no abyss” (33). Though he must endure the task, he suffers no disbelief concerning the rightness of his errand, nor does he doubt his adequacy to prevail. Even when far from home and in the deepest of peril, an epic hero remains safely bounded within an epic totality.

Chilean Boy Scout co-founder Alcibíades Vicencio was among numerous cultural critics who lamented a supposed decadence in Chilean society as the nation approached its centennial at the close of the first decade of the twentieth century. Writers of disparate social and political ideologies—including oligarchs, middle-class citizens, nationalists, radical democrats, and socialists—condemned the elites as a thoroughly lazy, irrational, and selfish class (Sáez-Arance 383-85). On the occasion of the nation’s centennial, a wave of politically and socially diverse commentators denounced a state of moral crisis, economic prostration, or secular injustice (Álvarez 45). And yet, while many of his fellow critics were pessimistic, Vicencio found an ardent hope in the Boy Scouts.

Vicencio challenged some three hundred young Chilean boy scouts to rise as epic heroes when he delivered a sermon to the assembly during the organization’s inaugural outdoor excursion on 21 May 1909 (Porras Castillo 22). This and other orations were printed as essays in the first *scoutista* publication, a booklet of one hundred and forty-two pages titled *Boy-Scouts de Chile* (1911), edited by the organization’s Directorio Jeneral. The presiding Chilean scout begins by recalling the address that Baden-Powell had recently pronounced with “la unción apostólica del que concibe una idea que afirma la felicidad de la patria i acrecienta el acervo del bien de la humanidad [y] nos exhortó a fundar entre nosotros la institución de los ‘Boy Scouts’” (Vicencio 25). However, Baden-Powell, in his own address, had not presented himself as an apostle, nor had he exhorted his Chilean audience to “go and do likewise” by advancing the Boy Scout mission. Rather, he had more modestly expressed his confidence that the program could “produci[r . . .] frutos” in Chile as it had done throughout the British Empire (cited in Valencia Baeza). Vicencio’s speech, including his representation of Baden-Powell, characterizes a key difference of literary tone between Baden-Powell’s literary endeavor and that of the Chilean *scoutistas*. Both projects expressed lofty social ambitions. However, by comparison, early Chilean *scoutista* literature took itself far more seriously.

After evoking Baden-Powell as the itinerant apostle of scouting, Vicencio decries what he regards as recent moral decline in Chilean society, and he summons the scouts to respond to the crisis:

Queremos que la juventud, al contemplar . . . nuestras instituciones i nuestras leyes convertidas en . . . mentiras convenientes, sienta en su

rostro el látigo de la vergüenza i les devuelva . . . la esperanza, el perdido sello de verdad. . . Queremos orientar vuestra alma juvenil, radiosa i bella como un sol primaveral, hacia otro punto del horizonte, donde como una aurora surja la sociedad futura. . . Queremos . . . una civilización cuya cultura sea radiante [como] los astros . . . , que no deje sumerjida en las oscuridades pavorosas del dolor, de la ignorancia, i de la miseria a la mayoría de los hombres, sino que lance sobre las profundas simas que dividen a las distintas clases sociales el firme puente del afecto, de la tolerancia i de la solidaridad humana. (30-31)

Vicencio charges the nation's youths with the mission of bearing the shame of their corrupt society. They must sustain the whip's lash upon their own faces. But they will not suffer indefinitely, as they will abolish Chile's shame by combating it with the hope of a lost truth. Like the sun in springtime, the rise of the scouts brings the promise of a redeemed society. Baden-Powell's speech in Santiago two months prior had identified the literal construction of bridges as one of the defining actions of the boy scout (Valencia Baeza). Vicencio exalts that act allegorically. Far beyond furnishing improvised means for crossing gullies or streams, the Chilean Boy Scouts should also serve as a firm bridge that reconciles a society stratified by social ranks as disparate as gaping canyons and Andean summits. Vicencio expresses this reconciliation as one that would elevate all to a higher social position.

Lukács, writing fewer than five years after Vicencio's speech, conceives of a link between youth and the certainty of triumph, as expressed in epic literature:

The heroes of youth are guided by the gods: whether what awaits them at the end of the road are the embers of annihilation or the joys of success, or both at once, they never walk alone, they are always led. Hence the deep certainty with which they proceed: they may weep and mourn, forsaken by everyone, on a desert island, they may stumble to the very gates of hell in desperate blindness, yet an atmosphere of security always surrounds them; a god always plots the [epic] hero's paths and always walks ahead of him (86).

The young heroes of epic stories reliably find and accept their appropriate missions. Though such heroes may suffer solitude, pain, and even death, they never suffer the agony of doubting their eventual victory.

Vicencio's foundational lecture addresses the scouts as heroic agents who recognize their present crisis and strive for a glorious future. Chilean Minister of War Roberto Huneus Gana, lecturing to them on 11 July 1909, even more fully expresses *scoutista* literature's epic cosmivision by hailing the scouts as prophesied messiahs with an appointed past, present and future:

Sois vosotros . . . la ambicionada aurora de aquel dichoso, de aquel excelente día que será el único eterno, el único sin noche, en la historia de la humanidad. Sufriréis seguramente tropiezos i desencanto en vuestro camino, pero siempre encontraréis alguna voz que, como la del actual Ministro de Guerra i Marina, os diga convencidamente: “El porvenir es vuestro. Adelante[,] adelante[,] i siempre adelante!” (36)

This passage not only shares Lukács’ sense of the epic, cited above. It also closely resembles Rodó’s *Ariel*, which, by the time of Vicencio’s and Huneeus Gana’s speeches, ranked among the most influential and culturally ambitious essays directed to the youth of Latin America (Acosta 7; González 78; Franco 120-21; Real de Azúa XXIV; Scavino 225). In the penultimate section of *Ariel*, the apostolic Próspero sends his disciples forth to carry out a society-transforming mission; he sends them into spiritual combat (Rodó 50). As they go about their duty, the *arielistas* are accompanied by their master’s guiding voice, and they also perceive that Ariel, a benevolent ethereal entity, supports their efforts (55-56). Similarly, Huneeus Gana invites his listeners to interpret him on an ethereal plane; he promises the scouts that they will never be beyond the reach of “alguna voz” that will always assure them that they are bound to inherit the future and complete their appointed task.

The texts that I have discussed above represent an overall narrative that *scoutista* literature developed, through essays, poems, and short stories in its magazines and other publications, of a society that had departed from its path and had fallen into moral decay. Nevertheless, owing to transcendental forces, a society as glorious as the Chilean nation was not destined for perdition. According to that narrative, the Boy Scouts offered social redemption.⁵

***Hatusimé*: A Chilean Boy Scout Epic with a Novel Conclusion**

From 1909 through the 1940s, the literature of the Chilean Boy Scouts displayed a predominantly epic cosmivision through the genres of essay, poetry, and short story. In 1947 Jacobo Danke (Juan Cabrera Pajarito, 1905-1963) published *¡“Hatusimé”! Novela para los adolescentes chilenos* (from here on identified as *Hatusimé*).⁶ The referent of the title,

⁵ For further reading on the rise and eventual dwindling of epic sensibilities in *scoutista* poetry, see pages 220-28 in Shaw’s “Boyscoutismo...”.

⁶ Little scholarship has been devoted to Danke’s work. He published three novels prior to *Hatusimé*, and a fifth and final novel after *Hatusimé*. *Hatusimé* is his only novel concerned with the Boy Scouts. He also wrote short stories, poetry, and literary criticism. Candia-Cáceres and Cristi situate his work within an esthetic shift, in the 1930s, from realism, naturalism and criollosim, toward vanguardist and socialist realism. This shift emphasized Valparaíso’s economic and political decline as Santiago became Chile’s most important city. Much of Danke’s narrative is attentive to marginalized persons such as laborers. Danke founded, with Oreste Plath, the journal *Gong!*, which published the works of Latin American writers

“hatusimé” or “hatusime,” is an abbreviation of the Chilean Boy Scout motto “Haz tú siempre mejor” or “Haz tú siempre lo mejor.”⁷ My focus is the implication of the book’s subtitle, which identifies the text as a novel. *Hatusimé*’s asserted categorization as a novel sets it at odds with the epic *scoutista* literature that preceded it.

By the time of the publication of *Hatusimé*, authors, literary critics, and scholars in Chile and elsewhere had developed theories of the novel as a modern genre. Georg Lukács posits, “in contrast to the normative childlikeness of the epic[, t]he novel is the form of virile maturity” (71). “[I]ts author has lost the poet’s radiant youthful faith” (85). Lukács theory conceives a culture’s turn from the epic to the novel as a sign of literary development akin to an individual’s abandonment of childish views in favor of perspectives more fit for adults. Silva Castro compliments Lukács: “En contraste con los poetas chilenos, que se sienten dueños de recetas mágicas, los novelistas se muestran más sensatos: [no] suponen que con sus novelas se están alcanzando cimas supremas” (16). Silva Castro regards poetry as a genre that fosters grandiose and magical thinking, while he esteems the novel as a more modest and sensible posture toward reality. Silva Castro evokes two other Chilean literary voices: critic Pedro N. Cruz’s assertion that a novel should regard the future pessimistically, and novelist Joaquín Edwards Bello’s insistence that novels bear a “confesión patética,” suggesting that novels should demonstrate an awareness of the shameful, lamentable, or ridiculous aspects of human experience (16, 19).

Walter Benjamin, in his essay “The Storyteller,” claims that storytelling had served the purpose of sharing valuable wisdom, and that the novel represents the loss of the value of experience, along with the loss of wisdom, counsel, and community. “The art of storytelling,” Benjamin writes, “is reaching its end because the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out. . . . [A] symptom of . . . the decline of storytelling is the rise of the novel” (83, 86-87). Benedict Anderson connects the novel genre with the modern nation: the novel arose in eighteenth century Europe as “the technical means for ‘re-presenting’ the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation” (25, original emphasis). These theories of the novel genre, conceived by thinkers within and outside of the early twentieth century Chilean context, assert that the novel form departs sharply from the assumptions found in poetry, epics, and storytelling, primarily by depicting the social, material (and perhaps the spiritual) world from a modern (rational, materialist, and solitary) perspective (though Lukács’ and Silva Castro’s references to poetry are, of course, far too simplistic).

of the political and cultural left, such as Pablo Neruda, César Vallejo, and José Carlos Mariátegui (56-57). For a general summary of the few scholarly responses to Danke’s novels, see Candia-Cáseres and Cristi 57-58. For a study of some of Danke’s short stories, see Fernández Aguirre.

⁷ Chilean Raquel Cousiño MacIver renders the phrase as “Haz tú siempre mejor” “Always do better” in *Manual del lobato*, her 1927 translation of Baden-Powell’s *The Wolf Cub’s Handbook* (21). Danke renders the phrase as “Haz tú siempre lo mejor” “Always do what is best” on page 79 of *Hatusimé*.

Though Danke dedicated *Hatusimé* to the Chilean Boy Scouts Association, he wrote it not as a member of the Scout organization, but rather as a fairly established novelist. Candia-Cáceres and Cristi identify Danke's *Dos hombres y una mujer. memorias de un proletario* (1933) and *La estrella roja* (1936) as novels that depict Valparaíso in a constant crisis of poverty, where hopeless characters understand their lives as undignified and their deaths as potentially meaningless (62-63, 66). Candia-Cáceres situates Danke's *Todos fueron de este mundo* (1952) among other novels that depict characters who are beyond redemption and out of place in a deteriorated and hostile Valparaíso (90-91, 99-103). By scrutinizing *Hatusimé*'s categorization as a novel, by no means do I question Danke's capability to produce narratives readily acceptable as novels. Rather, I claim that, regardless of the novelist, *scoutista* literature of the first half of the 20th century is incompatible with the novel genre as conceived by the scholars and critics cited above.

Hatusimé takes place in Valparaíso in 1910, when the Chilean Boy Scout organization was roughly one year old, and the nation was approaching its centennial celebrations (Danke 114, Rojas Flores 14). Boy scout Emilio Pastene and the uninitiated Arnaldo Fariás are friends and schoolmates. The book's first scene frames an epic cosmovision with a description of a world map on the boys' classroom wall. The atlas, as an image of totality, portrays continents and seas, smoking volcanoes, sailing ships and, above all, a hot air balloon passing through a curtain of rain into a sunny sky (Danke 15). Outside the classroom, Emilio and Arnaldo also experience the world as a harmonious totality. As they stand on a hill in their neighborhood one evening, "brotó en el cielo la primera estrella, el viento había desaparecido de la faz del planeta y una suave serenidad se difundía sobre montañas y colinas" (22). This passage bears a striking resemblance to Lukács' description of the happy epic ages "whose paths are illuminated by the light of the stars. Everything in such ages is new and yet familiar . . . The world is wide and yet it is like a home, for the fire that burns in the soul is of the same essential nature as the stars" (29). In *Hatusimé*, the stars come into view in the heavens in the same way that terrestrial flowers present themselves: by budding. The verb *brotar* attributes organic life to the stars, suggesting that they bear the "same essential nature" as that of the flora on Earth. By situating its story on "el planeta," which can only signify *planet*, instead of "la tierra," which can signify both *Earth* in its entirety, and *land* or *soil* as a mere portion of the Earth's surface, *Hatusimé* totalizes its characters' world. A planet, however vast, is one sphere. And in *Hatusimé*, that sphere is part of the somewhat broader total sphere that includes the heavens, stars, wind, mountains, and hills.

The serenity of this moment is initially disrupted by a vagabond who greets the boys as they walk home at dusk after sailing a model boat. Heavily bearded, dressed in ragged sailor's clothing, and with peculiarly wide and short feet, he appears suspicious. Chilean boy scout readers familiar with Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys* (in Maximiano Flores' 1912 translation *Guía del scout*) and short stories in *scoutista* magazines would have been conditioned to recognize such a lower class and somewhat bodily atypical character

as the villain, capable of theft or violence against animals, adults and children.⁸ Candia-Cáseres finds that novels set in Valparaíso beginning in approximately the 1930s, including Danke's *Todos fueron de este mundo* (1952), tended to feature immigrant characters who, though not simple villains, were recognizable as desperate individuals who were potentially violent, psychologically traumatized, or drunk. (103-04). But *Hatusimé's* wary treatment of Juan Evangelista Reyes quickly dissipates as a perceptibly good-natured spark radiates from the shadowed face. In this first encounter with the itinerant man, the boys are cautious but not afraid or defensive. Juan Evangelista does not assault them or ask for money. Instead, he states that he is seeking work (Danke 22-24).

As a handyman, Juan Evangelista becomes vital tissue of the social fabric in Valparaíso. He creates a network of references who can vouch for his work (Danke 54, 62, 94). Raymond Williams defines such a collective condition as a *Gemeinschaft*, “the more direct, more total, and therefore more significant relationships of community[, whereas the term *Gesellschaft* expresses] the more formal, more abstract and more instrumental relationships of *state*, or of *society*” (66). Even though Juan Evangelista is never welcomed into full fellowship in the neighborhood, his networking in the informal economy prompts the neighbors to engage one another. His itineraries construct and reveal Valparaíso as a *Gemeinschaft*.

Though readers might expect a Chilean boy scout to protagonize *Hatusimé*, the book mostly avoids developing such characters. While *Hatusimé* features no clear protagonist, the prologue elevates Juan Evangelista Reyes as the unchanging idiosyncratic Chilean (Danke 10). Juan Evangelista exhibits the narrative's most engaging personality. He knows Chile from end to end, as a result of a lifetime of sailing and itinerant labor (39). He indulges Emilio and Arnaldo in a series of personal stories, tall tales, and Chilean folklore and myths of both Hispanic and Indigenous origins. During multiple storytelling sessions, Juan Evangelista simultaneously performs manual labor and produces narratives. Juan Evangelista's act of completing handiwork while offering stories exemplifies Walter Benjamin's claim that a storyteller's social function consists in his “orientation toward practical interests” and his ability to give counsel through narratives (83, 86). In addition to sharing counsel, Juan Evangelista's stories also enchant the listeners' world. After the boys' first exposure to Juan Evangelista's stories, the hot air balloon seems to float even higher on the atlas on the classroom wall (Danke 41). The storyteller has made their world fascinating, while preserving the comforting totality of that world's map.

While strolling on a hill in their neighborhood, Emilio and Arnaldo ask Juan Evangelista if the legendary devil “el mandinga” truly exists. The storyteller expresses uncertainty, but not doubt. He cannot lay anecdotal claim to such knowledge, but he does

⁸ In the Chilean Scout magazine *El Scout Siempre Listo*, see “El pique del eco,” “El ídolo de Ranjipore” (serialized), “El honor de la decuria,” and Clementson's “Los incendiarios.” Baden-Powell's tale “El asesinato de Elsdon” on pages 32-36 of Flores' translation of his handbook as *Guía del scout* would also have been familiar to Chilean scout readers.

not discredit the possibility. Refusing to disenchant his listeners, he shares a tale he has heard from a miner who has heard the hammering of “el barreterito,” a spirit that inhabits abandoned mines. Countering Arnaldo’s expression of disbelief, Juan Evangelista evokes the ethos of oral lore: “Los mineros se persignan y, [c]omo me lo contaron te lo cuento.” The boys become speechless, while “Miríadas de doradas semillas se desparramaban por el éter. La bóveda celeste estaba adoptando un color acero templado [arriba d]el océano, escamoso y lleno de estrías” (66-68). In a similar passage in Danke’s short story “La rosa de los vientos,” Fernández Aguirre observes the author’s ability to create a “dimensión fantástica” and an “atmósfera de lo maravilloso” (191-92). Emilio marvels as his attention flows from the heavens to the land and sea around them, and then upward again to contemplate the domed sky. Gazing upward, he names all the constellations in view, attributing this knowledge to his Boy Scout training. Juan Evangelista praises Emilio, saying the boy is capable of navigating without a compass or sextant (68). Thus Juan Evangelista simultaneously validates the Boy Scout program and enchants the boys’ world. Here, as elsewhere in the story, the stars bud in the sky. The change in the sky’s color, from pale blue to silver, suggests the perceptible onset of the enchantment, drawing attention to the sea and its rhythmic waves, and upward again to ponder the constellations, which are, after all, stories told by the stars.

On an occasion when the children are not present, Juan Evangelista overhears the craft of another type of storyteller, one whose narrative disenchants the world. A provincial police commissioner, Iñiguez, gorges himself in a dining hall while boasting to a rowdy audience. He explains to his listeners that the people of his rural town believe in a phantom widow who terrifies travelers as they cross a bridge by night. The skeptical commissioner proceeds to narrate an encounter he has had with the wailing figure when he, in a drunken state, was attempting to cross the bridge. Determined to uncover what he believed to be a hoax, he threatened her with his sword. When she begged him not to strike her, he retorted that a ghost has no need to fear death. Knowing she was a living woman, he beat her with the flat side of his blade until she revealed her identity. (Although Iñiguez does not acknowledge it, apparently she had never attempted to pose as a phantom, and it remains unclear why she had been crying *before* he attacked her.) Juan Evangelista, appalled by the commissioner’s story, cannot tolerate such talk, and he leaves (48-50). By departing, Juan Evangelista is not so much protesting the drunken violence against the woman as he is rejecting Iñiguez’s intention to disprove a legend. While leaving, he whispers to himself, disappointed, “Esa no es la viuda que asalta en los andurriales a los caminantes rezagados y los ahoga entre sus brazos. Ni es la [legendaria bruja] Calchona, tampoco” (50).⁹ The commissioner’s gluttony on drumsticks while telling his tale, contrasted with Juan Evangelista’s telling of stories while rendering honest work,

⁹ La Calchona is a legendary Chilean witch (Martos García and Martos García 183).

deepens *Hatusimé's* moral distinction between the myth buster and the storyteller, which is akin to the distinction between novel skepticism and epic trustfulness.

Lukács claims that “the novel form is, like no other, an expression of . . . transcendental homelessness” (41). But, for the most part, *Hatusimé* does not allow for the fact of Juan Evangelista’s homelessness and economic instability to cause distress to him or to the reader. He is at home in the world, especially in Chile. Furthermore, his good nature and array of manual skills seem to assure his perpetual survival. While the book does not present his physical subsistence as a concern (until the final chapter), it frets for the survival of that which he represents—an epic worldview and traditional storytelling. As an oral transmitter of the Chilean pueblo’s stories, he identifies himself as a grandson and a son of adventurous Chileans, but he makes no reference to progeny of his own—he is the end of his line (Danke 37). When Emilio and Arnaldo tell him of their plans to build a model airplane, he responds with subtle counsel, and with probable reference to their model boat from their first meeting: “No digo que no sea una linda idea; pero ustedes tienen pasta de marinos y no de aviadores” (53). He reaffirms his claim by commending Emilio’s knowledge of the map of the stars (68). This counsel suggests his hope that the boys will preserve tradition rather than plunge into modernity. *Hatusimé* develops a hope that the scouts will carry on Juan Evangelista’s legacy. The narrative implies that the scouts will help him to preserve Valparaíso (and perhaps Chile more broadly) as a *Gemeinschaft*, while staving off the community’s drift toward the *Gesellschaft*.

While Arnaldo’s story is secondary to Juan Evangelista’s, it entails a rise to heroism. To his deep dismay, his mother inexplicably prohibits his enrollment with the Boy Scout organization (74-77). And yet, as if accepting Baden-Powell’s invitation, cited above, to become like “esos héroes de romances reales,” Arnaldo risks his life by jumping onto the neck of a runaway horse and reining the animal to a halt, narrowly preventing it from trampling his classmates (86-87). This act wins him the admiration of the students and faculty, who report “la providencial intervención de este chico” to Arnaldo’s mother (91). Moved by her son’s heroism, she at last allows him to join the organization. He becomes a boy scout just in time to join Emilio’s brigade in their participation in the ceremonies celebrating the nation’s centennial. Their inclusion in the patriotic festivities as *boy scouts* renders the experience more meaningful to them (110).

The penultimate chapter narrates the community celebrating itself. Thousands of voices unite in patriotic songs (111). A Chilean flag hangs from every house (110). The everyday setting of streetlight posts, residential gardens, and shop signs is transfigured by “[u]n raro encanto [que] flotaba en el ambiente; era como si todos los objetos hubieran adquirido un sello . . . patriótico” (109). Through this patriotic enchantment march parades of boy scouts and soldiers with more flags, while a band plays the Chilean National Anthem (111). Enrapt in the spell, Juan Evangelista salutes the passing procession, “estático, cuadrado, en actitud de firme, como si el flamear de los pabellones lo estuviera petrificando, convirtiéndolo en una estatua absorta ante la visión de[] nacimiento epopéyico de un pueblo libre” (112). This instance is crucial to an examination

of *Hatusimé* as an epic that suddenly gives way to a novel. Here Juan Evangelista in effect beholds at least two distinct births of two distinct peoples. While the epic (“epopéyico”) birth he regards certainly refers to the foundation of Chile as an early-nineteenth century new republic, I propose that he also witnesses the birth, in 1910, of a vastly more modern Chilean nation. The national flag seems to turn him into a stone statue, which is at once a tribute to him as a monument, and a relegation of him to the past. His salute to the scouts who march past him suggests his yearning to transmit his legacy to them.

Considering the likely expectations of Chilean boy scouts as readers of *scoutista* literature, *Hatusimé*'s penultimate chapter seems to deliver an appropriate resolution of the story: Arnaldo triumphs by becoming a hero and a scout, Chile celebrates its epic foundation, and the personification of the timeless Chilean salutes the scouts as if to bestow his tradition to them. But Juan Evangelista's witnessing of the birth of the modern nation proves irreversible and troubling. In the place of the epic-minded storyteller who has been petrified, there now appears a character of a novel.

The events of the final chapter occur a few days after the transformative moment narrated in the penultimate chapter. The centennial celebration has dwindled, and the factory bells call the laborers back to work (113). Juan Evangelista shares one final stroll with the scouts, to whom he explains that he has exhausted his opportunities for work in Valparaíso, and that he must move elsewhere. But now his perpetual optimism gives way to anxiety and melancholy (115, 117). The scouts, perhaps owing to their youthful innocence, fail to comprehend his plight, and instead they plead for more stories. But Juan Evangelista now mutters to himself, “Vienen los años, las averías son más difíciles de reparar y las máquinas no responden al esfuerzo del maquinista. . . . Lo que me duele, ciertamente, es que mi fondeadero final no será [lo] que debería ser el de todos los marinos[] sino un hospital o un asilo. . . . Ahí . . . la balandra es angosta y estrecha y no hay . . . timón que valga[], pues la navegación se hace bajo siete palmos de tierra, entre raíces y gusanos” (116-17). Three aspects of his murmur shift *Hatusimé* from its epic cosmivision to a novel-like worldview. First, Juan Evangelista expresses sentiments found in Danke's novel *La estrella roja* (1936). That novel's story takes place in a Valparaíso approximately two decades later than the setting of Juan Evangelista's story, and depicts the industrial machinery of the factory in which “proletarios [e]ran los accesorios de una máquina paradójicamente complicada” (cited in Candía-Cáceres and Cristi 64). As a handyman Juan Evangelista has enjoyed a long relationship with tools and machinery in which his humanity has remained intact. But he now perceives the threat of the incorporation of his body into the machinery of a more advanced phase of capitalism. Second, Juan Evangelista's angst over the conditions of his impending death demonstrates Walter Benjamin's observation that modern institutions have made lonely death far more common than death in the company of one's community, as the modern dying are “stowed away in sanatoria or hospitals” (93-94). Juan Evangelista fully expects

to die in such conditions.¹⁰ Third, Juan Evangelista views his death without faith in any sort of an afterlife. Or, if he expects to experience some form of conscious subjectivity after death, he does not regard the domain of worms and roots as a proper post-mortal home for a seafarer. He harbors no epic hope of sailing into the great beyond. His utterance instead expresses anxieties about the conditions of modern life, the conditions of the experience of dying in modernity, and the questioning of the reality or the quality of one's existence after such a death.

Momentarily returning his attention to his listeners, he points to a location on the bay where a small boat and its crew had recently been destroyed by the enormous propeller of an industrial ship. When Arnold asks how it was possible that the crew had come so close to the propeller, Juan Evangelista replies, “La fatalidad, no más, Arnaldito. Cuando están por pasar las cosas, pasan” (117). If this account of the tragedy on the bay is a storyteller's story in a Benjaminian sense, then the counsel it carries must involve a warning about modernity.¹¹ But the warning seems in vain. The reply, “When things are

¹⁰ Juan Evangelista Reyes shares important characteristics with sargento Escobedo in Chilean Francisco Coloane's novel for adolescents, *El último grumete de La Baquedano* (1941), winner of the first prize in the Concurso de Novela Infantil. Escobedo is the fictitious first sergeant on the Baquedano, the historical vessel used in the training of the Chilean Navy from 1899 until it was retired in 1936 (Délano 57, 101). In the Chilean cultural consciousness, at least among those concerned with military matters, the Baquedano symbolizes a traditional naval ethos. For example, it prioritized reliance on its sails, in spite of its motorized capacities (56). Thus, Escobedo represents a resistance to certain aspects of modernization. Escobedo, like Juan Evangelista, occupies a storyteller's role among the young cadets, including the adolescent protagonist, Alejandro, the last cabin boy to join the Baquedano on its final training voyage (Colane 55). Escobedo's storytelling, performed while rendering manual tasks, enchants his young listeners. Most notably, he believes that he has encountered a ghost that haunted a ship on which he worked in his youth (59-67). Two weeks after the Baquedano's final voyage, Alejandro visits Escobedo in the Naval Hospital in Valparaíso, where he is institutionalized, not for a bodily ailment, but rather for madness, as suggested by the final chapter's title, “La locura de Escobedo.” The aged Escobedo believes the Baquedano is out of service because it is haunted by a ghost, and he tells Alejandro that the two of them—the Baquedano's first sergeant and last cabin boy—are the only ones who can expel the phantom and restore the beloved ship to the sea. Deeply moved by the man's enthusiasm, Alejandro appears to accept the proposition, both verbally and with a handshake. Yet, immediately following Alejandro's stated commitment to Escobedo's proposed quest, the novel concludes abruptly: In that handshake, “Dos generaciones se despedían sobre el recuerdo de la vieja y gloriosa corbeta que, como el sargento, yacía anclada también ‘fuera de servicio’” (159). The novel's conclusion reveals that these two significant characters are parting ways, and only Escobedo takes his intention seriously. Recalling Benjamin's description of the conditions of death in modernity, we can surmise that Escobedo dies alone, stowed away in an institution that is both hospital and asylum. And yet he dies content in his worldview that is “out of service” in 1936. Juan Evangelista Reyes also likely dies alone. Unlike Escobedo, he dies in a troubled state of mind. And yet he is resolute that his last days and his death must avoid the mechanization and institutional confines of modernity that he spies on the horizon in 1910.

¹¹ Juan Evangelista's final tale is not the only instance in which *Hatusimé* manifests an aversion to propellers. On an earlier occasion, while the boys were building a model plane, they felt compelled to stop before installing the propeller, deciding instead to pay a visit to Juan Evangelista (57). In *Hatusimé*, not only

about to happen, they happen,” offers little wisdom for the listeners to apply to such a calamity.

Having told the story of the disaster, Juan Evangelista becomes increasingly detached from his young interlocutors. The scouts wave goodbye as they watch him shrug his shoulders and stumble out of the story, which then ends. After a life of striding through epics, the storyteller now lurches into a narrative that becomes a novel just as it concludes. If Juan Evangelista Reyes is the inalterable idiosyncrasy of the Chilean, as Danke states in the prologue of *Hatusimé*, then this book concludes by peering into the possible discontinuity of traditional Chileanness in a new age. And yet, as the homeless man now staggers through the same grey streets inhabited by the migrant and proletariat characters of Danke’s other novels, the boy scout characters waive goodbye to him from within their epic story, “halucinantes” beneath “el nimbo carmín y púrpura del poniente,” oblivious to the implications of the loss of their aged friend (120). Chilean boy scout characters do not venture into the novel, the modern literary form.

Conclusion

I have attempted to demonstrate that the majority of literature published for and by the Chilean Boy Scouts from the 1910s through the 1940s displays an epic worldview, with particular enthusiasm for the scouts as heroes. In critical response to *Hatusimé*’s claim to be a novel, I have drawn on literary theories that establish a disparity between the awe-inspiring and comforting cosmivision of epic literature and the pro-social ethos of storytelling on the one hand, and on the other hand, the materialist and socially atomizing worldview of the novel genre. This article has interrogated the limits of *scoutista* literature’s ability to remain faithful to its transcendental and communal paradigm, while also assuming the profane and isolated worldview of the novel genre. Young Arnaldo and Emilio inhabit the Valparaíso of 1910, a time when the founders of the Boy Scouts organization of Chile regarded their pupils as a collective agent of epic heroism and social redemption. Though *Hatusimé* takes the form of an epic in its first through penultimate chapters, its novelistic final chapter relinquishes its epic faith. Over the course of their story, the young characters learn practical skills from the Boy Scout program and receive wonderous lore from Juan Evangelista. But they cannot save Juan Evangelista from his precarity within their stratified society, nor do they seem aware that there had existed such an expectation of them. *Hatusimé* concludes without belief in the Boy Scouts’ epic heroism as preached by Vicencio and Huneus Gana.

are propellers devices capable of massive and meaningless destruction, but they also represent a troubling momentum toward modernity.

Since its foundation, Scouting, as a program and a culture, has aimed to transmit to its readers a sense of wonder, nostalgia, and tradition. But Scouting has also sought earnestly to prepare its young adherents for adulthood. As a target reader, the adolescent is a moving target. Adolescence represents a stage during which fiction and reality need not be firmly separated. Adolescence, in this sense, is a hybrid and transitional stage, and *Hatusimé* offers a hybrid and transitional narrative genre that permits interpretive complexity. *Hatusimé* significantly developed *scoutismo* as a literary project. But if it sought to bring Chilean *scoutista* literature and the novel genre into cohesion, its success is difficult to ascertain. Perhaps a degree of ambivalence is unavoidable, and that ambivalence demonstrates a profound characteristic of Scouting as a literary endeavor. Chilean *scoutismo* as literature, and the Chilean Boy Scout program in general, in its first four decades (and perhaps beyond), depended on its liminal quality, decidedly rooted in boyhood, ever reaching toward manhood, based in the *Gemeinschaft* while uneasily spying the *Gesellschaft*. Curiously, even though *Hatusimé* does not succeed in presenting the Boy Scouts as the heroes hailed by its Chilean founders, it concludes with a tone that, like Vicencio's attitude in his founding sermon, reveals a profound dissatisfaction with Chilean society as it proceeded through the first half of the 20th century. But unlike Vicencio's oration, Danke's novel offers hope that yields to uncertainty.

This article situates *Hatusimé* more firmly within the relatively small body of scholarship about Danke's literature (Candia-Cáceres and Cristi, Fernández Aguirre, Silva Castro). It also positions *Hatusimé* within a relatively small body of scholarship (history, literature, cultural studies) on Chilean Boy Scouts (Del Brutto, Rojas Flores, Shaw). My access to non-digital archival Chilean Boy Scout texts was limited to publications from the 1910s through the 1940s. Further findings might reveal literary tendencies that expand our understanding of *scoutista* literature beyond my definition of it in these pages. Notwithstanding *Hatusimé*'s humble impact upon literary studies, the book enjoyed an active publication history, with its last edition being printed during the dictatorship, by Zig-Zag, in 1982, with a reprint in 1987. Further scholarship based on *scoutista* literature of the 1950s-80s and beyond might illumine *Hatusimé*'s enduring or changing cultural significance to the Boy Scout movement in Chile during those pivotal and turbulent decades. I have primarily focused on Boy Scout literature from Chile because that was the first nation in Latin America (and the first nation outside the British Empire) to form the organization. Literary and cultural studies of other Latin American Boy Scout and Girl Scout iterations are few, and further research is likely to teach us much about the region's use of those programs to articulate an array of concepts such as nation, gender, nature, and attitudes about traditions and modernity.

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