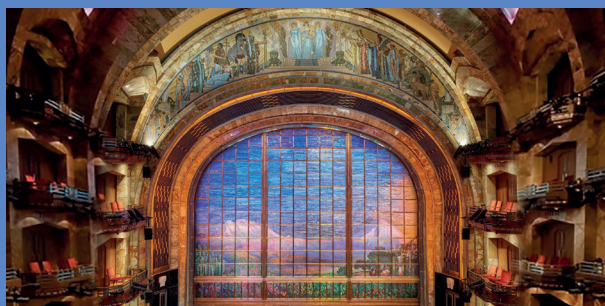


Latin America and Hungary Cultural Ties

América Latina y Hungría Contactos culturales



Editor:
MÓNICA SZENTE-VARGA

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HUNGARY
CULTURAL TIES

AMÉRICA LATINA
Y HUNGRÍA
CONTACTOS CULTURALES

Editor

Mónika Szente-Varga

Authors

Jorge Kristóf Asqui
Zsuzsanna Csikós
Barbara Hegedűs
Katalin Jancsó
Mercédesz Kutasy
András Lénárt
Vladimir Alexander Smith-Mesa
Béla Soltész
Mónika Szente-Varga
Ágnes Judit Szilágyi
Anna Urbanovics
Balázs Venkovits
Dávid Zelei

Text checked by
Fernando Portillo Alcántara
Timothy C. Dowling

Revised by
Emőke Horváth
Andrea Kökény
Bernadett Lehoczki
Gabriella Menczel

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Introduction

*“We understand each other through culture –
whether that is language, or the arts,
or simply our way of doing things.
If we want to break down barriers to
understanding, cultural exchange
is essential.”*

Sir Martin Davidson

This book is the fruit of the conference *Hungary and Latin America: Cultural Ties*, held on 6 April 2017 at the National University of Public Service in Budapest. It contains fourteen essays by researchers from the universities of Szeged and Debrecen, as well as Eötvös Loránd University and the National University of Public Service in Budapest, and the University College London.

The writings, elaborated mainly in English and partly in Spanish, follow the movement of people and ideas across the Atlantic, from Hungary to Latin America and vice-versa. Some investigations focus on the activities and contributions of Hungarian artists in Latin America, others on the exchange of ideas, such as the image of Cuba in Hungary or the image of Hungary in Cuba. Of course, ideas do not travel alone; humans are necessary to form and transform them.

The objectives of this book are to rescue the cultural heritage of Hungarian–Latin American relations, and to contribute to its preservation. Contacts between Hungary and Latin America were sporadic until the lost war of Hungarian independence of 1848–1849, but grew significantly after the establishment of the Austro–Hungarian Dual Monarchy (1867). The turn of the century brought flourishing cultural relations, only to see them cut by World War I. The 1920s saw the establishment of Hungarian colonies in various Latin American countries though, and after 1924, when the United States closed its doors to immigrants, migratory patterns changed and Latin America became a more popular destination.

Many Hungarian immigrants arrived in the region between 1920 and 1950. Some arrived directly from Hungary, while others emigrated from neighbouring states, in particular from territories separated from Hungary due to World War I. Where the former group often shied away from their cultural heritage, the latter usually had a strong emotional attachment to Hungarian cultural traditions. Contacts were severed again with the creation of the Socialist Bloc in Eastern Europe; it became illegal to leave Hungary, and the Socialist Government viewed with suspicion Hungarians abroad. Hungarians outside Hungary were labelled as dangerous or even treacherous.

There were three main trends in cultural contacts between Hungary and Latin America during the Cold War: visits in Hungary by Latin American artists having sympathies with the political left; cultural activities of Hungarian immigrants and their descendants settled in Latin America; and Latin American works by emigrated Hungarian artists living outside the region. The latter two could not be known in Hungary until 1990, and it was not easy to re-establish contacts. A lot of information had been lost with the death of the first generations of emigrants, with the disintegration of Hungarian colonies, and with the passing of time.

Hungarian–Latin American ties have had an asymmetrical character. There has been more interest and attention in Hungary about Latin America than vice-versa. It is important to broaden the cultural exchange because it can contribute to mutual understanding. Latin America has been a strategic partner of the EU since 1999, and Hungary has been part of this relationship since its accession in 2004. The essays in this volume demonstrate the richness and diversity of the links between Hungary and Latin America. Yet the volume is far from being comprehensive. It ranges in time from the 19th century to 2017, and over a wide range of arts, movements and individuals. These investigations are meant as a contribution to the European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018) and as a resource for cultural diplomacy. This volume was written primarily, but not exclusively, from a Hungarian perspective for a Latin American public. I consider it a beginning, and hope someday to hold in my hands a Latin American counterpart.

Mónika Szente-Varga

Exiled for Political Reasons: Hungarian Actors in Latin America

András Lénárt

Introduction

Latin America has been the final destination of several migration flows from Europe throughout the centuries. Hungarians often took part in these movements; the explanations for embarking on such long journeys usually had economic or political backgrounds.¹ Artists, photographers, architects, stage and film actors belonged to these groups; the majority of them arrived in Latin America in the 1940s. The Hungarian historian Ágnes Judit Szilágyi published a study on the arrival and activity of some of these actors, making use of numerous valuable sources, like the articles and reports of the Hungarian newspapers published in Latin America.² The Hungarian filmmakers' exile was not a rare phenomenon; while most directors, screenwriters and actors emigrated to Great Britain, Germany and the United States of America, Spain also sheltered some of these artists.³

In the Hungarian film industry, “poison factory” existed alongside the so-called “dream factory” in the 1930s and 1940s.⁴ Contemporary cultural politics favoured ideological films, but this was more the expectation of the extreme right; the government did not want to invest in filmmaking, and private investors preferred movies that entertained the public. Among the more than two hundred films shot in Hungary between 1939 and 1945, only a dozen can be regarded as ideological or propaganda movies.⁵ The Hungarian film industry flourished between the two world wars, creating a local star system. There was a clear and easy flow between the worlds of theatre and film; Hungarian actors moved between the two without difficulty.

Personal letters sent to Hungarian relatives, friends, or colleagues by artists exiled to Latin America shed some light on the political, professional and social background of some outstanding actors' exile to Latin America in the 1930s and 1940s, the Hungarian society's reaction, and, in some cases, the circumstances of their return to Hungary and the re-evaluation of their life (and tragedy) from the perspective of the present. The

¹ See for instance CSIKÓS 1988, 82–87; NÉMETHY KESSERŰ 2003; SZENTE-VARGA 2012; SZENTE-VARGA 2007; TORBÁGYI 2004; TORBÁGYI 2009.

² The original study can be found in SZILÁGYI 2009, 141–150. Recently, the author has published a Spanish translation of the same article: SZILÁGYI 2017, 81–90.

³ LÉNÁRT 2010, 92–99; LÉNÁRT 2013, 167–185.

⁴ BALOGH et al. 2004, 55.

⁵ VAJDOVICH 2013, 69–70.

international investigations concerning their life have completed our knowledge. The three best-known Hungarian actors who chose to live in Latin America were Antal Páger, Katalin Karády and Zita Szeleczky; this region was either their main choice or only a temporary residence before proceeding to the United States. A crucial aspect of these investigations are the Hungarian and Latin American political and social circumstances, based on my recent research carried out in archives, libraries, databases, and the synthesis and evaluation of the new works by other Hungarian and foreign historians and film historians. Moreover, some exclusive sources have come to light recently that provide new information. Antal Páger, for example, sent several personal letters to his hometown, Makó, that are available with the help of the residents of the town and the local museum; also, the FBI declassified a couple of documents that disclose new details about Katalin Karády's arrival in the United States.

The lives and careers of Katalin Karády, Antal Páger and Zita Szeleczky have much in common. They were among Hungary's biggest stage and film stars in the 1930s and 1940s; their names were known to anyone familiar with culture and social life. Although they got involved in various political issues, and they appeared in gossips and even calumnies, they did not take part explicitly in any political activities. They usually sympathised with conservative politic circles, but close links to the extreme right cannot be proven.

Antal Páger

In the 1930s, a new type of actor emerged both in theatre and on film with Antal Páger. He was neither the conventional handsome gentleman nor the good-looking adventurer and love interest of the heroine (and the female members of the public); he was the embodiment of the ordinary Hungarian citizen. Especially when he played "the man of the countryside", a member of the peasantry who worked for the everyday survival, his interpretation came across as authentic.

Film historians, but even viewers can identify the political and ideological messages in Hungarian movies of the 1930s and 1940s. Antal Páger had a key role in many of them. The most anti-democratic was *Takeover* (*Őrsékváltás*, Viktor Bánky, 1942), an anti-Semitic propaganda film where Páger was cast as the main character. *Dr. Kovács István* (Viktor Bánky, 1941) and *The Thirtieth* (*A harmincadik*, László Cserépy, 1942), which also starred Páger, included elements related to the Hungarian anti-Jewish laws, as well. Therefore, he became linked with these movies, although they represent only a minor portion of his abundant and diversified filmography.

Páger, although he never entered any political parties, frequently visited social meetings where politicians appeared. His political views and some of his declarations, mostly fragments of interviews, associated him with the right and the extreme right. When the left reproached him for his views, the right-wing newspapers defended him; later, this became "proof" of his collaboration with the far right. Páger believed that the main problem was that when the left attacked him, the right stood up for him without hesitation, and this brought about the semblance that he actually belonged to them.⁶

⁶ MOLNÁR GÁL 1988, 222.

These accusations were not groundless; he was a member of the Actor's Union that had been formed in 1938, right after the proclamation of the anti-Jewish laws, and the union's primary task was to remove Jewish actors from the theatre and film industry. He attended several parties organised by extremist magazines and political circles. His wife had various friends on the extreme right, and newspapers took several photos of him in the company of Ferenc Szálasi, leader of the fascist Arrow Cross Party. The government even wanted to appoint him as commissary of the film industry, but he turned down this offer.

In 1944, fearing he would be subject to recriminations for his (presumed) sympathy for the extreme right, Páger left Hungary and went to Austria; subsequently, he moved on to France and, in 1948, to Latin America. Nevertheless, the allegations followed him even to the New World; when he arrived in Buenos Aires, a Hungarian correspondent wrote about the "arrival of the infamous actor of the Arrow Cross Party, who was welcomed in the harbour by some of his friends, all war criminals."⁷ The new Hungarian Communist Government accused him of having collaborated with the philo-Nazi Hungarian regime. The authorities banned his films and his name was blacklisted. His house was confiscated and handed over to the film theoretician Béla Balázs.⁸

Páger settled in Argentina, but he also worked in Venezuela, Uruguay and Brazil. Letters sent to his Hungarian friends reveal that he never felt at home in any of these countries; he hoped one day to return to Hungary. His Hungarian friends sent him Hungarian newspaper articles where he was depicted as a Nazi collaborator; consequently, he stayed in Latin America for twelve years.

Argentina was a popular destination for Hungarian immigrants, who fostered and maintained an active cultural life there. Páger acted, directed and worked as a set designer in one of the most important theatre companies there. He also worked as a painter and a graphic artist, and he held exhibitions in various Latin American countries where he sold his paintings and illustrations at a high price. He worked in various theatres, restaging plays he knew from his Hungarian years. In 1951, he received the Argentine citizenship.⁹

He always yearned for home though, not only his mother country, but also his hometown of Makó. His letters note that he wanted to see his parents' graveyard, and to visit his brother and sister, who had financial difficulties. The Hungarian communist authorities were aware of this homesickness. For the Hungarian Government it was important to bring him home; they wanted to use him in the fight and propaganda against the Hungarian fascists living abroad. They entered into long negotiations. Páger imposed several conditions, and finally they came to terms; the actor returned to Hungary in 1956, one month before the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution.¹⁰ He was granted amnesty. This was a great success for the communist cultural diplomacy, and Páger's arrival served as a model for the homecoming of other Hungarian actors, like Pál Jávör.¹¹

Páger's return to Hungary met with disapproval from both political sides. The exiled colonies thought he had betrayed them and came to an understanding with the Hungarian

⁷ Quoted in MOLNÁR GÁL 1988, 234.

⁸ See the sources from Hungarian archives in ÓLMOSI 2008.

⁹ HALÁSZ 1992, 9–11.

¹⁰ Ibid. 12; MOLNÁR GÁL 1988, 241–251.

¹¹ Pál Jávör returned to Hungary in 1957 after having spent 11 years in the United States.

Communist Government, while other segments of the Hungarian society still looked upon him as a fascist and traitor.¹²

Páger was well aware of the difficulties that were awaiting him in Hungary. In a letter written to one of his friends in Makó in 1956, just months before arriving in Hungary, he recalled the calumnies and assaults that he had to endure both in his home country and in exile, because his enemies kept defaming him even in Latin American newspapers, claiming that he was anti-Semitic.¹³ He declared that some years before a Jewish group had wanted to lynch him in Uruguay (but instead they attacked two Hungarian actresses by mistake, provoking a violent clash between Hungarian and Jewish groups), while in Venezuela the Jews denounced him as a murderer; the local authorities had to take him under protection. He stated explicitly that he was afraid of the Hungarian Jews who were violently attacking him in articles and letters, and he vigorously criticised the world's Jewish communities for taking part in this "war" against him. He complained, for example, about an article that was published in Argentina in a newspaper that was issued by Jewish editors; it was written about the mass murders and mass graves during the Holocaust, and the text was illustrated with a still photo about a scene from his above-mentioned film *Takeover*, explaining: "Antal Páger calls upon the workers to slaughter the Jews" and under the image of the mass grave the following subtitle stated: "The results." Although he maintained that during World War II he had helped some Jews who got into trouble, in this letter he could not hide his disdain against this minority. Páger related in detail how he and his family lived in Latin America and how his feelings about his fatherland had not changed. Although he was pondering over returning to Hungary, he was worried about his family's safety, not being convinced of the Hungarian Government's, the colleagues' and the society's real feelings and intentions. In this letter he was recollecting his thoughts on the reasons why he had become one of the most hated men in Hungary – and also among some exiled communities –, whether it was for the roles he had accepted in the 1940s or his public behaviour.

Finally, he decided to go back to Hungary despite his fears, and returned to the stage, although some of his former colleagues refused to work with him. He made no political statements, but frequently performed in plays; Páger appeared in more than one hundred movies, both on the big and the small screen, until his death in 1986.

One of these movies had a strange relation to his past and his years in Latin America. In 1967, Zoltán Fábri directed *Late Season* (*Utószezon*), one of the best Hungarian films of these decades, although it has always divided its audience and the critics. The main character of the film, played by Páger, accidentally cooperated in the deportation of a Jewish couple in 1944. When Adolf Eichmann, one of the major organisers of the Holocaust is brought to trial in Israel, Páger's character in Hungary is stricken by remorse; he considers himself a Nazi collaborator. Although Fábri thought that this film was one of his best movies, some Hungarian critics disapproved of this kind of representation of the genocide and accused the director of formalism.¹⁴ Foreign critics admired the film, and it received great acclaim at the Venice Film Festival. One jury member, however, the American filmmaker and writer Susan Sontag, attacked the film publicly because of Páger's involvement; she declared that

¹² NÉMETHY KESSERŰ 2003, 191.

¹³ PÁGER 1992, 18–27.

¹⁴ MÁTYÁS 2006.

he was a war criminal, a Nazi collaborator, therefore the film had to be dismissed.¹⁵ Páger's career did not suffer much, and he earned the most important honours of the Hungarian state throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Katalin Karády

At the beginning of the 1940s, Katalin Karády counted among the most popular actresses in Hungary, appearing in successful films like *Deadly Spring* (*Halálos tavasz*, László Kalmár, 1939) or *Queen Elisabeth* (*Erzsébet királyné*, Félix Podmaniczky, 1940). Although she did not want to be typecast as a Hungarian *femme fatale*, in the majority of her films she was given the role of a mysterious woman with obscure intentions who brings about the ruin of the men who yearn for her. But sometimes she managed to break out from the well-known patterns, like when she played the beloved Queen Elisabeth. Although she cannot be regarded as a highly talented actress, she became an icon, one of the most popular film stars of the period. Her success became restricted to the screen: on stage she was destined to fail, because through live performances Karády's force of attraction was not strong enough, she lacked the talent to enchant the audience of the theatres.¹⁶ She did not play roles in propaganda films or ideological movies during World War II, but she performed at military concerts, attended charity events in regions that, before 1920, had belonged to Hungary, and she appeared in some short films shot for the Hungarian army. She visited military hospitals and sang for the injured soldiers.¹⁷ She accepted the existing administration in Hungary, and did not express any political views. She refused to join any political party, and maintained friendships with people of all political leanings. Various legends, gossips and calumnies surrounded her, provoking the multiplication of her enemies from all sides. Karády wanted to keep distance from the political parties, but she also yearned to have friends, no matter to which side they belonged. The right therefore accused her of belonging to the left, and the left accused her of belonging to the right. Her romantic relationship with a Hungarian officer only worsened the situation.

General István Ujszászy had an important role in the Hungarian foreign policy. He served as a military attaché in Warsaw and Prague, and he gradually achieved higher ranks in both the political and military hierarchy in the 1930s. During World War II, he worked for the Hungarian military intelligence service and, between 1942 and 1944, he headed this service. His activities are unclear and yet controversial; his major principle seems to have been survival, no matter the costs. According to available sources, he had a crucial role in two secret diplomatic missions: establishing contacts with the Allies and preparing the way for the country's possible withdrawal from the war. When the German troops invaded Hungary, they arrested Ujszászy and interrogated him on suspicion of treason. After the war, the NKVD (*Narodny Komissariat Vnutrennih Del*, meaning *People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs*, which was the Soviet secret police) arrested him; for whatever reasons, Ujszászy collaborated with the new communist administration, handing over valuable

¹⁵ FÁBIÁN 2016.

¹⁶ KELECSÉNYI 2010, 46.

¹⁷ KELECSÉNYI 1989, 42–44.

information on the former governments' operations and their key figures. He remained in custody and his fate is unknown; it is quite probable that he died a violent death. The details of his activities are ambiguous, filled with lots of ungrounded "facts" and even gossips, the majority of sources (including his own records) slanted, and even academic works backed by archival investigations necessarily contain suppositions.¹⁸

As Ujszászy's love interest during this delicate political period, Karády was involved in politics, however unwillingly. She never took political sides, but public opinion, the press and the authorities regarded her as having several friends from the left and among the Jewish minority. Accusations also arose about her spying for the British, being the lover of various politicians, being a nymphomaniac or being a lesbian. Her private life was not approved by the contemporary moral ethics. Professionally she reached the highest popularity, but she found herself in a trap: for the left, she was too right-wing and for the right she was too left-wing, although she never made clear political statements. Her personal relationships, her philo-Semite behaviour, and her willingness to assist the social and political outcasts nevertheless made her an ideal target for both sides.

According to the three anti-Jewish laws (1938, 1939 and 1941), Jewish people could not work in theatres or movies, and their involvement in the cultural field was reduced.¹⁹ Jewish screenwriters had the possibility to stay in the film industry, but only under a pseudonym or making use of the help of a so-called *front man*.²⁰ In any case, the name of the most renowned scriptwriters disappeared from the film credits. However, Karády did not break relations with her Jewish friends and colleagues, for which some of her fellow workers reported her to the authorities and she was fined. Some members of the entertainment industry thought that she had communist and socialist friends, yet her only dubious involvement was that she helped organise meetings between Ujszászy and some leftist circles; sometimes she acted as a mediator.²¹ Her situation became even more complicated when she played the title role in *Machita* (Endre Rodriguez, 1943), a film about a female spy who tries to seduce various men in order to achieve her goal: obtain the plans of an anti-aircraft gun. The audience thought that this could be regarded as a sort of confession.

In 1944, the Gestapo (*Geheime Staatspolizei*, meaning the Nazi Germany's *Secret State Police*) arrested her together with Ujszászy, as they thought that she was involved in his fiancé's suspicious activities. She was deprived of food, kept under inhuman conditions and the German officials tortured her brutally. They accused her of spying for the Allies and possessing classified documents. Her interrogators failed to extort a confession, and she was released after three months of imprisonment, but she was kept under supervision of the police.²² She remained silent until the end of the war.

¹⁸ HARASZTI 2007; SZITA 2006, 4–30; PUSZTASZERI 2008.

¹⁹ See details in VÁGI et al. 2013, 3–22.

²⁰ The front man was the person whose name appeared as the author of a screenplay or a novel instead of the real author who was blacklisted or whose name could not be published for some reason. This trick was quite common in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s to avoid the harassment of the extreme right and also in the United States of America, due to the activity of the *House Un-American Activities Committee* which took aim at several film directors, scriptwriters and actors in Hollywood, accusing them of collaborating with the communists.

²¹ PUSZTASZERI 2008, 165–167; 216.

²² KELECSÉNYI 1989, 48–49.

After the Soviet takeover, Karády could not find a place in the new Hungary. The authorities resented her relations with representatives of the former government. She earned some interesting parts on stage, but received only minor roles in movies, which were mostly of low quality. At the end of the 1940s, even theatre directors stopped employing her, and in 1951 she decided to leave the country. Her desired destination was the United States, but rumours of communist connections kept her from settling there: in the U.S., in the heyday of *House Un-American Activities Committee* (HUAC), a Central European actress with confused relations had little chance to establish in that country. After travelling through Austria, Switzerland and France, she arrived in Sao Paulo in 1951 with two close friends. Some Hungarian immigrants who had been living in Brazil for some time helped them obtain the required documents. In Hungary, the government blacklisted her songs and films, and put her relatives in internment camps, where they were forced to work on construction sites. After 1956, these relatives could return to Budapest, but they spent several years under surveillance.²³

In Brazil, Karády returned to the stage occasionally, but she wanted to do something else, far from the unpredictable world of the artists. In the beginning, she did not work, she just wrote letters to her friends who still lived in Hungary. She wanted to re-invent herself before starting a new life. Later she opened a hat salon with her friend and spent seventeen years in São Paulo. Her shop became a popular meeting-place for the upper-class Brazilian women. Karády usually worked in the background, not willing to meet the clients. She did not attend any meetings with the Hungarian immigrant circles.

Finally, as a wealthy woman with good relations to influential businessmen, a Hungarian lawyer, and some Hungarians who lived in the U.S., she received her visa to the United States and a residence permit. In New York she opened another hat salon, this one on Madison Avenue, for upper-class women. First Lady Nancy Reagan was one of her VIP clients. Sometimes she performed at concerts with a couple of songs or poems, but she never returned to plays or films.²⁴

According to some recently declassified documents, Karády's emigration to the U.S. was more complicated than previously believed. An FBI agent wrote that she was "a communist collaborator, lesbian and prostitute" and a close friend of the head of the Hungarian Nazi intelligence. Robert and Edward Kennedy personally intervened on her behalf, however, at the behest of Karády's influential Hungarian friends.²⁵

At the end of the 1960s, according to documents stored in archives,²⁶ Karády contacted the Hungarian embassy in an attempt to return home. After negotiations, however, she remained undecided and finally she did not leave the United States. She died in New York in 1990 and, after having received the American last honours in the same city, she was buried in Budapest. Her return to Hungary was a historical moment: she was given the Hungarian last honours in the capital's St. Stephen's Basilica, no such thing had happened there since the 1940s. Karády's return marked a turning point, it became a symbol for the beginning of a new political era in her home country, just one month before the first democratic

²³ See details in KARÁDY 1989.

²⁴ HÁMORI 2004, 95–103.

²⁵ U.S. Department of Justice 2011.

²⁶ These documents were published and summarised by PUSZTASZERI 2008, 276–285.

elections that were going to be held after the fall of socialism.²⁷ Her unforgettable film and stage interpretations form iconic components of the Hungarian film history, and her legend became immortalised by the biographical film *Smouldering Cigarette* (*Hamvadó cigarettavég*, Péter Bacsó, 2001), making use of the title of one of Karády's most famous songs from 1942.

Zita Szelezcky

Although Antal Páger and Katalin Karády were the most important members of the Hungarian artists' community exiled to Latin America, Zita Szelezcky also serves as a significant example. Her fate resembles that of Páger's. Even though she played important roles in various films and was considered a film star, her real world was the stage. She thought of herself primarily as a theatre actress. Contemporary articles about her mixed facts with rumours, false deductions, or even lies. When she turned down a role in the Hungarian National Theatre and the conflict between the actress and the directors became acrimonious, both sides tried to find political explanations. Szelezcky claimed she simply did not want to play that role. She was fired from the theatre, but a new director rehired her.²⁸

Some newspapers on the extreme right claimed Szelezcky had expressed her sympathy for National Socialism, but there is no evidence to support this allegation. Leftist groups wanted to place Szelezcky on their side as well. It is also true that Szelezcky was not careful about what she said or to whom. As one of her biographers puts it though, Szelezcky was not a member of the Arrow Cross Party and she was not anti-Semitic, but her strong Hungarian conscience made her an easy target in the interwar period. She was popular in society, and did not deal with political issues until the 1940s.²⁹ She was almost as celebrated as Katalin Karády, they both had fan clubs and sometimes they were competing for the same role, although their looks were completely different. Between 1936 and 1944 Szelezcky played in twenty seven films which received mixed reviews, but she entered the Hungarian stardom, just like Karády.³⁰

When the outcome of World War II was clear, she escaped to South Tirol. She moved on to other countries, arriving in Argentina in 1948. She could not return to Hungary because the new administration issued a warrant for her arrest as a war criminal. According to the authorities, she carried out activities to continue the war and to assist the fascist movements. Antal Páger's name also appeared on this list. In 1948, Szelezcky was accused officially of supporting Nazism, inciting against the Soviet Union with songs and poems in radio programmes, and attending concerts, both in Budapest and Warsaw, that popularised the war, the anti-democratic regimes and the Axis powers. Several witnesses, including colleagues from theatre, testified against her, claiming they were aware of Szelezcky's Nazi sympathies and her anti-Semitic attitude. Her situation was worsened by those eulogistic articles that were published on her by the most popular newspapers of the extreme right. Among the possible punishments, there were the most serious ones, death penalty and

²⁷ KELECSÉNYI 2010, 104–105.

²⁸ ÁBEL 2012, 27–28.

²⁹ PUSZTASZERI 2011, 67–68.

³⁰ KELECSÉNYI 2010, 69.

life sentence. A court found her guilty *in absentia*, and she was sentenced to three years imprisonment and the confiscation of her property. A Hungarian court cleared her name of these charges in 1994.³¹

When she arrived in Buenos Aires in 1948, several Hungarian artists were already living there, but under constant pressure because of their political views. Right after World War II, several Nazi war criminals (like Adolph Eichmann or Joseph Mengele) and sympathisers fled to Latin America, mainly to Juan Domingo Perón's Argentina. When Hungarian exile groups arrived, some segments of the society, including some of those Hungarian immigrants who had entered the country much earlier, thought that the new arrivals all belonged to the far right. Szelezky recalls with disappointment that many people accused them of being Nazis, fascists and murderers, while those who arrived after the revolution of 1956 were treated as freedom fighters and heroes.³²

Szelezky, in the year of her arrival, started to appear in local plays, first in German, later in Hungarian. She joined the Hungarian Theatre Society, but soon left it because there were constant, countless conflicts among the members. The actress maintained that the principal problem was that she was accustomed to the traditions of the Hungarian National Theatre, while the others had experiences mainly from private theatres. She went on several tours that included poetry readings, literary recitals and even Hungarian folk songs. She played an important role in an Argentine film, *To Live a Moment* (*Vivir un instante*, Tulio Demicheli, 1951) and in that same year she founded the Argentine Hungarian National Theatre, where she staged various classic Hungarian plays, including Imre Madách's *The Tragedy of Man*. This company dissolved one year later, so she continued her own touring programmes across the American continent; she also visited Australia. Afterwards she settled in the U.S. with her sister; she performed in clubs and released albums that included songs and poems. Argentina's Hungarian newspapers followed her career closely.³³ When Hungary went through fundamental political transformations, in the 1990s Szelezky returned several times, first in 1990, primarily to undergo medical treatments. She died in Hungary in 1999.

Conclusion

Páger, Karády and Szelezky were only three of the many artists who left Hungary for Latin America primarily for political reasons. They can be regarded as "prototypes" of this kind of political-artistic exile. A Hungarian website, making use of the Family Search database, made a selection of the provisional residence permits issued in Latin America to famous Hungarians, including actors and other artists.³⁴ This database offers information on, for example, the actors Romola Németh, László Szilassy, Piroska Vaszary, Miklós Hajmássy and László Pálóczy – their life and artistic activity in Latin America show how the exiled communities fought for their survival in those distant lands. The Hungarian immigrants

³¹ PUSZTASZERI 2011, 106–112; 116; 123–124; 131.

³² JÁVOR 2012, 61.

³³ ÁBEL 2012, 29–32; PUSZTASZERI 2011, 153–158. JÁVOR 2012 gives a thorough summary of articles written on Szelezky in Hungary and in Latin America.

³⁴ See FamilySearch s. a.; Hangosfilm 2015.

who had arrived in Latin America earlier knew them through various channels, including earlier plays or movies in Hungary. Before and during World War II, several Hungarian films were shown in Latin American cinemas or clubs, especially in Brazil and Argentina; this tradition did not end after the war. The Hungarian immigrant groups nonetheless were divided on their attitude toward the new arrivals. The social status, ideological viewpoint and the date of their arrival all helped determine the stance of the “old-timers”. Hungarian actors also had dissensions within their artistic community, bringing about the dissolution of some Hungarian theatre companies in Latin America.³⁵ As the Hungarian historian, Julianna Puskás, specialised in the life of the Hungarian exiled communities in North America, points it out: “The isolation of their associations and social organizations also expresses the social, ideological, political and cultural differences between the Hungarians established in America in different seasons.”³⁶ The same observation holds true for Latin America’s Hungarian exiled communities as well.

This phenomenon is not exceptional: after several flows of migrations, it is common to a certain extent that in the foreign country, where diverse groups settle down in different periods, cooperation between members of the same nation is not easy, usually for political reasons. Páger, Szelezcky and several other actors and playwrights became embroiled in the Hungarian communities’ and theatre companies’ spats and were unable to withdraw, either in Hungary or abroad. Their life and tragedy prove what the Hungarian actor Géza D. Hegedűs mentioned in his eulogy to Páger during his colleague’s funeral: “...he knew the dreadful hatred that hides in men, and he learned (because he had to learn) at the cost of bitter and painful lessons that, where politics begin, art should end.”³⁷

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The Advent of the Magyar Illusion – Hungary and Cuba: The Cinematic Evidence

Vladimir Alexander Smith-Mesa

“Hungarians, with their stubborn black eyes, are worshipers of Nature, of naked passions, of an open home and a free and joyous countryside. Their music is epitomized by Liszt, their poetry by Petofi, their orators by Kossuth.”

Quoted by FONER 1982, 127.

With these words, José Martí – the Cuban people’s national hero, who is often referred to as the “Apostle of Cuban Independence” – introduced the art and artists associated with the Magyar, in his unique chronicle of *Christ before Pilate*, the acclaimed painting of the nineteenth-century Hungarian painter Mihály Munkácsy (20 February 1844 – 1 May 1900).

What did Hungary do for Cuba? What is Hungarian about Cuban arts and aesthetics? Some answers can be found within the context of Cold War culture in the analysis of the Soviet bloc dimension of the Cuban Revolution, the cinematic discourse of which cannot be understood without an understanding of Hungarian film theory and films, and particularly its experience during the Soviet experiment; yet little has been said until now about this artistic and cinematic exchange. In relation to the countries of the Soviet bloc, most studies published in English concentrate on the relationship with the former USSR from a political and economic perspective. Indeed, the strong economic and military relationship between Cuba and the countries of the Soviet bloc has produced many articles, studies, books and debates, but little has been said about the extent to which artists, and the aesthetic discourses from these countries, influenced Cuban arts and the cultural policy of the Revolution until 1991. English language bibliographical references to this subject show that experience in the Arts has been ignored, even in the latest publications. Cuban and Hungarian studies are not based on any artistic manifestation, and do not provide references to this unique cinematic exchange – including the most recent academic study, an influential referential work that was published in Hungarian and in Spanish: *La mirada húngara: estudios históricos sobre España y América Latina* by the late Hungarian scholar Ádám Anderle.¹

In this paper, I attempt to fill this gap, in the context of recent studies on postcolonial perspectives not only within the geopolitics of the so-called Third World, but also regarding a transcultural contextualisation of the film history of Central and Eastern Europe, focused

¹ ANDERLE 2010.



on the Soviet experience.² I seek to answer these questions by analysing the Cuban film, the works of artists, film critics or events in terms of the words or concepts surrounding them: in our case in relation to the Hungarian illusion. Indeed, film art (including the documentary), like any historical document, can easily be faked and manipulated by its creators and cultural mentors. J. A. S. Grenville once said: “After all the art of the cinema is the creation of illusion.” In the present study, the term ‘illusion’ summaries those Hungarian filmic aspirations and ideals that came to bear as expressions of their aesthetics proposals. Illusion also refers to Hungarian cinematic discourse that expresses a profound commitment to the idea that the motion picture, as an art, has an imperative socio-political mission to accomplish. The use of the term ‘illusion’ alludes, of course to Sigmund Freud’s works, particularly *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *The Future of an Illusion*: “What is characteristic of illusions is that they are derived from human wishes.” Freud adds, however, that “illusions need not necessarily be false – that is to say, unrealizable or in contradiction to reality”.³

Why focus on the moving image, on cinema? We need to remember that the first legislation of the Cuban Revolution concerning the arts was the promulgation of the Cinema Law. The Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry (ICAIC) was created in the Revolution’s first year (on 24 March 1959), a fact that demonstrates cinema’s great significance within Fidel Castro’s political project. Was this main function for cinema an original Cuban idea? Why was cinema the most important of all arts for the leaders of the revolution? Certainly, this recalls something that Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the leader of the Russian Revolution, is alleged to have said: “...of all the arts for us *the most important is cinema*.”⁴

How is it possible to examine all these cultural changes at the same time? Films and videos provide an excellent starting point. Audio-visual works are the twentieth century’s cultural documents, chronicles, modernist texts *par excellence*. Motion pictures supply fundamental testimonies to the process of cultural change, which is the central concern of transculturation as a concept and of this paper. Cinema is seen appropriately as part and parcel of the transculturation process, but until now it has not been analysed in reference to Cuba’s relation with Hungary. The moving image is an innovative and revolutionary art form, symbiosis and synthesis of other art forms. Borrowing from anthropology the notion of material culture, motion pictures are ‘objects’, which provide a reliable and dangerous form of knowledge. Their risk lies in the fact that they only reflect the views of those who produce them. Theirs is a ‘reality’ created by human manipulation. This applies to historical film, which uses chronological reality to tell a fictional story, and also to documentary films, which are a broad category of cinematic expression united by the claim to remain ‘factual’ or ‘non-fictional’. As an historical source, each film, video and digital work bears the imprint of a particular era, and is an indication of the past reflecting the time and conditions of its creation. But at the same time, the moving image gives us the possibility to go beyond the boundaries of Space and Time, as philosophical categories, since both are temporary illusions like the moving image itself. Their great value lies in the capacity to

² See KOŁODZIEJCZYK–SANDRU 2016.

³ FREUD 2001, 31.

⁴ LUNACHARSKY 2002, 57.

register images in movement of historical moments, making them an irreplaceable source of information for a more in-depth knowledge and understanding of Cuban intellectual life over the last forty years.

This paper is based on the transcultural perspective, and an analysis of the impact of cultural changes in Cuba. As such it is another chapter in the study of the transculturation process, defined in 1940 by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, with an introduction by Bronislaw Malinowski:

“Every change of culture, or, as I shall say from now on, every transculturation, is a process in which something is always given in return for what one receives, a system of give and take. It is a process in which both parts of the equation are modified, a process from which a new reality emerges, transformed and complex, a reality that is not a mechanical agglomeration of traits, nor even a mosaic, but a new phenomenon, original and independent...”⁵

This will help explain how Cubans understood what was Hungarian about cinema film theory and aesthetics, and what they did to promote Hungarian cinematic ideals and why cinema became the most important instrument for their work. In Cuba, ICAIC best identifies the cinematic discourse of the Revolution. It offers the best example for the interpretation and understanding of the dynamics of culture between 1961 and 1991.⁶ The present study, which analyses motion pictures as cultural evidence, focuses on the most representative film critics, filmmakers and events that provide the facts of the Hungarian exchange established between 1961 and 1991. Essential testimonies are provided by the films and their posters, which were inspired by Hungarian cinema, creating a new kind of Cuban graphic art. Also of particular importance was a coproduction, the first one with Hungary and the last feature film co-produced with a country of the Soviet bloc: a film directed by Péter Tímár. This coproduction is a key testimony, which provides a great deal of interesting detail on the reality of historical moments such the ‘*período especial*’ (special period); and contributes to the current debate on the way filmic experiences from ‘the other’ Europe played a significant part in shaping and developing the cinematic discourse of the Revolution.

This is a critical study and a factual, historical one, in which the chronological events do not always dictate the flow of the narrative. It is intended as an introduction to the story of Cuba and its Revolution in relation to Hungary during those unique Soviet times, but only focused on the Cuban side. To complete the story, an analysis of the Hungarian side will be necessary, in which the Magyar interpretation of Cuban cultural matters is also considered. For this, the knowledge of the Hungarian language would be vital for a better understanding of the experience, and as such it is outside the purview of this paper.

⁵ ORTIZ 1995, lviii–lix.

⁶ BUENO 1977. See also *Ciclo Literario* 2016; *Actualidad* 2010; TOTH 1983; DIEGO–FERNÁNDEZ CHERICIÁN 1973.

Context

The arrival of Fidel Castro and his ‘barbudos’ (bearded revolutionaries) in Havana marks the beginning of a new socio-political process – a unique cultural experience in the Western hemisphere. In the same year, ICAIC, and with it the cinematic discourse of the Cuban Revolution, was born. *Semmelweis* (1952), directed by Frigyes Bán (1902–1969) was the film selected to introduce Hungarian cinema before Cuban spectators in Havana in 1959, as part of Valdés Rodríguez’s film course at the Havana University. It needs to be asked why this particular film was selected. Hungarian cinema arrived at a highly critical and defining period of Cuban history. 1959 was a time in which Cuban artists and intellectuals were seeking an alternative way to establish a national film production, and to conceptualise a cinematic discourse that responded to the revolutionary moment of the times. The need for reliable information about what was happening in that distant country was satisfied through the showing of films. *Semmelweis* was a film about the well-known Hungarian physician, Ignác Fülöp Semmelweis, who discovered the cause of puerperal fever. Although capable and intelligent, Semmelweis’s application for a post at the University in Vienna was repeatedly rejected. As a result, he remained in his country developing new ideas and methods. Most importantly for Cuban cultural mentors, this film showed how the historical film as a genre and this category, which consisted of ‘great man’ stories, offered the prospect of uniquely shaping national identity in cinema, fortifying patriotism. This Hungarian cinematic experiment with historical films about Semmelweis’ dramatic biography, showed the working and fighting spirit of the Hungarian man of sciences, fighting against the odds, which was a vital principle in the new cultural project that was starting in the island. We need to remember that this period was formative for the aesthetic and cultural policy of the Cuban Revolution. This was a pragmatic transition from pure nationalism to the construction of a Marxist-Leninist political system.

The declaration of the socialist character of the Revolution, and the appearance of the USSR and the countries of the Soviet bloc as a new supplier, offered Cuban orthodox Marxists, members of the People’s Socialist Party (PSP), the possibility of infiltrating Castro’s government. In this period, it is possible to define an adaptation of the Soviet-bloc cultural experiment. Socialist Cuba was essentially the Sovietisation of the cultural policy of the Revolution and the ideologisation of intellectual life. In Cuba, socialist rule in its Soviet-bloc variant grew from within, not as in Hungary, where it was imposed from without. As we know, socialist rule in Eastern Europe was a creation of the Kremlin. This historical fact is essential, and needs to be taken into consideration, in order to understand the reasons why the leaders in the countries of the Soviet bloc took so long to recognise the government of Fidel Castro. János Kádár, the First Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Worker’s Party – the same one who, in 1956, called for the military intervention of the Soviet Union – never recognised them as comrades.⁷ Certainly, Fidel Castro’s guerrilla movement, established in December 1956 (the *Movimiento 26 de Julio*) did not enjoy active Soviet-bloc backing; nor did it receive support from the Popular Socialist Party (PSP), as the Cuban Communist Party was then known. Nevertheless, revolutionary Cuba became the most reliable ally of the Soviet bloc in the Western Hemisphere in order to defend and preserve

⁷ KÁDÁR 1985; ANDERLE 2010.

its national independence. As a consequence, the Revolution made an irreversible shift from nationalism to a Soviet-bloc-style one-party system: a Marxist-Leninist state.⁸

The colonial status of Cuba when cinema reached the island, unlike the rest of Latin America that had won independence almost a century before, made the beginning of cinema in the Caribbean island similar to the Magyar country, which was under the subjection of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The 'national' film project in both these countries became tied up in the colonial and postcolonial construction of nationhood and identity. Of special importance in this was the film adaptation of literature, especially during the Soviet period. This particular practice intended to reinforce two main values in their cinematic discourses: nationalism and the status of cinema as the art of the moving image, films as expression of the art of the audio-visual image. Thus, for the cultural mentors of the Cuban revolution, the dissemination of Hungarian literary classics was an essential part of the experience. The first Cuban anthology of Hungarian literature was published in 1966, with a wide variety of poems, essays, short stories and excerpts from novels written by Hungary's foremost authors. This monograph provides an insight into the rich literary heritage of the country. Hungarian literature, similarly to Slavonic and other Eastern European literatures, displays a strong historical, social and often political commitment uncharacteristic of the Western tradition. Cuban editions demonstrate this fact, illustrating the specific role of literature in the formation of a national identity. This was particularly true of poetry, especially that of Sándor Petőfi.⁹

In April 1962, the first *Semana de Cine Húngaro* was presented in Havana. For the occasion, the filmmaker János Herskó and two actresses, Éva Ruttkai and Mari Törőcsik, travelled to Cuba. From then on, every year in Cuba there were Hungarian film retrospectives; and before each screening a representative of the cultural delegation or embassy responsible for providing the reels gave a short briefing, in their native tongue, on the background of the films. These introductions helped viewers to place the films they were about to see within their relevant contexts. Most of these films shown to Cuban audiences are now seen as masterpieces of Soviet and Eastern European cinema. Any screening of those films became a unique cultural event of growing significance largely because of their pioneering status for a Western audience. From then on, every year, on festive national dates, at least seven days were set aside for representatives of the film industries of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe to screen their films, to give talks and exhibit film posters around Cuba.

One important legacy of this experience is the contribution made by Cuban painters and graphic artists who designed the posters for the retrospective of Hungarian films and other materials used to promote the film production not only of Hungary but also of the countries

⁸ Soviet style cultural policies were imposed from the beginning, bringing a consequence of events similar to those seen in Stalin's Russia such as the institutionalisation of the role of the intellectual. ICAIC's censorship of the documentary PM (1961); the so-called Cuban Gulags: the Military Units to Aid Production or UMAP's (Unidades Militares para la Ayuda de Producción, 1965–1968); and the Heberto Padilla case (1968), the latter as an example of Soviet-bloc show-trials in the Cuban context. New institutions and organisations such as UNEAC (The National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba) and the Ministry of Culture were also created to control public debate. The Congresses of Culture provided Castro with an opportunity to dictate his policy: "Within the Revolution everything [...] outside it nothing" (Castro's words to the intellectuals), a tropical version of Lenin's idea: "Art through Revolution and Revolution through Art..."

⁹ DIEGO-FERNÁNDEZ, CHERICIÁN 1973.

of the Soviet bloc. These posters are historical documents that show the cinematic exchange between East European and Cuban artists and filmmakers from 1961 to 1991. They took expressive elements from films directed by Ferenc Kósa, István Szabó and others, in order to create original, unique, vivid and impressive images. These posters are also evidence of the collaboration between painters and filmmakers in order to create a new kind of poster design for the nascent film industry of the Cuban Revolution, which testifies to the work of the *Departamento de Carteles* (Poster Department), part of the *Centro de Información Cinematográfica* (Cinematic Information Centre), organised under Mario Rodríguez Alemán's leadership. Of international reputation, the posters produced by ICAIC, and created by Eduardo Muñoz Bachs, Olivio Martínez, Julio Eloy, Rafael Morante, Holbein López and many others, echo the revolutionary designs of film posters from the countries of the Soviet bloc. They grab your attention because of their wide chromatic range, excellent use of typography and wonderful serigraphic impression. Indeed, the silkscreen process gives them a unique texture and visual value, placing them in the vanguard of graphic design, and representing a significant development in Cuban visual arts. Today, they are internationally recognised as "Afiches del ICAIC".¹⁰ These film posters record the presence in Cuba of many films produced not only in Hungary, but also in the countries of the Soviet bloc during 1961–1991. From the number of posters produced every year for three decades, it is possible to recognise the wide and systematic promotion of this cinematography during this period.

For decades, the film production of the countries of the Soviet bloc were the most wide-ranging and systematically available to the Cuban viewer, and statistics provide further evidence of this film experience that was unique in the Western hemisphere.¹¹ The most important films and filmmakers from Hungary were reasonably well known to the Cuban audience. For example, Márta Mészáros's full-length directorial debut, *The Girl* (*Eltávozott nap*, 1968), was the first Hungarian film to have been directed by a woman. It won the Special Jury Prize at the Valladolid International Film Festival. Mario Rodríguez Alemán was the author of the first Cuban theoretical-critical study on Hungarian cinema. It was published under the title *Hungría: curso de cine por países*.¹² This text became a compulsory referential work for many in Cuba, both nationals and visitors, Cuban university students and those from the countries of the Third World. This brief and informative text is a pioneering work on Hungarian film history about which most scholars on Cuban and film studies know nothing. Today, Rodríguez Alemán is recognised as the great promoter of film production and theories from the 'other' Europe, and in particular of the cinematic discourse from the countries of the Soviet bloc. In this period of institutionalisation and Sovietisation of Cuban intellectual life, Rodríguez Alemán devised the first TV programmes on film analysis, such as *Cine debate*, *Noche de cine*, *Cine vivo* and *Tanda del domingo*, fundamentally in order to disseminate and celebrate the cinematic discourse from the countries of the former Soviet bloc. Alemán facilitated

¹⁰ See MOSQUERA 1989, 210. On Cuban film posters see VEGA 1996; CONSTANTINE-FERN 1974; VEGA 1997; GARCÍA-RAYO 2004.

¹¹ DOUGLAS 1996, statistics are on 318–323. Regarding the Cuban film poster inspired by Márta Mészáros's full-length directorial debut, *The Girl* (*Eltávozott nap*) of the Cuban designer Antonio Pérez "Ñiko" González, please see Soytimido s. a.

¹² RODRIGUEZ ALEMÁN 1962–1963.

their dissemination on television, reaching a wider audience than cinema. He very well understood this social advantage. If people stop going to the cinema, they will watch more films on television than they did before, and this will result not in a decline, but an increase in Soviet-bloc cinema's role in Cuban intellectual life. This cultural mentor knew that the Cuban viewer had already become accustomed to it and they could not stop watching TV programmes. There was no choice. Rodríguez Alemán's work was essentially an ideological analysis of the cinematic phenomenon, which reduced art to its ideological and political values, with a party commitment.¹³

The Cuban television day is short because of the lack in both funds and materials, and with the limited schedule for only two channels they were mainly broadcasting programmes from USSR and Eastern Europe. When Mario Rodríguez Alemán decided to incorporate television into the cinematic discourse of the Cuban Revolution, television, the 'vulgar and popularised' medium, was intended to be improved with the addition of the artistic and educational goals of many TV programmes from the countries of the Soviet bloc. In this way, it was hoped to accelerate a change in moral values. As part of this, historical films, particularly those about the Second World War and film literary adaptations, including Hungarian, were on Cuban channels. In addition, theatrical and ballet performances as well as cartoons and documentaries were broadcast. Other popular Eastern European series broadcasted in Cuba included *Máté Bors* from Hungary.

Another example is the reception of Hungarian pop music. *Ne sírj (Do not Cry)* is a song that became very popular in the island, when the Hungarian pop singer Klári Katona made it known during her performances in Havana. A very well-known Cuban TV producer of the period, Pedraza Ginori wrote a Cuban version of the song for Mirta Medina, entitled *De ti, de mí (From You, from Me)*.¹⁴ Certainly, if we look at the schedule for a typical day's programmes, we realise the level of Soviet-bloc television experiment in Cuba, a unique experience in the Western hemisphere, in a country of the so-called Third World.

Rodríguez Alemán's programmes on film criticism gave him a reputation as 'the man who teaches cinema on TV'. Certainly, the Cuban viewer perceived this film critic as such by giving the illusion of a teacher intimately and directly addressing a specific person and a specific family. This kind of programme pretended to reveal more profoundly the ideological, political, social and aesthetic meaning of films. Western films were also shown on these programmes – for example, film adaptations of Hungarian literary classics or those which 'denounced' the imperialist system and reflected the 'decadence' of capitalist societies. Other films that could have 'problems of ideology' had their 'message' clarified by the film critic in charge. He analysed films in the same way as a literary critic would analyse literature. He observed films as a reading text, emphasising their ideological values. Films were for him an important visual art, from which people learnt more quickly. Rodríguez Alemán saw cinema and TV as interdependent cultural forms and both were also assigned the role of what he called 'cultural educator'. According to him, his 'method' of watching movies on TV could revolutionise the traditional American-style viewing patterns already

¹³ His book *La sala oscura* could be considered a classic of film criticism written in the best Soviet style because of its explicit partisanship, didacticism and rhetoric.

¹⁴ See PEDRAZA GINORI 2016, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, as well as the blog of the Cuban TV director and producer PEDRAZA GINORI 2013. For the Cuban version of Katona's song, sung by the Cuban Mirta Medina, please see MEDIAN s. a.

established in Cuba. With the nationalisation of the media, both cinema and television became state institutions, thus there could not be any commercial competition between them. Television received the right to broadcast all the films imported into the country, and also received the right to televise all the plays and ballets performed in the theatres. In addition, a great number of adaptations of literary works, fictional and documental films were commissioned for television.

Rodríguez Alemán's work, in giving a central place to television within the cinematic discourse, was followed by ICAIC, which created its own programmes such as *Historia del cine*, *Cinematoteca de Cuba* and *24xSegundo*. These included cycles of broadcasts featuring motion pictures and appearances by filmmakers, film specialists, sociologists and psychologists. Did these efforts over more than twenty years produce any substantial change in the behaviour, interests and demands of Cuban audiences?

It is a very difficult task to measure this experience in terms of value. He linked television with cinema, and both, as a result, became primarily an educational cultural medium controlled by the state. Overall, by showing this number of programmes, Cuban television established a unique standard for cultural activity in the Western hemisphere: this was a celebration of the arts from the 'other' Europe. It was certainly a fascinating, complex and controversial experiment of innovation. Perhaps the most important achievement for that particular Cuban generation, bombarded for more than two decades by Soviet-bloc film production, was the primary information that later became knowledge about the existence of this kind of film and the culture of these countries. It is particularly important to acknowledge Rodríguez Alemán's remarkable work for the improving knowledge and understanding of Hungarian cinema in Cuban media, particularly on television.¹⁵

The Cuban Revolution was a historical moment that shook the whole continent, and throughout the so-called Third World there was a resurrection of Marxism in its Soviet version, Marxism–Leninism.¹⁶ This made the influx of reliable sources from such unfamiliar and distant cultures as the countries of the Soviet bloc, the 'other' Europe, particularly current and relevant. In this period, several Cuban editions of key Marxist film texts were published by Ediciones ICAIC, such as Lev Kuleshov's *Tratado de la realización cinematográfica* (1964), John Howard Lawson's *El cine en la batalla de ideas* (1964) and Sergei Eisenstein's *El sentido del cine* (1967), among many others. In terms of film theory and aesthetics, two Hungarian classics became compulsory references: György Lukács and Béla Balázs.

György Lukács (1885–1971) was one of the founders of Western Marxism, who developed the theory of reification, and contributed to Marxist theory with developments of Karl Marx's theory of class consciousness. In Cuba, he was also known as the philosopher of Marxism–Leninism because he organised Lenin's pragmatic revolutionary practices into the formal philosophy of vanguard-party revolution. As a literary and film critic, in

¹⁵ A respectable number of articles on Hungarian cinema, filmmakers and film theory were published in Cuba between 1961–1991; for those texts published in *Cine Cubano*, please see GARCÍA CARRANZA–CABALÉ 2014, 147–148; 208.

¹⁶ For a long list of titles of books which were available in Cuba at that time, please see page 403 in MOSQUERA, Gerardo: *Estética y marxismo*, a text written as a preface to the Cuban edition of *Aesthetics and Marxism* by Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, a book that did not get to be published. Mosquera's text is currently available online MOSQUERA s. a.

the 1960s Lukács was to become an important presence in Latin America and especially in Cuba. His texts – from the early twenties – were, forty years later, a significant incentive to Cuban left-wing intellectuals and artists. Lukács was especially attractive to the cultural mentors of the Cuban revolution because of his approach to the question of national identity, and his definition of the responsibility of intellectuals. For them, the Hungarian, from a Marxist perspective, associated Marxism with human liberation and emancipation. These were relevant, core values for the aesthetics and cinematic discourse of the Cuban Revolution. They are very powerful topics, which play a considerable role in Cuban self-consciousness. Indeed, national identity was bound up with the Cuban ideal of independence. Tzvi Medin, in her book *Cuba: The Shaping of Revolutionary Consciousness*, suggests that “Cuban revolutionary leaders introduced Marxism–Leninism into the Cuban revolutionary message by grafting it onto the images, symbols, values, and concepts of Cuban nationalism”.¹⁷ The cultural mentors mobilised all forms of the arts for the creation of images in correspondence with the new ideological status of the Revolution: a fusion of Cuban nationalism and Marxism–Leninism, or to put it in Fidel Castro’s own words: “I believe that my contribution to the Cuban Revolution is to have synthesised the ideas of Martí and Marxism–Leninism, and to have applied it to our struggle.”¹⁸

Lukács’s developments of realism and of the novel as a literary genre, argued for the revolutionary character of novels. The same conceptualisation was applied to audio-visual culture. Lukács’s Cuban edition came out from the official national publishing house *Arte y Literatura*, in a translation by Juan José Sebrelli, with an introduction by José Antonio Portuondo. This was going on mainly in the Department of Aesthetics at Havana University and ICAIC: the two-main centres for the study of Hungarian texts in the island.¹⁹ Lukács was seen in Cuba as the first and foremost theoretician of Marxist aesthetics.²⁰ Thus, it is essential to determine which aspect of his work has contributed most significantly to the philosophical and critical thought, and the cultural project and cinematic discourse, of the Cuban Revolution.

Lukács’s first article published in *Cine Cubano* was entitled *Sobre el romanticismo* (About Romanticism); and the question it poses was why this text was selected.²¹ We need to remember that Karl Marx was fundamentally a result of romanticism. It was a very complex movement in modern Europe, with all its sense of hope, liberation and social transformation. This was a very Lukácsian idea, to link the values of flourishing individuality, which is a very romantic notion, with the idea of social practices as justice and democracy. For ICAIC’s mentors, to talk about those ethical ideals of romanticism was to refer to the core moral and ethical values of Marx as a person and Marxism as a philosophical proposal. His understanding is based on the principle that every social matter has an ethical dimension. This text by Lukács helped to establish an understanding of aesthetics and romanticism within a Marxist frame. Thus, his essays became essential texts and were taught at the University. Cuban editions of his work were not only the tribute of the Cuban Revolution

¹⁷ MEDIN 1990, 530.

¹⁸ *Fidel y la religión. Conversaciones con Frei Betto* 1985, 163–164.

¹⁹ As David Craven explains: “The case for and against George Lukács was made in Cuba by José Antonio Portuondo (in favour), and by Gerardo Mosquera (against).” CRAVEN 2006, 204.

²⁰ LUKÁCS 1978. See also LUKÁCS 1964, 126–148.

²¹ LUKÁCS 1966, 34–37.

to a legendary Marxist philosopher, political and literary theorist; these publications were testimonies of the extraordinary breadth and variety of Lukács's thought. They permitted Cuban readers to sense the evolution of a powerful intellectual personality from Hungary.

Béla Balázs (1884–1949) was a Hungarian film aesthetician who published in Hungarian and German. His books, *Der sichtbare Mensch* (Visible Man, 1924) and *Der Geist des Films* (The Spirit of Film, 1930) remain amongst the founding stones of modern film theory, though the latest was not published in Cuba until 1980. However, his texts had been circulating even before 1959, since the years of Valdés Rodríguez's summer film school. In general, Balázs strove to offer to modern man possibilities for overcoming his particular state of estrangement by designing a utopian visual culture in which film plays an essential role. The ambition of Balázs to describe film as a language brought him close to the Russian Formalists; he was actually able to advance views on montage that would be too mechanistic even for Eisenstein's standards. However, a genuinely philosophical component enters his work through complex reflections on cinema, and *The Spirit of Film* was a seminal contribution to the conceptualisation of film language. Certainly, Balázs is routinely acknowledged alongside Rudolf Arnheim, André Bazin and Siegfried Kracauer as a central figure in film theory of the classical period from the 1920s to the early post-war years. Yet it is not primarily on early works like the *Visible Man* that Balázs's reputation rests.²² Despite widespread acknowledgement by Balázs's contemporaries that his pre-war German-language works were the first significant contributions to a 'dramaturgy' of film, reception of his work in the Spanish-speaking world has remained dependent on *The Spirit of Film*, with a 1952 translation (from the 1948 Italian edition). Balázs's two major works on silent and early sound cinema, were acknowledged by Cuban film critics, theoreticians and filmmakers such as Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Osvaldo Sánchez and Julio García Espinosa as influential contributions to the 'dramaturgy' of early film; yet Cuban interpretations of Balázs's works have remained unknown. In a book on film criticism, entitled *Cine o Sardina*, appears an essay by Cabrera Infante entitled *Literatura y cine – Cine y literatura* (Literature and Cinema – Cinema and Literature), which may be considered one of the most interesting interpretations on the film theoretical legacy of Balázs. The Cuban film critic wrote: "In 1924, Balázs produced a famous phrase, now the film is about to inaugurate a new direction in our culture."²³ Cabrera Infante was right. In his ninety-page treatise, Balázs stakes a claim for film as an art that may restore to modernity the lost expressive capacities of the visual body. Under such headings as *Type and Physiognomy*, *The Play of Facial Expressions*, *The Close-Up* and *The Face of Things*, he presents a typology of expressive elements that together comprise the "only shared universal language", the image-language of film. Cabrera Infante's article refers to the comments of Balázs on the new cinematic visibility of the human body, together with extracts from his theoretical sketches on performance,

²² In those days, we had several meetings in Havana and in London. At that time, I was writing my PhD paper and the project of the UCL Festival of the Moving Image, FoMI 2008b. In living memory, it was Julio García Espinosa who introduced me to the film theory of Balázs (in particular on the idea of visibility). My eternal gratitude to Julio for that, my copy of the Cuban edition of Balázs's work, it was a present from Julio – together with a copy of the journal *Cine Cubano* – the edition where his text, *Por un cine imperfecto* was published for the first time. Another evidence of the transcultural condition of film art.

²³ Quoted in CABRERA INFANTE 1998, 23. The extract given here by the Cuban film critic derives from a first full translation of *Visible Man*.

close-up and montage. For Cabrera Infante, the contribution of Balázs ranks among the most valuable documents in film history. The Cuban edition of his work *La estética del filme* (The Spirit of Film, 1930) was from an Italian translation of the text by Giannina Bertarelli. In the film journal *Cine Cubano*, Osvaldo Sánchez published his review of the book of Balázs, where he said: "Beyond its historical value, the book contains the theoretical vitality of a man, whose aesthetic intuitions, open lines of meditation that continue to be current."²⁴

One of the main questions facing the emergent revolutionary 'intelligentsia' in Cuba was whether they should have revolutionary art, or art for the Revolution: that is, the State. Somehow the role played by artists and intellectuals was misunderstood. They believed that they had found the path to play an active role in society. The *Sociedad Nuestro Tiempo* provided the principal names for ICAIC. From that moment, there was a radical change in the way the film industry was conceived. Certainly, Cuban political leaders, along with cultural mentors and filmmakers, shared the idea of 'remaking the nation'. In order to achieve this, the cinematic discourse of the Cuban Revolution had to be different from previous years. Alfredo Guevara, the first director of ICAIC, defined its discourse in six aspects.²⁵ In that context, the filmic experience of the countries of the former Soviet bloc was a necessary reference point for the mentors of ICAIC. Like Alea and other founders of the New Latin American Cinema (NLAC), Espinosa had studied film in Italy in the renowned Centro Sperimentale di Roma, where he learned the neorealist style and to express the relationship of politics and art from a Marxist perspective. How did Cubans come to know the works of Balázs and Lukács for the first time?

In 1951, Manuel Valdés Rodríguez, the father of film studies at Havana University, sent a letter of introduction to Mario Verdone, who was teaching at the *Centro Sperimentale Cinematografia* in Rome, Italy, where translations of the theoretical work on cinema by Balázs were read and discussed. The letter was to introduce two Cuban amateur film makers, Julio García Espinosa and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea. It would become the meeting place of the new generation of Cuban film students with Hungarian theoretical works.²⁶ Valdés Rodríguez and Verdone knew each other from Moscow VGik film school, where they were both in Eisenstein's film class. The letter also served to introduce Gutiérrez Alea and García Espinosa to Umberto Barbaro and Luigi Chiarini,²⁷ who had translated Balázs.²⁸

Espinosa's way of seeing filmmaking was common among a type of intelligentsia that in Latin America and within Cuba had grown distant from the politics of market capital and its system of intranational and international domination, and was attracted to a variety of Marxisms and socialisms. In April 1963, García Espinosa published in *La Gaceta de Cuba* a text entitled *Conclusiones de un debate entre cineastas cubanos*. This was a sandpaper

²⁴ SÁNCHEZ 1983, 94–95.

²⁵ GUEVARA 1960, 3.

²⁶ *Cinema Nuovo* (Guido Aristarco, founder and director of the Italian film journal, who wrote the prologue of the Italian edition of Lukács's book *The Destruction of Reason* and the Centro Sperimentale Cinematografia connected those pioneering film theory works of the Hungarians Béla Balázs and Lukács with the founders of the New Latin American Cinema Movement: Gabo – Gabriel García Marquez, Fernando Birri and later the Cubans Titon – Gutiérrez Alea and García Espinosa; another evidence of the transcultural condition of film art.

²⁷ BONDANELLA 2001.

²⁸ Mario Verdone himself attended the opening day of the EICTV film school in Havana, he was invited by Gabo and Birri, Casa del Cinema s. a.

of the main topics discussed concerning aesthetics in relation to cultural politics, and was signed by the best-known Cuban filmmakers. In this document, there appeared ideas that echo the postulates of Lukács and Balázs, such as *cultura sólo hay una* (there is only one culture) or *las categorías formales del arte no tienen carácter de clase* (the formal categories of art do not have a class character), which were in opposition to the central Soviet concept that postulates the class character of the art. Once again, Alfredo Guevara, as Director of ICAIC, had to ‘clarify’ the political position of these filmmakers in order to save their future within the cultural project and the future of the cinematic discourse of the Revolution.²⁹

Humberto Solás: The Lyrical Element (Balázs within ICAIC)

“...and looks can express every shade of feeling far more precisely than a description, than words [...] what matters in film is not the storyline but the lyrical element” said Béla Balázs. Already in 1924, in his seminal book *Visible Man*, Balázs claimed that cinematography has the power to reshape the ‘face’ of the world. Humberto Solás’s film-work presents the major concepts on which Balázs’s film theory is built, especially his views on the thematic of mirror-shots, “closeness” and his understanding of the interplay of close-up, montage and conjecture. Balázs’s *Visible Man* had already claimed the cinematic close-up as the “true terrain of film”. In his first book about cinema, Balázs considered the close-up to be the cornerstone of any genuine film dramaturgy, the core feature of the new art and the major means to establish a visual culture that transcends the boundaries of traditional aesthetics:

“The close-up is the technical precondition of the art of facial expressions and hence of the highest art of film in general. A face has to be brought really close to us and it must be isolated from any context that might distract our attention (likewise something is not possible on the stage); we must be able to dwell on the sight so as to be able to read it properly... Both soul and destiny can be seen in the human face. In this visible relationship, in this interplay of facial expressions, we witness a struggle between the type and the personality, between inherited and acquired characteristics, between fate and the individual will, the ‘id’ and the ‘ego’.”³⁰

The Cuban filmmaker, like the Hungarian film theorist did before him, borrowed and transformed different concepts provided by romantic and formalist aesthetics, ideas from different sources, to set up a framework in which one can detect many sources of inspiration for his own films as film theories to come. To understand Solás’s film theory in its own right, one has to reconstruct the literary milieu of his times and the social network of artists and intellectuals in Havana after 1959, in particular after 1961 with the declaration of the socialist character of the Revolution. Born in December of 1942 into a middle-class Havana family of very modest means, Humberto Solás joined the insurrectionary movement against the Batista dictatorship at the age of fourteen. He made his first experimental film

²⁹ See also GUEVARA 1963, 14. For the opinions of the filmmakers in the meeting, see also in the same number, *Conclusiones de un debate entre cineastas cubanos*, 32–47.

³⁰ Ibid.

in 1959, the year of the triumph of the Revolution, at the age of seventeen; and became a member of ICAIC. In 1961, he directed his first film in collaboration with Héctor Veitia and under the supervision of visiting Dutch documentarist Joris Ivens. He subsequently worked as a producer of documentary shorts while directing portions of the *Latin American Newsreel* and the Popular *Encyclopedia* series.

Humberto Solás spent his first two years at the Film Institute working on *Cine Cubano* magazine; and it was in that period that he came across the text by Béla Balázs published in Cuba, entitled *Heroes, Beauty, Stars and the Case of Greta Garbo*, amongst others, in which Balázs considers such factors as audience identification and implications of the close-up for the evolving art of film.³¹ For Béla Balázs, though, Garbo's face epitomises not transcendence, but a suffering of the here-and-now. The screen face, which comes to us most fully in the close-up, is rather like a screen within a screen, a second screen on which viewers can project their own impressions and fantasies – within, of course, the stylistic and cultural confines of that gigantic image. For example, one could see Garbo's beauty as spiritual or bland, compelling or over-perfect, but one probably could not see her as “downright ugly” without wilfully misreading the image.³²

The Visible Balázs in Solás's *Lucía*: On Acting

Gender in ICAIC film production has been a persistent topic in Cuban film studies. ICAIC, as the state-sponsored film institute, in which the cinematic discourse of the Cuban Revolution was engaged, explored questions of gender since its very early years. This has been central to the academic work of Marvin D'Lugo (1993), Catherine Benamou (1995, 1999), Julianne Burton-Carvajal (1986, 1993), and others, who have examined ICAIC films such as *Lucía* (Humberto Solás, 1968), *Portrait of Teresa* (*Retrato de Teresa*, Pastor Vega, 1978), *One Way or Another* (*De cierta manera*, Sara Gómez, 1978), *Up to a Point* (*Hasta cierto punto*, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1980), and *Far Away* (*Lejanía*, Jesús Díaz, 1986). These explored the representation of Cuban women in a socialist society and issues of gendered spectatorship.³³

An important reference on the topic of gender in/on films is Humberto Solás. His early films were highly experimental and somewhat hermetic. With these empirical indications of the new medium's potential in mind, it is quite comprehensible that Solás expected an overwhelming cultural shift to result from his work in cinema. He thought it would be able to change the ‘face’ of nearly everything in a profound manner. Only the medium-length feature *Manuela* (1966) hinted at the masterpiece he would produce two years later at the age of twenty-six. Solás achieved international success in 1968 with his first feature film, *Lucía*; an ambitious period film piece that was told in three stories set at different moments of Cuban history. Like Kalatozov's film *Soy Cuba*, Solás's film is divided into stories or ‘saltos’

³¹ This information came from the filmmaker himself, after a long conversation with Humberto Solás, at my parent's place in Havana, in the summer of 2007. At the time, I was working on the programme for the 2008 UCL Festival of the Moving Image, FoMI 2008a. Solás was invited but he died in the same year. Regarding Balázs's article that Humberto mentioned, please see BALÁZS 1970, 72–77. See also BISPLINGHOFF 1980, 79–85.

³² See BALÁZS 1970, 72–77.

³³ For a study on this, see BARON 2011.

with each dealing with a different class: the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and the peasantry. His film ‘jumps’ through historical periods exploring three different women from colonial times: in 1895 during the Spanish–American war; the struggle against Gerardo Machado’s dictatorship in the 1930s; and the emancipation struggle of a peasant girl in the 1960s whose education, despite the Revolution, is held back by obsolete Cuban machismo. All are seen through the eyes of three different women, each named Lucía.³⁴ Today, *Lucía* is considered a key work of ICAIC. For the British film critic Michael Chanan:

“Lucía was a tour de force: three episodes in three different cinematic styles about three women, each called Lucía set during three different moments in Cuba’s history. Lucía 1895 is shot in a histrionic style, influenced by the Italian director Luchino Visconti, replete with the extraordinary image of naked black liberation fighters riding out to meet the Spanish cavalry. Lucía 1933 turns to Hollywood models and adopts the more sedate style of domestic melodrama by Cukor or Kazan, while Lucía 196? takes on the hue of the nouvelle vague.”³⁵

According to Marta Alvear, Solás’s film is: “Remarkable for the dialectical complexity of its narratives and the virtuosity of its three different visual styles.”³⁶ As the critics affirmed, Solás worked extensively and effectively with tableaux, choreography, minimal scenography and expressionistic lighting in an attempt to integrate various modes of popular culture into film. To the question: having chosen to make a film about historical transformation and the revolutionary process, why did you choose to cast a woman as the central figure rather than a man, a couple, or a group? Solás responded:

“Women are traditionally the number-one victims in all social confrontations. The woman’s role always lays bare the contradictions of a period and makes them explicit. There is the problem of machismo, especially apparent in the third segment, which undermines a woman’s chances for self-fulfilment and at the same time feeds a whole subculture of underdevelopment.”

As he has had to argue many times, for him: “*Lucía* is not a film about women; it’s a film about society, but within that society, I chose the most vulnerable character, the one who is most transcendently affected at any given moment by contradictions and change.”

For exactly the same reason, Solás also cast a woman as the central figure in his previous film:

“My point of departure was the same premise, that the effects of social transformations on a woman’s life are more transparent. Because they are traditionally assigned to a submissive role, women have suffered more from society’s contradictions and are thus more sensitive to them and hungrier for change. From this perspective, I feel that the female character has a great deal of dramatic potential through which I can express

³⁴ Raquel Revuelta is Lucía I (1895), Esclinda Núñez is Lucía II (1930) and Adela Legrá is Lucía III (in the 1960s).

³⁵ CHANAN 2008.

³⁶ BURTON–ALVEAR 1978, 32–33.

the entire social phenomenon I want to portray. This is a very personal and a very practical position. It has nothing to do with feminism per se.”³⁷

This portrayal of Cuban history resonates with Solás’s film. Indeed, as Béla Balázs stated:

“The cameraman has to be a conscious painter. First, because as an optical art, a film has primarily to be a feast for the eyes. Secondly, because every lighting effect, every colouring, has a symbolic value and expresses a specific atmosphere, whether the cameraman desires this or not. So he has to desire it.”³⁸

The close-up, like the still-life painting, is powerful in the art of suggestion. Cinema is essentially a visual art; thus, the use of painterly techniques can be useful in film. How can we see all this in Solás’s films? The inward struggle which is ‘readable’ in the dramatic change of facial expressions lends cinema the power to convey psychological insights beyond those that are available in the theatre, where the audience looks at the actors from a great distance and a fixed position. Therefore, the crucial innovation that sets cinema apart from stage drama is the variance of viewpoints, and especially the close-up that is inserted to intensify the viewer’s empathetic understanding. In his films, Humberto Solás, the modern man, is more attracted by the human face; but he is also the ancient man, much more attracted by the entire human body. We need to remember those sequences in his films from *Lucía to Cecilia*, which are all replete with the extraordinary image of naked Afro-Cuban mambises (liberation fighters) riding out to meet the Spanish cavalry.³⁹

One of the most fundamental questions that is increasingly facing ethicists and society alike is: “What does it mean to be human?” “In what consists the act of being human?” Indeed, there are many interpretations about these sentences, and in every area of philosophical concern, including of cinematic discourse, we are always thrown back to these basic questions. Another important fact to consider is alluding to the passage in *Visible Man* where Balázs expected the film to unite the psyche of the white man. It is interesting that it was Balázs’s early allegiance to race theory that made his work available for appropriation by Nazi film ideologues, who do not consider some human beings to be human persons. These differences in view indicate that here we are faced with a problem about the recognition of what we take human beings to be as we experience them, and so as we experience ourselves.

The cinematic discourse of the ICAIC holds that every human being is a human person, and every human person is a human being. ICAIC film production focused on the real experience of inequality and social-racial discrimination of women and Afro-Cubans. This fact began to be recognised in Cuban films thanks to ICAIC productions. Great examples of this fact are the films directed by Humberto Solás. His cinematic work is mainly about the emancipation of Cuban women, particularly those living in the countryside. Solás’s most memorable filmic characters are women of all races. This distinction between the evident

³⁷ BURTON-ALVEAR 1978, 32–33.

³⁸ CARTER 2010, 76.

³⁹ The term *mambises* (mambí: definition as per the Royal Spanish Academy of Language dictionary in the singular) refers to the guerrilla Cuban independence soldiers who fought against Spain in the Ten Years’ War (1868–1878) and Cuban War of Independence (1895–1898).

and the visible is telling, and I can refer to the differences between the two colossuses of the cinematic discourse of the Cuban Revolution: Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Humberto Solás. This difference brings Solás close to an Italian filmmaker, whom he really admired. In his essay *The 'Cinema of Poetry'* (1965), Pier Paolo Pasolini claimed that cinema might be apt for exploring a 'poetic' style, because the medium has an "irrational nature". Due to a slippage of terms, however, Pasolini does not so much come to define a 'cinema of poetry', but he will examine the conditions of a 'free indirect discourse' in cinema instead.⁴⁰

One of the catalysts that contributed to Solás's return was István Szabó's *Mephisto*. Intertextuality is an idea that any text has been influenced and shaped by texts that have come before it (anything read, or seen in case of movies). Therefore, no film exists on its own and consciously or not, all films borrow ideas from other films, past or present. Humberto Solás's *Un hombre de éxito* is also another example of intertextuality, in this case with *Mephisto*, a 1981 film adaptation of Klaus Mann's novel of the same title, directed by István Szabó, and starring Klaus Maria Brandauer as Hendrik Höfgen. Szabó's Oscar film was a significant reference for Solás's film, a fact that has not been acknowledged yet.

Regarding this personal observation of mine, Nelson Rodríguez Zurbarán – Solás's partner in life and work, the great editor not only of Humberto Solás's films, but also of many key films of the ICAIC – explained that: "Humberto marked his intention to connect his film *Un hombre de éxito* with Szabó's *Mephisto* in the sequence that you mentioned, which is loaded with signs but only subtly." The one that I mentioned to Nelson was a panning long shot of the stairs, where for the first time the well-known Nazi swastika, with all its symbolism, appears in Cuban cinema, bringing all its sinister atmosphere to an ICAIC film production. The Hungarian film was very influential on Solás. As it is well known, the Cuban filmmaker always focused on a female rather than a male protagonist, different to Szabó's film tradition, with *Un hombre de éxito*, since *Un día de noviembre*, like Szabó in his film, Solás used the symbol of the swastika in a context of anti-Nazism; and both filmmakers shared a recurrent theme throughout, the most common being the relationship between the personal and the political or historical. Like Szabó, Solás used history to make references to the present. Both films are chronicles of the moral decline of the establishment, cinematic essays on opportunism, ambition, betrayal and deception.⁴¹ Indeed, Humberto Solás was a human. On Humberto Solás, we can paraphrase what the Italian film critic said about Béla Balázs: "An exemplary life of a social and free man, that is to say of a man totally human. His life and his work were a tenacious and constant struggle for this human emancipation."⁴²

⁴⁰ PASOLINI 1976, 542–558. This text was read in Italian by Pier Paolo Pasolini in June 1965 at the first New Cinema Festival at Pesaro. The present version is from the French translation by Marianne de Vettimo and Jacques Bontemps which appeared in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, No. 171, October 1965, under the title *Visible Balázs and the Spirit of Film: Pier Paolo Pasolini and Humberto Solás*. I wrote an essay on their similarities as filmmakers where "the lyrical element" of Balázs, this was a perspective shared and conceptualised in those poetic films by Pasolini and Solás; they both made supremely cinematic use of close-up, eye contact, giving that lyrical element, transcendent meaning to their films.

⁴¹ On the political context, see CUNNINGHAM 2014, 54–81.

⁴² Quoted from the prologue by Umberto Barbaro in the Cuban edition of BALÁZS 1980, 7.

István Szabó at the EICTV (The School of Three Worlds, the Film School of Gabriel García Márquez)

István Szabó is the best-known and one of the most critically acclaimed Hungarian film directors of the past few decades. In the 1960s and 1970s he directed amateur films in Hungarian, which explore his own generation's experiences and recent Hungarian history (*Apa* [1966]; *Szerelmesfilm* [1970]; *Tűzoltó utca* [1973]). His signature film trilogy consists of *Colonel Redl* (1984), winner of a Jury Prize at the Cannes Festival, *Hanussen* (1988) and *Mephisto* (1981), which received the Cannes Award for the Best Screenplay. Szabó was the first Hungarian director to win an Oscar.⁴³ He was the winner of an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film for *Mephisto*. He made a switch to English-language films with *Meeting Venus* (1991), *Sunshine* (1999), *Taking Sides* (2001) and most recently *Being Julia* (2004), which garnered an Oscar nomination for actress Annette Bening.⁴⁴

In 1988, István Szabó visited Havana, invited by Cuba's International Film School (the EICTV), a project on the moving image created by the Nobel Prize of Literature, Gabriel García Márquez.⁴⁵ On 27 April, he held a meeting with EICTV students, scholars and filmmakers. Szabó's conversation with the EICTV community was published in an anthology of meetings and conferences celebrated between 1987–1988. This volume includes the visits of Robert Redford, George Lucas, William Kennedy, Fernando Solanas, Francisco Rabal, Harry Belafonte, among many others.⁴⁶ For obvious reasons, the first question asked was regarding the evolution of Szabó's film style, from his early films to the internationally successful *Mephisto*. On this point, the filmmaker explains that his first films were based on his own ideas, until someone recommended Klaus Mann's literary work. Szabó did not like the book at all, however he "felt that the story refers to something very serious, something that moved him". He is of the opinion that:

"There is no need to make film adaptations from great works of literature because their messages are in words, thus, when you convert words into images, the result is a duplication. Therefore, I believe, for me, it's impossible to make a film adaptation from a novel such as *One Hundred Years of Solitude*."

⁴³ Although a Hungarian–American director, Michael Curtiz (Mihály Kertész), also won an Oscar previously for directing *Casablanca*.

⁴⁴ CUNNINGHAM 2014. In January 2006, it became public that Szabó had been an agent of the III/III department, a former communist agency of interior intelligence. After the revolution in 1956, he was blackmailed and forced to cooperate, though later he was considered willingly cooperative. Allegedly, he wrote reports about fellow Hungarian directors, actors and actresses such as Miklós Jancsó, Mari Törőcsik, Károly Mécse. An acknowledged Hungarian journalist Zsolt Bayer said: "This is the time to re-watch *Mephisto* (1981). It has just become obvious that Szabó directed his own life in the movie, masterfully." Szabó has never denied the charges and considers his agent work heroic and needful, claiming he saved the life of a friend sentenced to death for his involvement in the revolution of 1956.

⁴⁵ The EICTV is also known as the School of Three Worlds, the School for Every World. It is based on the challenge of constantly adapting to new cultural and technological trends under the guiding principle of "learning by doing". As well as many workshops, the school offers a regular course of three years.

⁴⁶ For István Szabó's text, please see FOWLER CALZADA 1996, 98–109.

For Szabó:

“Each film has its own world of colours. *Coronel Redl* is cold blue and grey, because they were the colours of the uniform of the Austro–Hungarian army. *Mephisto* is purple, red and gold, because that was the theatrical world of Central Europe: baroque, full of gold and velvet.”

To the question about his opinion on the cinematography of Latin America and his recommendations to the future generations of filmmakers in these countries, Szabó recognised that he did not know much about Latin American cinema because “these films do not reach Europe, I know very few film, thus, I am not in the best position to give you any advice”, he said. “I would suggest you leaving behind that mania of asking for advice. Just make your films, make mistakes and you will realize how to make movies, because my experiences are from Budapest, which may serve there but not here”, concludes the Hungarian filmmaker. Indeed, these are some of the great dilemmas of the moving image created in small – and poor – countries: to try to imitate foreign experiences and the distribution (commercialisation) of their films. As a response to internationalisation, film co-production offers both benefits and drawbacks.

“Hagyjátok Robinsont!”

Many of the films co-produced in Cuba during the Soviet period (1961–1991) have seldom been studied to this day. For Soviet-bloc and Eastern European film criticism, these were experiments beyond their cultural borders of interests, and were therefore ignored. Film historians and critics misunderstood these films.⁴⁷ The film, *Leave Robinson Crusoe Alone* (*Dejen en paz a Robinson Crusoe*, 1989) directed by Péter Timár, is a Hungarian–Cuban addition to the cinematic adventure tales that reconstruct the structural elements of Crusoe’s island story. It was the first film that Cuba co-produced with Hungary, and the final one that it co-produced with a country of the Soviet-bloc. The film was released in Hungary on 4 January 1990, but it was never shown in Cuba.⁴⁸ Indeed, film co-production as the fusion of cultural diversity and national specificity is a difficult topic to deal with.

The synopsis of the film is as follows: Daniel Defoe (Dezső Garas) takes home a drunken sailor, Robinson Crusoe (played by István Mikó), from the pub and lets him tell his stories about an uninhabited island. Crusoe explains to Defoe that he was dropped from a ship as a punishment. After early encounters on an island with cannibals, he finds a beautiful girl whom he names Péntek (Friday, Milagros Morales). From the very beginning, Crusoe is attracted by the exoticism and eroticism of the young cannibal girl. After persistent efforts to approach her, little by little Crusoe manages to persuade her to become his lover; soon after, the couple have to deal with the arrival of a sales agent (Max Álvarez – for the Hungarian version of the film voiceover, Gábor Máté), a commune

⁴⁷ On this topic, please see SMITH-MESA 2011.

⁴⁸ Timár’s film is not included in a study on film adaptations of Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. See STAM 2005, 63–98.

organiser (Raúl Pomares – voiceover Frigyes Hollósi) and a missionary (Miguel Navarro – voiceover Zsigmond Fülöp). Maximillian E. Novak, in his study *Daniel Defoe: Master of Fictions*, in which he queries whether the story of Robinson Crusoe was in fact based on the accounts of the sailor Alexander Selkirk, notes the following: “He (Selkirk) expressed a dislike for alcoholic drinks when they were offered him, and he seemed to have lost some of his ability to use language, a fact that supported those who believed that language was neither a natural nor a necessary human acquirement.”⁴⁹ Although Tímár appears to defend this perception in principle, the Hungarian Crusoe is quite different from the Scottish Selkirk. The film character is a loquacious alcoholic.

The Cuban–Hungarian Crusoe Film

Tímár’s film is less an inquiry into Defoe’s inspirational source and more an indication of the particular film production values in the countries of the Soviet-bloc at that time, when traditionally negative characters such as drunks, prostitutes, dubious individuals and intellectuals were given a sympathetic representation. Tímár’s other significant departure from Defoe’s original story is the introduction of three new characters, the sales agent, the Utopian socialist philosopher and the missionary (those roles were played by Cuban actors). Tímár depicts them arriving on the island at different moments, at which point each makes his rhetorical speech in front of Robinson and his girlfriend. Crusoe does not question these new arrivals; instead he contents himself with the enjoyment of contemplating them, until he decides, with the help of Péntek, to put them in cages. Tímár makes powerful use of editing techniques to caricature these characters, speeding up short impulsive movements to accentuate how unconvincing they are, or slowing the characters down to show them wallowing in their own narcissistic attitudes. Certainly, Tímár’s film is a great example of a glasnost film, the East European use of the joke in a cinematic context, of reflective laughter and also of the Cuban, to mock serious topics such as philosophy, religion and the economy, which were three major linchpins of Soviet ideology (Marxism–Leninism).⁵⁰

Dejen en paz a Robinson Crusoe is a bizarre filmic experiment, a humorous depiction of a negative reality. Tímár’s view of the false options offered by philosophy, economics and religion is notable for its satire, which highlighted the collapse of the Soviet ideal. As a film, it reflects the pessimism that was felt in relation to the Soviet reality of those days: centred on the absence of hope, feelings of frustration and ideological disbelief. Tímár has an interesting cinematic idea that does not entirely succeed as a film proposal in using the metaphor provided by Daniel Defoe’s original story to observe the human condition and spirit and, in the particular case of this Hungarian film, to testify to the deep confusion of the time in the Eastern European state of mind. Tímár, like any good cinematographer of the glasnost period, from a country of the Soviet bloc, considered sexually explicit matters to be another vital aspect of contemporary filmmaking. His presentation of people of African extraction, of women and sex as pleasurable and vital aspects of life, also calls to mind

⁴⁹ NOVAK 2001, 539.

⁵⁰ For a relevant publication on this topic see PRIETO JIMÉNEZ 1997. Prieto Jiménez is the current Minister of Culture in Cuba.

Freudian references to female sexuality. Indeed, *Dejen en paz a Robinson Crusoe* can also be read as a cinematic exploration of Freud's theory of female sexuality.

Colonialist Ideology in Postcolonial Times: Representation of 'the Other'

As Robert Stam has pointed out, "...despite Defoe's attempts to distance Friday from blackness and Africa, any number of filmic adaptations (not to mention illustrated versions) of Robinson Crusoe have intuitively turned Friday back into an African and black man, thus restoring precisely what Defoe himself had gone to such pains to repress".⁵¹ In the Hungarian film version, Friday is turned into a black African female character, and thus the film-maker gets rid of the clearly homoerotic subtext of the original literary story, keeping intact the 'social contract' of enslavement and adding a sexually explicit storyline to the film narrative. The film-maker also keeps the ideological use of the cannibalism storyline in the novel to differentiate the white European from the native inhabitant of the island, giving the same colonialist representation of the 'other' as an inferior human being. In this sense, Tímár managed to maintain the colonialist ideology of Defoe's novel, a fact difficult to believe of a so-called 'socialist' cinematic discourse. Tímár's treatment of female sexuality brings to mind the English term 'dark continent', which was a nineteenth-century term for Africa, so used because it was largely unknown and therefore mysterious to Europeans. In *Dejen en paz a Robinson Crusoe*, the spectator sees in close-up a group of half-naked cannibals in a ritual dance around a monumental female figure, lying on her back with her legs apart. The figure's colossal vagina, the most sensitive part of a woman's body, is exposed and penetrated by an artificial black giant erect penis. It is an unashamedly and transparently sexual scene.

The film-maker displays a certain understanding of naturalistic erotic art, but mainly seems to have taken this as a good excuse to present beautiful, naked bodies in explicitly sexual movements. The selection of Afro-Cuban people to play these roles suggests that the European colonial perception of 'the dark continent' of the nineteenth century had changed little in Tímár's twentieth-century film, confirming the persistent European male sexual fantasy about African bodies. However, is the Hungarian Crusoe nothing more than an erotic film? In *Erotic Cinema*, Douglas Keesey and Paul Duncan suggest that "erotic movies are a dream world where we live out the sinful, shameless and infinitely gratifying sexual fantasies that are off-limits in real life".⁵² This kind of film focuses on a subject with either suggestive or sensual scenes, illustrating human nudity and lovemaking, though not of an extremely explicit nature. Erotic films appeal to the emotions of the viewer, with their emphasis on pleasure and human companionship. Bringing together the exotic and the erotic, *Dejen en paz a Robinson Crusoe* encourages us to explore this aspect of the aesthetic meaning of primitive art, by observing half-naked bodies in erotic ritual dances. However, if there is one general characteristic which can be applied to *Dejen en paz a Robinson Crusoe* as an erotic film, it is its comical quality. The comic aspect of eroticism is deftly

⁵¹ STAM 2005, 72.

⁵² KEESEY-DUNCAN 2005, 9.

demonstrated in several sequences of the film. Ultimately, Tímár's Robinson Crusoe is a visual celebration of sexuality. The film music helped to confirm this quality; played by Cuban boy band 'Moncada', who were very popular at the time, it provided the film with a convincing sense of carnival and disorder.

The Advent of the Magyar Illusion testifies to a fact: for Cuba, Hungarian filmmakers, film theoreticians and films turn out to be truly immeasurable, forever suggesting and demanding new readings. This is precisely the meaning of Hungary to the Cuban cinematic discourse, the significance of the Magyar Illusion to the moving image of the island of Cuba, another evidence that Art inspires other arts and artists inspire other artists.⁵³

By way of a conclusion, I would invoke Jorge Luis Borges's thought:

"The word 'precursor' is indispensable to the vocabulary of criticism, but one must try to purify it from any connotation of polemic or rivalry. The fact is that each writer creates his precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future."⁵⁴

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⁵³ Further reading: AITKEN 2012; AGUIRRE 1988; AMAYA 2010; BALSKEI 1992; BARNET FREIXAS 2002; CUNNINGHAM 2004; CHANAN 1985; DOUGLAS 1989; GARCÍA ESPINOSA 1997, 71–82; HERNÁNDEZ OTERO–SERPA 2000, 88–100; ILLÉS 1993; ICRT 1990; LAPOINTE 1983; LUKÁCS 1966b; LUKÁCS 1967; LUKÁCS 1970; SAN JUAN 1973; NEMES 1986; PÉREZ BETANCOURT 1990; PORTUGES–HAMES 2013; PORTUONDO 1979a; PORTUONDO 1979b; TÓTH 2011, 47–52; VALDÉS RODRÍGUEZ 1966; VARONA DOMÍNGUEZ–RODRÍGUEZ PÉREZ 2014.

⁵⁴ BORGES 1999, 365.

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La Imagen de Cuba en Hungría a finales del siglo xix y principios del xx

Zsuzsanna Csikós

Introducción

Las investigaciones realizadas sobre la historia de las relaciones húngaro-cubanas de la segunda mitad del siglo xix y principios del xx en ambos países hasta ahora abarcan principalmente dos campos: los viajes realizados por los húngaros a la isla y su actuación allá, y la imagen que se formó sobre Cuba en Hungría en el período mencionado. Como punto de partida de estas relaciones podemos tomar la derrota de la Revolución y Guerra de Independencia (1848/1849) contra los Habsburgo, cuando muchos húngaros tuvieron que dejar el país e ir al exilio por cierto tiempo. Unos cuantos de ellos se exiliaron en los Estados Unidos y algunos llegaron a Cuba. En la historiografía húngara el caso más conocido es la actuación de los soldados y oficiales dirigidos por János Prágay en la tercera expedición militar de Narciso López en 1851 para liberar la isla. János Prágay era el jefe de estado mayor de López, militar y político de origen venezolano.¹ La mayor parte de estos húngaros murió en el campo de batalla (Las Pozas) o poco después en el hospital, entre ellos el mismo Prágay, pero en la conciencia cubana preservó la heroicidad de esta gente: “Moriremos pero no nos rendimos. Somos húngaros” —fueron sus últimas palabras, según las fuentes de aquel entonces.² Su motivación queda bien clara: dos años después de la derrota húngara esta gente todavía sigue viviendo en el ardor de la libertad y está lista para luchar contra el absolutismo en cualquier parte del mundo.

Nuestro ensayo presentará la imagen que se daba tanto en la prensa húngara como en los libros de viaje editados por aquellas fechas en nuestro país sobre Cuba, su historia y su gente. Nos centraremos en cuatro fuentes: las descripciones de Pál Rosti en *Uti emlékezetek Amerikából* (Memorias de un viaje por América, 1861), los artículos publicados en el *Vasárnapi Újság* (Periódico Dominical, 1854-1921), la obra de Antal Berecz “Cuba sziget földrajzi és történelmi ismertetése” (“Informe sobre la geografía y la historia de la isla de Cuba”, 1898) publicada en *Földrajzi Közlemények* (Cuadernos de Geografía),

¹ János Prágay (1811-1851) fue teniente coronel en la Revolución y Guerra de Independencia de 1848/49 y sirvió bajo el mando de György Klapka. Después de la derrota se fue a los Estados Unidos donde escribió un libro sobre la revolución que se publicó tanto en inglés como en alemán en 1850 en Nueva York (*The Hungarian Revolution; Der Krieg in Ungarn*). También allá conoció a Narciso López y junto a sus compatriotas decidió participar en la expedición de López en 1851. Sobre la actuación de los húngaros, véase ANDERLE 1973, 687–710.

² Véase, por ejemplo, el artículo de BEREZ 1898a, 297–299.



y los apuntes de Ferencz Gáspár vinculados a la isla y publicados en su libro titulado *A föld körül* (Alrededor del mundo, volumen II, capítulo 3, 1906). Las obras mencionadas corresponden a diferentes tipos discursivos: dos de ellas (Rosti, Gáspár) son libros de viaje y como tales, pertenecen al género de la literatura de viajes, el informe de Berecz es de carácter de divulgación científica, mientras los artículos de *Vasárnapi Újság* pertenecen al género periodístico. Las cuatro fuentes están acompañadas por fotos, sin embargo no se da su origen, con excepción del libro de Rosti, cuyas fotos fueron tomadas por él mismo.

Cuba fue uno de aquellos pocos territorios que quedaron fuera de las guerras de independencia de las primeras décadas del siglo XIX en el continente americano y permanecieron bajo el control español hasta 1898. A partir de la segunda mitad del siglo XIX los movimientos independentistas contra el dominio español se intensificaron. Los momentos más destacados de esta lucha fueron las tres expediciones de Narciso López (1849, 1850, 1851), la Guerra de los Diez Años (1868-1878) y la Guerra de la Independencia Cubana (1895-1898) que desembocó en la Guerra Hispano-Estadounidense en 1898. Al mismo tiempo hay que mencionar que la cuestión de la independencia cubana casi siempre estuvo enlazada a la pretensión anexionista, esto es, a la incorporación de la isla a los Estados Unidos.³ La semejante situación histórica —la lucha por la independencia— en parte pudo explicar el creciente interés húngaro por la historia del país caribeño en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX.

Los libros de viaje de Pál Rosti y Ferencz Gáspár

En la segunda mitad del siglo XIX Cuba no era un país desconocido por completo para el lector húngaro debido al libro de Pál Rosti (1830-1874), *Uti emlékezetek Amerikából* (1861). Rosti fue húsar en la Revolución de 1848/49 y después de la derrota, fracasado y desesperado, decidió dejar el país y con la ayuda de sus cuñados, que eran gente prestigiosa e influyente en la vida político-social de su tiempo, consiguió viajar a Múnich y a París para realizar estudios de fotografía, entre otros.⁴

El viaje de Rosti realizado en 1857-1858 tenía metas científicas: él iba a seguir el itinerario del barón Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), pero al final recorrió solo tres países: México, Cuba y Venezuela.⁵ En su obra Rosti siguió la descripción del libro titulado *Voyage aux régions équinoxiales du Nouveau Continent fait en 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803 et 1804 par Alexandre de Humboldt et Aimé Bonpland* (París, 1807), del famoso ilustrador alemán, que se convirtió en la fuente principal de la obra del viajero húngaro.⁶ Al mismo tiempo, la gran novedad del libro de Rosti consistió en las fotos, hechas con la técnica más moderna de su tiempo.⁷

³ ANDERLE 2004.

⁴ Sobre la vida de Rosti, véase KINCSES 1992.

⁵ Alexander von Humboldt era un geólogo, naturalista y explorador alemán que realizó un viaje por el continente americano entre 1799 y 1804.

⁶ Del libro, los capítulos dedicados a Venezuela están ya traducidos al español. En 1968 la Universidad Central de Venezuela los publica con el título original del libro, *Memorias de un viaje por América*. Sobre el viaje de Rosti véanse también JANCÓ 2014, 199–207, y DORRONSORO 1983.

⁷ Sobre las fotos de Rosti véase PAPP 2008, 118–127.

Rosti pasó dos meses en La Habana (enero-marzo de 1857) y en su libro dedicó ocho capítulos al país caribeño. Los dos primeros capítulos —*La descripción de La Habana en general* y *Un domingo en La Habana*— son de carácter costumbrista y detallan la vida de los habaneros. El tercero —*El clima en La Habana y la fiebre amarilla*— explica las circunstancias climáticas y su relación con ciertas enfermedades. En el capítulo IV escribió sobre los ingenios azucareros, y en el último (VIII) sobre el cultivo del tabaco. Ya percibió los cambios que se llevarían a cabo en la producción de azúcar durante las décadas siguientes: la modernización y la mecanización que traerían consigo la concentración de los ingenios y el nacimiento de las grandes centrales azucareras para los años finiseculares. En el caso del tabaco obtuvo informaciones exactas sobre la manufactura del puro o habano, qué tipos existían, la cantidad que se producía y se exportaba, cómo se consumía, quiénes lo fumaban, etc. Su presentación fue muy sistemática y escrupulosa, los términos específicos se daban en español con explicaciones húngaras: “[...] ‘azúcar blanco’ (fejér czukor); ‘quemado primo’ és ‘segundo’ (barna első s másodrendű); ‘cucurucho’ (egészen barna, legelső rendű)”.⁸

Rosti dedicó tres capítulos enteros a la composición étnica de la población y la convivencia entre las razas (capítulos V, VI y VII: La esclavitud; Los negros libres y la población de color; Los colonos libres). En su discurso mencionó que la relación entre negros y blancos, entre esclavos y hombres libres era mucho menos discriminativa en Cuba que en los Estados Unidos. En este país, según él, había una gran contradicción entre los principios de libertad, igualdad y fraternidad y la esclavitud existente, real. Incluso en aquellas partes de EE.UU. donde se llevó a cabo la abolición, la discriminación seguía siendo muy perceptible. “Pero, porqué en la patria de la libertad y la igualdad muestran tanta antipatía, un verdadero odio hacia los negros ya libres y sus descendientes, porqué son tan injustos con ellos: no lo he podido descifrar claramente hasta hoy.”⁹ En relación con los negros y la esclavitud tenía una opinión matizada. Rechazaba la esclavitud como institución —era partidario del abolicionismo— pero insistía en la inferioridad mental de los negros. Al mismo tiempo consideraba que la ignorancia de los negros se debía, antes que nada, a la falta de educación y a los tratos inhumanos. Sin cuestionar la vigencia de la teoría sobre la supremacía de la gente blanca, planteó su responsabilidad en el asunto también. Por otro lado, no pasó por alto la pereza, la negligencia e indolencia de los criollos, o sea, la mentalidad negativa de esta gente, que en parte se debía al clima. No hay que olvidar que la teoría del determinismo geográfico era muy fuerte en aquella época. Rosti mencionó la situación desastrosa de la minoría china llevada a la isla para combatir la falta de mano de obra.

Resumidamente podemos constatar que la experiencia directa, la opinión subjetiva y las lecturas previas formaron el punto de vista de Rosti. Muchas veces complementó su comentario con notas de pie, la primera, una de éstas se refirió a la pronunciación del español. Para Rosti Cuba era una tierra lejana, exótica y ajena, pero a veces, simpática, de la que intentó dar una imagen real: “Concentré todos mis esfuerzos en pintar con los colores más vívidos y fieles a la realidad, las impresiones que ejercieron en mí los paisajes, las plantas, los hombres y sus condiciones sociales... para poder ofrecer lo más

⁸ ROSTI 1861, 18.

⁹ ROSTI 1861, 24.

claramente posible a mis compatriotas las ideas deducidas de la experiencia y los cuadros e informaciones más fielmente adecuados a la realidad.”¹⁰

Los apuntes de Ferencz Gáspár (1861-1923) sobre Cuba nacieron unos 40 años más tarde. Gáspár era médico militar y sirvió en la flota de la Monarquía Austro-Húngara a lo largo de 7 años, a finales del siglo XIX. Después trabajó como médico en varios barcos comerciales hasta 1907, cuando definitivamente se estableció en Budapest y cumplió varios cargos administrativos gubernamentales. En 1923 se suicidó.¹¹ Debido a su trabajo como médico marítimo circunnavegó el mundo y publicó varias obras de divulgación científica sobre sus experiencias vividas en las tierras lejanas que gozaban de gran popularidad en su tiempo. “Los libros populares de Ferencz Gáspár son las joyas de divulgación de las ciencias naturales que ofrecen una imagen global y compleja sobre el mundo y sus pueblos al fundir una bien lograda y selecta bibliografía con experiencias propias.”¹² Así salieron a la luz los seis volúmenes de su libro titulado *A föld körül* (Alrededor del mundo, 1906-1908) prologado por uno de los científicos más destacados de Hungría de aquel entonces, Ármin Vámbéry.¹³ Gáspár añadió una bibliografía amplia a cada tomo de su obra y entre los libros enumerados se encontraba, por ejemplo, el libro del geógrafo alemán Emil Deckert sobre la descripción geográfica e histórica de la isla (*Cuba*, 1899), el cual Gáspár utilizó como fuente directa a la hora de presentar la isla caribeña.¹⁴

La temática y el método que Gáspár siguió eran bastante semejantes a los de Rosti. Gáspár empezó su presentación evocando la opinión de Cristóbal Colón al ver la isla en octubre de 1492, y después enumeró varios adjetivos y títulos conocidos en relación a la belleza de la isla. Al mismo tiempo él insistió en la autoidentificación de Cuba como “La siempre fiel Isla de Cuba” difundida durante las guerras napoleónicas.¹⁵ Al tener en consideración que las descripciones del libro de Gáspár correspondían a la situación de principios de los años 1890 —él mismo mencionó este hecho en la introducción del libro, mientras el libro se publicó solo en 1906— esta frase gana un significado especial. La fidelidad desapareció, Cuba llegó a ser independiente en 1898 pero con la ayuda de los Estados Unidos. Gáspár estaba convencido de que Cuba se desarrollaría rápidamente en la nueva era independiente. “Es muy posible que durante la nueva era americana no solo la industria azucarera sino todas las demás instituciones de Cuba se desarrollen rápidamente y la isla rica se convierta en el verdadero filón de la Unión.”¹⁶

También la obra de Gáspár se enfocó en la descripción de la capital. Él, como Rosti, distinguió dos Habanas: la ciudad nueva lujosa, elegante y moderna, frente a la vieja, que reflejaba el verdadero rostro de una ciudad colonial española con sus calles estrechas

¹⁰ ROSTI 1968, 31.

¹¹ Sobre la vida y la actuación de Gáspár véanse los artículos siguientes: SZÁLLÁSI 2009 y KUBASSEK 1988, 105–106. Gáspár escribió su nombre con “z” (Ferencz). En las citas de los artículos mencionados se utiliza la forma actual del nombre, sin esta letra (Ferenc).

¹² KUBASSEK 1988, 105.

¹³ Ármin Vámbéry (1823-1913) era un orientalista de fama mundial, catedrático, viajero, miembro de la Academia de Ciencias de Hungría. A él se debe la primera expedición exitosa (1861-1864) que un europeo logró realizar por las tierras de Asia Central.

¹⁴ GÁSPÁR 1906. Gáspár dedica el tercer capítulo del segundo tomo a presentar Cuba a los lectores húngaros: Kuba szigetén (En la isla de Cuba).

¹⁵ La frase aparece en español y sin traducción. GÁSPÁR 1906, 47.

¹⁶ GÁSPÁR 1906, 63.

y enmohecidas, llenas de basura. Se ve claramente que a lo largo de los 40 años que separan las dos obras las diferencias entre los dos barrios llegaron a ser más profundas y patentes. Otro punto común de las dos obras consiste en detallar la composición de la población y el problema de las razas. Según los datos de Gáspár un millón de españoles, unos 10-12 mil blancos de otras partes y medio millón de negros, mulatos y mestizos vivían en la isla. Aparte mencionó la minoría china de la que Rosti también habla en su obra, si bien Rosti detalló los métodos engañosos con los que atraieron a los chinos a la isla, que al llegar tuvieron que trabajar como semiesclavos durante 8 años y solo hasta después pudieron seguir como colonos libres. Asimismo, Rosti mencionó que los cubanos los consideraron flojos y Gáspár añadió que se trataba de unos 50 mil hombres que vivían separados y excluidos de la sociedad cubana. Gáspár prestó atención destacada a la composición de las razas. Según él la confrontación permanente entre los criollos y los blancos peninsulares fue y seguía siendo el mal más grande del país. Ambas obras insisten en calificar a los criollos como perezosos y negligentes. Gáspár explicó este comportamiento negativo en parte como debido a dificultades de aclimatación más que de asimilación, y añadió que además los criollos iban perdiendo sus tierras y bienes, y poco a poco se convertían en obreros cuyos bienes constaban de un machete y de una hamaca. La obra de Gáspár siguió reflejando la opinión pública sobre la supremacía de la gente blanca, en cuanto a su mentalidad y capacidades. Como se puede observar, el capítulo de Gáspár sobre Cuba ofrece una imagen bastante semejante a la que hemos visto en el caso de Rosti.

Los artículos del periódico *Vasárnapi Újság*

A partir de los años 1850-1860 salieron a la luz cada vez más artículos sobre Cuba en las diferentes publicaciones húngaras. Una de éstas fue el periódico *Vasárnapi Újság* (Periódico Dominical) que era el semanal ilustrado más popular de su tiempo y se publicó entre 1854 y 1921, y con estas fechas resultó ser el más duradero de su época.¹⁷ Se trataba de un periódico de carácter informativo, enciclopédico y educativo que tenía dos metas: una declarada, de divulgar conocimientos útiles sobre el país y sobre el mundo, y una oculta que consistía en mantener y reforzar el espíritu nacional sin que la censura se diera cuenta de este intento. No hay que olvidar que los años 1850-1860 eran el período de la represión y del neoabsolutismo de los Habsburgo después de la derrota de la Revolución y Guerra de Independencia de 1848/49 cuando Hungría perdió todos los derechos a la autonomía, un período en el que incluso la lengua oficial era el alemán.¹⁸

Según el buscador del periódico, en total se encuentran 69 entradas relacionadas con Cuba publicadas entre 1854 y 1921. El primer artículo breve salió en diciembre de 1865

¹⁷ La idea de fundar un nuevo periódico que llegase a los amplios círculos de la sociedad se debió al escritor más conocido de aquel entonces, Mór Jókai (1825-1904). El semanal que salía los días festivos, en los años 60 ya tenía más de 10 mil abonados y dio un empuje importante al florecimiento de la vida cultural y literaria del país. Los que colaboraban en su redacción y edición eran todos figuras prestigiosas y reconocidas de la vida cultural de aquel entonces, lo que aseguraba el alto nivel y la calidad del semanario. Debido a su gran popularidad pudo formar la opinión pública y contribuir a que la gente común tuviera más conocimientos y más información sobre tierras ajenas también.

¹⁸ La situación cambió solo con el Compromiso de 1867.

y resumió los resultados de una investigación que fue realizada por un sociólogo español, Ramón de la Sagra (1798-1871), sobre la fecundidad de las mujeres cubanas.¹⁹ El último se publicó en 1900.²⁰ Varios son solo anuncios a propósito del café cubano o se mencionaba el nombre de la isla en relación con ciertos datos comparativos (por ejemplo, la longitud de las líneas de ferrocarril en los diferentes países del mundo o la producción de piña) entre las noticias breves. Hasta la segunda mitad de los años 1890 las noticias fueron bastante esporádicas y circunstanciales, excepto una de marzo de 1876 dedicada a los puros cubanos.²¹

La mayor parte de los artículos relacionados con Cuba se dedicó a la cuestión de la independencia de la isla y la guerra entre los Estados Unidos y España. El primer artículo que hizo referencia al estado político de Cuba de aquel entonces salió en mayo de 1872. El autor de la nota detalló los acontecimientos sangrientos sucedidos en el cementerio de la capital cubana en diciembre de 1871, cuando fueron asesinados unos estudiantes de medicina por haber estropeado dos tumbas españolas por accidente. En el artículo se mencionó que España no era capaz de valorar ni gobernar sus colonias correctamente.²²

A partir de 1896 las noticias referentes a Cuba se multiplicaron. En los números de los años 1896-1897 podemos encontrar 12 artículos, en el año siguiente 24. Como se indica, casi todas estas noticias se relacionaron con el tema de la independencia cubana.

En diciembre de 1896 un largo artículo presentó la vida de Antonio Maceo con el motivo de conmemorar su muerte, ocurrida el 7 de diciembre de aquel año. El artículo dio una valoración positiva sobre su figura y el papel cumplido en la lucha de los cubanos por la independencia y dijo que Maceo había sido el alma y el jefe más destacado del levantamiento. A propósito de la guerra que la isla sostuvo por su independencia, mencionó que España llevaba ya dos décadas luchando con Cuba y sus pérdidas tanto materiales como humanas eran enormes.²³

Uno de los artículos de 1897 mencionó que los cubanos querrían librarse del mal gobierno y del sistema explotador. Los españoles creían equivocadamente que después de la muerte de Antonio Maceo los insurgentes se rendirían pero no sucedió así, los nuevos jefes fueron capaces de reemplazarlo. En aquel entonces unos 50-60 mil insurgentes luchaban contra 350 mil soldados españoles, de los cuales 120 mil eran combatientes voluntarios. El mayor problema de los cubanos era la falta de armas, pero además de comprarlas, trataban de conseguirlas de los españoles con la ayuda de varios trucos. Los artículos hablan sobre los líderes cubanos con mucha simpatía y presentan dos fotos sobre la bandera y el nuevo escudo de la república cubana. Según el artículo, si Cuba llega a ser un estado independiente será capaz de desarrollarse por sus propios esfuerzos debido a sus riquezas naturales y a sus tierras fértiles. “Si Cuba se queda sola puede desarrollarse por su propia fuerza porque su

¹⁹ A kubai nök termékenysége 1865. Los autores de los artículos generalmente no se identifican, son “anónimos”, pero muchas veces se indican las fuentes.

²⁰ Después de la guerra entre España y los Estados Unidos se perdió el interés por la isla en los periódicos húngaros.

²¹ SÁMI 1876, 199. Lo que puede llamarnos la atención en este artículo es que se apoya en los apuntes de un viajero británico, sin tener en cuenta o mencionar la descripción detallada de Rosti sobre el mismo tema.

²² S. L. 1872, 222–223.

²³ Maceo, a kubai hős 1896.

tierra fértil, que actualmente tiene 1 millón 750 mil habitantes, sería capaz de mantener a unos 8-9 millones también.”²⁴

De los 52 números del año 1898 del semanario, en unos 20 podemos encontrar información sobre Cuba y la guerra. En marzo se escribió sobre el hundimiento del acorazado Maine y se mencionó que la causa podía ser la explosión de la caldera, o sea, no se aceptó la posición estadounidense según la cual la explosión fue provocada por los españoles. En cuanto a la intervención norteamericana el artículo opinó que el humanitarismo motivaba el comportamiento de los EE.UU, sin embargo, unas semanas más tarde se escribió sobre el espíritu de venganza de los norteamericanos frente a los españoles, que era capaz de suscitar cierto patriotismo falso.²⁵ En mayo en un solo número se publicaron tres artículos relacionados con la guerra y con los tres participantes. El primer artículo trató sobre la política de la reina María Cristina y su hijo, Alfonso XIII. Según el autor la reina hizo todo lo posible para mantener la paz en la isla, pero no podía dejar que deshonraran a la nación española, que la dignidad, la honra y los derechos de España sufrieran mella. El segundo se refería al presidente norteamericano, MacKinley, con mucha simpatía, y mencionó que éste prometió mejorar el destino de Cuba en su programa presidencial e iba a arreglar los conflictos surgidos de manera pacífica. El tercero era el resumen de la conferencia impartida sobre Cuba por Antal Berecz, miembro de la Asociación Húngara de Geografía.²⁶

En otro número se publicaron dos caricaturas, una tomada de un periódico español y la otra de uno norteamericano. En la primera se veía al Tío Sam (símbolo caricaturesco de los EE.UU.), disfrazado, que llevaba un puerco en las manos para Cuba, pero en sus bolsillos se encontraban bayonetas. La otra, respuesta a la anterior, llevaba por título “El DQ moderno” —Don Quijote— y presentaba a un soldado español en su caballo —que había sido rocín antes— luchando con un molino de viento, pero las alas de éste le arrojaban de lado mientras el Tío Sam contemplaba la escena muy contento desde una ventana del molino.²⁷

Un especial interés merece el artículo de Sándor Hegedűs (1875-1953), conocido escritor húngaro de su tiempo. En los años 90 él viajó a los Estados Unidos, y de sus experiencias escribió un libro que lleva por título *Az óriások világa* (El mundo de los gigantes), (1898). Al tener en cuenta sus experiencias directas y recientes sobre aquellas tierras, consideró que la guerra pronto terminaría porque España ya no podía más con las deudas y las cargas. La incompetencia de la política colonial española, y su apego obstinado a la isla que estaba tan cerca de los Estados Unidos levantaron el sentimiento de libertad entre los cubanos, cruelmente sometidos. Hegedűs opinó —quizás un poco a la ligera— que los Estados Unidos no ocuparían Cuba por la fuerza, sino que esperarían hasta que los cubanos se dieran cuenta de que no eran capaces de autogobierno y ellos mismos irían a pedir su protección. Cuba y Puerto Rico seguirían el ejemplo de Hawái y en breve formarían parte de los EE.UU. Los yankis necesitaban a Cuba para poder dominar ambos océanos mediante el canal de Panamá. Todo ello parecía justificar la tesis de que la guerra se ganaba solo con dinero. El autor estaba muy consciente de las metas ocultas de los Estados Unidos.²⁸

²⁴ A kubai háborúról 1897.

²⁵ A Maine amerikai hadihajó elsüllyedése 1898.

²⁶ Los tres artículos son: A spanyol királyné és fia, XIII Alfonz 1898; Mac Kinley 1898; BEREZC 1898a, 297–299.

²⁷ Gúnyrajzok az amerikai-spanyol háborúról 1898.

²⁸ HEGEDŰS 1898.

Los últimos cinco artículos que se publicaron en los números de diciembre de 1898, más uno de los números de 1899, presentaron la guerra mediante las cartas enviadas al periódico por Ferenc Viter (1875-1924). Como oficial de la Marina de los EE.UU., Viter estuvo presente en la batalla que terminó con la armada española.²⁹ Sus escritos también son aportaciones muy importantes para dar a conocer el verdadero carácter de la guerra a los lectores húngaros. ¿Qué nos cuentan estas cartas? Viter dijo que la misión secreta del crucero en el que él servía era llevar a los voluntarios a la isla para combatir y que tenían que desembarcar en Guantánamo. Los primeros voluntarios eran aventureros de las praderas. La táctica contribuyó a llevar quince mil soldados a la isla, que padecía de hambre, y muchos decidieron seguir combatiendo en el ejército estadounidense precisamente por eso. Describió los horrores de los bombardeos vividos allá. Al mismo tiempo insistió mucho en la heroicidad de los norteamericanos y en el sentimiento del patriotismo que era general y bien palpable en toda la América del Norte durante la guerra. Sobre Cuba casi no dió informaciones. Sus cartas presentaron la guerra como un conflicto entre los dos imperios.³⁰

En general podemos constatar que las noticias referentes a Cuba se enfocaron en las luchas por la independencia ante todo. En este sentido la imagen ofrecida por el periódico era objetiva, imparcial y bastante profunda. Incluso la lucha de los cubanos se detalló con simpatía. La valoración positiva pudo tener sus raíces en el esfuerzo semejante de los húngaros cincuenta años atrás. Al mismo tiempo, como hemos visto, los detalles sobre la guerra se redujeron más bien a los hechos bélicos protagonizados por los dos imperios y a la falta de interés por el posterior destino de Cuba.

El Informe de Antal Berecz sobre Cuba

En Hungría las primeras revistas científicas de historia, antropología y geografía aparecieron en el período de la Monarquía Austro-Húngara. Una de estas revistas fue el boletín de la Asociación Geográfica Húngara, *Cuadernos de Geografía*, publicado a partir de 1873. En uno de los números de 1898 se publicó el discurso sobre Cuba ofrecido por Antal Berecz (1836-1908) en la sesión del 14 de abril de 1898 de la Asociación.³¹ En las primeras páginas Berecz destacó la excelente situación geográfica y la belleza de la isla, y describió la geografía natural y humana de Cuba, señalando que los tres productos principales del país son el café, el azúcar y el tabaco. Incluyó datos estadísticos en relación con la producción azucarera llamando la atención sobre la brusca caída sucedida entre 1880 y 1896, cuya causa podía atribuirse a los continuos levantamientos, las rebeliones y las perturbaciones que traían consigo la destrucción de muchos ingenios. A propósito del café mencionó que su producción había bajado considerablemente en tiempos recientes, debido al café brasileño y de Java, mientras el tabaco se había convertido en un producto tan buscado que incluso lo falsificaban. Berecz también expuso datos sobre la población en los que se veía que el número de blancos casi se había duplicado en menos de 40 años (entre 1857 y 1894), mientras la población de color había crecido solo en 130 mil aproximadamente, pero no explicó las

²⁹ Después de terminar la guerra Viter dejó el ejército estadounidense debido a una enfermedad y regresó a Hungría donde trabajó como periodista durante los siguientes años.

³⁰ VITER 1898a, 847–851, 866–869; VITER 1898b, 887–891; VITER 1898c, 908–909; VITER 1899, 23–26.

³¹ BEREZ 1898b, 167–184. Berecz era un reconocido geógrafo de su tiempo.

causas del crecimiento brusco de la población blanca. Llamó la atención sobre la situación de los mestizos: estaban listos para independizarse en cualquier momento y odiaban tanto a los españoles como a los demás europeos que llegaron solo para enriquecerse.

Después de detallar algunos datos sobre el comercio, la red de ferrocarriles, el sistema administrativo y de educación, el autor ofreció una breve descripción de la capital, semejante a las de Rosti y Gáspár, si bien enumerando asimismo las demás ciudades importantes de Cuba. A propósito del sistema legislativo, Berecz mencionó que en la isla estaba en vigor el código civil español y las leyes cubanas correspondían a las aplicaciones de justicia de los pueblos civilizados.

De la historia cubana Berecz destacó los momentos más importantes a partir de la llegada de Colón a la isla. Mencionó que Hernando Soto hizo matar a todos los indios en el siglo XVI; que La Habana llegó a ser la capital de la isla en 1633; detalló las guerras entre los ingleses y los españoles por el derecho de libre comercio a lo largo de los siglos XVII y XVIII y que La Habana llegó a ser el centro del tráfico de negros de toda la América Hispánica. Berecz constató que el siglo XIX se caracterizó por las confrontaciones permanentes entre los blancos y los negros y que muchos negros murieron en estas luchas. Los conflictos internos fueron complicados por las concepciones diferentes en cuanto al estatus de la isla: mientras los españoles querían mantenerla bajo su dominio a toda costa, los criollos deseaban / planeaban unir la isla a los Estados Unidos. “En el senado de Washington discutieron sobre comprar la isla ya desde 1845, y al año siguiente se fundó una compañía norteamericana que iba a tener la misión de reunir 200 millones de dólares para realizar la compra de Cuba [...]”³² Berecz trató también los asuntos de la Guerra de los Diez Años (1868-1878), y mencionó que en 1881 entró en vigor la Constitución española en Cuba y con esto los isleños tenían derecho de enviar diputados a las Cortes. A pesar de haberse ampliado los derechos y la autonomía de la isla, la mayoría de la población ya anhelaba la independencia total. En relación con la guerra hispano-estadounidense mencionó que los habitantes de los Estados Unidos exigían la anexión de Cuba y que dependía del gobierno norteamericano el futuro destino de la isla. Berecz añadió que la motivación estadounidense era evidente: iban a dominar la región cuando el canal interoceánico fuera ya una realidad. Al mismo tiempo, no omite señalar que el poder excesivo de los Estados Unidos desfavorecía los intereses europeos.

El discurso de Berecz ofrece una síntesis de todos los conocimientos que la gente de aquel entonces podía tener sobre la isla en Hungría. No se indican las fuentes de los datos y de las demás informaciones, excepto el periódico *El avisador comercial* al que hizo referencia al detallar la deuda estatal de la isla.³³

Conclusiones

Las fuentes comentadas en este ensayo reflejan una valoración relativamente neutral, objetiva, a pesar de la distancia geográfica de los dos países. La experiencia directa de

³² BEREZ 1898b, 180.

³³ “Según *El avisador comercial* habanero, Cuba no tiene tanta deuda que no pueda pagarla [...]” BEREZ 1898b, 173. El periódico mencionado se editó en Cuba entre 1888 y 1897.

los viajeros —Rosti y Gáspár— se complementa con las informaciones publicadas en los periódicos húngaros de aquel entonces. La constante lucha por la libertad y la independencia a lo largo del siglo XIX pudo enlazar la historia de Cuba y Hungría y levantar interés y simpatía por el otro. Al seguir las investigaciones del tema y examinar otras fuentes del período se puede matizar y ampliar más la imagen presentada en este ensayo. También merece la pena dedicar atención al otro lado: ¿qué se sabía en la isla sobre Hungría y los húngaros a finales del siglo XIX, fuera de la expedición de János Prágay y sus soldados? Para terminar solo mencionaremos algunos ejemplos. Las primeras traducciones de los poemas de Sándor Petőfi se publicaron en 1893 en Cuba.³⁴ En 1894 en la revista *La Habana Elegante* apareció el poema de Petőfi con el título original en húngaro, *Fa lesznek...* [Árbol seré...] traducido por Benjamín Giberga, mientras José Martí en un artículo de 1886 escribió sobre el pintor húngaro, Mihály Munkácsy.³⁵ Estos ejemplos justifican la existencia de un interés mutuo por parte de ambos países para conocer al otro.

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³⁴ El político y literato cubano, Diego Vicente Tejera (1848-1903) publica en su libro *Poesías* (1893) las traducciones de 17 poemas de Petőfi, bajo el título *Cantos magiares*. Se trata de traducciones indirectas, pues Tejera tradujo los poemas de Petőfi del francés.

³⁵ MARTÍ, José (1886): El Cristo de Munkacsy. *La Nación*, 02.12.1886. www.lebanese4cuban5.com/marti/marti000196s.html (10.08.2017.)

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Ata Kandó y los Hijos de la Luna. Pueblos originarios de Venezuela a través de las lentes de una fotógrafa de origen húngaro¹

Katalin Jancsó

“Al principio, la movió posiblemente la curiosidad, sin embargo, según confiesa en sus memorias de viaje, le empezaron a interesar cada vez más las cuestiones etnográficas y sociales. Ya durante su primer viaje a América del Sur, se centró en los pueblos indígenas: observaba, investigaba y documentaba apasionadamente la vida de los habitantes de la selva, los llanos y las zonas montañosas.

No le atraían las apariencias, más bien quería captar la unidad de la cultura tribal que se ocultaba tras los coloridos y variados fenómenos cotidianos. Presentía que la comunidad humana aislada era la guardiana de una peculiar armonía ancestral. No podía hacer más que soñar con todo esto durante su niñez en Budapest o más tarde durante las décadas que pasó en París o Ámsterdam. Más de una vez confesó que la pureza de las relaciones humanas la empujaba hacia los indígenas de esas regiones lejanas.

Además de los indígenas makiritare, visitó a las tribus yanomami y piaroa, pero, pasados algunos días ya podía percibir qué daños había ocasionado la actividad ‘civilizadora’ cada vez más agresiva que solo tenía impactos negativos. Documentaba sin cesar -esta fue su medida de protesta.

Abandonó la selva que escondía fósiles etnográficos y viajó a la región de los Andes, terreno de la alta civilización de los incas, destruida por los conquistadores españoles. Además de las maravillosas zonas arqueológicas de las culturas ancestrales indígenas, capturó con su lente a campesinos quechua, pescadores mestizos y gente marginada por la sociedad.”²

La mejor presentación de los motivos profesionales y personales de la fotógrafa Ata Kandó para trabajar en regiones tan lejanas como América Latina nos la ofrecen las citadas palabras del reconocido etnógrafo húngaro, Lajos Boglár,³ investigador de varios pueblos nativos de la Amazonia brasileña y venezolana, quien, unos años más tarde que Ata Kandó, también visitó y estudió a los piaroa. Hemos recogido sus palabras del texto de presentación de la

¹ Esta investigación fue apoyada por el proyecto núm. EFOP-3.6.2-16-2017-00007, titulado *Aspects on the development of intelligent, sustainable and inclusive society: social, technological, innovation networks in employment and digital economy*. El proyecto ha sido apoyado por la Unión Europea y cofinanciado por el Fondo Social Europeo y el presupuesto estatal húngaro.

² BOGLÁR 1976.

³ 1929-2004.

exhibición itinerante *Esclavo o Muerto* (Slave or Dead) que se llevó a unas 65 ciudades de todo el mundo entre los años 1969 y 1976 en colaboración con *Survival International* y que llegó a Budapest en octubre de 1976. Pero no fue ésta la primera exhibición de Kandó que se organizó sobre los pueblos aborígenes venezolanos; años atrás, en 1962, el Museo de Bellas Artes de Caracas ya había realizado una exposición conjunta con su amiga, Barbara Brändli. Pero, para poder explicar los detalles de esta fascinante carrera y obra, necesitamos seguir la cronología de los acontecimientos.

Ata Kandó, una vida aventurera

Ata Kandó nació en Budapest en 1913, con el nombre de Etelka Görög. Fue hija de Imre Görög y Margit Beke. Su padre, profesor de latín, historia y literatura húngara fue tomado prisionero de guerra en Rusia durante la primera guerra mundial. Pasó en Rusia más de cinco años, donde aprendió el ruso y, al volver a Hungría, comenzó a trabajar como traductor de obras rusas. Su madre venía de una familia intelectual⁴ y, aunque no terminó sus estudios en la universidad, aprendió ocho idiomas, entre ellos los idiomas escandinavos y el ruso, por lo que ella también se convirtió en escritora y traductora,⁵ y escribió su primer libro en 1915, con el título de *El libro de Ata*, en el que reunió sus ideas pedagógicas liberales. Ata, según confesaba ella misma, creció en un ambiente de educación sumamente liberal. Como de niña no podía pronunciar su nombre, Etelka, su madre le permitió que utilizara Ata, que sería el nombre con el que se la conoció durante toda su vida.⁶

A la joven Ata Kandó le gustaba dibujar y pintar, por lo que a los 14 años se matriculó en la escuela de dibujo de Álmos Jaschik⁷ y más tarde empezó a estudiar artes aplicadas en la escuela de Sándor Bortnyik. En esta escuela conoció a Victor Vasarely y a quien posteriormente se convertiría en su marido, el pintor Gyula Kandó.⁸ Se casó con Kandó cuando ella apenas había cumplido los 18 años y empezaron a vivir una vida de artistas, en circunstancias modestas. Se trasladaron a París para probar fortuna a principios de los años treinta y allí recibieron una invitación del padre de Kandó, quien vivía y trabajaba en círculos cinematográficos en Barcelona. Juntos ganaron un concurso de carteles publicitarios y el premio fue una cámara de fotos Voigtländer que Ata empezó a utilizar. Fue en el puerto de Barcelona donde Ata, al observar las velas blancas de los barcos y el juego de las luces, decidió dedicarse profesionalmente a la fotografía.⁹ Volvieron a Budapest en 1935 y Ata empezó a estudiar fotografía y a trabajar de aprendiz en diferentes estudios.¹⁰ Aprobó el examen final de fotografía en el estudio de József Pécsi.¹¹

⁴ El abuelo, Manó Beke, fue catedrático, un matemático famoso.

⁵ SÁNDOR 2003, 72.

⁶ MOLNÁR 2005.

⁷ Dibujante, pintor y pedagogo famoso de la época, fundó su escuela privada de dibujo en 1920.

⁸ Dibujante, pintor y dibujante publicitario, miembro del círculo Kassák, fundó su escuela privada de dibujo *Taller* en 1928, que seguía las ideas del programa de enseñanza de la Bauhaus.

⁹ BODNÁR 2013; MÉSZÁROS 2015.

¹⁰ Sus mentores fueron Klára Wachter, Mariann Reismann y Ferenc Haár.

¹¹ SÁNDOR 2003, 73.

En 1938, de nuevo viajaron a París; querían establecerse en la capital francesa. Allí se vincularon con el círculo de artistas internacionales de la época y Ata empezó a trabajar ya como fotógrafa, en el estudio de Haár, entre otros. En este periodo, hizo sobre todo fotografías de niños. Sin embargo, la segunda guerra mundial interrumpió la carrera profesional de la joven pareja y, en 1940, como consecuencia de la ocupación nazi de París, tuvieron que volver a Hungría de nuevo. Ata ya estaba embarazada de su primer hijo, Tomás, quien nació en Hungría cuatro meses después, en 1941.¹² Dos años más tarde nacieron sus hijas gemelas; sin embargo, la familia estaba en una situación bastante difícil. Como el marido Gyula Kandó no era judío, Ata y él podían moverse con relativa facilidad por la ciudad y por el país; no obstante, los miembros de la familia de Ata tuvieron que buscar refugio. Ata escondía a varios judíos en su casa y Gyula también ayudó a muchos fugitivos, además de que les apoyaron con dinero. Ata prestó todos sus documentos originales a una mujer judía embarazada para que pudiera dar a luz a su hija en un hospital. La niña se registró como hija de la familia Kandó y ella y su madre sobrevivieron a la guerra en compañía de los Kandó en su casa de verano cerca del lago Balaton.¹³ Durante estos años algunas fotos de Ata aparecieron en *Új Idők*¹⁴ y otras publicaciones.

La carrera internacional

Al terminar la guerra, la familia perdió casi todos sus bienes y, por consiguiente, en 1947 decidieron probar fortuna una tercera vez en París,¹⁵ donde les esperaba carencia y miseria. Además, Ata perdió su cámara, lo que aumentó aún más su desesperación. Fue Robert Capa quien socorrió a Ata. La invitó a su casa, donde la esperaba con una Rolleiflex. Además de obsequiarla con la cámara, le ofreció trabajo en el laboratorio de la Agencia Magnum Photos, donde Ata trabajó hasta 1952. Gyula Kandó desistió de la lucha por sobrevivir y después de dos años de estancia en París, volvió a Hungría, dejando atrás a Ata con sus tres hijos. Ella se quedó en la capital francesa y Gyula murió en los años sesenta en Hungría.¹⁶

Ata conoció a su segundo marido, el holandés Ed van der Elksen, en la Agencia Magnum y, en 1954, decidieron trasladarse e instalarse en Holanda. Van der Elksen era 12 años más joven que Ata, y sus caminos se apartaron después de 5 años de matrimonio, así que Ata se quedó sola de nuevo, con sus tres hijos.¹⁷ En ese tiempo Ata mantenía a la familia encargándose de trabajos fotográficos para agencias de moda francesas y holandesas. En un par de años se convirtió en una fotógrafa popular, y sus fotos se publicaban en magazines de París y otras ciudades europeas.¹⁸

¹² MOLNÁR 2005.

¹³ Por esta labor a Ata le otorgaron en Jerusalén, en 1999, el título Justos entre las Naciones. Véase Kandó family, The Righteous Among The Nations: en Yad Vashem, The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, <http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=4035854> (10.08.2017.)

¹⁴ Semanal literario húngaro que se fundó en 1894 y se publicó hasta 1949.

¹⁵ SÁNDOR 2003, 73.

¹⁶ BODNÁR 2013.

¹⁷ ÚRVÁRI 2015.

¹⁸ SPIRA 2014, 58–86.

En 1956, como reacción a los acontecimientos de la revolución húngara, la fotógrafa decidió trasladarse a la frontera austro-húngara para hacer reportajes con los refugiados. En esta labor la acompañó una amiga fotógrafa holandesa, Violette Cornelius. Hicieron fotorreportajes sobre todo de niños y familias en campos de refugiados, en pueblos cerca de Viena y la frontera. El libro (titulado *Libro sin título*¹⁹), publicado en diez lenguas, les trajo fama y popularidad y, en especial, ingresos que ofrecieron para apoyar a los refugiados.²⁰ Al año siguiente, en 1957, Ata publicó otro libro de fotografías, con el título *Sueño en el Bosque* (Dream in the Forest), como fruto de un viaje que realizó con sus hijos durante las vacaciones de 1955 por Austria y Suiza. Su hijo de 14 años redactó el texto del libro. Años más tarde, en 1998, Árpád Göncz, presidente de la República de Hungría, le otorgó la medalla conmemorativa Imre Nagy, como reconocimiento de su obra para la conservación de la memoria histórica de la revolución de 1956.²¹

Una amistad fructífera

En los años siguientes, Kandó volvió a la temática de la moda y, en 1959, fue galardonada con una medalla de plata en un concurso de fotografía de moda en Munich.²² Durante estos años trabó amistad con la modelo suiza, Barbara Brändli.²³ Brändli trabajaba para magazines de moda de París cuando conoció a Ata, pero, en 1959, dejó Europa por razones familiares. Se casó con un arquitecto venezolano de origen indígena, alumno del famoso arquitecto Le Corbusier en París y se mudaron a Caracas donde Brändli quería empezar a trabajar como fotógrafa. Siguió manteniendo comunicación con Ata Kandó a quien invitó a su casa. Ata aceptó la invitación y, en 1961, la visitó con el plan de hacer una expedición con su amiga a las comunidades indígenas del país.²⁴ Kandó describió detalladamente su llegada a la capital venezolana, sus esfuerzos para poder realizar la expedición planeada y sus experiencias en la selva, en un libro que solo se publicó en húngaro y que lleva el título *A hold véréből* (De la sangre de la luna), una obra cuyo género resulta difícil de categorizar. No es un álbum de fotografías, es más bien una memoria de viaje ilustrada con una serie de fotos sacadas durante los viajes de Ata a Venezuela; además, varios capítulos del libro, especialmente la segunda parte, que relata su segundo viaje, están redactados con un enfoque etnográfico y antropológico. Esta aproximación etnográfica se refleja también en las fotografías, que están llenas de sentimiento y humanismo.

Para poder iniciar la expedición, las dos mujeres necesitaban tener tres cosas importantes: dinero para comprar un coche y financiar el viaje, contacto local para poder entrar en la Amazonia, y mucho valor, puesto que un viaje a lugares sin contacto con la civilización prometía ser peligroso. Al principio, no tenían ni dinero suficiente, ni contacto local, por lo que Ata trató de conseguir pequeños trabajos en Caracas. Hizo una serie de fotos de la ciudad y de otros temas e intentó venderlas a revistas y editoriales. Poco a poco reunió

¹⁹ Se publicó una versión húngara en 1999 con el título *Édes Hazám, Isten veled!* [¡Adiós, mi querida patria!].

²⁰ BODNÁR 2013.

²¹ Elismerés 1998.

²² SÁNDOR 2003, 74.

²³ 1932-2011.

²⁴ SÁNDOR 2003, 74–75.

el dinero suficiente para poder comprar un coche. El esposo de Brändli también les ayudó de diferentes maneras.²⁵ Finalmente compraron un coche y empezaron a hacer los preparativos del viaje. Conocieron a un joven afrovenezolano que estaba dispuesto a acompañarlas durante el viaje. Su objetivo era llegar a comunidades indígenas que estaban en aislamiento o solo tenían pocos contactos con la sociedad venezolana. Era un plan arriesgado. Las zonas de difícil acceso, el clima intolerable, la vegetación y los animales de la selva, así como el río Orinoco y sus afluentes, eran elementos que para dos mujeres viajeras inexpertas podían desencadenar acontecimientos impredecibles y peligrosos. Además, querían contactar con grupos indígenas cuya lengua, costumbres y comportamiento no conocían.

Venezuela y la población indígena en los años sesenta

En Venezuela, las décadas de los cincuenta y sesenta trajeron consigo cambios significativos tanto en el sistema económico como en la evolución de la población del país. Hasta el segundo tercio del siglo, Venezuela se consideraba un país subdesarrollado y de carácter semicolonial en el que coexistían diferentes sistemas económico-sociales. El sistema capitalista nacional se veía influenciado por los monopolios de los países imperialistas. La población indígena y su sistema comunal primitivo quedaban al margen de la sociedad, sin tener contacto con el sistema económico nacional. La inmigración masiva que afectó a varios países latinoamericanos durante las últimas décadas del siglo XIX y las primeras del siglo XX no tuvo ningún impacto en la sociedad venezolana. Sin embargo, en los años 50 y 60 se experimentó un incremento en la llegada de inmigrantes extranjeros como resultado de la industrialización, así como un significativo aumento de inversiones en la explotación de petróleo y hierro.²⁶ Así, el verdadero boom petrolero se manifestó en las décadas citadas, seguido por un nuevo auge en los años 70, lo que aumentó la inmigración extranjera y también originó una migración del campo hacia las ciudades. La población rural se caracterizaba por la desnutrición, altos índices de mortalidad, enfermedades y pauperismo.²⁷ En el mismo período y a lo largo de las siguientes décadas, empezó a incrementarse también la llegada de mineros ilegales de oro y esmeraldas tanto nacionales como foráneos a ciertas regiones, lo que tuvo serios efectos en el medio ambiente y en la población rural del país.

Las regiones amazónicas eran las zonas menos pobladas de Venezuela, y estaban controladas -e incluso gobernadas- sobre todo por misioneros religiosos (capuchinos y salesianos). Los pueblos indígenas, que constituían la mayoría de la población local, sobre todo en los estados de la Amazonia, estaban excluidos de la sociedad venezolana y eran considerados “menores de edad”.²⁸ En esta región selvática vivían varias comunidades indígenas que anteriormente no habían tenido contacto con la sociedad o solo habían tenido contactos dispersos. Así fue el caso de los yanomami, por ejemplo, quienes habían migrado de Brasil hacia territorios venezolanos en busca de un hábitat más seguro. “Sin embargo, el aislamiento étnico no fue muy duradero. Tras un número de encuentros dispersos, a mediados del siglo XX (1950) comienzan a establecerse de manera permanente personas

²⁵ KANDÓ 1970, 13–54.

²⁶ BRITO 1967, 113–156.

²⁷ BRITO 1967, 264–276.

²⁸ GONZÁLEZ NÁÑEZ 2009, 62–63.

no-yanomami en el área. ... Más avanzado en el siglo xx, en el contexto de explotación cauchera, se siguen dando encuentros esporádicos que no terminan muy bien...”²⁹. El número de misiones religiosas empezó a crecer desde los años cincuenta³⁰ e incluso este es el periodo en que un número muy reducido de viajeros, etnógrafos y antropólogos aparecen en la región, comienzan a explorar la zona y a publicar artículos y fotos de la situación de los pueblos indígenas en la prensa internacional. Las primeras señales del proceso de aculturación empezaron a percibirse en las zonas de más fácil acceso y que se encontraban más cerca de pueblos y lugares habitados por personas de la sociedad mayoritaria. Por el contacto con el mundo moderno, aparecieron nuevas enfermedades en ciertas tribus indígenas que no tenían ningún contacto con el sistema sanitario nacional, por lo que a iniciativa de algunos médicos voluntarios o misioneros se iniciaron intentos esporádicos para el establecimiento de pequeños hospitales.

Asimismo, esta es la época del surgimiento del indigenismo oficial. Desde finales de los años 50 ya existían algunas instituciones indigenistas (similares a las de otros países latinoamericanos), como por ejemplo la Oficina Central de Asuntos Indígenas (OCAI), e intentaron adaptar políticas indigenistas. La OCAI trató de llevar a cabo distintos proyectos en las zonas indígenas del país y “creó una jerarquía organizacional que perdura -con algunos leves cambios en la nomenclatura- hasta la promulgación de la Ley Orgánica de Pueblos y Comunidades Indígenas (en el año 2005)”.³¹ En 1961 se adoptó una nueva Constitución, según la cual: “El Estado propenderá a mejorar las condiciones de vida de la población campesina. La Ley establecerá el régimen de excepción, que requiera la protección de las comunidades indígenas y su incorporación progresiva a la vida de la Nación.”³² Las antiguas ideas de “civilización” y evangelización iban cambiándose lentamente. Aunque según la Ley de la Reforma Agraria de 1960, había que garantizar la tenencia comunal de la tierra a las comunidades indígenas, la ley se puso en práctica solo una década más tarde junto con algunos programas de desarrollo económico.³³

Los viajes a la Amazonia venezolana

En el contexto arriba explicado se puede entender que el viaje de las dos mujeres, Ata Kandó y Barbara Brändli, fue un verdadero reto. Aún después de haber adquirido su automóvil, todavía no sabían cómo podrían llegar a los pueblos indígenas que habitaban en territorios amazónicos poco conocidos. Como se ha indicado, las acompañó en sus “expediciones” un venezolano de origen africano, que les ayudaba durante el viaje, si bien no era experto en los pueblos de la Amazonia. Por suerte, se encontraron con un sacerdote francés que vivía en comunidades indígenas y que consiguió construir un pequeño aeropuerto provisional para poder llevar medicamentos y otros materiales importantes de manera más fácil y rápida a las comunidades.³⁴ Con la ayuda de este eclesiástico pudieron emprender su primer viaje

²⁹ GERMÁN FREIRE 2007, 327.

³⁰ JESÚS BELLO 2010, 18.

³¹ BIOD CASTILLO 2008, 78.

³² ARMELLADA 1977, 394.

³³ BIOD CASTILLO 2008, 80–81.

³⁴ SÁNDOR 2003, 75; KANDÓ 1970, 117–118.

a la región de los indígenas makiritare, a la Misión de Santa María de Erebató. Después de la expedición, Brändli se quedó en Caracas y empezó a dedicarse al fotoperiodismo, realizando trabajos documentalistas de carácter antropológico (sobre todo entre los yanomami) y convirtiéndose en una fotógrafa popular y reconocida en el país. En los años posteriores, fue contratada para fotografiar varias comunidades indígenas del país, sus fotos se publicaron en revistas y libros, y fueron también expuestas en exhibiciones.³⁵ Fue galardonada con el Premio Nacional de Fotografía en 1994.³⁶

Ata Kandó regresó a Europa con planes de volver a Venezuela, lo que pudo cumplir en 1965. Esta vez llegó a América del Sur por encargo de O.G.E.M.,³⁷ una compañía holandesa con intereses en Surinam y las Antillas Holandesas, para tomar fotografías de centrales y líneas eléctricas, y también de plantas industriales. Aprovechando su labor de dos meses en el Perú, emprendió viajes a los Andes para hacer una serie de fotos de los pueblos andinos. Al mismo tiempo, en Budapest se estaban haciendo los preparativos de un viaje de expedición a la Amazonia venezolana.³⁸ Según los planes, Ata Kandó iba a unirse a la expedición como fotógrafa. Sin embargo, estuvo esperando a sus colegas húngaros en Puerto Ayacucho en vano, puesto que se pospuso el viaje.³⁹ En dicho puerto, Kandó se encontró con Juan Baumgartner, médico húngaro, conocido como doctor Juan Baumgartner, médico indigenista o “hechicero blanco”. Baumgartner llegó a la región en los años cincuenta por encargo del gobierno venezolano para prestar servicios médicos modernos a los pueblos indígenas de la Amazonia. Baumgartner fue uno de los primeros facultativos que llevaron a cabo programas de vacunación y otros tratamientos, como médico-jefe de la Unidad Sanitaria de Puerto Ayacucho, establecida por él mismo.⁴⁰ El médico húngaro era conocido en varias comunidades indígenas, incluso en territorios colombianos y brasileños,⁴¹ lo respetaban como amigo y buen hombre blanco.⁴² Por lo tanto, contaba con la confianza de los indígenas guahibo y piaroa, lo que ayudó también a Ata a poder aproximarse a ellos. Durante esta estancia de varios meses, Ata llegó a otros territorios casi desconocidos también: visitó una misión holandesa en territorio piaroa y llegó a otra, en tierra de los waika (yanomami), donde estuvo trabajando en la redacción de un diccionario yanomami. Antes del análisis de las descripciones de Ata, veamos en breve algunos datos básicos sobre los pueblos que visitó.

Los pueblos visitados

El primer pueblo que Kandó conoció fue el yekuana (conocido también como maquiritare o makiritare), uno de los pueblos amazónicos más aislados. Los yekuana habitan cerca de algunos afluentes del Orinoco (por ejemplo, el río Caura y su afluente, el río Erebató); un grupo más pequeño de esta etnia vive en territorios de Brasil. Su población se estima entre

³⁵ LÓPEZ FALCÓN 2016.

³⁶ JESÚS DOS RAMOS – MEDINA PADRÓN 2004, 18.

³⁷ Overseas Gas and Electricity Company NV.

³⁸ Probablemente se trata de los preparativos del viaje de Lajos Boglár, que finalmente se realizó en 1967-68.

³⁹ KANDÓ 1970, 246–247.

⁴⁰ ZENT 1993, 50.

⁴¹ KANDÓ 1970, 248.

⁴² BOGLÁR 1978, 18–19.

5 mil y 10 mil habitantes. Algunas comunidades (de hasta 45 habitantes) viven en zonas de acceso limitado, ubicadas a varios días de camino de las poblaciones mestizas. En los años setenta y ochenta, se produjo un aceleramiento en los procesos de aculturación, por la influencia de las actividades económicas de los mercados locales.⁴³

Los guahibo viven en zonas colombianas y venezolanas, su número de habitantes alcanza los 25 mil. En cuanto a su organización económica, hay grupos nómadas, seminómadas y sedentarios, dependiendo del grado de contacto con la sociedad moderna. En los últimos tiempos, muchos se trasladaron a ciudades como Puerto Ayacucho, donde se llevó a cabo un proceso de aculturación fuerte.⁴⁴

Los piaroa han expandido su territorio en las últimas décadas y actualmente habitan diferentes regiones de selva húmeda tropical en Venezuela y Colombia, también en las cercanías de Puerto Ayacucho, donde Kandó se encontró con el doctor Baumgartner. La población piaroa es de aproximadamente 15 mil personas y ha tenido un crecimiento natural en los últimos años. Hasta la segunda parte del siglo xx, los piaroa permanecieron en relativo aislamiento; hasta nuestros días existen algunas comunidades que mantienen su aislamiento de la sociedad moderna. Su organización social y grado de aislamiento depende de la región geográfica donde vivan.⁴⁵

El último pueblo que Kandó documentó fueron los yanomami, que habitan un territorio extenso en la frontera entre Venezuela y Brasil, con una población de aproximadamente 12 a 14 mil personas en los territorios venezolanos.⁴⁶ Tras siglos de aislamiento, las primeras misiones llegaron a este pueblo a finales de los años cincuenta del siglo xx. Una gran parte de los yanomami habitan zonas de muy difícil acceso, lo que obstaculiza la acción de las misiones y los servicios de salud⁴⁷ pero que también contribuyó a su permanencia en aislamiento, -con la resultante independencia cultural. Durante las últimas dos décadas se han incrementado las relaciones con estas comunidades y se puede percibir el fenómeno de un acercamiento: se han establecido grandes comunidades yanomami en las cercanías de centros de distribución de servicios y bienes.⁴⁸

Los años en que Ata Kandó llegó a estos territorios fueron un periodo importante, puesto que en esta época el indigenismo político (iniciado en los años cuarenta) y sus instituciones nacionales en el continente ya se habían establecido; en este periodo se llevaron a cabo las primeras investigaciones antropológicas serias en la región, y para muchos pueblos este periodo conllevó los inicios de contacto con la sociedad moderna. Los contactos crecieron posteriormente, es decir, en el tiempo de la llegada de Kandó, todavía pudieron conocerse comunidades que conservaban sus costumbres tradicionales. Algunas estaban en contacto más estrecho con la sociedad y ya habían adoptado el uso de ciertos objetos contemporáneos e incluso algunas costumbres, si bien en el caso de otros grupos apenas se podían observar señales de aculturación. Algunos de los pueblos aborígenes no habían visto a mujeres blancas anteriormente y tampoco estaban acostumbrados al uso de cámaras de fotos, por lo tanto, la presencia de Kandó y Brändli fue una experiencia inesperada, para

⁴³ STUART Olson 1991, 415; FERNÁNDEZ – KELLY 2007, 177.

⁴⁴ STUART 1991, 132–133; YÉPEZ 1993, 2113.

⁴⁵ SHELTON 2012, 142–143.

⁴⁶ SHELTON 2012, 141.

⁴⁷ FERNÁNDEZ – KELLY 2007, 176.

⁴⁸ LIZOT 2007, 267.

ambas partes. En principio, las dos mujeres llegaron como fotógrafas, no como expertas en antropología. En sus viajes posteriores, ambas mujeres eran más expertas ya, habían leído obras y estudios sobre los pueblos amazónicos, y también se preparaban científicamente para su viaje, hecho que por ejemplo se siente en las descripciones del segundo viaje de Kandó.

Brändli y Kandó pasaron aproximadamente dos meses entre los yekuana, y Ata por su parte pasó un periodo más largo entre los piaroa y los yanomami, sin embargo hubo comunidades donde pasaron solo unos días. Por estos contrastes en el tiempo pasado observando a cada grupo, Ata no pudo redactar sus descripciones según los mismos aspectos examinados. En general, además de sus impresiones personales y memorias de viaje, ofreció a los lectores informaciones sobre el hábitat de los pueblos, sus costumbres cotidianas y valores humanos, la vida religiosa y sus creencias, los mitos, los ritos y símbolos, los rituales de la muerte, sus conocimientos de hierbas medicinales, los contactos con la sociedad moderna y la influencia de la misma y su aceptación en la comunidad.

El encuentro con “las mujeres blancas”

Uno de los momentos más importantes para el éxito de los viajes de Kando y Brändli fue el resultado del primer encuentro con los distintos grupos étnicos que conocieron. Las primeras experiencias no fueron muy positivas: los indígenas se escondían al ver que estaban acercándose a sus cabañas. Fue un factor muy importante también el hecho de que llegaran o no en compañía de personas ya conocidas y confiables. La primera opción -acompañadas- fue el caso de su encuentro con los indígenas yekuana (o makiritare) y piaroa. Con los primeros, el sacerdote francés, Daniel, fue “el elemento seguro”. Daniel llevaba ya dos años viviendo con los makiritare y, al ver los indígenas que las dos mujeres eran sus amigas, las aceptaron con amistad y mucha curiosidad. Parte de la bienvenida fue un golpe en el hombro y una ovación ruidosa y fraternal. Los miembros de la tribu nunca habían visto a mujeres blancas antes, por lo que debieron palpar todas las partes su cuerpo.⁴⁹ Según sus tradiciones, los que llevaban pantalones eran hombres, por lo tanto, examinaron con suspicacia a las dos mujeres que vestían pantalones, incluso echaron una ojeada en sus blusas palpando el pecho para ver si realmente eran mujeres normales y semejantes a las de su propio grupo.⁵⁰ Las mujeres indígenas tenían tanta curiosidad que les gustaba rebuscar objetos y ropas interesantes en sus maletas, riéndose de todo; querían probarse todas sus ropas y ver cómo funcionaban los objetos modernos usados en otros lugares. Algo semejante ocurrió cuando Ata Kandó llegó sola a visitar a los indígenas piaroa. Huyeron a la desbandada al ver a la mujer blanca, y solo se atrevieron a aparecer cuando supieron que ella era amiga del doctor Baumgartner, el “hechicero blanco”, pues entonces la visitante era también una hechicera, y podían por tanto confiar en ella.⁵¹ Al llegar a los waika en Ocamo, Ata fue palpada no con desconfianza sino más bien con alegría. Los niños la “atacaron”, se arrojaron sobre ella, rodaron, lucharon y jugaron juntos en la hierba. Quisieron desvestirla y vestirla, y cuando Ata empezó a hacerles cosquillas, estallaron en risas.⁵² En Mavaca, los

⁴⁹ KANDÓ 1970, 126.

⁵⁰ KANDÓ 1970, 179.

⁵¹ KANDÓ 1970, 253.

⁵² KANDÓ 1970, 284.

indígenas llenaron la casa de Kandó⁵³ gritando en busca de “material”. Esta palabra mágica adaptada del español tenía un sentido amplio: significaba comida, textiles, herramientas o anzuelos, esto es, cualquier objeto que pudiera ser útil o interesante para ellos. Pensaban que si llegaba a su población algún viajero y les llevaba, daba o prestaba algún “material”, entonces era un “*nóhi*”, un amigo. Si no lo hacía, no entendían por qué les había visitado.⁵⁴

La máquina fotográfica

Otro elemento importante fue la relación de los pueblos nativos con la “máquina demoníaca”, la cámara fotográfica. Kandó relató así las reglas del uso de la cámara:

“Tuve que prometerle a Daniel que no iba a sacar fotos los tres primeros días. Eso fue un mandato. Lo requería el método psicológico. Según Daniel, los casos desafortunados —en los que los indígenas mataron o asaetearon a un misionero o al miembro de alguna expedición etnográfica o médica— derivaban de que los blancos habían cometido algún error psicológico tonto. ... Si queríamos establecer una buena relación con los indígenas y una atmósfera agradable durante nuestra estancia, debíamos obedecerles en cualquier caso. Si sacáramos nuestra cámara enseguida, eso los volvería desconfiados y cerrados. ... El teleobjetivo, además, es parecido a una pistola — y la misma cámara es una máquina que es un objeto sospechoso, mágico y muchas veces peligroso.”⁵⁵

Por lo tanto, había que ser precavido con el uso de la cámara. El uso excesivo podía irritar y enfadar a los indígenas y enojar a los espíritus. En este caso, si uno no lo reconocía y continuaba sacando fotos, como consecuencia, venían las flechas... Kandó incluso relató un caso en el que jóvenes del pueblo waika empezaron a asaetearla.⁵⁶

Características generales de los pueblos indígenas y su identidad

En general, Ata Kandó tenía una imagen positiva de los pueblos que conoció, lo que se reflejaba también en las fotos sacadas. En el caso de cada pueblo ofrecía una descripción detallada de sus características físicas, el pelo, el cuerpo, la estatura o la pintura corporal que documentó en sus fotos. Definió a los indígenas como gente laboriosa, alegre, simpática y que no eran holgazanes ni conocían el robo. Siempre mantenían su vivienda limpia.⁵⁷ El vestido utilizado señalaba el grado de aculturación al que Kandó prestó atención tanto en sus descripciones como en sus fotos. Los makiritare en los tiempos de la visita de Kandó vivían desnudos aunque si algún miembro de la comunidad tenía que ir a la ciudad ya

⁵³ Kandó “heredó” la casa de Napoleon Chagnon, antropólogo norteamericano que dejó la población por cierto tiempo para pasar las vacaciones con su familia en Caracas, y le ofreció a Kandó que podía hacer uso de la casa durante su ausencia.

⁵⁴ KANDÓ 1970, 289.

⁵⁵ KANDÓ 1970, 176.

⁵⁶ KANDÓ 1970, 304.

⁵⁷ KANDÓ 1970, 95.

se vestía con ropas modernas. En otros pueblos utilizaban más ropa, generalmente los hombres. Los yekuana eran los “hombres de las canoas”, maestros de la construcción de canoas, incluso otros pueblos “compraban” sus canoas por trueque. Recibieron el nombre makiritare de sus vecinos, que significa “hombres del río”. También eran expertos en la preparación de la cerbatana.

Como la misma Kandó tenía tres hijos, siempre se acercaba con mucha sensibilidad a los niños de la comunidad y le interesaban las relaciones entre padres e hijos. Con afán describió varias veces la relación íntima que tenían estos pueblos con sus hijos, la importancia de la familia en su vida, la costumbre de que las madres llevaban a sus hijos en la espalda por tres años. Por la tarde, cuando ya todos estaban en casa, los hombres empezaban a ocuparse de los hijos, jugando con ellos y enseñándoles saberes prácticos con mucha paciencia.⁵⁸

A los piaroa, Ata los presenta como uno de los pueblos más pacíficos, que respetaban mucho las leyes de la sociedad, los tabúes y la religión. En el caso de este pueblo, Ata ofrece una descripción que ya se puede calificar como una reseña antropológica. Menciona muchos detalles, describiendo sus costumbres y los detalles de su vida cotidiana. Uno de los elementos que más le fascinó a Kandó fue la *churuata*, la choza o vivienda colectiva de los piaroa, hecha de paja, madera, palma y lianas en la que vivían unas 40 personas. Ata relató la elección de lugar, el proceso de construcción y las funciones que tenía la vivienda.⁵⁹

El pueblo más valiente y guerrero entre los que visitó Ata, fue el de los waika o yanomami. Según los informadores de Ata, el nombre waika significaba finalizar o acabar. En la mayoría de las zonas que Ata conoció, todavía no utilizaban vestido, más bien solo algunos objetos de decoración y los hombres se sujetaban el pene con unas cuerdas, que ataban alrededor de su cintura. Ata distinguió dos maneras de decorarse las orejas: el uso de palillos en el caso de los hombres y de hojas y pétalos entre las mujeres. A ellas las describió como gente bella, con el pelo brillante, aunque la masticación de las hojas de tabaco, que era una de sus costumbres, deformaba su cara. Donde aún no conocían las tijeras, se cortaban el pelo con una hoja muy afilada.⁶⁰ En la descripción de los waika, Ata utilizó también libros etnográficos como fuente de información. En el caso de este pueblo consideró asimismo importante describir el hogar típico que era el *yano*, una casa multifamiliar en forma de cono que al mismo tiempo representaba una unidad económica.

Características culturales

Gran parte de las descripciones y fotografías de Ata cubren el tema de las costumbres. Sería difícil detallar toda la información que aparece en las descripciones, por lo tanto, solo subrayamos los temas que Ata consideró más importantes en sus relatos y composiciones fotográficas. Uno de los elementos descritos más destacados fue el de la alimentación, las frutas, semillas y raíces que consumían, los modos de elaboración, con especial atención al uso y la preparación de la mandioca. El pan de mandioca era la base de la alimentación

⁵⁸ KANDÓ 1970, 188–190.

⁵⁹ KANDÓ 1970, 326.

⁶⁰ KANDÓ 1970, 283.

de todos los pueblos visitados. En algunas zonas se consumía la *yucuta*, una bebida hecha de *cambur*⁶¹ y mandioca, así como el *casave*, el pan de yuca. La harina de mandioca jugaba un papel importante en su comercio también. En ciertos casos (por ejemplo con los piaroa), era un elemento de contacto con la población mestiza y blanca.⁶² Un factor importante en su alimentación era el éxito en la caza, actividad principal de los hombres. Ata detalla en todos los casos los objetos e instrumentos utilizados para la caza, así como la manera de cazar. El uso de la cerbatana (los piaroa se la compraban a los makiritare), los dardos, el veneno, los arcos y flechas y la forma especial en que los waika usaban estos elementos fueron documentados detalladamente en los textos y fotos de Kandó. En las descripciones de las artesanías e instrumentos musicales, sobresalen las hamacas, cuyos maestros eran los makiritare, y la cestería, que era una actividad cotidiana en todas las comunidades. Tanto en las hamacas como en las cestas utilizaban motivos decorativos ancestrales: en las cestas de los makiritare se representaba todo el universo, en el que el punto central simbolizaba el lugar del ser supremo.⁶³ Los piaroa utilizaban formas y motivos diferentes. Ata también menciona sus máscaras especiales, que se utilizaban en danzas rituales.⁶⁴

Otro elemento destacado de las culturas indígenas es la religión. A la fotografía húngara le fascinaban los mitos que le contaban y los elementos de su cosmovisión, que eran decisivos en la vida cotidiana de estos pueblos. La existencia de un ser supremo, los ritos que se vinculaban con él y otras ceremonias son parte de los temas que aparecen en los relatos de Kandó, como por ejemplo algunas fiestas, ceremonias de iniciación o ritos de caza. En la última parte del libro, Kandó cuenta el mito de los yanomami, la historia de su nacimiento 'de las gotas de la Luna', que incluso le dio la idea para el título de su libro.

Contactos con la civilización

Uno de los aspectos más importantes de los estudios etnográficos de Kandó fue el contacto existente de estos pueblos con la sociedad no indígena del país. En algunos casos, la fotografía se dio cuenta de que ciertos pueblos ya se identificaban con la vida civilizada y se consideraban venezolanos.⁶⁵ Como llegó a poblaciones en distintos niveles de contacto con esas comunidades mestizas, Ata pudo tener una imagen bastante compleja de la cuestión. Llegó a localidades que eran dirigidas por alguna misión, e inclusive a algunas que estaban casi totalmente aisladas de la civilización. El nivel de contacto también dependía de las ideas de la misión concreta. Algunas consideraban que la tarea de las misiones debía limitarse a enseñar a los indígenas aquellas cosas que les podían hacer la vida más fácil y que los podían preparar para contactos posteriores con la vida de los mestizos. Por ejemplo, como sus territorios en la selva iban disminuyendo, muchos misioneros consideraban que se debía enseñar a los indígenas a labrar la tierra y criar animales. El misionero que quizás más impacto tuvo sobre Ata fue el clérigo francés Daniel, de la orden de *Les petits*

⁶¹ Plátano.

⁶² KANDÓ 1970, 258.

⁶³ KANDÓ 1970, 191.

⁶⁴ KANDÓ 1970, 324.

⁶⁵ KANDÓ 1970, 94.

frères de Jésus, fundada por los discípulos de Charles de Foucauld.⁶⁶ Ata relató sus ideas detalladamente:

“En su discurso Daniel explicó, basándose en comparaciones y ejemplos sacados del evangelio, que el bautizo era una “tarea posterior”. El buen misionero debía ser, antes que nada, un buen etnógrafo, para que pudiera entender y estudiar las culturas ancestrales y para que pudiera hacerles entender a estas gentes que no valían menos que nosotros, incluso podían dar mucho a nuestra civilización, y que eran iguales que nosotros (si no más valiosos porque eran más honestos y menos imaginativos en los actos de maldad). Solo había que enseñarles lo que les era útil, lo que les hacía más fáciles sus problemas cotidianos y que les proporcionaba una vida mejor. En ningún caso se les podía imponer el cristianismo, sobre todo no de manera tan imbécil y paternalista como lo había hecho la escuela antigua y como lo hacían muchos misioneros contemporáneos que les quitaban a los indígenas su cultura y sus costumbres y no les daban nada a cambio.”⁶⁷

Daniel le contó a Kandó sobre una conversación que había tenido una vez con el cacique del pueblo. Los indígenas lo aceptaron y lo respetaban tanto que después de la muerte de su brujo, Daniel se convirtió en su nuevo brujo. Además, como dijo el cacique: “Tu familia somos nosotros. Tú lo haces todo por nosotros y nosotros lo hacemos todo por nuestra familia.”⁶⁸ Los indígenas querían conseguir que Daniel se quedara por siempre en su pueblo, puesto que pensaban que él iba a protegerlos.⁶⁹

En otras comunidades Kandó tuvo otras experiencias. Cerca de la ciudad de Puerto Ayacucho, esto es, cerca de las zonas habitadas por la sociedad mestiza, ya se podían ver las consecuencias negativas del contacto. Los indígenas guahibo, entre los cuales vivía el doctor Baumgartner eran nativos semicivilizados, agricultores que comerciaban ya usando dinero. Sin embargo, todavía no conocían el verdadero valor del mismo, y por lo tanto, los mestizos muchas veces los engañaban. Ata observó con amargura que los que se quedaban en el lugar ajeno se depravaban. Según ella, sus parientes que se quedaban en la selva eran mucho más felices.⁷⁰

En el caso de los piaroa, Kandó mencionó un fenómeno típico: los pueblos que querían mantener y conservar sus tradiciones y tenían miedo de la genta blanca, se trasladaban cada vez más allá, a lugares más escondidos en la selva. Según sus informaciones, a las orillas de los ríos Cuao y Sipapo vivían todavía “verdaderos piaroas”. Con la ayuda de varios misioneros y doctores (el doctor Caballín,⁷¹ James Barker,⁷² y el padre Feddema⁷³), pudo

⁶⁶ La orden se fundó en 1933 para seguir las ideas de Charles Foucauld (1858-1916), sacerdote católico, geógrafo y lingüista, véase la página de la Asociación Charles Foucauld: www.charlesdefoucauld.org/fr/groupe-petits-freres-de-jesus-6.

⁶⁷ KANDÓ 1970, 186.

⁶⁸ KANDÓ 1970, 186.

⁶⁹ KANDÓ 1970, 182.

⁷⁰ KANDÓ 1970, 251.

⁷¹ El Doctor Caballín fue jefe del Centro de Estudios sobre Malaria.

⁷² Fue misionero de New Tribes Mission, una misión fundada en los Estados Unidos en 1942. Los miembros de la misión fueron expulsados de Venezuela en 2006.

⁷³ Hernán Feddema fue un padre holandés salesiano que con otros dos misioneros holandeses llegó a Venezuela en los años 50. El primer diccionario de la lengua piaroa se vincula con su nombre.

llegar a esos pueblos y también vio las diferentes ideas que guiaban a los misioneros que vivían en dichas zonas. El padre Feddema y otros dos compañeros misioneros no querían evangelizar a los indígenas, sino ayudarles a preservar su cultura. James Barker, jefe de una misión norteamericana evangelista tenía otros puntos de vista: ellos trataban de enseñar a los indígenas cómo se debía construir una casa, lo que tuvo consecuencias negativas: en las casas estrechas no había ventilación y las enfermedades e infecciones contagiaban más fácilmente a los indígenas. En otras misiones (Ratón, Esmeralda) ya estaban planeando la construcción de escuelas, de cuyos efectos positivos Ata dudaba. Ella comentó las actividades de las misiones en varias partes del libro, subrayando las ideas de Daniel, según las cuales era mejor no intervenir en la vida de los indígenas.⁷⁴

Algunos elementos y objetos de la vida moderna estaban ya presentes en algunas poblaciones aisladas, o justamente los empezaban a conocer en aquellos tiempos en que Ata llegó a la región. Uno de ellos era la máquina de coser, que les ofrecía la posibilidad de arreglar o confeccionar ropa. En uno de los pueblos visitados de los yekuana, Brändli empezó a enseñar a las mujeres a coser.⁷⁵ Otros objetos que nunca antes habían visto eran la cuchara y el tenedor, o el jabón, que querían utilizar para aprender cómo había que lavarse el pelo, con lo que las provisiones de las dos viajeras pronto se acabaron. La radio era ya conocida en algunas comunidades apoyadas por misioneros. Estos filmaban a veces a los indígenas y después hacían “noches de cine”, en las que los naturales se podían ver a sí mismos, lo que tenía un impacto importante en ellos. En el pueblo de Daniel, había una epidemia de escarlatina cuando las dos exploradoras llegaron. Kandó y Brändli intentaron ayudar a Daniel en la asistencia y curación de los indígenas. Una noche, para animar a los enfermos, Daniel mostró una de sus grabaciones anteriores:

“Proyecta una grabación corta que se hizo en una de sus expediciones anteriores. Los indígenas ya la han visto varias veces pero siempre se alegran al verla. La proyectan en la ‘casa de hombres’ con gran éxito. El público la ve con entusiasmo, se ríen a carcajadas y gritan. Daniel se ríe con ellos y grita también. Alguien dice:

- Aunque hemos muerto, seguimos viviendo en la película.

Lo dice porque hace unos meses uno de sus compañeros murió al cortar árboles en la selva, pero en la película está con ellos y está de buen humor igual que los otros.”⁷⁶

En algunas poblaciones, como Ocamo, asentamiento fundado por el padre Hermano Pedro y habitado por los shirishana (subgrupo de los yanomami), en los meses de la visita de Ata recibieron un tractor, y empezaron a aprender a usarlo. Como consecuencia de estas nuevas influencias, su anterior modo de vida (recolección, caza, pesca) iba convirtiéndose en vida de semi-cazadores y semi-agricultores,⁷⁷ lo que bien mostraba los procesos iniciados en el camino de su aculturación.

⁷⁴ KANDÓ 1970, 266.

⁷⁵ KANDÓ 1970, 199.

⁷⁶ KANDÓ 1970, 180.

⁷⁷ KANDÓ 1970, 285.

Documentación fotográfica

Antes que nada y a pesar del carácter marcadamente etnográfico de gran parte del libro de Ata Kandó, debemos reiterar que Kandó era esencialmente fotógrafa y, en especial, fotógrafa documentalista. Sus textos fundamentaban sus fotos y viceversa, sus fotos servían para ilustrar el contenido y apoyaban el mejor entendimiento de sus descripciones. Actualizando el concepto, podemos decir que los dos elementos -texto y fotos- se complementan perfectamente. Las fotos llevan notas explicativas que aluden al contenido del libro. Las imágenes aparecen en series, según los temas estudiados. Tenemos así series con los siguientes temas: la ciudad de Caracas, la sociedad venezolana, sus primeras expediciones y experiencias con los indígenas, los makiritare, los waika, los piaroa, etc. Todas las fotos seleccionadas para el libro sirven para apoyar y presentar las reflexiones de Kandó ante los grados de aculturación alcanzados, su admiración por la flora y fauna amazónicas y por las costumbres ancestrales que los pueblos indígenas habían conservado hasta los años de su visita. Algunas de sus fotos más sobresalientes nacieron de los rostros indígenas y de la gente observada en sus actividades cotidianas, y muestran la gran sensibilidad de Kandó. Capturó momentos importantes que reflejaban los rasgos característicos y el alma de estos pueblos: la bondad en los ojos de una madre makiritare, la determinación y concentración en el rostro de un navegante en el Río Erebató, la inquietud de Daniel, el cura francés, el niño yekuana enfermo en su hamaca, el rostro noble del brujo con su corona de plumas, una mujer con su hijo en la espalda, el contento que se ve en la cara del hijo de un cacique, las caras de pícaros de una pareja que estaba pasando momentos íntimos cuando Ata entró en su choza, y podríamos continuar la lista. Además, las fotos sirven de documentación muy valiosa con respecto a las actividades y costumbres cotidianas de las poblaciones amazónicas en los años sesenta: Kandó hizo varias fotos de *churuatas* o chozas, de la preparación del pan de yuca y mandioca, de hamacas, cestas, canoas, el uso de la cerbatana y los arcos y flechas. Justamente estas fotos son las que le trajeron el reconocimiento y la fama mundial.

La despedida

Tras haber pasado por segunda vez otros meses entre indígenas con poco contacto con el resto del país, llegaron los momentos de despedida. Ata no quiso terminar su libro sin describir sus pensamientos y añadir su opinión y comentarios personales, que seguramente habían cambiado mucho desde su primera llegada a Venezuela. En varias partes del libro, cuando tuvo que despedirse de una comunidad, utilizó la expresión “nos vamos y los dejamos a su suerte”, lo que también reflejaba su inquietud y preocupación por estos pueblos. A continuación, citamos algunos fragmentos de sus últimas palabras:

“Por aquí y por allá, como por ejemplo a las orillas del río Cuao, todavía viven verdaderos piaroas. Hoy todavía viven. Mañana ya quizás no vivirán.

¿Cómo se podría impedirlo? Muchos están buscando la respuesta a esta pregunta. Pero hay aun más gente que piensa que no existe la solución, porque no se puede volver atrás en el tiempo. Es un hecho que de momento, la civilización de la raza blanca, aunque no sea mejor, es más fuerte que las otras. Por consiguiente, se viene exterminando a los

indígenas con éxito desde Pizarro. Por cierto, los cristianos civilizados mataron a muchos más indígenas que los indígenas y animales de la selva juntos. Para colmo, por dinero, por oro, por petróleo, por los llamados “principios”. Mientras los indígenas y los animales fieros matan por sobrevivir. ... Una solución ideal sería si pudiéramos cubrir la selva con una cúpula mágica de veneno para que nadie nunca pudiera acercarse allí. Ni asesino, ni misionero, ni médico, ni etnógrafo, ni ... fotógrafo. ...”⁷⁸

Ata Kandó, impresionada por los pueblos visitados y consciente de sus problemas, se esforzó por la mejora de su situación y por luchar contra el exterminio de tribus sin o con poco contacto con la civilización. Colaboró con *Survival International*, organización fundada en 1969. Formó con algunos compañeros el grupo de trabajo “South American Indians” (Indígenas de América del Sur) y, en el marco de esta labor, participó en 1971 en la publicación de “Slave or Dead” (Esclavo o muerto), breve texto preparado en cooperación con otros tres autores.⁷⁹ Ata incluso ofreció varias de sus fotos a organizaciones venezolanas para su uso en la labor indigenista. Hasta hoy este periodo de su carrera profesional se considera el más impactante y llamativo. Como se mencionó al inicio del presente ensayo, después de sus viajes Ata inició una gira por varios países, con una exposición que presentaba sus experiencias en la selva venezolana. Llevó su muestra a Caracas y también a su país natal, Hungría donde, además de las exposiciones y ponencias llevadas a varias ciudades, se hizo un documental sobre su labor en Venezuela con el título *Una mujer sale para la selva...*⁸⁰ En 1970 publicó el libro *De la sangre de la luna*, en húngaro, que nunca ha sido traducido a otras lenguas.⁸¹ Ata Kandó falleció en septiembre de 2017, pocos días antes de cumplir los 104 años.

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⁷⁸ KANDÓ 1970, 327–328.

⁷⁹ KANDÓ et al. 1971.

⁸⁰ *Népszabadság*, 05.11.1971.

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La Hungría exótica: representaciones de Budapest en la literatura latinoamericana

Dávid Zelei

*“Desde París cualquier
mención de algo que esté más
allá de Viena suena a literatura.”
(Cortázar: Rayuela)*

En las últimas décadas varios estudios se dedicaron a analizar cómo el sujeto hegemónico (el colonizador, el europeo, el hombre, el cristiano, el heterosexual) ve al *otro* (prácticamente, representante de cualquier etnia, cultura, religión, sexo u orientación sexual minoritaria en el Primer Mundo), dando lugar a la formación de enteras disciplinas académicas relacionadas con el tema, del poscolonialismo a los estudios subalternos. Simplificando radicalmente el carácter y objetivo de este conjunto bastante complejo de textos, estos estudios básicamente intentan reconstruir la figura del *subalterno desde la perspectiva del colonizador*, analizando el subtexto y las estrategias narrativas del discurso hegemónico, muchas veces llegando hasta subrayar el carácter racista/sexista/paternalista y/o eurocentrista del mismo. Sin cuestionar los enormes méritos de estos estudios, la globalización de esa visión¹ tiene sus peligros: lo más importante para nosotros, aunque de forma exagerada, lo contiene el título de la antología legendaria del poscolonialismo, *The Empire Writes Back* (El imperio contraescribe), que refleja fielmente la *necesaria* contraposición de alteridades.²

Debido a esa visión dicotómica, pocos son los textos que se ocupan de la alteridad *sin* tocar el tema del poder, a pesar de que muchas relaciones culturales carezcan de cualquier dimensión económica o política, que —lógicamente— hace ininteligible el uso de esta perspectiva. Eso significa que no hay un lenguaje teórico en que pudiéramos hablar del *otro* si éste último *no* se sitúa en algún polo de nuestras dicotomías frecuentemente usadas (colonizador-colonizado, occidental-oriental, hombre-mujer, heterosexual-homosexual, etc.).

Sin embargo, hay que enfatizar que, en el terreno de la cultura, varias representaciones del *otro* parecen independientes de las relaciones de poder y, pese a ello, varias veces utilizan las mismas estrategias que los villanos de los estudios poscoloniales. En lo que sigue, vamos a ver tres representaciones literarias de Budapest, de tres autores latinoamericanos de los siglos xx y xxi. A lo que buscamos respuesta es a tres preguntas básicas: ¿qué motivos les influyeron en la selección de tema y escena?, ¿qué papel ideológico o poético tiene la capital

¹ El intento de globalizar el discurso poscolonial tal vez más conocido es el de MOORE 2001, 111–128.

² ASHCROFT et al. 1989.

húngara en su obra? y ¿cómo describen al *otro*? En otras palabras, ahora nuestra cuestión no es si puede hablar el subalterno,³ sino ¿qué puede decir el *otro* del otro *otro*?

Hungría en América Latina

En los últimos años varios estudios comparados indicaron el notable crecimiento de las obras literarias relacionadas con Hungría en América Latina, sobre todo en Brasil,⁴ y efectivamente, si comparamos la escasa y esporádica producción literaria del siglo xx y la muy abundante y territorialmente concentrada del siglo xxi, se nota la diferencia.

Hablando primero del intercambio literario entre Hungría e Hispanoamérica en el siglo xx, podemos decir que hasta el colapso de la Unión Soviética, dicho contacto cultural se realizó mayoritariamente a través de traducciones, y la publicación no era independiente del compromiso político del autor o de las relaciones políticas de los países en cuestión. Para mencionar solo un ejemplo, de las 37 antologías de cuentos, poemas, dramas, ensayos, mitos, leyendas o crónicas latinoamericanas publicadas en Hungría hasta 2005, 32 (!) nacieron en la era de Kádár; 9 de ellas están relacionadas con Cuba, y todas vieron la luz durante el período paralelo del castrismo y kádárismo.⁵ El interés por el otro era mutuo, aunque la cantidad de las traducciones cubanas parece mucho menor que la de las húngaras. De todos modos, cabe mencionar la publicación de las obras de Sándor Petőfi, Attila József e Imre Madách⁶, traducidas por poetas y escritores de primera clase (como Fayad Jamís, Virgilio Piñera, Nicolás Guillén o Eliseo Diego), y los números de revistas enteramente dedicados a la literatura húngara.⁷ Sin embargo, no podemos decir que abundáramos en obras de ficción hispanoamericanas estrechamente relacionadas con Hungría. En sentido estricto, o sea, contando solo las ficciones que contienen como mínimo un lugar, personaje o tema húngaro realmente relevante para su interpretación, hablamos de un *corpus* compuesto básicamente de cuatro obras: un libro de poemas del peruano Antonio Cisneros (*El libro de Dios y de los húngaros*); otro, “precursor de las obras gastrofilosóficas tan populares en la actualidad”⁸ de Miguel Ángel Asturias y Pablo Neruda (*Comiendo en Hungría*),⁹ un poema de Borges (*Al primer poeta de Hungría*) y un “cuento húngaro” de Cortázar (*Lejana*).¹⁰ Si ampliamos nuestro concepto de literatura incluyendo en ello los géneros periodísticos y todo lo considerado como no ficción, podemos añadir a la lista de textos el diario de viaje de García Márquez sobre la Hungría de 1957,¹¹ el ensayo de Carlos Fuentes sobre *El constructor de la ciudad* de György Konrád (repúblicado después como prólogo de la edición norteamericana

³ SPIVAK 2003, 297–364.

⁴ Véase, por ejemplo URBÁN 2015, 99–110; PÁL 2014, 119–145.

⁵ Con base en la bibliografía de la única historia literaria hispanoamericana en húngaro: SCHOLZ 2005, 291–293, compilada por Mercédesz Kutasy y László Scholz.

⁶ PETŐFI 1973; JÓZSEF 1963; MADÁCH 1978.

⁷ Véase, por ejemplo, *Literatura húngara de hoy*, número especial de la revista *Unión* (No. 2, abril-junio de 1966).

⁸ CSIKÓS 2012, 24.

⁹ CISNEROS 1978; ASTURIAS – NERUDA 1969.

¹⁰ Disponibles en sus libros *El oro de los tigres* (1972), y *Bestiario* (1951).

¹¹ GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ 1980.

del libro) o el de Vargas Llosa sobre Árpád Göncz,¹² mientras, si no insistimos en el papel primario del hilo húngaro en la obra, podemos encontrar episodios pequeños o personajes secundarios húngaros desde *Rayuela* (1963) de Cortázar hasta *Chiquita* (2008) de Antonio Orlando Rodríguez.

De todos modos, el resultado es bastante pobre, sobre todo si tenemos en cuenta que según su intérprete,¹³ las principales promotoras del libro de Asturias y Neruda eran sus mujeres, entusiasmadas al ver los bajos precios del salón de modas de Klára Rothschild, durante su estancia en Budapest. De los otros tres mencionados de la primera lista, Cisneros pasó buen tiempo en Budapest, o sea, según mis datos, en la Hispanoamérica del siglo xx sólo Borges y Cortázar escribían ficción sobre Hungría sin tener algún lazo con el país.¹⁴ En el siglo xxi esa tendencia no parece cambiar radicalmente, a pesar de que el escritor argentino de origen húngaro, Federico Andahazi publicó una novela histórica ambientada en Budapest (*Los amantes bajo el Danubio*), de lo que vamos a hablar en detalle.

En la ficción brasileña, la primera alusión a los húngaros en el siglo xx se encuentra en la novela más importante del premodernismo brasileño, *Canãa* (1902) de Graça Aranha. En el capítulo octavo de la obra aparece una familia húngara que sirve como contrapunto de la protagonista colectiva de la obra, la colonia alemana civilizada, encarnando la barbarie con sus rituales premodernos, como el sacrificio brutal de un caballo.¹⁵ Después de esta descripción lejos de positiva, durante mucho tiempo solo podíamos encontrar húngaros en las obras de Paulo Rónai.¹⁶ No obstante, en el siglo xxi esta tendencia cambió radicalmente: en los últimos años escribir sobre Hungría pasó a ser la moda. El pionero de la “hungarización” del mercado del libro brasileño (si podemos exagerar un poco) era, sin duda, Chico Buarque, cuyo *Budapeste* (2003), además de tener una recepción crítica y académica vasta y muy positiva,¹⁷ recibió uno de los premios literarios más importantes de Brasil, el Premio Jabuti,¹⁸ y fue adaptado al cine por el director Walter Carvalho. No independientemente de la posición del autor en la cultura popular brasileña, el libro fue recibido con gran bombo en los medios: entre otros, fue elogiado por el premio Nobel portugués, José Saramago, el músico-ensayista José Miguel Wisnik, el cantautor-guitarrista-poeta-activista Caetano Veloso, y el escritor más vendido de 2003,¹⁹ Luis Fernando Veríssimo: sería difícil negar que la presencia húngara en la cultura brasileña del siglo xxi empezó con este libro, que iba a tener una influencia decisiva en el aumento de las obras relacionadas con Hungría.

¹² FUENTES 1989; VARGAS LLOSA 1998. A ambos los cita CSIKÓS 2013, 136–137.

¹³ SZENTGYÖRGYI 2005, 76–82.

¹⁴ Las relaciones personales de Cortázar con Hungría las mapea de modo ejemplar el estudio de ILIAN ȚĂRANU 2012, 71–86.

¹⁵ URBÁN 2014, 95–103.

¹⁶ Como no hay equipos de investigación permanentes que traten con el tema, y todos los años aparecen miles de títulos nuevos en el mercado literario brasileño, podemos suponer que existan varios ejemplos latentes entre los títulos con menos éxito nacional e internacional.

¹⁷ Machado Meireles analiza la recepción de *Budapeste* en más de 30 (!) páginas, enumerando los artículos de periódicos y revistas, las publicaciones académicas, tesis doctorales y tesinas. MACHADO MEIRELES 2014, 24–57.

¹⁸ También fue galardonado con el Premio Passo Fundo Zaffari & Bourbon de Literatura, como la mejor novela en idioma portugués publicada entre 2003 y 2004.

¹⁹ MACHADO MEIRELES 2014, 25.

Durante la década posterior al éxito del libro de Chico Buarque, nacieron otras dos novelas brasileñas relacionadas con Hungría: *Os Húngares* de Susana Montoro²⁰ en 2011 (con el que la autora ganó el Prêmio São Paulo de Literatura en la categoría del mejor autor debutante), e *Írisz: as orquídeas* de Noemí Jaffe en 2015. Ambas fueron primeras novelas tardías de mujeres de otra profesión (Montoro es psicóloga, mientras Jaffe es crítica literaria del periódico *Folha de São Paulo* y profesora universitaria); si añadimos a eso que Chico Buarque es, ante todo, músico, parece que la transgresión profesional en la vida favorece a la transgresión territorial en la literatura. Es interesante, que mientras de los tres autores solo Jaffe tiene ciertos lazos familiares con Hungría (como descendiente de una familia judía de origen serbio, de madre bilingüe, nacida en la frontera entre Serbia y Hungría), hay escasas publicaciones sobre el tema por parte de la colonia húngara en Brasil, a pesar de la significativa comunidad húngara en el país.²¹

Llegando al fin de este breve panorama histórico, cabe llamar la atención a las tendencias más recientes de las “novelas húngaras” latinoamericanas, ya que sin duda existen varios paralelismos entre las obras nacidas en la década de los 2010. Es evidente, por ejemplo, el interés por la historia, sobre todo por los puntos cruciales de la historia húngara: el libro de Montoro se desarrolla después de la Primera Guerra Mundial; el de Andahazi, a finales de la Segunda (la historia comienza en 1944), mientras el de Jaffe después de la Revolución de 1956. Las tres son, por ende, historias de migración forzada, y al mismo tiempo, descripciones de diferentes fases del proceso de integración a una cultura lejana y ajena. Así, las tres tratan de representar de alguna forma el Encuentro (no deseado) de dos mundos, y la posterior necesidad de recrear la identidad del protagonista, aunque en diferente nivel artístico. El contrapunteo de los dos mundos es evidente: las novelas de Montoro y Andahazi incluso están divididas en parte europea y parte latinoamericana, invirtiendo los papeles de los continentes en la geografía simbólica de la civilización (la América Latina pacífica) y la barbarie (la Europa en llamas). En suma, la receta de los autores de la década actual es conectar el trauma histórico con la migración forzada para hablar sobre temas como alteridad, ajenidad, e identidad mixta, que tienen profundas raíces en la historia literaria latinoamericana.

En las siguientes páginas fijaremos nuestra atención en las representaciones de Budapest de tres obras (*Lejana* de Julio Cortázar, *Budapest* de Chico Buarque, y *Los amantes bajo el Danubio* de Federico Andahazi), tratando de responder básicamente tres preguntas: ¿por qué Budapest?, o sea, qué función poética tiene la ciudad en la obra; ¿cómo es este Budapest? (¿está en armonía con la poética/ideología del texto?), y finalmente, ¿cómo es el *otro*? ¿que estrategias usa el autor para describir a los habitantes de la capital húngara, y cuál es la relación de su *otro* con los *otros* de las teorías mencionadas en la introducción?

²⁰ Para el análisis detallado de la obra desde el punto de vista húngaro, URBÁN 2015.

²¹ URBÁN 2015, 101.

El Budapest de Cortázar

A pesar de tener escaso contacto personal con Hungría,²² Julio Cortázar se acerca con gusto al “tema húngaro” en su narrativa en la década de los 1950 y 60. Las causas son desconocidas, pero es interesante que “aunque en sus cartas escritas a sus amigos, Cortázar no deja constancia de viaje alguno a Hungría y en cambio comenta con pasión sus viajes a Praga, a Marrakech o la India, él construye varios seres ficticios etiquetados como húngaros (no checos, ni árabes, ni indios).”²³

Las primeras huellas de este capricho (con intención no escribimos “interés”, ya que, como vamos a ver, el uso frecuente de personajes húngaros no se acompañó con un interés léxico) se encuentran en el cuento clásico *Lejana*, incluido en *Bestiario* (1951), de lo que vamos a hablar más abajo en detalle, mientras las otras en *Rayuela* (1963) y *62/Modelo para armar* (1968).

En *Rayuela*, uno de los miembros del Club de la Serpiente, Ossip Gregorovius, representa la hungaridad, aunque de una credibilidad, como mínimo, cuestionable: según su ficha detallada, nació en Borzok, que en aquel entonces formaba parte del imperio austrohúngaro,²⁴ por lo que su “origen magyar [es] evidente”, a pesar de que “le gusta insinuar que es checo”, y que según los miembros del Club nació en Glasgow, debido a las “complacencias xenofílicas excesivas” de su madre, la británica “Miss Marjorie Babington, 22 Stewart Street” (527).²⁵ Complica aún más la situación que Gregorovius tiene tres (!) madres “según la borrachera” (527), de las que una parece húngara porque “no se animaba a mencionar la Transilvania, tenía miedo de que la asociaran con historias de vampiros” (295). Más tarde nos enteramos accidentalmente de su estancia en Hungría: “En Budapest yo era gran lector del código civil” (322). Sin embargo, como hablamos del personaje quizás de menor confianza de la novela, vale la pena fijar nuestra atención en el punto de vista y el campo asociativo de los personajes *sobre* Hungría. Una de las ideas clave la dice el propio Gregorovius (cuya posición es interesante por tener una identidad nacional totalmente confusa, marcada por sus madres occidentales y centroeuropeas), cuando declara que “Desde París cualquier mención de algo que esté más allá de Viena suena a literatura” a lo que responde la Maga (uruguaya): “Imagínese desde Montevideo (...). Uno cree que la humanidad es una sola cosa, pero cuando se vive del lado del Cerro...” (295). Debemos recalcar que el carácter ficticio de la región centroeuropea es idéntico ya sea desde la perspectiva occidental (“Desde París”) o latinoamericana (“desde Montevideo”), lo que está puesto en escena de manera excepcional en el siguiente diálogo entre la Maga y Gregorovius: “¿El tokay es un pájaro?” “Bueno, en cierto modo.” (295). Sin embargo, desde el punto de vista poético no podemos condenar a Cortázar, ya que no hace otra cosa que transmitir (aunque en un tono hiperbólico, que viene lógicamente del estilo del texto) la cosmovisión de sus personajes.

²² Como curiosidad, Ilian nota que “en la época de la composición de *Lejana*, Cortázar trabajaba en Buenos Aires en el estudio de traducción del húngaro Zoltan Havas”, pero fuera de eso, pocos son los argumentos que podrían explicar el elevado número de alusiones del escritor argentino a los húngaros. ILIAN ȚĂRANU 2012, 73.

²³ ILIAN ȚĂRANU 2012, 72.

²⁴ Según mis investigaciones, la única localidad llamada así (Borzuk o Borzok) es un pueblo en el centro de Irán (provincia de Yazd) de población desconocida.

²⁵ En lo que sigue, los números de páginas entre paréntesis refieren a esta edición: CORTÁZAR 2007.

La última mención de húngaros en *62/Modelo para armar* repite la estereotipia de Gregorovius sobre Transilvania: hablamos de la cita repetida de Erzsébet Báthory, la “condesa sanguinaria” transilvana muy de moda en los años 60, cuyo campo asociativo contiene ideas como sadismo, vampirismo y locura, estimulando en el lector varias cadenas asociativas localizadas por la teoría poscolonial (p. ej. Este—desconocido—peligroso—sadístico) sobre Transilvania, y en el segundo nivel, sobre Hungría. El papel de la condesa en la novela cortazariana está analizado detalladamente por Ilian,²⁶ aquí nos limitamos a registrar su presencia en la obra cortazariana.

Transilvania, vampiros, tokay y Trianon: la Hungría imaginaria de Cortázar está compuesta de “muy pocos estereotipos culturales y algunos datos proporcionados por una enciclopedia mínima”.²⁷ Pero ¿cómo es su Budapest, únicamente representada en *Lejana*?

Antes de intentar responder esta pregunta, trataremos de averiguar por qué motivos eligió el escritor argentino la capital húngara como escena de suma importancia de su obra, ya que varios estudios coinciden en que la elección cortazariana de Budapest como lugar de encuentro de los dobles no es mera casualidad. El núcleo temático y el problema central del cuento es el desdoblamiento o escisión del personaje, que está estrechamente relacionado con el desdoblamiento del territorio simbólico: podemos hablar de la territorialización de los *yos*. Y esta declaración no es solamente válida para Budapest: como Lavaud indica, la única alusión directa a Buenos Aires lleva a una pista falsa, ya que “el Odeón bonaerense”, escena del concierto de Elsa Piaggio de Tarelli en el cuento, “se usa más para teatro que para conciertos”.²⁸ Buenos Aires y Budapest, así, son más bien proyecciones de *yos* que territorios reales; su uso es meramente funcional.

Pero si es así, y el autor buscó las escenografías *para* los personajes, el carácter de las ciudades debe ser deducible del carácter de los personajes. Mas, ¿cómo son estos *yos*?

Para entender la elección de ciudades, debemos partir del palíndromo de Alina Reyes (“es la reina y...”²⁹), que además de señalar su posición social, también indica su ser incompleto. Naturalmente, las dos cosas están en estrecha relación: la vida aburrida de la “reina” (en realidad, de la burguesa) resulta el sentimiento de ser incompleto. Lo que dinamiza la obra es la tensión entre la seguridad y el aburrimiento: los tres puntos ocultan una vida más interesante, más emocionante (“porque abre un camino”), pero también más arriesgado y peligroso (“porque no concluye”).

Para ser suficientemente interesante al tomar una decisión radical, el doble necesita ser completamente opuesto a Alina Reyes: al principio de la obra, las rivales de la mendiga de Budapest en la imaginación de Alina son una “pupila de mala casa en Jujuy” y una “sirvienta en Quetzaltenango”. Ambas están a enorme distancia social y física de la burguesa bonaerense. Pero, mientras Jujuy (vista desde Buenos Aires, la provincia más lejana y subdesarrollada del país) es el fin de la Argentina, y Quetzaltenango (la segunda ciudad más grande de Guatemala, en las montañas) casi el de la América Latina, Budapest parece el fin del mundo. Además, podemos ver una correlación entre el estatus social de los posibles *alter egos* y su distancia de Buenos Aires: si aceptamos que según una burguesa bonaerense,

²⁶ ILIAN ȚĂRANU 2012, 81–84.

²⁷ ILIAN ȚĂRANU 2012, 72.

²⁸ LAVAUD-FAGE 1986, 77.

²⁹ Todas las citas son de la siguiente versión: CORTÁZAR, Julio: *Lejana*. <http://lejana.elte.hu/Lejana.pdf> (30.09.2017.)

vivir como sirvienta en la lejana y atrasada Guatemala es peor que vivir como pupila de mala casa en Jujuy, puede ser aún peor ser mendiga en el Budapest inimaginablemente lejano. Así, si la antítesis perfecta de Alina Reyes es una mendiga, la de Buenos Aires debe ser Budapest: como Roger Carmosino indica, “los mundos de Budapest y de Buenos Aires están escindidos (...) porque representan dos condiciones sociales diferentes, costumbres y culturas contrarias.”³⁰ Ser Buenos Aires es ser burguesa; mientras, ser Budapest es ser mendiga. La dualidad superior-inferior permanece, pero, al igual que en las “novelas de migración” recientes, hay una inversión en la localización tradicional de la civilización y la barbarie.

Además de las razones arriba mencionadas, que vienen de la poética de la obra, hay otra razón muy práctica de la elección de Budapest: los puentes, punto de encuentro de los dobles, uno de los símbolos clave de la obra. Como Carmosino dice, “Budapest es la ciudad elegida por Cortázar para tratar el tema de la escisión y el puente porque está construida sobre las dos márgenes del río Danubio. Esto significa que es una imagen de la dualidad y la unidad. De un lado está Buda, la zona tradicional montañosa donde viven los terratenientes, mientras la otra parte, Pest, es llana y allí se ubicaba tradicionalmente la clase comercial y obrera.”³¹

De esta cita es evidente que los estudiosos conocen más o menos la (socio)geografía de Budapest, pero ¿qué ocurre con Cortázar?

Ante todo, el Budapest de *Lejana* tiene un ambiente medieval, y un clima muy frío (la palabra “nieve” aparece 9 veces en el corto texto, mientras “frío” 7, y “hielo” 3 veces) — todo muy parecido a una novela de Sorokin: en las calles, “caballos erizados de estalagmitas y polizontes rígidos” (nótese que los caballos forman parte constante de la imagen de Hungría desde Graça Aranha), en el río, “hielos rotos y barcazas y algún martín pescador que allá se llamará *sbunáia tjéno* o algo peor”. La impresión de estar en una novela rusa aumenta aún más, si vemos los nombres geográficos usados por Cortázar. Ejemplos como Dobrina Stana, Skorda, Burglas o plaza Vladas dan la impresión como si el escritor argentino los creara con un generador de palabras eslavo-rumano. Similar es el caso de los héroes nacionales, Vladislav Néroy y Tadeo Alanko: el repetido prefijo “Vlad” (plaza Vladas, Vladislav Néroy) parece reflejar la vampiromanía de Cortázar, que muy posiblemente otra vez usó sus escasos conocimientos sobre Transilvania para crear nombres “húngaros”, esta vez, utilizando el nombre de Vlad Tepes, también conocido como Drakula. De las pocas menciones de los habitantes de la ciudad, ninguna es sorprendente: “chicos abrigadísimos” (si no lo hubiéramos mencionado todavía, en el Budapest de Cortázar hace mucho frío), “bebedores de tokay” y “cimblistas” (éstos últimos aparecerán también en Chico Buarque). De todos modos, podemos compartir la opinión de que si “Buenos Aires es el mundo frívolo de la burguesía moderna”, “Budapest [es] un mundo tradicional, desconocido y misterioso, de pobreza y dolor. La escisión de Alina es paralela con la escisión del mundo.”³²

¿En qué medida armoniza la representación del Budapest de Cortázar con la poética de *Lejana*? Para tratar de responder esta pregunta, debemos tener en cuenta que, al igual que la figura del doble, la ciudad misma está *más creada que descrita* por la

³⁰ CARMOSINO 1985, 137–154.

³¹ CARMOSINO 1985, 152.

³² CARMOSINO 1985, 148.

protagonista: “el mundo de la mendiga (...) se conforma poco a poco durante la historia del cuento hasta coincidir con (...) Budapest”³³. Ilian recalca el proceso “de previsión, de adivinación o de suscitación de una realidad palpable”³⁴, mientras Merlo describe como llegamos desde el uso de verbos relacionados con la imaginación (soñar, pensar, suponer, confabular) a los de la certeza (sentir, saber).³⁵ Eso significa que cualquier intento de representación mimética o referencial de la capital húngara sería contradictorio a la poética de la obra: lo que debemos ver es la proyección del estado de ánimo de Alina; es decir, una visión onírica sobre su parte ausente. La escritura antimimética excluye la lectura referencial.

Sin embargo, nada viene de la nada: como hemos visto, la elección de Budapest es muy consciente por parte del escritor, que buscó una ciudad desconocida (y necesariamente subdesarrollada) en el fin del mundo, cuyas características especiales son su dualidad y sus puentes. La decisión cortazariana de encontrar la proyección territorial de un mendigo, o bien, dicho de otra manera: la proyección de la antítesis de la burguesía en la capital húngara marca la ubicación de Argentina y Hungría en polos opuestos, y estos dos polos, según Cortázar, no son compatibles: no es casual que el marido reciente Luis María decide divorciarse de la Alina-mendiga en sólo dos meses.

El Budapest de Buarque

Como ya hemos mencionado, *Budapeste* de Chico Buarque jugó un rol muy importante en el creciente interés acerca de Hungría en Brasil, a pesar de que el autor no tuvo ningún interés en ello: al igual que Cortázar, no tiene conexión alguna con Hungría, y nunca fue a Budapest — escribió la novela “en el puente aéreo Rio-París”³⁶ (¡otra vez París! ¡otra vez un puente!) a base de guías, mapas y un diccionario; cuando era joven, “montaba mapas de ciudades imaginarias, y Budapest era una de ellas.”³⁷

Sin embargo, y a pesar del inmenso bombo mencionado más arriba, de ninguna manera podríamos decir que su obra hubiera sido exitosa sin causa: la novela — de estética profundamente posmoderna— deconstruye de forma original la posición del autor,³⁸ y pone en cuestión la inseparabilidad de realidad y ficción, propia y ajena, lengua e (in) comunicación, con buen humor y cierto lirismo. Según la historia, regresando de una conferencia internacional de escritores anónimos, José Costa está obligado a pernoctar en Budapest debido a un problema técnico de su avión. La lengua totalmente inentendible que escucha en la tele de su hotel le cautiva, y pronto vuelve, dejando en Río a su mujer, Vanda, a su hijo, Joãquinzinho, y su trabajo en la Agencia Cultural Cunha y Costa, donde escribe discursos, artículos y hasta libros para políticos y otras celebridades, incluso *autobiografías* en primera persona que *no* tratan de su propia vida. En este contexto, Hungría funciona como vía de escape que ofrece la posibilidad de reconstruir/sustituir la identidad perdida

³³ HAGHROOSTA 2011, 1192.

³⁴ ILIAN ȚĂRANU 2012, 77.

³⁵ MERLO, 2002, 71.

³⁶ GIRON 2003.

³⁷ GIRON 2003.

³⁸ FÜRTH 2009, 54.

del protagonista. La nueva identidad húngara del protagonista (Zsozé Kósta) se construye a través del aprendizaje de la lengua extremadamente difícil del país elegido, y el amor con Kriska,³⁹ profesora de lengua con un hijo, Pisti. Como podemos sospechar de la poética posmoderna de la obra, el resultado de todo eso no es una identidad reconstruida o recuperada, sino el desdoblamiento total del mundo de Costa/Kósta: dos lenguas, dos posiciones, dos mujeres se materializan en dos vidas vividas en dos ciudades; es decir, estamos ante una transgresión constante, simbolizada por los frecuentes viajes entre Río y Budapest. Para el lector, todo eso significa que pronto nos encontramos en un laberinto de espejos y espejismos (Río/Budapest, Vanda/Kriska, húngaro/portugués): no es mera casualidad que José Miguel Wisnik compare la historia con *Lejana*.⁴⁰ Pero ¿en qué medida se parece el Budapest de Buarque al de Cortázar?

Si etiquetamos el Budapest de Cortázar como “visión onírica”, lo podríamos hacer igualmente con el de Buarque: como Wisnik dice, en *Budapeste* “se crea una ciudad construida con sueño y realidad”.⁴¹ Conociendo las dualidades mencionadas más arriba entre realidad y ficción, no es sorprendente que su Budapest sea una mezcla interesante de un mapa y un sueño: como si cruzáramos un ejemplar de *Lonely Planet* con el Budapest de *Lejana*.

En este Budapest parece natural que Zsozé Kósta viaja en el metro azul (¡y no hacia la plaza Vladas, sino hacia Újpest-Városkapu!), aparece en el periódico *Magyar Hírlap*, y sabe con qué acento pronuncian la palabra “fecske” en dialecto *székely*, pero con la misma naturalidad ve “acróbatas del Danubio” (!), “carreras de carneros” (!!), “marionetas eslovenas” (!!!) y un “coro de ventrílocuos” (!!!!) en sus paseos domingueros en la Isla Margarita, para no hablar de mi favorito, “la pista de baile giratoria en lo alto de la Torre de Atila”. Algunas de estas imágenes son deducibles de viejos estereotipos (la Torre de Atila claramente viene de la continuidad huno-húngara falsa, las carreras de carneros del supuesto carácter nómada de los últimos), pero el coro de ventrílocuos y los acróbatas del Danubio representan un tono absolutamente nuevo y surrealista en la paleta. Además, de acuerdo con sus fines poéticos, Buarque toma en serio la dualidad de las dos partes de Budapest, interpretando como ruralidad el carácter histórico de Buda: en la “Óbuda, la vieja Buda” (en la realidad, un distrito lleno de multifamiliares contruidos en la era de Kádár) comen pizza con Kriska en “restaurantes de paja”, en realidad únicamente existentes en los *skansens*.⁴²

Es evidente pues que la capital húngara de *Budapeste* refleja la identidad duplicada/dividida de Costa/Kósta, y la poética posmoderna de la obra, en esta amalgama de países, lenguas, familias y posiciones: un Budapest semificticio-semireal viene orgánicamente de la lógica de la obra, y la situación es aún más interesante acompañando a la capital húngara con su doble. Como Wisnik menciona, Budapest es “un contrapunto de Río de Janeiro, su inverso al mismo tiempo familiar y extraño (“sinistro”, diría Freud, “mortífero”, diría Pisti).”⁴³ Lo que debemos recalcar, es que al igual que en el caso de Buenos Aires en Cortázar, con el paso del tiempo, los contornos de Río se vuelven cada vez más borrosos: en un punto, José Costa ya solo puede evocar su ciudad natal usando los mismos estereotipos (el Pan

³⁹ Sobrenombre incorrecto de Krisztina usado en vez de Kriszta.

⁴⁰ WISNIK 2003.

⁴¹ WISNIK 2003.

⁴² FÜRTH 2009, 46.

⁴³ WISNIK 2003.

de Azúcar, o un chico fumando marihuana) de los que está construido su Budapest.⁴⁴ Este carácter borroso de la ciudad nacido de la pérdida de memorias refleja la transformación/desdoblamiento de la identidad de Costa/Kósta: la integración (¡siempre parcial!) a una realidad siempre va de la mano con la pérdida parcial de la otra.

El Budapest de Andahazi

Comparando con Cortázar y Buarque, a primera vista, la posición de Federico Andahazi no es la de un extraño en el tema húngaro. Es descendiente de una familia húngara (su padre, Bela Rodolfo Andahazi-Kasnya era un poeta y psicoanalista famoso, mientras su abuelo, Béla Andaházi-Kasnya — modelo de Bora en la novela — era pintor y político). Su abuelo llegó a Buenos Aires a finales de la década de los 1940 (en la novela, deja Hungría durante el bombardeo ruso de Budapest, a principios de 1945).⁴⁵ Emigrante de tercera generación, Federico Andahazi se ocupa mayoritariamente de escribir novelas históricas (*El anatomista* [1997], *Las piadosas* [1998], *La ciudad de los herejes* [2005], *El conquistador* [2006]) algunas veces con tinte magicorrealista (*El príncipe* [2000]), y siempre con elevado interés por lo erótico —tanto, que escribió en tres tomos la *Historia sexual de los argentinos I-III* (2008-2010). *Los amantes bajo el Danubio* (2015) narra el reencuentro dramático de Bora Persay (pintor húngaro de familia noble, *alter ego* del abuelo de Andahazi) con su ex-mujer judía, Hanna, durante la ocupación nazi de Budapest, en 1944. La historia sigue el modelo de las “novelas húngaras” de la década de los 2010 arriba mencionadas: situación de guerra en Hungría — emigración forzada — llegada e integración a América Latina. Aquí el contrapunto de Budapest no es otra metrópoli, sino una aldea en el campo argentino; Bora y Marga se establecen en Unquillo, Córdoba, en 1945, activando la antigua dicotomía entre ciudad (Bora) y campo (Marga).

En el programa de televisión de Andahazi *Vas a viajar en mi sidecar* el autor presenta la historia entera de su investigación acerca de su abuelo,⁴⁶ mientras en varias entrevistas contó su intento con el libro: “Lo que yo traté de hacer fue *reconstruir* ese sufrimiento.”⁴⁷ Todo eso significa que el libro tiene la pretensión de reflejar/documentar de alguna forma la realidad: hablamos de una novela histórica clásica.

No es nuestro objetivo ahora analizar en detalle las diferencias entre la biografía real y ficticia de Béla Andahazi-Kasnya,⁴⁸ ya que el Bora de la novela es un personaje

⁴⁴ FÜRTH 2009, 59.

⁴⁵ Según sus biografías cortas, dejó el país en 1947. Andaházi-Kasnya Béla. *Történelmi Tár*, www.tortenelmitar.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3316&catid=42%3Aa&Itemid=67&lang=en (30.09.2017.)

⁴⁶ El video está enteramente accesible en la página de Andahazi: www.andahazi.com/radio-tv.html (30.09.2017.)

⁴⁷ ALVAREZ PLÁ 2015.

⁴⁸ Sólo algunos ejemplos: el autor, por motivos dramáticos, cambió las fechas del período turco de Bora-Andahazi, no hay mención de la dramática masacre de Endrőd por parte de la guardia civil durante su llegada al pueblo, etc.

ficcionalizado (para no decir simplificado e idealizado), ni enumerar los problemas con la veracidad histórica del texto;⁴⁹ ahora nos limitamos a ver cómo es el Budapest de Andahazi.

A pesar del origen húngaro y el declarado intento de reconstrucción por parte del autor, parece como si Andahazi quisiera reconstruir Budapest de un folleto para turistas a veces mal interpretado. De otra forma no podemos explicar, cómo puede ver Hanna la Catedral de San Esteban en la parte de Buda,⁵⁰ ni cómo puede ir el padre de Bora a “los baños turcos del Hotel Gellért” (25) cada jueves antes de la Primera Guerra Mundial, si el Gellért sólo abrió sus puertas al público en 1918. El hecho de que entre los topónimos sólo podemos encontrar monumentos típicamente turísticos (el Parlamento, el Bastión de los Pescadores, la Catedral de San Esteban, el Castillo, el aeropuerto de Ferihegy), y que la avenida Andrásy y el Puente de las Cadenas parecen ser las únicas calles y puentes⁵¹ de la ciudad, refiere a que Andahazi no prestó mucha atención a la creación del ambiente —su capital húngara es tan creíble, como sus nombres pseudohúngaros (Bora, Helen). Exagerando un poco, podríamos decir que sólo hay dos problemas con su Budapest histórico: que no conoce Budapest, y que no sabe mucho de su historia. Eso es aún más evidente si lo comparamos con las obras que se desarrollan en la misma época y mismo lugar, pero cumplen ambos requisitos, como las novelas policíacas de Vilmos Kondor, o la recién publicada obra de Gábor Zoltán, *Orgia*. Yo, personalmente, veo mucho mejor construido y más creíble el Budapest de Buarque que el de Andahazi: el problema es que mientras la poética del primero no promete referirse a la realidad, el segundo sí, así mientras la (semi)ficcionalidad del Budapest de Buarque es lógica, la de Andahazi no es intencional.

Conclusiones

Como hemos visto, el motivo de viaje es constante en todas las historias analizadas: en una de ellas, Budapest es punto de partida (*Los amantes...*) mientras en las otras dos, el destino (*Lejana, Budapeste*). Eso implica que estamos ante movimientos migratorios de dirección opuesta: en los autores que no tienen ningún lazo familiar con Hungría, América Latina viaja a Budapest, mientras en el caso de Andahazi, los protagonistas húngaros están forzados a buscar refugio en América Latina. Eso conduce a dos puntos de vista diferentes: uno pseudo-interior (Andahazi), y otro, exterior (Buarque, Cortázar).

⁴⁹ Sólo algunos ejemplos: el padre de Bora no pudo llevar el título de Vitéz antes de la Primera Guerra Mundial, ya que la orden fue fundada en 1920 por Miklós Horthy, Andahazi entiende mal el artículo de Colomán de Hungría, y el papel de Hungría en la Primera Guerra Mundial, y sobre todo: olvida mencionar la colaboración húngara con los alemanes: en el libro no hay mención de los representantes de la Cruz Flechada, partido de extrema derecha en el poder desde octubre de 1944, cuya sede central estaba en la calle Andrásy, adonde Bora y su ex-mujer judía van a comer en estos días.

⁵⁰ “Desde el sitio más elevado de la casa se veía el viejo puente: de un lado del Danubio, los torreones del Bastión de los Pescadores, la aguja de la Catedral de San Esteban y las cúpulas del palacio; en la orilla contraria se levantaban los domos del parlamento y los edificios del centro de Pest.” ANDAHAZI 2015, 184. (En lo que sigue, los números de páginas entre paréntesis refieren a esta edición.)

⁵¹ En la obra de Andahazi, el puente, tan importante para Cortázar, tiene importancia dramática, no tanto simbólica: como está vigilado por nazis, atravesar en él con su ex-mujer judía es uno de los puntos clímax de la obra.

En el caso de Cortázar y Buarque, Budapest está estrechamente relacionado con el tema de la identidad y el doble: para José Costa tiene en sí la esperanza de la reconstrucción de su identidad perdida, mientras para Alina Reyes, el encuentro de su otro lado, siniestro, pero estimulante. Finalmente, para Alina, Budapest será el lugar de la pérdida de su identidad, mientras para Costa/Kósta, la tierra de un éxito inesperado.

Desde el punto de vista húngaro, ninguna de las tres representaciones de Budapest parece real, pero mientras eso coincide con los objetivos poéticos de Cortázar y Buarque (siendo la proyección del lado siniestro de la personalidad de Alina y de la realidad ficcionalizada de los escritores fantasma), es contrario a los objetivos de la novela histórica de Andahazi.

Pero la mayor sorpresa viene de las políticas de los textos. Como he planteado en la introducción, veo que el mayor problema de las teorías centradas en la otredad está en que no muestran interés por las relaciones interculturales donde la cuestión del poder no sea relevante. Sin embargo, analizando las causas de la elección de Budapest por parte de extraños totales como Buarque o Cortázar (contrapunto del mundo burgués de Buenos Aires, ubicación semirural-semimetrópolis), y el uso de algunos de sus motivos (caballos y carneros en el centro de la ciudad), nos muestra que deberíamos estar más atentos frente a las relaciones entre ajenos sin relación: la otredad parece igualmente siniestra si no está vinculada con el poder.

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New Immigration and Images of the Americas: The Effects of Travel Writing in Hungary

Balázs Venkovits

Introduction

Migration studies usually focus on economic, social and political considerations as the key “pull factors” influencing people’s decisions on finding a new home. Thus, for example, during the period of the New Immigration studied here, the United States is often presented as the primary destination for new immigrants because of the on-going (second) industrial revolution, technological developments, and a modern (and model) political system – all of which provide job opportunities and social freedom. Latin America compares poorly:

“Political instability in several new Republics; the low demand for free labour in the majority of Latin American countries who possessed either large native populations (Mexico) or used slaves (Brazil and Cuba); the high cost of the passage; unfavourable geographies and climates in the hinterland; unattractive political and cultural characteristics; all help to explain why Latin America lagged well behind the United States as a destination for immigrants.”¹

Yet as Puskás argues, “numerous other factors also played their part in the mechanism of emigration, factors not so much economic but rather social and psychological in nature, and these by and large elude quantification”.² These include published accounts of earlier travellers and migrants published in the form of books, newspaper articles, and letters, whose descriptions of foreign lands could complement, contradict or exaggerate the traditional pull factors and thus influence migration patterns. This is especially important where political and cultural characteristics addressed by writers line up with the purposes of their accounts and their cultural background, personality and political stance. This literature played a key role in establishing the images of certain countries and its peoples, becoming reference points later on. It provided a general overview of the population, culture, political system and economy of the countries visited.

The reports emigrants sent back also had a crucial impact on how attractive a country appeared. Their accounts make up a special part of the corpus of travel writing as their perceptions differ significantly from those travellers, tourists, or scientists who spent less

¹ SÁNCHEZ ALONSO 2007, 398.

² PUSKÁS 1982, 56.

time in the Americas. Emigrants discussed topics not addressed by others, often including descriptions of everyday life or tips for those considering emigration. Hungarian emigrants also sent private letters about their experience, often exaggerating the positive aspects of immigration.

In what follows, I will study how accounts written by Hungarians reflected and shaped the images of the Americas and thus possibly migration patterns, providing an inter-American approach by focusing on the United States and Mexico. It is worth studying these two countries in comparison not only because of their geographical proximity but also because several Hungarians visited and wrote about both countries and often compared them, thus providing a ready-made case study of this phenomenon. For the United States, especially before the era of mass migration, travel accounts often exaggerated the positive features, while those written about Mexico focused on negative ones and discouraged migration. This changed at the beginning of the 20th century, when the United States closed its gates to new immigration and the Hungarian Government also attempted to discourage emigration, while Mexico during the Porfiriato (an era marked by the presidency of Porfirio Díaz, 1876/1884–1911) presented itself as an alternative. Travel accounts reflect the shift, but it was not enough (partly due to the outbreak of World War I) to change the overall images of the countries and thus fundamentally alter migration routes.

As noted above, travel accounts are less-quantifiable influencing forces than other factors usually considered in migration studies, thus we need to be aware of certain limitations in terms of their significance. As Wendy Bracewell also notes, “the importance of the genre in shaping its readers’ views of the world is often assumed. The problem, as usual with the history of reading, is one of evidence for travel writing’s wider influence.”³ We cannot be certain of how many people actually read an account, whether they shared the perceptions of the traveller or not, and how they compared to other factors shaping people’s views of certain countries. Despite the lack of direct evidence on its influencing force, however, the role of travel writing as a source of information on foreign lands seems to be undisputed. We may identify recurring patterns and general trends that were shared by most people and made up an important part of knowledge on the countries studied here. Thus when studying the travel accounts written by Hungarians about the Americas in this paper, the texts are seen as reflections of the time and shapers of the discourse on migration, but by no means are they presented as decisive on their own when considering decisions of people on when, how and where to immigrate. They exerted their effect in combination with economic trends, governmental policies and general perceptions of the mother country and the New World shaped by various other texts simultaneously.

Migration and the Americas

The cusp of the 20th century witnessed one of the largest waves of immigration to the Americas. During the era referred to as the New Immigration in the United States and the Great Emigration in Hungary, millions of Europeans (mainly from East, Central and South Europe) embarked on voyages to find new opportunities in the New World. This wave

³ BRACEWELL 2015, 215.

of mass immigration started in the 1870s and lasted until World War I, more specifically the numerous restrictions and the quota system introduced in the aftermath of the Great War. Mass migration brought about not only an unprecedented influx of people into the Americas, but also resulted in the exchange of ideas and played a major role in shaping the image of the New World in the immigrants' native countries.

During this unprecedented wave, the United States attracted the great majority of immigrants. Between 1881 and 1920, approximately 24 million people settled in the United States, mostly in urban areas. Not all Europeans immigrated to the United States, however, especially after the government introduced various forms of immigration restriction first targeted at non-European groups (see the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882) and then extended significantly to include other people as well (e.g. the Emergency Quota Act of 1921). At the same time, other countries in the Americas implemented policies to attract immigrants. Canada became more attractive as, "from the mid-1890s until World War I, favorable government policies, eastern industrialization, and the opening of the western provinces to agriculture brought 300,000–400,000 immigrants each year, most from the British Isles and central and southern Europe".⁴ Roughly another 13 million immigrants went to Latin America between 1879 and 1930:

"Argentina, Brazil after the abolition of slavery, Uruguay and Cuba were the main destinations for foreign labour. More than 90 percent of the 13 million European immigrants who travelled to Latin America between 1870 and 1930 chose these four countries, although modest immigration flows to countries such as Chile, Venezuela, or Mexico occurred."⁵

The figures for Hungarian immigration mirror these international trends. The most important destination was the United States in this case also. By the beginning of the 20th century, Hungarian emigration reached unprecedented heights, and trans-Atlantic migration was perceived by Hungarian officials "as the newest, most modern movement, most significant with regard to its character, and most dangerous concerning its effects".⁶ Between 1899 and 1913, 85 percent of people leaving Hungary immigrated to the United States.⁷ It is difficult to calculate the exact number of Hungarians who left the mother country though. According to Thirring, the number of people who left Hungary (not necessarily all of them of Hungarian ethnicity) between 1881 and 1900 was close to 500,000. By the first decade of the 20th century, however, the number reached almost one and a half million. Julianna Puskás, on the other hand, claimed that "the actual number of immigrants to the United States for the examined period (1871–1913) can be estimated to be 1,200,000."⁸

Immigration to other parts of the continent seems insignificant. Canada became an important destination only after the restrictive immigration policies of the United States took effect in the 1920s, with about 30,000 Hungarians immigrating to Canada in the inter-war

⁴ POWELL 2005, 46.

⁵ SÁNCHEZ ALONSO 2007, 399.

⁶ THIRRING 1904, 12.

⁷ PUSKÁS 1982, 21.

⁸ PUSKÁS 1982, 18–19.

period.⁹ Central and South America also remained marginal during this period of mass migration. According to Thirring, between 1871 and 1901 only thirty-nine Hungarians left for Central America from German ports. Most Hungarians went to Brazil (1,235) and Argentina (274), but these figures are low even if we know that the majority travelled to Central and South America from ports of other countries.¹⁰ According to Anderle, however, 10–12,000 Hungarians, mostly farmers, arrived in Brazil by the end of the 19th century. He also argues that the “number of Hungarians in Latin America would reach only a few tens of thousands before World War I”.¹¹ This began to change only after 1920 and the restrictions introduced, especially with regard to Mexico and Cuba,¹² due to their proximity to the United States.¹³

Pull Factors and Travel Writing: “Reverent Admiration” vs. the “Imperial View”

In Hungarian travel accounts written prior to the era of mass migration, writers often viewed the United States with “reverent admiration” and in line with this projected an overtly favourable image of a land of opportunities, in a political, economic and social sense.¹⁴ Travel writers and news from the U.S. intensified the pull factors. Trans-Atlantic cables provided greater access to information on American progress, the second industrial revolution, railroads, world fairs and politics, and “newspapers in Hungary also wrote about the favorable job opportunities in America”.¹⁵

Information from Hungarians living in the U.S. (in the form of *Amerikás levelek*, or letters from America) often reported only on success and equality. This ran contrary to the official Hungarian publications that emphasised the hardships of life in the United States, calling attention to “the abuse of immigrants, and reported on mining and industrial accidents”.¹⁶ People tended “to disbelieve their government, although it was telling the truth, and accepted at face value what their relatives and fellow villagers told them about the New World, although these accounts were blatantly one-sided”.¹⁷ Travel writers often presented the United States as a model society (see Sándor Bölöni Farkas, for example, or Ágoston Haraszthy), a land of opportunities, transmitting a positive view of the populace and technological progress. The country was seen as superior both within the Americas and in comparison to Hungary.

While the United States was depicted with reverent admiration, Latin America was perceived in a completely different fashion. Travel accounts stressed political instability and presented travel in Latin America (and thus immigration) as dangerous. In general, travel

⁹ POWELL 2005, 46.

¹⁰ THIRRING 1904, 77.

¹¹ ANDERLE 2008, 175.

¹² Ibid. 176.

¹³ For more on Hungarian migration to the Americas see ANDERLE 2010; GLANT 2013; KATONA 1973, 35–52; PUSKÁS 2000; SZENTE-VARGA 2007; TORBÁGYI 2004; TORBÁGYI 2009.

¹⁴ KATONA 1971, 51–94.

¹⁵ PUSKÁS 1982, 53.

¹⁶ GLANT 2010, 176.

¹⁷ Ibid.

accounts provided a negative view of the population, culture and life in Latin America. This “imperial view” portrayed the local populace (with the exception of those of European descent) as backward, inferior, requiring education from superior peoples and countries (like the United States).¹⁸ Such negative images clearly contributed to the unenthusiastic perception of the region during this period and these countries could become attractive only when immigration to the U.S. was restricted.¹⁹

Inter-American Images and Migration: Mexico and the United States before the New Immigration

The comparative study of the Hungarian images of Mexico and the United States serves as a good opportunity for investigating how travel accounts reflected society and pull factors and how they could influence decisions on migration. First, I focus on the era directly preceding the New Immigration to be able to present the fundamental images of these countries that served as reference points for a long time, and only then will present the (attempted) changes in images during the peak of mass migration. Some of the writers addressed the issue of migration specifically, while others only indirectly touched upon the pull factors influencing immigration; still, both provided important sources of information for Hungarians.

Sándor Farkas Bölöni’s *Útazás Észak Amerikában* [A Journey in North America (the United States)] established the image of the United States in Hungary as a “promised land” of unlimited opportunities.²⁰ Bölöni’s publication became one of the most popular books of its time in Hungary, with two editions within two years. Hungarians publishing after Bölöni wrote in a similar style and reinforced the image of the United States as the land of opportunities. They all emphasised that the United States changed rapidly, as Bölöni noted:

“In America no statistical data, no matter how accurate, remain relevant after five years. The phenomenal population growth, economic and educational changes each year simply outstrip statistical information. Hence last year’s facts about a place or thing are no longer useful the next year.”²¹

The United States, in this view, provided a model for modernisation and improvement, and travel accounts became “textbooks of political and economic progress, a treasury of democratic ideas frequently quoted in political debates in Parliament and at county level”.²² The rapid progress, internal improvements, the growth of American cities, the hard work and resulting prosperity of the population all impressed Hungarians. Writers introduced Americans as restless, hard-working Yankees, practical and creative, as in the following excerpt from another influential travel account published by Ágoston Haraszthy in 1844:

¹⁸ See PRATT 1992.

¹⁹ ROMERO 2010; DREISZIGER 1982.

²⁰ BÖLÖNI 1834.

²¹ BÖLÖNI 1834, 128.

²² KATONA 1971, 57.

“The American lives twice as long as others and does a hundred times more; the American wakes up early, and as soon as he is up he starts doing his business whatever that might be. He has breakfast with haste, and not to lose precious time, meanwhile, he reads the papers, and finishing within a few minutes, returns to his work. The time for lunch arrives; everyone appears on time at the sound of the bell, sits at the table without saying a word and the entire lunch ends within maximum twenty minutes; at restaurants, travelers might see three or four hundred men sitting down for lunch but after 15 minutes, only two or three of them can still be seen.”²³

These features, images and depictions together presented the United States as an attractive destination for immigration.

Images depicting Mexico and Mexicans contrast starkly. Although there were some early writings about Latin America in Hungary, the real breakthrough came after the defeat of the Hungarian War of Independence, when more Hungarians arrived in and wrote about Mexico. These accounts comprise the major source of information for the period leading up to the New Immigration. Western (European) travellers characterised Mexico as lazy and backward, while they also emphasised the country’s lack of progress.²⁴ Hungarian travellers reiterated these ideas when they adopted the attitude and terminology of Western travel accounts and emphasised the superiority of the United States in their comparisons, rather than creating an independent image of Mexico.²⁵

Comparisons between the two countries were often part of descriptions of Mexico, with the United States assuming the superior position. Károly László (1815–1894), a former revolutionary who started various business ventures in Mexico, directly compares the two countries in his writings. He emphasises the superiority of the United States in technological development especially “when these rough and clumsy [Mexican] wheelbarrows passed the road-building company’s nicely painted North American carts it was interesting to notice the great difference between the two structures, and I thought to myself: if the steam engine had not been in use by now, when would these folk [i.e. Mexicans] invent it?”²⁶ It is the result of such a contrast, together with the view of the population, that entailed the necessity, in László’s opinion, of foreign – especially U.S. – intervention to assist in Mexico’s development. He clearly expresses this idea and the sharp contrast he perceives in his reports:

“On the rivers, with banks full of sleeping crocodiles only, there will be swift steamships loaded with California gold, [...] beautiful towns will be built [...] and the treasures hidden in the fertile land will be produced, as if by magic, by the tireless North American farmers [...] the now wild country will become the home of civilization and abundance in our lifetime.”²⁷

²³ HARASZTHY 1844, 2.

²⁴ See for example BUCHENAU 2005.

²⁵ VENKOVITS 2011, 28–47.

²⁶ László Károly levelei 1859a.

²⁷ László Károly levelei 1859b.

He even considers the occupation of Mexico justified, which is especially interesting coming from someone who fought for the independence of his country just a decade before:

“The hard-working North Americans will flock into this area; they will dig up the treasures hidden in the ‘fat’ plains and rocky mountains, will bring them to the surface, and the wilderness of today that is not aware of its wealth will be turned into a rich, civilized, industrious country and may be annexed to the United States, which is the wish of the majority of those in the United States, in fact a plan that can hardly be concealed.”²⁸

Another former revolutionary, János Xántus (1825–1894) shared this opinion about the role and mission of the United States. The much more positive perception of the northern neighbour (as established by Bölöni) had a major impact on the perception of Mexico. Xántus claims that changes are needed to exploit the apparent opportunities of, for example, La Paz: “Such a change can only come about at a snail’s pace, as long as the peninsula belongs to the Mexican Republic, for flourishing commerce in Mexico is unimaginable.” He depicts Mexico as a politically unstable country, and argues that this volatility rendered it unable to govern itself. Xántus argues similarly to László when discussing the role of the United States in the region:

“If [...] the peninsula should become the property of the North American Union, which is only a matter of time, for it will inevitably happen before long, then La Paz will become one of the main depositories of American industry; [...] Furthermore, due to its geographical location, La Paz could become for the North American Union what, for example, St. Helena, Gibraltar, Malta, or Bermuda constitute in the hands of the British.”²⁹

Such depictions clearly presented the United States as the obvious choice for immigration while Mexico assumed an inferior position. This was coupled by the overtly negative perception of the Mexican populace as depicted in these early travel accounts.

Travel writers saw the population in no better terms. While they praised the natural beauty of Mexico, they contrasted it with the desolation of society. They portrayed Mexicans as lazy and inferior to their North American counterparts. Pál Rosti (1830–1874), a scientific traveller and photographer following in the footsteps of Alexander von Humboldt, embodied this trend in his 1861 book:

“However pleasant Mexico [City]’s climate is, however enchanting its environs and interesting its people are, the European traveler, who requires a more enthusiastic social life in the larger towns, will not enjoy himself in this city after a longer stay. There is no sign of social life there, unless in the group of Europeans.”³⁰

²⁸ László Károly levelei 1859c.

²⁹ XÁNTUS 1860, 129.

³⁰ ROSTI 1992 [1861], 153.

Although László ran several successful businesses in Mexico, his letter of 1862 reflects a similar view. He does not emphasise opportunities for prospective Hungarian immigrants and depicts the population in a way that is everything but flattering:

“These people possess no industry, no desire to work, and no ingenious mind. They have never reached manhood, but from childhood they passed on to helpless old age. People do not move forward but do not step back either, and if no blood rushes into it from some lively nation, it will never have a better future, it will disappear from the family of people without anyone shedding a tear for it. How unfortunate that this Canaan is possessed by such a sluggish, indolent, degenerated people who do not deserve to live.”³¹

Xántus shares the same opinion in general and presents an especially negative view of the Creole population:

“Seeing all this, and personally experiencing the exceptional hospitality of the Creoles to strangers, it would seem that their life is the most attractive and happy in the world. It may be so for the natives, but the North American and European who has learned to live a productive and intellectually satisfying life, would soon be bored by this life style and quickly realize that tropical life is not for him. [...] It is not life but merely vegetation.”³²

The three revolutionaries provided the first Hungarian views of Mexico and Mexicans, and established an unfavourable image of the country in Hungary, one in clear opposition to that of the United States in terms of politics, social conditions and economic opportunities alike. Such an image was clearly not welcoming for Hungarian immigrants.

Besides this group of Hungarian revolutionaries, soldiers participating in Habsburg Maximilian’s Mexican venture (1862–1867) also provided descriptions of the country but these did not significantly differ in terms of the general image presented. Their writing brought wider attention and a more independent image of Mexico, but even as the first calls to re-evaluate Mexico emerged, these writers retained the racist writing style and view of Mexico as an inferior nation. As members of an imperial army, of course, many used travel accounts to justify their presence.³³ Hungarian soldiers published two books and several articles that present not only military events but also discuss everyday life in Mexico.³⁴

Maximilian’s Hungarians put Mexico on the map in Hungary but did not bring about any change in the image of the country. Thus, when the era of the New Immigration started in the 1870s, Hungarians had clearly contrasting images of the two North American countries as expressed in these accounts. A hard-working, superior and developed United States provided abundant opportunities, while backward, lazy Mexico was simply dangerous. Given the hectic political and social conditions, and reports on the threat posed by bandits, Mexico seemed anything but welcoming for Hungarian immigrants.

³¹ Folk Mexico 1862.

³² XÁNTUS 1976, 149.

³³ BUCHENAU 2005.

³⁴ See PAWŁOWSKI 1882; SZENGER 1877, and the articles of Emil Nikolics (1866), Pál Sarlay (1867–1871), and István Burián (1868). For more information see JANCsó 2011, 419–430; VENKOVITS 2014, 28–46.

The Peak of New Immigration: Changing Images?

Certain changes occurred in the above-described images by the turn of the century, partly as a result of the growing difficulties of new immigrants in the United States and the introduced restrictions, while simultaneously to these, Mexico introduced measures to attract more immigrants. While Mexico's image therefore became more favourable in Hungary, and some travelogues also attempted to present it as a new destination for emigrants, the Hungarian attitude towards the United States became more critical. The admiration of the country mixed with a degree of disillusionment that emphasised the negative aspects of immigrant life. Katona claims that "the eleven travelogues [on the United States] published in Hungary between 1877 and 1900 bear little or no resemblance to the ten travel books written between 1834 and 1863".³⁵ András Vári goes further, writing that "the model country of the Reform Era became the land of threats by 1890".³⁶ Tibor Glant, however, contends that travel writing of the period was simply more complex, on top of which there were many more of them. Hungarian travel writing on the United States experienced its heyday between 1893 and 1908, and Glant concludes that although critical voices became more emphatic, the myth of the land of opportunities survived in both a political and, especially, economic sense.³⁷ Economic opportunity in particular was a crucial consideration for immigrants.

Many Hungarian travelogues, however, were critical of the U.S. in this period and called attention to the downsides of the Gilded Age:

"Bölöni and his fellow travelers in pre-Civil War America hailed in the U.S. a land of freedom, equality, and plenty. To their counterparts in the second half of the last century America was far from being an Eldorado anymore and they tried hard to dispel the myth of America in Europe and Hungary as a fairy-land of plenty where 'fried pigeons would fly into your mouth' whenever you open it."³⁸

According to Glant, the anti-American sentiment of the era expressed in some of these writings arose from three main factors: "a major shift in the way Hungarians came to view the future of their own country, an imperial approach to the New World, and large-scale trans-Atlantic migration."³⁹ Several writers embarked (or were sent) on study tours in the United States, but they were more willing to share negative experiences as well. People called attention to poverty more often, with some noting that in New York, "in the immense metropolis there are several hundred thousands of people who have neither lodging nor bread [...] nor work".⁴⁰ They put more emphasis on the hardships of the trans-Atlantic voyage, and the harsh treatment and low ranks of recent immigrants, among other issues. This changing image in Hungarian travel writing was augmented by the various Hungarian government publications mentioned above.⁴¹

³⁵ KATONA 1973, 35.

³⁶ VÁRI 2006, 153.

³⁷ GLANT 2012, 79–99.

³⁸ KATONA 1973, 37.

³⁹ GLANT 2010, 175.

⁴⁰ Quoted in KATONA 1973, 43.

⁴¹ GLANT 2010, 176.

At the same time, Hungarian travel writers became more complimentary of Mexico. They noted the nation's modernisation and even called the Hungarians' attention to business opportunities, in line with the intentions of the Mexican Government. Some Hungarian texts called for a "more realistic" and "fair" representation of the country and its people. They tried to refute earlier negative impressions and called attention to good prospects in the country. In earlier travel accounts, even if business and agricultural investment opportunities were mentioned in Mexico, they were usually not presented as viable options for Hungarian immigrants.

This tendency had several causes: the New Immigration to the United States; changes in the attitude towards the emerging great power of the New World as a result of a mass exodus from Hungary; modernisation in Mexico under Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911) that found supportive and endorsing voices in travel writing; and more welcoming Mexican immigration policies that were aimed at attracting European settlers in part by altering the formerly gloomy view of the country. The quasi-dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz established better commercial, political and cultural relations with Austria–Hungary, which made the exchange of information and travel easier for Hungarians.⁴²

"Díaz and his supporters organized an international public relations campaign to reinforce the regime's apparent durability with a veneer of cultural credibility. For this they recruited foreigners and Mexicans to lobby opinion makers and policy makers abroad and to write foreign-language 'books, pamphlets, and articles that were directly or indirectly subsidized by Porfirian authorities.' They wanted to show the world that Mexico was becoming more European and less 'Indian,' more civilized and less dangerous."⁴³

The main aim of the administration was to lure foreign investment to the country together with European settlers partly by improving the image of the nation abroad. This attracted several foreigners who in turn could witness and propagate modernisation and improvement. The policies contributed to more friendly attitudes and positive images in travel accounts but similarly to earlier attempts, the overall immigration policy failed because even though Mexico was presented as a more attractive place, other regions of the Americas were still perceived as more advantageous, and newly arrived immigrants did not get the support they were hoping for.

Travel writers noted the modernisation of the county, and the improved infrastructure. Railways linked the Pacific Ocean with the Gulf of Mexico, and major cities with Mexico City. This made travelling faster, safer and more reliable and various parts of Mexico more accessible for travel writers as well. Similarly to the U.S. earlier, the railroad unified the country and improved commerce and the economy. The government laid telegraph lines and enforced law and order in the countryside; the budget was balanced, and Mexico provided a welcoming atmosphere for investors.⁴⁴ According to Buchenau, "Porfirian modernization led to a greater influx of foreigners. Entrepreneurs and professionals flocked to Mexico from Britain, France, Germany, Spain, and the United States, forming sizeable

⁴² SZENTE-VARGA 2012, 28–44.

⁴³ FRAZER 2006, 90.

⁴⁴ FOSTER 1999, 127–143.

foreign-born communities in the larger cities”.⁴⁵ These investors (and travel writers) also promoted the Díaz regime.

The best illustration of the changing depictions of Mexico and the presentation of the Porfiriato is the pioneering figure in Hungarian travel writing, Jenő Bánó (1855–1927). He presented a novel attitude towards his adopted home, redefined the relationship between the U.S. and Mexico, and set out to mend the image of the latter in Hungary with the aim of attracting immigrants. As a review of his first book in *Vasárnapi Újság* claimed on October 19, 1890, “the book has current value as well, at a time when so many people emigrate in search of a new homeland”.

Like most immigrants, Bánó left Hungary to earn money and return home. After failing in the United States, he moved to Mexico. In his accounts, the relationship between the United States and Mexico is turned upside down. He calls attention to development and opportunities in Mexico, while criticising the United States and emphasising the threats and failure of immigrants: “There are several other Hungarians in San Francisco but as I heard they all live under the most modest circumstances; California, the promised land—as we can see—does not really waste its blessings on our poor compatriots who wandered here wishing to get rich.”⁴⁶ He notes, moreover:

“[Mexicans] do not like the North Americans and still the neighbor’s influence expands day by day; but in my humble opinion this with time can pose a threat for this young state that has just started to flourish and which as an independent republic is destined to a great role, if, however, they would unite with North America, the country would lose its originality, special characteristics, and nationality among the Anglo-Saxons—as it happened in California, New Mexico, and Texas—and it would be degraded to a secondary position within this enormous body.”⁴⁷

He presents a completely different image with regard to Mexico: for the first time, Mexican accounts emphasise Hungarian success, a welcoming environment and people, and good opportunities for immigrants.

Bánó is eager to share with his readers the examples of modernisation and improvement in Mexico. He travels on and describes new railroads as projects bringing progress for the cities and for the country in general. He writes about the technology available in the country, together with signs of industrialisation, mining, and great developments in agriculture. This was in line with the general developments in the region: “[A]fter 1870 the situation changed. Political stability and the emergence of policies design [sic.] to attract foreign immigrants that had been growing since the 1850s and 1860s including religious freedom, rights of private ownership and respect for civil rights, friendlier attitudes towards foreigners, all helped.”⁴⁸

Mexico was depicted as a country offering business opportunities earlier as well but it was seen as an attractive place for American or English settlers and businessmen. Bánó introduces Mexico in his letters not just as an alternative destination specifically

⁴⁵ BUCHENAU 2005, 92.

⁴⁶ BÁNÓ 1890, 68.

⁴⁷ BÁNÓ 1890, 96.

⁴⁸ SÁNCHEZ ALONSO 2007.

for Hungarians, but as a better one than the U.S. This was in line with the intentions of the Díaz Government (even if probably they did not think of Hungarians in the first place). It seems from his letters written to his father that Bánó knew that such a publication could be beneficial for him and he actually sent his writings to Díaz. The review of his first book was published in Mexico and it praises Bánó for the fair and positive treatment of the nation. According to Díaz's letter, the Mexican President promised support for Bánó's endeavours.⁴⁹

Bánó encourages Hungarian immigration to Mexico both indirectly by the complimentary depiction of the country and also more explicitly: "This is Mexico, dear father, a really blessed country, and anyone who has a practical mind is destined to become rich here."⁵⁰ Bánó goes even further and writes: "It would be wiser for our Tóts [people of Slovak ethnicity living in the territory of Hungary], if they want to emigrate from the upper parts of our county, to come here and not to the unfortunate North America where they are looked upon as draft animals."⁵¹ While in the U.S. he presents the difficult circumstances of Hungarian immigrants, in Mexico he emphasises success. He writes about six Hungarians in Mexico City and claims that "all my Hungarian compatriots have a successful life both in social and financial terms, and what is even more important, they are all loved and respected both by Mexicans and others."⁵² Hungarians have a much better status in Mexico than in the U.S. and Bánó mentions in particular Samu Lederer, his influential friend and patron in Mexico City, who could not cope in the U.S. but became successful in Mexico. Bánó also provides practical advice for Hungarian readers, offering growing tips for coffee, vanilla, rubber tree, etc., describing workers and their wages, the challenges of immigrant life. He calls attention to the support granted by the government and realisable profits.

Bánó's books provide a mix of a typical travelogue, a migrant narrative, and propaganda.⁵³ Bánó identifies with the policies of the Díaz Government and extends his view of progress to all aspects of life, remaining blind to problems of the nation. It is not by chance that Szente-Varga refers to Bánó as the publicist of the Porfiriato and that he also earned the position of Consul General of Mexico in Hungary.⁵⁴

He not only changes the former depiction of the country in terms of opportunities for immigrants but also provides an entirely different image of the population, the country is deemed to be safe, different groups within society receive a favourable treatment, people are presented as kind, hospitable, as well as good workers.⁵⁵ Several things influenced Bánó's approach to Mexico: his career plans (knowing that these publications could benefit him); a degree of disappointment in the United States; and his disdain for the imperial view. Later, as an employee of the Mexican Government, it also became "his duty" to present such an image of the country and to emphasise opportunities for cooperation. The Hungarian expressed more sympathy with and openness towards Mexicans than those writing before him and this resulted in a revised image of the nation.

⁴⁹ BÁNÓ 1896, 25.

⁵⁰ BÁNÓ 1890, 139.

⁵¹ BÁNÓ 1890, 139; 195.

⁵² BÁNÓ 1890, 108.

⁵³ See also BÁNÓ 1906.

⁵⁴ SZENTE-VARGA 2014, 127–135.

⁵⁵ BÁNÓ 1890, 101.

All of this, however, was undercut by World War I. For Hungarians, the United States continued to be more attractive during the entire period of the New Immigration, and emigration to Mexico remained marginal. Although more Hungarians arrived in Mexico, “no signs of significant Hungarian immigration were found”.⁵⁶ The country retained an image as politically unstable and dangerous, with only a sporadic Hungarian presence and no real opportunities.

Conclusion

When drawing conclusions based on images and perceptions expressed in travel writing one has to be careful to avoid overgeneralisations. As also noted above, the influence of a great variety of travel accounts may be assumed (with greater certainty in some cases as in others) but it is hard if not impossible to quantify such an effect. At the same time, we do not have a large number of accounts we could rely on and thus to a degree we are forced to draw conclusions using only a relatively low number of primary sources (especially regarding Mexico). We should also keep in mind one of the basic tenets of travel writing studies: travellers’ accounts tell just as much about their own background as the land and culture visited. This was the case in the travelogues presented above also: the writers’ preconceptions, social background, objectives with publications, and their general view of their own position in the New World clearly left a mark on the depiction of the Americas. What seems to be certain despite these limitations, however, is that travel writing served as an important source of information and it often reflected migration patterns and policies. This is the case with Hungarian travel writing on the Americas, as well. Travel writing worked in combination with a myriad of other factors and it often exaggerated or attempted to negate push and pull factors – economic, social and cultural considerations that are at play both in the mother country of immigrants and in their destination. The images of the United States and Mexico presented in Hungary (in diverse texts ranging from books, articles, and letters) could influence emigrants by shaping their perceptions of far-away lands, possible destinations, and available opportunities. Extending the basis of this research by including more, so far neglected or non-Hungarian travelogues, and by finding more opportunities to combine the methods and approaches of travel writing and migration studies, we might expand the conclusions of this project and extend it both in a geographical and temporal sense.

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⁵⁶ SZENTE-VARGA 2017, 36.

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Image of Hungarians in *Folha de São Paulo* between 1945 and 1955

Anna Urbanovics

Introduction

The years of the 20th century contained many significant historical turning points not only for European nations, but also for the whole world. Journalism and more diverse broadcasting spread these years, which could provide an insight view of the events even for citizens living in distant points of the World. Contemporary newspapers could draw a relatively accurate picture between distances, such as the Latin American and Central European countries. These broadcasting carried an outstanding importance those years, because telecommunication and the Internet were not yet spread. This news meant the single way for many broken families and compatriots living far from home to be informed about each other. It was especially true in case of the emigrated Hungarians who could get some news about the events of Hungary from these newspapers.

After these introductory thoughts, the paper tends to analyse contemporary articles to shape the image of Hungarians in Brazil based on the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper. First of all, I would like to find out what kind of news the readers could read about the Hungarian situation, which events were communicated in the press and which Hungarian successes were reported about the Hungarian migrants settled in Brazil. In addition, I will try to answer what kind of other Hungarian-related contents the Brazilians could read in the newspapers apart from political and economic news.

My choice fell between 1945 and 1955, because it was a very eventful and decisive period with respect to Hungarian history. World War II, the peace negotiations and the sovietisation of the Central European region took place in the course of these years. While the second half of the 1940s was mainly about political events in the analysed newspaper, the years between 1950 and 1952 were mostly about the successes of Hungarian migrants. In the early 1950s, Hungary's destiny and political situation was characterised by the development of the two poles. In 1953 and 1954, however, the glamour of Hungarian football and a number of sports achievements came to the fore, pushing to the background Cold War ideology. The selected period covers 10 years between two significant events, because it is after World War II, but before the revolution in 1956.¹

¹ There are antecedents of press research related to Brazil, Hungary and the Hungarian community living in Brazil. There is an interesting press analysis with respect to the year 1941. See SZILÁGYI 2000, 137–142. Her writing SZILÁGYI 1999, 15–22 is also press focused, but is based on Hungarian publications released in Brazil by the Hungarian community.

In the first part of my paper, I will present the story of the *Folha de São Paulo*, and then I give a short description of what kind of other literature I used during the research. After that I will write about the research method and some difficulties which I had to face with, and then summarise the statistical results concerning the articles. I also formulate some hypotheses, for which I seek the necessary evidence to justify or reject during the research. In the second part of my paper, I would like to provide an overview about the diplomatic relations between Hungary and Brazil in the given years, highlighting the factors which could influence the relations of the two countries. After drawing the general context, I will present the content of the articles in chronological order. Finally, I conclude the paper with a summary of the results.

Literature Review

The *Folha de São Paulo*, also called as *Folha* (Sheet) was founded on 19 February 1921. The founders were Pedro Cunha and Olival Costa, both journalists.

Over the years, the team of the newspaper released several dailies in parallel, the first of these was the *Folha da Noite* (Sheet of Night), followed by *Folha da Manhã* in 1925, and then by *Folha da Tarde* (1949). Later on, however, due to financial difficulties (costs of printing), the three journals had to be united by the decision of the owner so that the still-active *Folha de São Paulo* was created. The newspapers were initially read only by the *paulistanos*, inhabitants of the city of São Paulo, and later spread to big cities such as Rio de Janeiro and the capital Brasília.

The daily newspaper is still the main product of the Folha Group, but the company also owns a publishing, an online portal (UOL) and a data centre (Datafolha). In the years since its first edition, the journal has undergone several changes and phases, but its target audience remained the same. The articles of the newspaper focused primarily on the labourers and the farmers of São Paulo, but they were active also in promoting the rights of civil initiatives. The daily journal has always been politically independent, which has been the constant goal of the editors.

Folha de São Paulo has the third most readers with respect to the printed version, behind the *O Estado de São Paulo* and *O Globo*, and they are the leading Internet news portals in Brazil. The total circulation of the digital and printed version in November 2017 was 292,331 editions. It publishes more than 160 news per day.² With the articles and announcements of the daily newspaper, it seeks to inform the paulistanos about the events of everyday life. The journal has always been in competition with *O Estado de São Paulo* for the readers' attention, however their audience is different.

In 1931, Alves de Lima took the ownership rights, whose primary purpose was to protect the interests of the rural strata. At the time of Estado Novo (between 1937 and 1945), when Vargas was in power, the editorial duties of the news were taken by Hermínio Saccheta, who had been in jail as a political prisoner. In these years the government made increasing pressure over the press.

² *Site da Folha*, official website: www1.folha.uol.com.br/institucional/folha_com.shtml?fill=8 (Accessed: 06.09.2017.)

In the period between 1945 and 1955, the newspaper used the reports from major American and British international news companies. Therefore, some of the articles I have analysed include inaccuracies and time slips. The publication of international news on the page and the creation of a more accurate image was a response to the needs of the readers, because Europeans have made a significant part of São Paulo's population. I think that the analysis of the articles of the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper is also a good choice because the articles have been made to a large audience since the journal was significant even in the period between 1945 and 1955. In addition, the editors have put great emphasis on political independence, so the news contains a contemporary reportage as objectively as possible.

In addition to the aforementioned journal, my work was based on Judit Ágnes Szilágyi's book entitled *Metszéspontok, Tanulmányok a portugál és a brazil történelemről* [Intersections, Studies of Portuguese and Brazilian History] which helped shape the necessary form and structure in Hungarian image research.

Research Methodology

During my research, I used primary sources from the digital archive of *Folha de São Paulo*. The website of the archive is <http://acervo.folha.uol.com.br/>. On the website all the volumes of the newspapers have been uploaded since 1921, so I could get a relatively full picture of even old times such as the period between 1945 and 1955. On the website we can find the content by entering a page number, specifying an exact date, or even search by keywords. The results are then listed in a chronological order, which makes it easier to get to the articles which you are interested in.

Although the digital archive is a very useful tool for accessing earlier periods, and allows articles of the newspaper to be read internationally by anyone, I had to find solutions for a number of problems during my research.

First of all, although the website is free of charge and its full content is available, it requires the installation of some special reader applications, such as Java and Adobe Reader, beforehand. On the other hand, these programs have completely frozen and made the computer unusable in many cases, so reading articles has become quite time-consuming and slow due to continuous reboots.

As a second step, I had to select some keywords that only display the articles I searched for and help to determine my research scope. Different articles were found by the keywords "Hungria" (Hungary) or "húngaro" (Hungarian), and I also tried combinations, for example, "política húngara" (Hungarian politics). The search process was hampered by the shortcomings found in short and long vowel searches because, in many cases, the search engine did not detect long vowels due to poor readability. Finally, after trying several combinations, I chose "húngaro" as keyword, which resulted in a total of 1,141 hits from that period. I did not want to use combinations such as "política húngara" or "economía húngara" because it would have excluded articles which are not about political or economic events. This would have been a mistake in creating the full picture of Hungary. The findings were automatically sorted by yearly breakdown. My choice fell into the category of articles between 1941 and 1955, but I ignored articles between 1941 and 1944.

It was therefore challenging to find the articles because I did not want to exclude any valuable articles. However, the word “Hungria” would not have been a good choice, since many articles have only mentioned Hungary as part of a list and did not contain any significant references. Such articles were about, for example, World War II or the evaluation of Eastern European countries’ position after the war.

Thirdly, I would like to highlight the poor quality of pages, which in some cases distorted the articles to such a large extent that I could not read them or just the headlines were readable. The articles have been digitalised using a scanner, and most are quite worn and difficult to read despite the multiple zooming. The pages can be displayed by the Digital Pages application as images. They can only be read online, downloading or saving options are not available on the interface. With the built-in zoom feature, the loaded page can be readable, and the cursor helps to guide to the content we want to read. A small copy at the right corner of the screen shows the part of the page that is displayed on the screen.

The location of the searched keyword is highlighted by a red line on the page, which helps a faster, more focused reading. This is a very useful tool that has made my job easier.

The findings can be accessed through a 5–6-click selection system. In order to open the given article, we have to select the year groups, then years, months and page numbers. If we want to open a new article, the same selection process starts from the beginning, which is a meticulous work.

Statistics

It is worth observing the statistical data concerning the number of articles and the changes in the number of articles over the years because they let us have an overview on the events that were significant for the Western block countries.

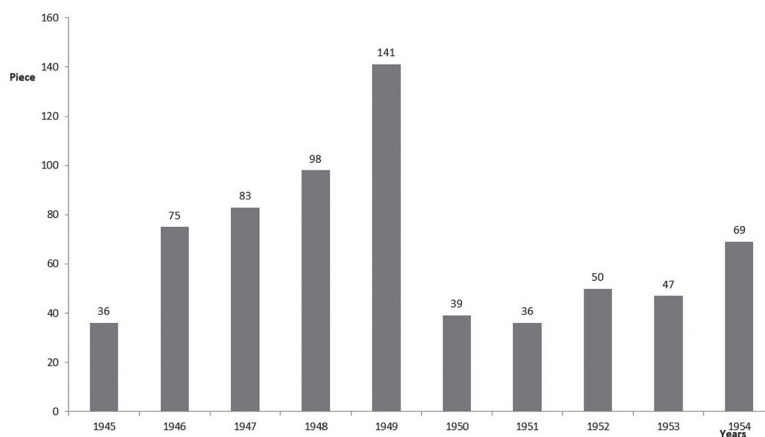


Figure 1.

The number of articles related to Hungary

Source: Compilation of the author based on <http://acervo.folha.uol.com.br/>.

After having chosen the keywords, I continued the research according to the word of “húngaro”. In this time period, 1941 and 1955 by the categorisation of the system, I got a total of 1,141 hits. From these, 674 items fell into my 10-year period selected. The breakdown by year of the 674 articles is shown in Figure 1.

It is clear that in the years of peace negotiations following the end of World War II, gradually more and more articles appeared on Hungarian events. The number of articles reached the highest point in 1949, which was also due to the fact that a great number of Hungarian migrants arrived in Brazil.

In the first years of the 1950s, relatively few articles (48 articles on average) were reported in the Brazilian newspapers about Hungary. Compared to 1949, we can experience a huge downturn. The trends regarding the number of articles published on Hungary over the years, compared to the 36 articles of 1945 are shown in Figure 2.

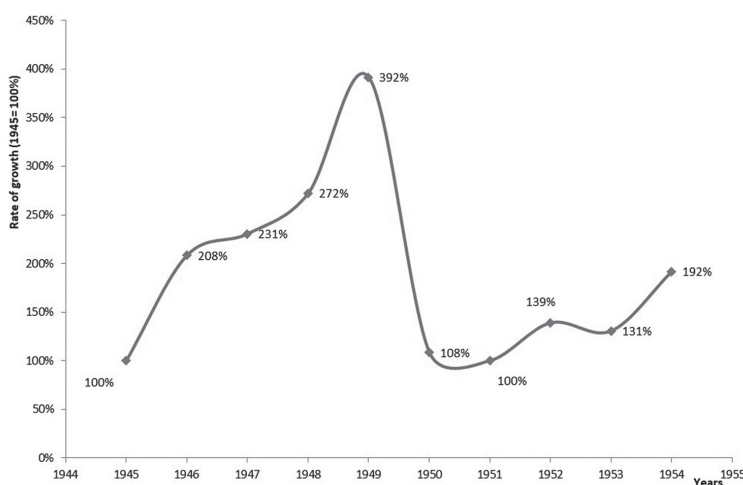


Figure 2.

The number of articles related to Hungary compared to the data of 1945

Source: Compilation of the author based on <http://acervo.folha.uol.com.br/>.

Assumptions

Before my research, I defined some of the assumptions which I will try to prove. Taking into consideration the general lines and political views of *Folha de São Paulo* and the political and economic situation of the time, the following hypotheses have been created.

1. The Brazilian press mainly broadcasted news on political and economic issues in Hungary, and a clear opposition to the Soviet views can be recognised in the articles.
2. The readers of the *Folha de São Paulo* were informed about the most significant political and economic events occurring in Hungary although the sources of broadcasting were limited in the 1950s.

3. In the 1950s, the readers of the *Folha de São Paulo* were informed about Hungarians living in Brazil. For example, Hungarian artists and athletes and innovations of Hungarian scientists were communicated.

A Brief Introduction of the Brazilian–Hungarian Diplomatic Relations

In order to properly interpret the articles of the *Folha de São Paulo*, it is essential to understand the general characteristics of the international context. It is important to have a brief overview of the development of Brazilian–Hungarian relations between 1945 and 1955. The official diplomatic relationship between Hungary and Brazil was first established in 1927, which was interrupted between 1942 and 1961. This break seems to be a long period especially compared to the relationship between Hungary and Argentina, where, after WW2, diplomatic relationship was re-established in 1949. Yet, in case of Mexico, the normalisation of official ties took an even longer time. After breaking diplomatic relations in 1941, contacts were only normalised in 1974.³

Although, from the aspect of Brazil, Hungary has never been considered a significant country as an independent state, Hungary has always prioritised good economic relations with the Latin American country.⁴ In those decades when diplomatic relations did not exist, the two countries were members of the two opposite blocs of the world. While Brazil became a member of the Western bloc, Hungary came under the influence of the Soviet Union.

Another aspect of the Brazilian–Hungarian relationship is the presence of the Hungarian migrants in Brazil who contributed to the Brazilian art and sport life, especially with respect to football. Approximately 40 to 50 thousand Hungarians arrived in Brazil in several waves, in particular in the 1920s, 1930s and after WW2. Many of them settled in São Paulo state.⁵

Articles

1945–1949

The vast majority of articles of 1945 report on the expulsion of the German army from the Hungarian capital that had been heavily bombarded and the last acts of war in WW2. For example, readers were informed that László Bárdossy, Hungarian Foreign Minister between February–April 1941 and Prime Minister (3 April 1941 – 7 March 1942) was sentenced to death at the end of 1945.⁶ The articles also reported that the Bergen-Belsen concentration

³ DÖMÉNY 2001.

⁴ SZILÁGYI 2009, 163–185.

⁵ PONGRÁCZ 2008, 33–37.

⁶ It was during his premiership that Hungary joined the aggression against Yugoslavia; and Jewish men were banned from serving in the regular armed forces and were obliged to perform labour service by government decree (April 1941); Hungary joined the war after the bombardment of Kassa, today Košice, Slovakia (June 1941); Act XV of 1942, the so-called Third Jewish Law was adopted and approximately 20,000 deported Hungarian Jews were massacred in Kamianets-Podilskyi, today's Ukraine (August 1941); and Hungary declared war on the United States (December 1941).

camp was liberated,⁷ where many Hungarian Jews had lost their lives. Survivors organised commemorations. With respect to post-war Hungary, it was written that the United Kingdom acknowledged the Hungarian Government as a democratically functioning one, yet it was already mentioned in the newspaper that the Soviet leadership was planning to take direct control over the country.

Articles of 1946 mostly deal with the increasing Soviet influence in Hungary (for example the arrival of Soviet soldiers, estimated by the newspaper to reach 700,000) and the peace negotiations. With respect to the latter, the main topics discussed were related to border changes and territorial claims. Hungarians living in Brazil could be particularly interested in this topic, especially if they had emigrated from territories which had been ceded to the neighbouring countries after WW1 and longed for the returning of these lands to Hungary, because the change of borders had been the principal cause of their emigration. They had problems in their new countries (loss of jobs, property, prestige; negative discrimination, etc.) and left Europe due to the above-mentioned reasons, none of which were directly connected to Hungary. Therefore, they tended to maintain Hungarian traditions and links with Hungary more than people who left directly Hungary for having suffered persecution in their homeland. It is interesting to mention that an article in *Folha* about the Central European peace negotiations was written by the Hungarian Ferenc Puszta. After the negotiations, however, the newspaper informed that no border changes would take place.

The articles also mentioned some of the Hungarian leaders. News included that former Prime Minister László Bárdossy asked for amnesty which was denied by the leadership – characterised as Communist by the newspaper –, and he was shot on 10 January 1946. Some extreme right politicians and Nazi collaborators were also executed, such as László Endre (1895–1946), State Secretary in the Ministry of the Interior, right hand of Adolf Eichmann in deporting Hungarian Jews. As regards post-war Hungarian leadership, readers were informed that Zoltán Tildy⁸ was elected President (1 February) and 3 days later Ferenc Nagy⁹ Prime Minister (4 February 1946).

Most of the 1947 articles were about the Hungarian elections, the severe economic crisis coupled with the enormous inflation the country was experiencing.¹⁰ The British and Americans were increasingly alarmed by the Hungarian political and economic situation and feared a Bolshevik takeover and dictatorial government. It was written that the United Nations called for intervention in the Hungarian crisis, fearing Hungary could turn into a military base for communists. The majority of the articles in *Folha de São Paulo* are

⁷ It was situated in Saxony, Germany and was liberated in April 1945 by British troops.

⁸ Zoltán Tildy (1889–1961). Prime Minister (1945–1946), President (1946–1948.) Member of the Independent Smallholders' Party. He was held under house arrest until 1956. He participated in the coalition government during the Revolution, and was sentenced in the Imre Nagy trial.

⁹ Ferenc Nagy (1903–1979). Prime Minister of Hungary, forced to resign at the end of May 1947. He emigrated and finally settled in the U.S. His memoirs are NAGY 1948.

¹⁰ The 1946 Hungarian inflation has been the worst in world history. 1 dollar was supposed to be worth 4,600,000 quadrillions of *pengő* by the end of July 1946. (ROMSICS 1999, 305.) "Due to ruinous hyperinflation, the *pengő* totally lost its monetary value by the summer of 1946 and in practice was no longer used as a currency, its place being taken by trading in old, foreign currencies or everyday consumer goods." (ROMSICS 1999, 246–247.) The new currency, *forint* was introduced in August 1946.

Portuguese translations of the articles taken from the English and American press, so we can feel the opinion of the Western countries about the Hungarian situation.

Three years after the end of World War II, the relationship of Hungary with its neighbours (friendship treaties, situation of minorities) was a recurrent topic in *Folha* (1948). It was reported that in Yugoslavia anti-Hungarian propaganda was sweeping, Hungarians in Vojvodina had to endure very harsh conditions. The newspaper also informed that Hungarian–Yugoslav relations were getting worse. The latter was actually part of a general trend, which characterised the whole Socialist camp and stemmed from the Soviet–Yugoslav rift.

There were also articles concerned about the situation of the Catholic Church in Hungary and the deteriorating relations between Hungary and the Holy See.¹¹ There was news about the introduction of a new agricultural policy in Hungary and the ban of different products, such as coffee, tea and cocoa which were imported from Latin America, and could affect Brazil.

The articles of 1949 focus on two show trials, the trial of Cardinal József Mindszenty and of former Minister of the Interior and outstanding member of the Communist Party, László Rajk. The decisions of the Rajk trial were announced by the *Folha de São Paulo* on the main page, stressing that the politician who assisted in establishing and deepening the Communist regime in Hungary received a death sentence in a conceptual lawsuit by the government he had helped. The deterioration of relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia led to the demonisation and condemnation of the Yugoslavian leadership in the Soviet bloc, and hence to Titoist trials, in which alleged allies of Tito were sentenced. In most cases, like Hungary, this occasion was used to get rid of real/potential internal enemies within the Communist Party. Rajk was condemned as a Titoist and executed. During the year, Hungarian–Yugoslav relations got radicalised and *Folha* reported that Hungarian border guards opened fire at the Hungarian–Yugoslavian border.

Relations between the Western and the Eastern bloc deteriorated gradually after World War II, and Brazil, as many other Latin American countries, joined the U.S.-led Western bloc. In the articles of the *Folha de São Paulo* an opposition to the Soviet views can be clearly seen.

1950–1952

In 1950 a relatively small number of political and economic articles appeared in the daily papers, the last article was in August. Next year, there was little news about Hungary, the majority of which were about the successes of Hungarians in Brazil. Most of the articles in 1952 were written about the further deterioration of Yugoslav–Hungarian relations, informing for example that Hungary accused Yugoslavia of espionage and officially declared the Yugoslav Ambassador *persona non grata*, that the assets of Yugoslavian companies

¹¹ The Apostolic Nuncio, Angelo Rotta was forced to leave in April 1945, having been declared *persona non grata*, thus bilateral relations broke. When József Mindszenty was elected Archbishop of Esztergom, he proposed the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the Holy See, to no avail. (BALOGH 2014, 94–96, 102–103; VÖRÖS 2017, 1–9.)

operating in Hungary were frozen, their operations were abolished, and the diplomatic ties were completely cut.¹²

In March 1952, the celebration of the 60th birthday of Mátyás Rákosi was reported upon and characterised as the culmination of the dictatorial system and of the personal cult that surrounded him.

1953–1954

In the years 1953 and 1954 most of the articles covered the successes of the Hungarian sport, with only a few political aspects. These included Cardinal Mindszenty (in jail), the death of Stalin, that Rákosi was called to Moscow and officially removed from his position, and that Imre Nagy took his place as leader of the country. In 1954 it was reported that Hungary asked for membership of the United Nations.¹³ There were articles accusing Hungarians being involved in espionage cases, as well as the arrest of a Hungarian Nazi group in São Paulo for racial discrimination.

In the early 1950s, as the countries of both blocs interrupted their diplomatic relationships, the newspapers could rely on only the most significant international broadcasting offices which were mainly owned by British and American companies. Even in these circumstances, the readers of the *Folha de São Paulo* were nonetheless informed about the most important political and economic events occurring in Hungary.

Successes of Hungarians

Sports

A significant part of the news was about the successes of Hungarian athletes, mainly football players. In the period between 1945 and 1955, the success of Hungarian football lived its glory internationally. Hungarian players became world-known specialists also in Latin American clubs, who wanted to learn the basics of European-style football.¹⁴ The sports section usually reported on the latest results of the Hungarian national league, both on the results of the matches already being played and the results of the expected matches. The names of the teams have been written incorrectly in many cases; not only were the teams of Budapest known, but also the teams of other cities like Szolnok or Eger. Newspaper readers were informed about the results of the league to play and bet for the next matches of the European leagues, including Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, English and German national leagues.

¹² Hungary constructed an expensive line of military defence on the border between 1951 and 1955, which it started to dismantle in the year of its completion due to Soviet–Yugoslavian rapprochement. Relations started to improve after the consolidation of the Kádár system, from the first half of the 1960s. For more details see BOTTONI 2010, 44–47.

¹³ Hungary became a UN member in 1955, as part of the so-called package deals.

¹⁴ SZENTE-VARGA 2015a, 157–172; SZENTE-VARGA 2015b, 343–354.

László Pákozdi (referred to as Pakosdy, Pakozdy in several articles) is one of the Hungarian football players mentioned in the *Folha* articles. He started his career in Hungary, then he moved to Latin America where he achieved significant successes in the Chilean national team, and later became coach and captain (in 1957). The *Folha de São Paulo* reported about Pákozdi as a player of the Botafogo team in Rio de Janeiro, where he was hired as a player and coach. He died in Santiago de Chile in 1993.¹⁵

1953 and 1954 were two years of glory in the history of Hungarian football, which made up a large part of the Hungarian-related articles in the international press. A memorable event in 1953 was that the Hungarian team managed to defeat the English national team at Wembley, which was a good sign before the World Cup. The Hungarian national team at the 1954 World Cup, which took place in Switzerland, and its captain, Ferenc Puskás, received the biggest attention; his play was in the limelight during the matches. During the World Cup, the Hungarian team met Brazil in the quarter-finals; the match ended with a 4–2 Hungarian victory. The final of the World Cup was played by Hungary and West Germany (2–3).

Arts

After World War II, Hungarians who were marching into Brazil met a well-functioning, prosperous and multi-decades-old Hungarian community, primarily in larger cities. Some Hungarians who had been forced to emigrate got involved in the arts, such as acting, and this success was also a success for the non-integrated, newly arrived. Here is an example of László Vajda, who performed as a theatre director in São Paulo on stage *Carne de Força*. *Folha de São Paulo* also published a biography of Gabriel Pascal, a film producer and director, who was also of Hungarian origin, though his name in the country is not known. He has also made a film version of famous pieces such as *My Fair Lady*, *Pygmalion*, or George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*. Gabriel Pascal enjoyed the popularity of the late 1930s so that, for example, in *Time Magazine*, in 1938, he was among the 10 most influential people in the world.¹⁶

The music world was another successful branch of art, where Hungarian artists managed to break into Latin America, including Brazil. A long description in a number of pages were dedicated to the world famous Zoltán Kodály and Béla Bartók. In one of their articles, they commemorated Ferenc Erkel, the composer of the Hungarian anthem. Though it is not mentioned in the article, it should be added, that Erkel's contemporary, the emigrant Ferenc Debály is the composer of the music of the Uruguayan anthem.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the Léner Fours, in the Latin American countries, were greeted by huge success and audiences. Their music and performances were presented in a special piece of praise. The Léner Four, also known as the Lehner String Quartet, was founded in 1918 under the leadership of Jenő Léner.¹⁷ The quartet also included József Smilovits, Sándor Róth and Imre Hartmann. The Quartet was one of the prestigious orchestras of

¹⁵ PINCÉSI 2014.

¹⁶ Gabriel Pascal film 2006.

¹⁷ MOLNÁR 1968.

the age, earning numerous awards for their work, such as the Beethoven cycle, recording all of Beethoven's works. Their pre-war successes centred on London, where they entered the Royal Albert Hall three times. In addition to London, they had concerts in many cities in Europe, Africa and America. They did not return home from their overseas tour and moved to Mexico City in 1941. From there, Latin American tours were organised, including the ones in Brazil. Soon, Jenő Léner moved to New York, where he reorganised the quartet with other members. He died in 1948, resulting in the disappearance of the new ensemble in the U.S., and therefore the orchestra in Mexico became the only Léner Quartet in the world.

The articles of *Folha de São Paulo* include the names of pianist György Sándor¹⁸ and Róbert Weisz, as well as the name of opera singer Endre Koréh.¹⁹ In addition to the musicians who performed the concerts, every Thursday at the São Paulo radio station, Gizella Thury²⁰ sang.²¹ Subsequent research revealed that she was also a member of the Hungarian Artists' Club founded on the 3rd of February 1955, a Hungarian community organising cultural programs. The club coordinated and supported the work of local artists, painters, actors, musicians, writers and journalists.

In the field of literature, the writing of René Fülöp Miller, *The Saints that Moved the World* can be mentioned, which has never been translated into Hungarian. The book was published in 1945 and is about five saints whose attributes, wills, love and meaning can give a good example of achieving human perfection.

Another article presented to the readers the piece *Mar da historia* by Paulo Rónai (Pál Rónai, 1907–1992). The talented young man had been discovered by poet Lőrinc Szabó. Various volumes containing poems translated by Rónai were published in pre-1945 Hungary.²² These formed the basis of his Latin American and in particular, Brazilian contacts. Rónai was deported to a work camp in 1940. He was fortunate enough to survive, and after being released, he emigrated to Latin America. He gained great popularity in Brazil with his translations.²³ He mastered French, Hungarian, Latin, Portuguese and Spanish.²⁴

There was a promotion for the book written by Arthur Koestler, *Age of Longing*, which is a “novel in the near future, in a society where the threat of nuclear destruction is a daily reality”.²⁵ These articles are all published as book reviews and allow a glimpse into the Hungarian literature for the general public.

¹⁸ György Sándor (1912, Budapest – 2005, New York). He studied at the Hungarian Academy of Music and was a disciple of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály. He moved overseas at the end of the 1930s and had a South American tour in 1939.

¹⁹ Endre Koréh (1906, Sepsiszentgyörgy – 1960, Vienna). Singer of the Hungarian Opera House, and following his emigration after WW2, of the Viennese Opera House.

²⁰ Gizella Thury (1912–?). She was an opera singer, a member of the Hungarian Opera House.

²¹ MMK s. a.

²² *Brazília üzen: mai brazil költők* [Brazilian Message: Contemporary Poets from Brazil] in 1939; *Santosi versek/Ribeiro Couto* [Poems from Santos by Rui Ribeiro Couto] in 1940, *Latin költők* [Latin Poets] in 1941.

²³ KABDEBÓ 2012.

²⁴ Some of his works were published in Brazil: RÓNAI 1945; RÓNAI 1975; RÓNAI 1981. He contributed to the promotion of Hungarian literature by translating various works into Portuguese and publishing them in Brazil. His translation of the *Paul Street Boys* by Ferenc Molnár became a classic (MOLNÁR 1958?). He also translated *The Tragedy of Man* by Imre Madách (MADÁCH 1980).

²⁵ KOESTLER s. a.

Mixed

There were some communications about scientific life in the daily: an article about promoting a book on the biography of Ignác Semmelweis and a photo report of the Nobel Prize winning chemist, György Hevesi, were published.

The Brazilians were enthusiastic not only for Hungarian art and sport but also for Hungarian cuisine. An announcement was made that the Ritz bar serves Hungarian goulash soup every Sunday, while *feijoada hungara* is on the menu on holidays.

I also found an advertisement of a Hungarian language course organised by a language school in São Paulo. I find it interesting because the languages of the major Western European states appear in the language schools, for example English, French, Spanish, Italian and Russian. Among the languages of the region was Romanian, which also presupposes the presence of a large number of Romanian immigrants in the country.

Results and Final Consequences

When reading the articles, it was clear that although Hungary and Brazil did not have any official ties between 1945 and 1955, the Brazilian press tried to provide some information about Hungarian events. Most of the reports were brief and limited to the most significant facts, but Hungarians living in Brazil could form an idea of the Hungarian political and economic situation. Although most articles had political bias because of the Cold War context, we could see a number of writings describing Hungarian successes, some related to Europe (for example, the Hungarian national soccer team) and some to Brazil (Hungarian immigrants).

My research work aimed to create the image of Hungary based on the articles of *Folha de São Paulo*. I used one of the most important organs of the Brazilian press, so I could offer an insight of what the Brazilians of those days could know about Hungary.

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The Early Signs of the Brazilian Church Policy Crisis: Carlos Kornis de Totvárád, a Hungarian Law Professor in the Brazilian Empire (1854–1862)

Ágnes Judit Szilágyi

During the reign of the Brazilian emperor Dom Pedro II (1831–1889), the conflict between ultramontanist and the reformist state on the question of civil marriage and registration intensified. This was the earliest instance of the conflict that later returned in 1872–1875 as the “Religious Affair” (*Questão Religiosa*) in the form of the struggle between state administration/Freemasonry and the Church.¹

The growing number of Protestant immigrants – largely German settlers and English merchants – arriving from the 1850s on, meant that mixed and non-Catholic marriages happened more often. This led to many peculiar incidents, and the legislators had to react to the situation; for instance, a contemporary newspaper article reports about a woman raised as a Lutheran but converted to Catholicism, after consulting with the Bishop of Rio de Janeiro, immediately got permission to marry. The only problem: she had been married for the past eleven years to a Swiss Lutheran man, whom she had married on 15 November 1845, in the chapel of the Brazilian Germans, in the presence of many witnesses including their own pastor. Dom Manuel do Monte Rodrigues de Araújo (1798–1863), Bishop of Rio de Janeiro, respected theologian, and a man influential in politics, invalidated the previous marriage in granting permission for a new one. He noted that the first wedding had not followed the regulations of the Council of Trent. The decision caused a public outcry; it offended popular morality, and violated the rules of natural cohabitation. The scandal thus created a more general anti-clerical sentiment.²

To prevent such cases, the imperial government addressed the question of civil marriage and its regulation. In 1856 the Council of State issued a decree qualifying marriage not just as a religious act and a sacrament, but also – following the French example – as a civil contract. In Brazil, however, state and church were not separated, so even raising the question led to protest from some representatives of the Catholic Church. The bishop

¹ See ALVES 2005.

² News on 6 March 1857 from *Correio Mercantil* in ÓNODY 1977, 333.

of São Paulo, Dom Antônio Joaquim de Mello (1791–1861), wrote to the emperor voicing his concerns in 1858.³

Bill No. 1144 (released on 11 September 1861, enacted in 1863), represented an attempt at compromise; however, it did not introduce civil marriage generally.⁴ It therefore failed to resolve the dilemma of mixed marriages. Although it allowed mixed marriages performed in Brazil, among non-Catholic foreigners to be registered, thus guaranteeing the legality, the indissolubility, and the terms of inheritance in these marriages, independent of the Catholic Church.⁵ The bill also ordered the births and deaths of non-Catholics to be registered.

A legal, theoretical debate, in which the followers of ultramontanist took great part, preceded the release of the bill.⁶ Augusto Teixeira de Freitas (1816–1886), one of the best-known and prestigious jurists of the era, studied the subject thoroughly from the perspective of family law and participated in the discussions. (Between 1855 and 1857, he systematised the operative common laws (*Consolidação das Leis Civis*) on behalf of the Brazilian imperial government; in 1859 Dom Pedro II ordered him to elaborate the new civil code (*Código Civil–Esboço*). Teixeira de Freitas encountered a jurist named Carlos Kornis de Totvárd who persistently debated him on the issue of civil marriage. Carlos Kornis de Totvárd, was born in Arad (Hungarian part of Austria–Hungary), as Károly Kornis (1822–1863). He became a law professor and emigrated to the Americas after the Hungarian revolution in 1848.

The dispute of the two jurists runs through issues of Brazilian newspapers, *Diário Mercantil* and *Diário do Rio de Janeiro* from August 1860. Teixeira represented the ultramontane view, in favour of marriage as a sacrament.⁷ Kornis, despite being Catholic, advocated civil marriage. He contended that the law should apply to all citizens uniformly, regardless of religion, and that it should recognise the indissolubility of marriages, even when the ceremony did not follow Catholic rules and traditions. His arguments caught the attention of the public not just in Rio de Janeiro, but also internationally. The Protestants of Brazil sent a message of congratulations to him, whereas the pope pronounced his text on mixed marriage anathema causing him to be the target of the intrigues of the Brazilian archbishops and priests.⁸

The Protestant community's letter of thanks (see Appendix I), signed by 585 people, came in an ornate file given to Kornis in 1861. The document was published by his biographer, Olivér Ónody (1911–1997), who was born in Eperjes (Hungarian part of Austria–Hungary) and settled in Brazil in 1946. Ónody held his inaugural lecture on Károly Kornis in 1975 in Rio de Janeiro, as he was invited to be an honorary member of the prestigious Brazilian Institute of Historical and Geographic Sciences, the *Instituto*

³ “...abro meu coração, pedindo de joelhos a V.M.I. que faça abortar na Assembleia Geral um projeto de lei, emanando do governo de V.M. com o fim de admitir-se no Brasil o casamento civil. Sou, Senhor, talvez o último dos bispos quem vem bradar contra esse passo tão oposto às leis da igreja e às suas dogmáticas definições [...] A Igreja, Senhor repugnara os casamentos de herejes com católicos; e o projeto de lei os legitima e os facilita.” ÓNODY 1977, 333.

⁴ This would happen in 1890, after the downfall of the monarchy, see Decree No. 181, 24.01.1890. ROCHA 1890.

⁵ OBEID 2013.

⁶ Ibid. For more information see NEDER–CERQUEIRA FILHO 2007.

⁷ See GALANTE 2008.

⁸ KORNIS 1890, 2.

Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro. The edited version⁹ of his study was published in 1977, and it is the most complete analysis and bibliography of the career and oeuvre of Károly Kornis.

The contemporary Hungarian public knew of the adventurous life of this 19th-century jurist. Kornis published articles about his experiences abroad in Hungarian journals (mainly *Alföld*), and soon after his death Endre Balogh wrote a commemorative article praising the jurist on the pages of *Arad*.¹⁰ Even decades later, national papers evoked his memory from time to time (*Vasárnapi Újság*, for example), and the authors of encyclopaedic works such as Sándor Márki (*Arad vármegye és Arad szabad királyi város monographiája*, 1892–1895; *Amerika s a magyarság*, 1893), József Szinyei (*Magyar írók élete és munkái*, 1899), Ferenc Agárdi (*Régi magyar világjárók*, 1955), Dénes Balázs (*Magyar utazók lexikona*, 1993), Péter Torbágyi (*Magyarok Latin-Amerikában*, 2004) documented his life, as well.¹¹

Kornis numbered among the many who emigrated from Hungary for political reasons following the 1848–49 revolution. “After the mournful days of the surrender at Világos, Károly Kornis was also sentenced to death, and because he was not captured, in 1850 he was hung in effigy. For a while he went into hidings in the Hungarian lowlands; later, as tutor to the Návény boys, he found refuge in Brussels, from where he escaped to London, and evaded the hangman’s noose.”¹² In the early 1850s, he lived in the United States (see Appendix II); he moved to Brazil in 1854, where he earned a naturalised citizenship (*naturalizado*) in 1856. For a couple of years he was the co-owner of a photography studio in Rio de Janeiro, shared it with István (Estêvão) Birányi (1815–1856),¹³ another Hungarian political refugee. The firm of Birányi & Kornis is part of the history of world photography. “In the 19th-century, Rio de Janeiro, the capital of the Empire and a vibrant economical and artistic center, became invariably the main spot for making, selling and learning photography in Brazil. [...] In the 1840s and 1850s [...] some of the most outstanding photographers were the American Augustus Morand, the German Francisco Napoleão Bautz, the Swiss Louis-Abraham Buvelot, the Portuguese Joaquim Insley Pacheco and the Hungarians Bira[n]yi and Kornis.”¹⁴

The above-mentioned Insley Pacheco (1830–1912) photographer, draftsman and painter was a well-known figure in the art circles of the Empire and a favourite at the court of Pedro II. He too, had apprenticed in New York in 1849–1851. In his memoirs he mentions Kornis as a fellow apprentice under Matthew Brady (1822–1896), who later became known for his photographs of the American Civil War.

In his unpublished diary Károly Kornis refers to the events: “For seven months I worked as assistant to a daguerreotypist, who taught me the profession. I enrolled together with my fellow countryman named István Birányi, who used his money to purchase equipment and appurtenances so that casting our lot together we could travel around the world while working side by side.” Their studio in Rio de Janeiro began to prosper after the two Hungarian photographers were commissioned to execute portraits of the Emperor, and

⁹ ÓNODY 1977.

¹⁰ BALOGH 1863, 2–3.

¹¹ See also SZILÁGYI 2016, 207–219.

¹² KORNIS 1890, 1.

¹³ ÓNODY 1977, 291–292.

¹⁴ HANNAVY 2013, 206.

their series of portraits were distributed throughout Brazil. After visiting the ruler on five occasions and preparing a series of twelve photo portraits, Kornis recorded his impressions as follows:

“Dom Pedro is one of the most cultured and admirable individuals among the crowned heads of our time. I see him as a majestic human being who aroused our sincere admiration. He speaks French, German, Latin, Spanish, and Italian, in addition to Portuguese, his mother tongue. [...] When we first visited him, he wore a black frock coat and pantaloons, with a white vest, displaying his decorations on the left side. He is of a manly bearing, tall and well-built, with a fine chestnut color beard and mustache, and blond hair. His complexion is as white as a maiden’s and his voice is high-pitched. At first he was reserved [...] but by now we are admitted to his exclusive company and are allowed to approach him with confidence.”¹⁵

From 1859 to 1861, Kornis worked as a language instructor, teaching mostly Latin, but also French and German, and composed a Latin grammar book (*Institutiones Grammaticae Latinae*, 1857). From 1861 he imported and traded Hungarian wines. In 1862 he returned to Europe, although in bad health. He passed away in Györök (village near Arad) in January 1863, of tuberculosis at the age of 41.¹⁶

Kornis conducted business activities only to make a living in Brazil; what interested him was his original profession: law. He remained productive in this field, despite working in a foreign language. He published pamphlets in Portuguese and Latin on immigration and family law.¹⁷ His articles appeared in the press and, according to the catalogue of the Brazilian senate’s library, he collected his writings in individual volumes.¹⁸ These volumes show how Kornis debated other prestigious personages of the era, in addition to Teixeira de Freitas. He did so as an outsider, not caring about the inner hierarchy of the Brazilian jurist community. Determined, sober and accurate, he argued on the side of non-Catholics (mainly immigrants), trying to protect their rights against the ultramontane view.

His tractate entitled *O casamento Civil, ou o direito do poder temporal em negócios de casamentos: discussão juridico-histórico-theologica em duas partes* [Civil Marriage, or the Secular Authority on Marital Cases: Legal, Historical and Theoretical Pamphlet] appeared in two parts: Volume 1 was released in 1858, Volume 2 the next year. Kornis based his reasoning on the “laws concerning marriage, traditions and natural law” and argued against “the right reverend Prebendary Joaquim Pinto de Campos”,¹⁹ who viewed Protestants as “abominable dissenters”. (Joaquim Pinto de Campos [1819–1887] published his work dealing with the question of marriage, for which Pope Pius IX awarded him the title

¹⁵ The diary excerpts are quoted in ÁCS 1964. I am grateful to my student Ádám Balogh for calling my attention to the articles of the “Vasváry” Collection.

¹⁶ ÓNODY 1977 *passim*.

¹⁷ For example KORNIS DE TOTVÁRAD 1856. See TORBÁGYI 2004, 36.

¹⁸ See Senate s. a.

¹⁹ “Apresenta argumentos do direito natural, os costumes e leis [...] com a refutação da primeira these do Illmo. e Revmo. Sr. Cônego Joaquim Pinto de Campos.” KORNIS DE TOTVÁRAD 1858–1859, Vol. I.

of Papal Prelate.²⁰) Kornis, an immigrant, replied that “the Brazilian constitution applies to all citizens of the empire, including non-Catholics, so no person has the right to call them abominable dissenters in the Brazilian parliament. If the right reverend Prebendary believes that his expressions were appropriate he may use them on his pulpit, but he has to curb his emotional words, respecting the constitution if he wants to speak as a member of legislation”.²¹

In 1860 Kornis released another pamphlet, *Refutação da doutrina do dr. Braz Florentino Henriques de Souza apresentada na sua obra “O casamento civil e o casamento religioso”* [Refutation of the Theory of Dr. Braz Florentino Henriques de Souza, which He Set Forth in His Work “On Civil and Ecclesiastical Marriage”]. Kornis’s criticism targeted Henriques de Souza (1825–1870), a professor of the Recife law faculty and a respected intellectual within the North Brazilian ultramontane movement. Souza later took part in the revision of the civil law code assembled by Teixeira de Freitas, and ultimately became governor of Maranhão Province. In his work on civil and ecclesiastical marriage, Souza reacted to a bill submitted by the imperial government to the House of Representatives on 19 July 1858 (see Appendix III), calling it anti-Catholic and even unconstitutional. He referred to Protestantism as “the most sanguinary enemy of Brazil’s religion, the main cause behind the people’s disharmony, so all in all as something that entirely goes against them, and rejects any order or authority”.²²

Kornis later published a supplement, *Reflexões sobre a emenda substitutiva* [Reflections on the Planned Amendment]. At nearly 100 pages it is still shorter than either of his two preceding volumes. The work’s starting point is the issue of family law, which had been a topic for several administrations, and the debates on the bill released in 1858. Kornis criticises the bill outlined by the then-Minister of Justice, João Lustosa da Cunha Paranaguá (1821–1912) and his followers, reconfiguring one presented in 1860 by Joaquim Vilella de Castro Tavares (1816–1858), representative from Pernambuco, and professor at the law faculty of Recife. Kornis accused the minister of laxity, pointing out that he was still influenced by ultramontanism, and thus not writing a proper law leading to a consensus. He also states that the changed draft does not guarantee the indissolubility of the marriage in case a spouse later converts, and thus (he argues), the draft goes against the morals of natural law, as well as the traditions of the people.

Károly Kornis was not the only one who thought this way; the emperor and many enlightened Brazilian Catholic intellectuals (for example J. T. Nabuco de Araújo, 1813–1878) held similar views.²³ Kornis was nonetheless subject to many attacks, some personal.

²⁰ On Campos, see WILSON 1978, *passim*.

²¹ “A Constituição do Brasil, recebendo como cidadãos do imperio, os membros tambem não catholicos, julgou-os dignos de serem filhos da grande familia social, e sendo assim, ninguem tem o direito de insulta-los no sanctuario do parlamento brasileiro, com a gratuita expressão, de serem elles de crenças abominaveis. S. Revmo. podera usar de semelhante linguagem, se a julgar conveniente, no seu pulpito sagrado, mas tem a refreiar a violencia das suas palavras quando quizer fallar como guarda da Constituição, e membro da legislação civil.” (Original orthography.) KORNIS DE TOTVÁRAD 1858–1859, 125.

²² “...sendo o protestantismo «o inimigo mais encarniçado da religião do Estado, é tambem o maior dissolvente dos povos, o contraste, a negação, em summa, de toda autoridade e de toda ordem».” The words of Souza in KORNIS DE TOTVÁRAD 1860c, 1.

²³ GALANTE 2008, 113.

They questioned²⁴ his professional competency, his command of the language, and his Catholicism. His notoriety spread to Europe: the Lisbon-based newspaper *Journal de Commercio* reacted to his works negatively in an anonymous article. It pained him that his mother tongue, “magiar” was labelled barbaric.²⁵ Ónody notes in his essay that the rapid worsening of Kornis’s health paralleled the coarsening of the debate; eventually he had to leave Brazil.²⁶ Gizlene Neder, a modern historian, calls Kornis a rare gem (“uma joia rara”) of Brazilian intellectual life. She emphasises that even today readers cannot find serious mistakes in his texts, either professionally or linguistically.²⁷

Károly Kornis touched on his host country’s most crucial juridical and political issue with good sense. With his professionalism and enthusiasm for debate and equality, he influenced the major Brazilian legislative project of the 1850s, the elaboration of the civil code, and especially laws concerning family law and civil marriage. The unfolding argument about legal theory sparked many disagreements between the Catholic Church and the Brazilian Government; ultramontanists and liberal-conservative reformists clashed in polemics that foreshadowed the crisis in the church policy of the 1870s. The law of 1861 created a compromise between the two sides that also marked a small step toward the separation of church and state. Sadly Kornis, who was the greatest advocate for the rights of Protestants and immigrants, did not live to see the completion of that project.

Appendix I

The text of the letter of thanks given to Dr. Carlos Kornis de Totvárd in 1861 by the Protestant community of Rio de Janeiro.²⁸

“Os Protestantes, o Brasil e com eles os respeitadores da santidade do matrimônio, da lei igual e idêntica para todos, da liberdade da consciência e do progresso do gênero humano, reconhecem e agradecem ao Ilmo. Sr. Dr. Carlos Kornis de Totvárd a sua cooperação valiosa, espontânea e generosa, para acelerar o final triunfo da justiça e da razão na lei matrimonial do Brasil, 1862.

Ao Ilmo. Sr. Dr. Carlos Kornis de Totvárd.

Ilmo. Sr., os protestantes do Rio de Janeiro não têm palavras suficientes para exprimir quanto são gratos a V.S. por ter-se tão generoso e desinteressadamente dignado empregar a sua valiosa pena em prol do que eles têm de mais caro e sagrado, a honra e a tranquilidade das suas famílias. Se até aqui, por um fato anomalo no século e no país livre em que vivemos, cuja constituição garante a liberdade de crença, os matrimônios entre pessoas não católicas e os casamentos mixtos careciam de garantia nas leis, principalmente pelo que respeita a incontestável validade dos mesmos com as suas naturais conseqüências,

²⁴ TAUNAY 1895, 240.

²⁵ NEDER 2007, 32–33.

²⁶ ÓNODY 1977, 320–323.

²⁷ “O jurista húngaro meteu-se de corpo e alma num debate ácido, espinhoso, e deixou como contribuição o melhor de si: a luta política e ideológica pela modificação da legislação civil brasileira.” NEDER 2007, 23. See also SILVA 2016.

²⁸ ÓNODY 1977, 354–355.

semelhante falta de garantia acha-se hoje como que sancionada por uma lei especial. Até aqui a bigamia e a desmoralização do vínculo matrimonial entre os protestantes residentes no Brasil não se firmavam senão no abuso dos princípios gerais de direito e da moral, que regem a matéria, visto que nenhuma lei especial a regulava. Hoje esse estado de coisas já se não pode classificar de abuso, pois votou-se a respectiva lei, porém – com dor o dizemos – ela não obsta à reprodução desses imoralidades. Membro da igreja católica romana, mas levando no entanto por uma generosa tolerância, por um vivo sentimento de justiça e incitado por essa natural simpatia que prende as almas bem formadas ao país, aos homens e às coisas, no meio dos quais vivem, teve V. Sa. glória de firmar na consciência pública a convicção da insuficiência dessa nova lei, prestando assim um eminente serviço à verdade, à justiça, à causa do progresso, da tolerância e ilustração religiosa, e contribuindo à divulgação e ao triunfo dos princípios do direito e da boa moral. Depois dos judiciosos trabalhos de V.S., sobre a questão, qualquer equívoco tornar-se-á impossível. Sabem hoje todos, emigrantes e emigrados, a lei sob cujo domínio têm de viver. Embora um zelo mal entendido se tivesse empenhado em confundir, escurecer e equivocar a questão, todo esse esforço se desvirtuou ante o modo por que V.S., dotado de profundos conhecimentos jurídicos, de vasta erudição e invencível lógica, destruiu na opinião pública os argumentos em contrário. Cumpra a nós, espectadores, mais interessados da luta, gratos pelos esforços de V.S., pedir-lhe que aceite esta fraca manifestação de nosso respeito, em testemunho deste seu nobre empenho, e do nosso eterno reconhecimento. Agora que antes mesmo de ser posta em vigor, já se conhece publica e notoriamente quanto a lei, com que deviam ser resolvidas as justas queixas de nosso culto, é insuficiente e irrisória, como a considerou mesmo um distinto membro do Senado brasileiro, na sessão de 9 de agosto próximo passado: agora essa lei não poderá deixar na incerteza a mais ninguém, nem aos colonos, nem aos colonizadores. E nós podemos nutrir justas esperanças de que graças à ilustração, perseverança e abnegação de V.S. estes últimos não tardarão em convencer-se com o tempo de que seria desconhecer os preceitos da justiça e equidade, se deixassem de estabelecer no país uma lei sobre o casamento, que dê garantias eficazes e não sujeitas a capciosas interpretações, aos direitos dos cônjuges e da prole das nossas famílias, satisfazendo assim às exigências da época, e provando a todos, de modo não equívoco, ser uma verdade o art. 5. da constituição do Império, que permite todas as outras religiões, contanto que o seu culto se pratique em edifícios sem forma exterior do templo.

Rio de Janeiro, 10 de setembro de 1861.

Os protestantes residentes no Rio de Janeiro (Seguem as assinaturas.)”

Appendix II

Transcript of Mary Hirschfeld, Hungarians Look at S. America. *Plain Dealer*, (Cleveland, OH) July 29, 1962. (“Vasváry” Collection, Somogyi Library, Szeged.)

“The new fascination with Latin America, the course of this modern destiny, the history of its development, has even engaged the attention of the Association of Hungarian Students in North America.

Dr. Elemer Bako of Columbia University has delved into research to find out what bonds *Hungarians* established with that part of the word and his findings have been published by that organization.²⁹

He discovered that the 16th century Hungarian was the first one to leave a record of that interest. He was Maximilianus Transylvanus (1490–1536), a diplomat who served in The Netherlands. He wrote about the voyage of Ferdinand Magellan around Cape Horn, the southern tip of South America. A relative of Max's wife had financed that first globe-girdling journey.

Baron Janos Retkay [Rátkay] entered the Jesuit order in 1664 and went to Mexico to convert the Indians in the 17th century. In the 18th century Laszlo Orosz, another Jesuit, spent 42 years teaching in Argentina and Paraguay.

THAN THERE WAS Karoly Kornis, who founded the first Hungarian newspaper³⁰ in the United States, in 1852 [1853], according to Dr. Bako, later Kornis went to Rio de Janeiro where he wrote a book on inheritance laws³¹ and another on the civil marriage laws of Latin America.

Ede Szenger, a medical doctor, was a physician at the Mexican court of the Emperor Maximilian, the tragic Hapsburg prince.

Laszlo Madarassy (1840–1893), a popular writer crossed the ocean for a visit to Panama, Colombia, Peru, Chile and Bolivia then wrote several books concerning his experiences. He was one of the Hungarian writers to produce fiction about Latin America for Hungarian youth.”

Appendix III

Bill Submitted by the Imperial Government to the House of Representatives Concerning Civil Marriage, 19 July 1858.³²

„Proposta do governo em negocio de matrimonio apresentada à Assembléa Geral Legislativa em 19 de Julho de 1858

Art. 1.º Os casamentos entre pessoas, que não professão a religião catholica apostolica romana, serão feitos por contracto civil, podendo seguir-se o acto religioso, se este não tiver sido celebrado antes.

Art. 2.º O casamento civil tambem poderá ser contrahido quando um dos contractantes fôr catholico e outro não. Fica porém entendido que se nessa hypothese preferirem celebrar o casamento religioso aute a Igreja catolica, o poderão fazer independentemente do contracto cilvil, produzindo o religioso além do viuculo espiritual para o catholico, todos os effeitos civis para ambos tão completamente como se tivesse havido contracto civil.

²⁹ BAKO 1962, 12.

³⁰ *A magyar számuizöttek lapja* (New York) October–November, 1853. Examples are in the National Széchényi Library, FM3/11443. For a description see LIPTAY 1871, 358–359.

³¹ KORNIS DE TOTVÁRAD 1856.

³² KORNIS DE TOTVÁRAD 1860, 269–270.

Art. 3.º O contracto civil seguido da commuoicação dos esposos, assim na hypothese do art. 1.º, como do art. 2.º, torna o matrimonio indissolúvel, e produz todos os effeitos civis, que resultão do que é contrahido segundo as leis e costumes do Imperio.

Art. 4.º Os casamentos mixtos ou entre pessoas estranhas á Igreja catholica, *bona fide* contrahidos antes da publicação da presente lei por escriptura publica, ou celebrados na fôrma de alguma religião tolerada se considerão *ipso facto* ratificados para os effeitos civis, como se tivessem sido contrahidos ou celebrados na fôrma prescripta para os casamentos civis uma vez que a isso se não opponhão impedimento taes, que os deverão embaraçar, segundo o que houver regulado o governo em conformidnde do § 1.º do art. 6.º

§ Unico. Dentro porém de um anno, contado da publicação da lei, será livre dissolvê-los, quando o permita a religião segundo a qual se tiver celebrado a cerimonia religiosa. Passado este periodo ficarão sendo indissolúveis.

Art. 5.º São reconhecidos válidos e produzirão todos os effeitos civis os casamentos celebrados fôra do Imperio, segundo as leis do paiz onde tiverem sido contrahidos.

Art. 6.º É o governo autorizado:

§ 1.º Para regular os impedimentos, nullidades, divorcios *quoad thorum*, e fôrma da celebração dos referidos casamentos, como contractos civis.

§ 2.º Para organizar e regular o registro dos mesmos casamentos, assim como dos nascimentos que delles provierem.” (Original orthography.)

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Aspectos interculturales de la Guerra del Paraguay: El papel de los húngaros en el primer conflicto moderno de América Latina (1864–1870)

Jorge Kristóf Asqui

La primera guerra moderna en América Latina

La guerra moderna se caracteriza por elementos decisivos que son productos del impacto de la revolución industrial. Las nuevas tecnologías influyeron en la mejora de nivel de vida. No obstante, aparte de los frutos del progreso, las tecnologías afectaron la forma de la destrucción, aumentando los daños en los conflictos bélicos. La naturaleza de la nueva guerra, se cristalizó en la Guerra Civil Norteamericana (1861-1865), cuyos elementos básicos eran el uso del telégrafo, la aplicación de los ferrocarriles, la aparición del ejército en masa y la táctica de la guerra posicional que tendría un papel prominente en la Primera Guerra Mundial. Según la ciencia militar la Guerra del Paraguay tiene la misma naturaleza, razón por la cual es considerada como la segunda guerra moderna en la historia mundial después de la Guerra Civil Norteamericana.¹ Las pérdidas, en valor promedio, revelan la magnitud de los hechos: 50.000 soldados brasileños, 18.000 soldados argentinos, 5.000 soldados uruguayos y 278.000 soldados y civiles paraguayos (el 62% de la población total paraguaya).²

Para definir la duración de la guerra, se puede distinguir diferentes etapas. La definición es siempre el resultado de las aproximaciones de los historiadores que examinan el fenómeno de varios puntos de vista. Los actos bélicos duraban de 1864 a 1870, que se conoce como la Guerra del Paraguay. Los paraguayos utilizan su término propio, llamando el conflicto como la Guerra Grande. El comienzo de la guerra tenía un carácter geográfico reducido, ya que Paraguay, atacando Brasil por el Mato Grosso, se enfrentó exclusivamente a su vecino norteamericano. Brasil, con una amenaza armada que debilitó su seguridad, decidió fortalecer una diplomacia multilateral por medio de negociaciones, cuyo resultado era la elaboración del Tratado de la Triple Alianza en el primero de mayo de 1865, formando un bando militar con

¹ DUPUY - DUPUY 1993, 898–900, 998–999.

² Se desarrolla un debate entre los historiadores respecto a las pérdidas humanas. Vera Blinn Reber cuenta con una población paraguaya entre 285.715 y 318.144, y con una pérdida total entre 24.286 y 58.857. Las investigaciones de Thomas L. Whigham y Barbara Potthast definen una población total paraguaya entre 420.000 y 450.000 y una pérdida total entre 141.351 y 166.351. Fuente: DORATIOTO 2012, 456–457. Otras cifras demuestran otros porcentajes: población total — 525.000, sobrevivientes — 221.000 de los que 29.000 eran hombres. KOHN 1986, 335.

Argentina y Uruguay (llamados como los aliados) para poner fin a la invasión paraguaya y derrotar el Gobierno paraguayo, conservando las condiciones geopolíticas favorables del país lusófono en la región platina. Con el tratado la guerra se amplió en el espacio regional y se desembocó en una guerra total de 1865 a 1870, en la Guerra de la Triple Alianza. Derrotadas las fuerzas paraguayas en 1870, los aliados ocuparon el país por un tiempo largo hasta terminar con las negociaciones e iniciar la evacuación del país en 1876. Por esta razón existe la expresión el Conflicto Paraguayo que abarca la guerra 1864-1870 y la etapa de la ocupación 1870-1876.

Paraguay en la rivalidad geopolítica

El Estado paraguayo se formó como un Estado del siglo XIX sin salida al mar,³ en una zona mesopotámica entre los ríos Paraguay y Paraná en medio de la Cuenca del Plata, en América del Sur, según la terminología en inglés como un *landlocked country*. El territorio se liberó del imperio colonial español en el año 1811 que fue seguido por otro tipo de lucha para defenderse de las aspiraciones centralistas de Buenos Aires, actual capital de Argentina que también llevaba a cabo una lucha independentista contra el dominio español, así como de las reclamaciones limítrofes de Brasil, el país gigantesco suramericano que se independizó del imperio colonial portugués. Es decir, terminada la fase independentista, los países latinoamericanos se involucraron en enfrentamientos armados entre ellos para ampliar así los territorios por cuenta de los demás, introduciendo el período de rivalidad, una competición territorial por la consolidación de la soberanía.

Parece ser, que los sucesivos enfrentamientos armados entre los vecinos de la región suramericana generaban una situación política tan inestable que requería una mano dura en los gobiernos de entonces, cada cual con la intención de preservar la integridad del territorio soberano. En el caso de Paraguay, en los tiempos de José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia (1814-1840) el poder ejecutivo se transformó en una rama de poder dominante que se endureció claramente con la instalación de la institución del Dictador Perpetuo en 1816. El *landlocked country* se encontraba en una posición aislada, pero también alejada de rivalidades territoriales. La única cosa que le faltaba era la independencia de jure, ya que las grandes potencias ni siquiera reconocieron su estatus. Paraguay de facto era un país soberano, pero sin garantías de parte de los países vecinos y europeos.

Tras el fallecimiento del Dictador Perpetuo en 1840, en un período de transición, se creó una presidencia estable bajo Carlos Antonio López (1844-1862), que llevaba una línea política que favoreció la apertura política y económica al extranjero. Las relaciones diplomáticas se intensificaron y los países vecinos y europeos reconocieron la independencia del país platino paulatinamente.⁴ Durante la presidencia de Carlos Antonio López, bajo la práctica política de la apertura, los emigrantes europeos eran recibidos con entusiasmo,

³ Paraguay fue el único país en América del Sur que no poseía territorios abiertos al mar hasta la Guerra del Pacífico (1879-1883) en que Bolivia perdió el litoral del Pacífico a favor de Chile y se convirtió en un país mediterráneo.

⁴ El primer país en reconocer Paraguay fue Brasil (14 de septiembre de 1844) para frenar la política expansionista del dictador argentino Juan Manuel de Rosas, líder deseoso de formar de Paraguay una zona de influencia de Buenos Aires. DORATIOTO 2012, 27.

pioneros que contribuyeron a la construcción de la nación paraguaya. Además, en el resto de los países de la Cuenca del Plata también llegaron emigrantes de diferentes partes del mundo, entre ellos húngaros que desempeñaron un papel importante en la memoria colectiva de aquellos países, sobre todo en la memoria de la guerra más sangrienta en la historia de América Latina,⁵ que fue iniciada por la razón de la política intervencionista del siguiente presidente, Francisco Solano López (1862-1870) que, cambiando la estrategia de su predecesor (política defensiva), optó por el empleo de las fuerzas armadas en la diplomacia regional platina, en primer lugar contra Brasil.⁶

El objetivo del ensayo es presentar el papel de los emigrantes húngaros en el contexto de la Guerra del Paraguay, un evento histórico poco conocido en Hungría.⁷ Mi hipótesis es que el impacto intercultural de los emigrantes húngaros en la primera guerra moderna de América Latina y en la posguerra, tanto en el sentido militar como civil, y su contribución al éxito del proceso de la construcción de los Estados-Naciones en la época eran significantes. La naturaleza de la investigación requiere el uso de las fuentes primarias y secundarias. El ensayo se ocupa del análisis de la carrera de cuatro personas (Francisco Wisner, István Geőcze szendrői, Juan Czetetz, Sándor Asbóth nemeskéri),⁸ eligiendo el teatro bélico como punto de conexión. Por esta razón, aparte de las obras básicas de László Szabó (1982) y Péter Torbágyi (2004), es imprescindible utilizar fuentes especiales para el descubrimiento de cada una de las cuatro personas. En el caso de Wisner el estudio de Günter Kahle (1984) y las investigaciones del historiador Luis Verón (2000, 2013) son los pilares. En el caso del desconocido Geőcze, su obra, que relata su estadía en Brasil en los tiempos de la guerra,⁹ está disponible y sirve de una fuente directa así como las memorias propias de Czetetz. La obra básica de Ádám Anderle (1970) refleja las actividades de Czetetz, el forjador del Estado-Nación argentino. La página web de Office of the Historian of Department of State of the United States of America¹⁰ enumera los datos básicos de las actividades de Asbóth en el servicio exterior estadounidense, período en que se desarrolló la guerra. Además, los trabajos de Béla Várdy (2000, 2012) y József Solymosi (2003, 2012) complementan los datos con las correspondencias de Asbóth y las fuentes estadounidenses. El análisis de la carrera de los cuatro emigrantes se realiza en diferentes capítulos, concluyéndolos en un resumen para evaluar el peso intercultural de los cuatro en el conflicto y posguerra.

Paraguay en camino hacia la guerra y el ingeniero húngaro

Debido a la política aperturista de Carlos Antonio López, los emigrantes europeos eran bien recibidos como Francisco Wisner de Morgenstern (Wisner Ferenc). En las fuentes de

⁵ KOHN 1986, 335.

⁶ BETHELL 1996, 4.

⁷ En el siguiente ensayo de enfoque geopolítico se puede consultar la evolución de la guerra en húngaro: ASQUI 2012, 87–96.

⁸ Ádám Anderle ofrece una visión general con respecto a la presencia de los húngaros en América Latina apesar de que no se encarga del examen detallado de las cuatro personas escogidas para el presente ensayo. ANDERLE 2008, 174–181.

⁹ ASQUI – SIPOSNÉ KECSKEMÉTHY 2013, 43–48 analiza el libro de Geőcze.

¹⁰ Oficina del Historiador del Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos.

lengua húngara y española las informaciones sobre la descendencia y la juventud de Wisner son escasas.¹¹ Un estudio en alemán en las publicaciones del Archivo Estatal Austríaco,¹² nos cuenta más detalles de la etapa temprana de la vida del todavía desconocido húngaro.

Nació el 31 de julio de 1804 en Sásová (en húngaro Zólyomszászfalu), en la actual Eslovaquia, de Éva Hassko, una mujer católica soltera. En el certificado de bautismo emitido el 3 de febrero de 1807 se menciona el nombre del padre: Franz Wisner von Morgenstern, prefecto de cámara en Liptovský Hrádok (Liptóújvár en húngaro) en la actual Eslovaquia y ennoblecido en 1791.¹³ No existe ningún documento sobre la adopción. Parece que el hijo ilegítimo no heredaba el título de nobleza, pero su padre a partir de 1824 le apoyaba en poder estudiar en la academia de minería (Bergakademie Schemnitz en alemán y Selmechányai Akadémia en húngaro) en lo que es hoy Banská Štiavnica, Eslovaquia.¹⁴ A finales de 1827, después de un período escolar inquietante con problemas financieros, terminó sus estudios.¹⁵

Viajó a Polonia y participaba en el Levantamiento de Noviembre de 1830-1831 al lado de los polacos y en contra del Imperio ruso, pero, por el levantamiento ser aplastado, emigró a París.¹⁶ En Londres presuntamente conoció al Marqués de Barbacena, diplomático de Brasil, que reclutó a algunos voluntarios europeos para derrotar las revueltas locales brasileñas. No se sabe si de esta manera llegó a la América del Sur (Minas Gerais y/o Rio Grande), pero en 1842 llegó a Uruguay, desde donde fue a Argentina para realizar operaciones militares en la guerra entre los federales (partidarios de Juan Manuel de Rosas) y los unitarios (opositores del dictador mencionado).¹⁷ Abandonando el teatro argentino se fue a Asunción, capital de Paraguay,¹⁸ donde llamó la atención al presidente Carlos Antonio López con sus mapas trigonométrico-hidrográficos de los ríos Paraguay y Paraná. Se casó con María Lorenza Lugo, hija legítima del juez Pedro Lugo.¹⁹

El asentamiento de Wisner en Paraguay no es un caso frecuente. El país no era un destino favorito para la migración. La Oficina de Inmigración del país mediterráneo registró 450 personas que llegaron de Austria-Hungría hasta 1898.²⁰ La carrera del ingeniero húngaro muestra el éxito individual. Apoyando al Gobierno de Carlos Antonio López, entró en la vida política y en los juegos de la diplomacia para favorecer el tránsito fluvial entre los territorios paraguayos y argentinos. En 1857 diseñó el Palacio de los López, el actual Palacio Presidencial.²¹ Según Szabó, usando sus experiencias en ingeniería, entre 1856 y 1861 Wisner emprendió la construcción de la primera línea ferroviaria.²² Verón afirma que “los planos fueron realizados por el ingeniero inglés William Whiteheat” y que la primera vía férrea del país “(para uso de zorras estiradas por caballos), de unos 400 metros de longitud, fue construida en 1856, unía los Arsenales con el murallón del puerto

¹¹ SZABÓ 1982, 149.; TORBÁGYI 2004, 158–160.; Mercenario húngaro en el Paraguay 2008.

¹² KAHLE 1984, 198–246.

¹³ KAHLE 1984, 204–205. Según SZABÓ 1982, 149, fue en 1792.

¹⁴ KAHLE 1984, 205–206.

¹⁵ KAHLE 1984, 209.

¹⁶ KAHLE 1984, 210–211.

¹⁷ KAHLE 1984, 212–213.

¹⁸ SZABÓ 1982, 150: llegó a Paraguay en 1846.

¹⁹ KAHLE 1984, 217.

²⁰ TORBÁGYI 2004, 159.

²¹ El Palacio de López 2008.

²² SZABÓ 1982, 154.

capitalino y fue construida bajo la dirección del ingeniero Whitehead” añadiendo que “en junio de 1858 llegó al país el ingeniero George Paddison contratado por el gobierno para la construcción del ferrocarril Asunción — Villa Rica” y que “Paddison fue secundado en su labor por otros ingenieros compatriotas suyos como George Thompson, Henry Valpy y Percy Burrell”, todos ellos “bajo la dirección general del ingeniero en jefe William Whitehead, autor de los planos de la red ferroviaria a realizarse.”²³ Verón no menciona el nombre de Wisner. Lo cierto es que gozaba la confianza de Carlos Antonio López tanto, que en su mensaje presidencial del 14 de marzo de 1857 a la Representación Nacional destacó el papel del ingeniero, entonces en el cargo de Ministro de Guerra y Marina, en el proyecto de las construcciones militares de carácter defensivo en los puntos estratégicos del país, así como la trinchera de Humaitá.²⁴

En 1863 Wisner escribió las “Consideraciones sobre las relaciones exteriores del Paraguay”, un estudio en que afirmó el peso de Brasil en la región platina a expensas de sus vecinos hispanohablantes,²⁵ conclusión que le agradó al nuevo presidente antibrasileño, Francisco Solano López. En cambio de la posición política intervencionista del presidente, Wisner en la clausura de la obra propuso convocar una conferencia a favor de una cooperación pacífica entre los países de la región (Argentina, Brasil, Paraguay y Uruguay). La conferencia no se organizó, pero el presidente, tomando en consideración la afinidad a la escritura, le concedió al ingeniero húngaro a escribir una biografía minuciosa del primer líder del Paraguay independiente, cuya elaboración terminó en 1864,²⁶ un libro (1996, Instituto Cultural Paraguayo-Alemán, Asunción) con el título *El Dictador del Paraguay José Gaspar de Francia*.

Los soldados húngaros y la Guerra del Paraguay

El ingeniero húngaro y el presidente guerrero

Fracasada la intención de Wisner de convocar la conferencia sobre la cooperación, la guerra comenzó. Wisner trabajó como miembro del consejo gubernamental para ejercer con eficacia en el conflicto. Participó en la implementación de las fortificaciones en Curupaty²⁷ y Humaitá para detener el avance terrestre de los aliados, y promovió la modernización naval para obstaculizar el avance fluvial de los mismos como en la batalla naval de Riachuelo.²⁸ Además de las fortificaciones defensivas a lo largo del río Paraguay, Verón acentúa la importancia de Wisner como “promotor de la instalación de la planta siderúrgica de Ybycuí.”²⁹

²³ VERÓN 2000.

²⁴ *Mensajes de Carlos Antonio López* 1931, 136.

²⁵ SZABÓ 1982, 155.

²⁶ SZABÓ 1982, 155–156.

²⁷ Una estudiada fortificación que detuvo a los aliados 2013.

²⁸ GRAU PAOLINI, Jaime Enrique – IRIĆIBAR, Manuel Augusto (2008): La batalla naval del Riachuelo. *Boletín del Centro Naval*, No. 822. 404.

²⁹ VERÓN 2013.

A pesar de las preparaciones, los aliados triunfaron y la fortificación de Humaitá se rindió ante la superioridad numérica, Wisner fue capturado y su casa quedó destruida. El alto nivel de disminución de la población significaba un déficit en el mercado laboral que exigía el repoblamiento. “La primera medida adoptada por el gobierno para levantar la economía nacional fue la venta de las tierras públicas, que dio origen a los grandes latifundios, amparada en la ley de 1872” con que se estableció la Oficina de Inmigración, cuyo director era el Wisner liberado.³⁰ Con la ley “por primera vez se pudo vender y comprar tierras “libremente” en el Paraguay; asimismo se dio la libertad de contratar trabajadores, elegir las profesiones y trasladarse de un lugar a otro. El remanente de la población paraguaya -en su mayoría mujeres, niños y ancianos- no estuvo en condiciones para acceder a los beneficios suscritos en aquella ley. Esta constituyó una atracción para los extranjeros que aprovecharon la oferta de tierras a precios ínfimos.”³¹ De acuerdo a Szabó, Wisner se metió en la reconstrucción de Paraguay con la construcción de ferrocarriles y con los negocios. Descubre la posibilidad de la venta de bosques y minas, planea y construye nuevos ferrocarriles, funda empresas y se encarga de valores.³² La participación en la reconstrucción del país fue motivada para acumular riquezas, manteniendo sus hijos que nacieron de su esposa paraguaya. Verón explica el interés de Wisner en la reconstrucción, mientras Szabó se olvida de esto: “el 6 de julio de 1871, fue nombrado administrador general de los bienes que fueron propiedad de Francisco Solano López, confiscados por el Gobierno emergente en la posguerra. Debido a la desastrosa situación financiera que atravesaba el país en la posguerra, el gobierno se vio obligado a poner en venta las propiedades fiscales de Asunción, para lo cual nombró tasador a Wisner de Morgenstern, a finales de agosto de 1871.”³³

En 1873 se editó un mapa del país elaborado por Wisner, con texto y signos en francés. El tamaño es de 1795 mm x 1275.³⁴ Este mapa era tan puntual que la Sociedad Imperial y Real de Geografía de Austria le otorgó el estatus de miembro correspondiente de la dicha sociedad. El mapa fue premiado en la Exposición Universal de Viena que tuvo lugar del 1 de mayo al 31 de octubre de 1873. En los últimos años vivía con una riqueza merecida como director de los ferrocarriles paraguayos.³⁵

El jurista viajero en una monarquía latinoamericana

Uno de los capítulos más importantes de la vida de István Geőcze szendrői era que escribió por primera vez en lengua húngara sobre el Brasil del siglo XIX en un libro de dos volúmenes, publicado en los años 1869 y 1870 en Pest con el título „Utazás Brazíliába és vissza” (“Brasil: Ida y vuelta”). La fama del libro llegó hasta la Emperatriz Isabel, esposa del Emperador Francisco José I de Austria, quien por mérito regaló al escritor húngaro un broche de diamante.³⁶ Este libro es de mucha importancia por varias razones: se revela el

³⁰ PALAU et al.1997, 4.; TORBÁGYI 2004, 159.

³¹ PALAU et al.1997, 4.

³² SZABÓ 1982, 157.

³³ Mercenario húngaro en el Paraguay 2008.

³⁴ MORGENSTERN 1873.

³⁵ SZABÓ 1982, 158.

³⁶ Geőcze I. István (szendrői), *Kislexikon*, www.kislexikon.hu/geocze.html (30. 08. 2017.)

personaje, la formación, la vida y las experiencias personales del escritor. Presentó un país desconocido como un testigo, a base de sus experiencias directas.³⁷ El valor más especial de su obra es su estadía en Brasil en el tiempo cuando estalló la guerra interestatal más sangrienta de América Latina.³⁸

El camino de Geőcze a Brasil se realizó entre 1864 y 1866. Su forma de ver al país desconocido, sus nuevas impresiones y el estilo de su libro fueron determinados por los siguientes detalles. En cuanto a su procedencia, nació en 1836 en Bačka (Bácska en húngaro), en el condado de Zemplén, en la actual Eslovaquia. El entorno familiar (padre: János Geőcze, madre: Antónia Szerdahelyi) de religión protestante predestinaba a estudiar, particularmente por su padre abogado. Terminó los estudios de secundaria en Sátoraljaújhely, Ungvár y Kassa. Entre 1853 y 1857 se ocupó de estudios jurídicos en la Universidad de Pest, en la actual Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem. En aquellos tiempos Hungría pasó a ser un país derrotado por la Austria de los Habsburgos y gobernado autocráticamente por el Emperador Francisco José, después del fracaso de la revolución y la guerra de independencia húngaras de 1848-1849.

Las iniciativas revolucionarias húngaras formaban parte de las tendencias mundiales de formar Estados-Naciones que en Italia desembocaron en una guerra de unificación en contra de los Habsburgo. En 1860 el recién licenciado Geőcze alistó como soldado al lado de Garibaldi para luchar por la liberación de Italia. Bajo el mando de Garibaldi llegó a ser teniente, después teniente primero y comandante de compañía. Más tarde, como profesor, daba clases en la escuela de oficiales de Cuneo en la región Piamonte de Italia. Después de Italia viajó a Suiza donde los periódicos le informaron de un poblado suramericano de 24 hectáreas en la provincia de Santa Catarina, en la parte sureña de Brasil que fue fundado por Dr. Herman Blumenau, un emigrante farmacéutico alemán, el 2 de diciembre de 1850. Allí el veterano de las luchas italianas se dedicó al cultivo de café, la fuente de su riqueza. El poblado lleva el nombre de su fundador y conserva sus tradiciones y su identidad alemana hasta en la actualidad.³⁹

Geőcze partió de Génova el 13 de enero de 1864 en el barco Santa Catherina para llegar a las costas de Río de Janeiro el 10 de marzo de 1864, mirando por primera vez la entonces capital del país desde el Cabo Frío. Debido a su alto nivel de educación describe una imagen auténtica y detallada sobre los días ordinarios, el clima, la superficie terrestre, la hidrografía y la composición exótica de la población en el puerto. Una de las descripciones más interesantes es la de Hungria do Brazil, región muy parecida a la Gran Llanura Húngara, que se encuentra en la provincia de Rio Grande, al sur de Santa Catarina.

Desde el punto de vista de un jurista escribió de la constitución de 1824 de Brasil que desde el 7 de septiembre de 1822 era un país independiente y monárquico. De acuerdo a la constitución, el Estado se basaba en 4 ramas de poder, una estructura monárquica única y adorada por el mismo Geőcze⁴⁰: el legislativo constituido por dos cámaras (Congreso y Senado) cuyos miembros eran asignados por vías de elecciones obligatorias; el ejecutivo monárquico con el Emperador en la cumbre; el judicial y el moderador que era garantía

³⁷ El semanario publicó algunos detalles del libro de Geőcze en sus dos números: GEŐCZE 1869a, 463–465.; GEŐCZE 1869b, 480.

³⁸ BETHELL 1996, I.

³⁹ BORSODY BEVILAQUA 1969, 201–202.; FRÖSCHLE 2006, 18, 21–22.

⁴⁰ GEŐCZE, 1869c, 67–68.

para asegurar el balance en las disputas políticas entre los grupos conservadores y liberales. A pesar de que el tráfico de esclavos en el Atlántico fue prohibido desde 1850, en Brasil la institución de la esclavitud quedó ser legítima hasta su abolición en 1888, que contribuyó a la caída de la monarquía.

Desde el punto de vista de un soldado, el viajero húngaro era testigo de la guerra total que fue iniciada por Francisco Solano López con el ataque paraguayo del 13 de diciembre de 1864 contra Brasil, por lo que Brasil se alió a Argentina y a Uruguay. Geőcze mencionaba episodios importantes del enfrentamiento como la partida de Don Pedro II, el Emperador brasileño (1831-1889), del territorio nacional para estar personalmente en el campo de batalla en Argentina, en el país vecino.⁴¹ La estructura de la defensa nacional,⁴² cuya base era la milicia, está bien descrita en el libro. Esto significa que cada ciudadano tenía que prestar servicios militares dentro del territorio nacional. El constitucionalismo prevaleció en la movilización de la milicia, ya que el permiso del Congreso era necesario para la movilización entre las provincias. Además existió un ejército permante pequeño. El comandante supremo de las fuerzas armadas en guerra y en paz era el Emperador.

Las fuerzas armadas imperiales bien pagadas consistían en el ejército y en la armada con veleros y buques de vapor. Geőcze se dedicó a la cafeicultura por un tiempo breve y después decidió regresar a Hungría donde el sistema autocrático de los Habsburgos iba debilitándose.⁴³ El veterano húngaro no quiso tomar parte activa en la guerra, pero, como un corresponsal talentoso, contó las direcciones principales de los movimientos de las tropas paraguayas contra el Imperio del Brasil (Mato Grosso y Rio Grande), añadiendo su explicación de la estrategia defensiva del país monárquico por medio del reclutamiento de los voluntarios para impedir la salida de la milicia al campo de batalla y guardar así la mano de obra en la economía.⁴⁴

En la escena internacional, la derrota de la dinastía en Königratz demostró el fin del absolutismo y la intensificación del diálogo político entre Austria y Hungría. Esto favoreció la situación de los emigrantes húngaros para el regreso. Geőcze devolvió su tierra al Gobierno imperial brasileño para abandonar el país tropical. En el puerto de Río de Janeiro, mientras esperaba el barco en que volver al país natal, seguía su libro de viaje en que informa de la aparición de buques de guerra, refiriéndose sin duda a las primeras señales de un nuevo conflicto,⁴⁵ la guerra entre España y Perú⁴⁶ por el puerto peruano de Callao. Chile, Bolivia y Ecuador apoyaron a Perú en un pacto defensivo. El puerto de Río recibió los buques de guerra de España que causó controversias entre los países del pacto defensivo y el gigante lusófono.

El 11 de octubre de 1866 llegó a Marsella desde donde regresó a Hungría. Desde el julio de 1867 trabajaba en la Real Oficina del Primer Ministro. Según el Archivo Húngaro de Historia Militar el 10 de septiembre de 1870 se alistó al Ejército Real Húngaro (en el ejército

⁴¹ GEŐCZE 1869c, 66–67.

⁴² GEŐCZE 1869c, 68–71.

⁴³ GEŐCZE 1870, 147.

⁴⁴ GEŐCZE 1869c, 70–71.

⁴⁵ GEŐCZE 1870, 150.

⁴⁶ La guerra hispano-sudamericana (1865-1866) terminó con la derrota de España y Chile comenzó a desarrollar el poderío naval militar. DUPUY - DUPUY 1993, 999.

común de Austria-Hungría) como teniente.⁴⁷ Desde el 20 de septiembre de 1872 hasta 1880 era profesor de organización militar en Ludovica⁴⁸ y llegó a ser teniente primero.⁴⁹ Desde el mes de octubre de 1873 hasta 1880 editaba la Gaceta de Ludovica (*Ludovica Academia Közlönye*), donde publicaba y seguía publicando después de su jubilación también. Debido a su amplio conocimiento de lenguas extranjeras se ocupó de la literatura militar en francés, italiano, inglés, español y portugués para introducirla en la enseñanza húngara.⁵⁰ Desde 1880 trabajaba en el Ministerio de Defensa hasta la jubilación el 30 de marzo de 1884. Geőcze se convirtió en uno de los representantes destacados de la literatura militar húngara. Su educación le permitió llevar una actividad científica extensa con varias publicaciones, con temas como Federico el Grande y Napoleón, cuestiones actuales como la expansión rusa, la política colonial británica o la situación en los Balcanes, y la aplicación militar de los aerostatos.

Juan Czetz (Czetz János) y la construcción del Estado-Nación en Argentina

Nació en 1822 en Ghidfaláu (Gidófalva en húngaro), actual Rumania, en una familia armenio-húngara de Transilvania, como hijo de un capitán de húsares. Según el archivo de la ciudad de Gherla (Szamosújvár en húngaro), antiguo centro de la comunidad armenia en Transilvania en la actual Rumanía, el apellido original de Czetz era Vártán, palabra armenia que significa rosa o color rosa.⁵¹ Su vida tiene características semejantes a las de la vida de otros emigrantes húngaros: el soldado, el político, el cartógrafo, el científico y el profesor. Desempeñaba con éxito cada uno de los papeles. Estudió en la Academia Militar Teresiana (Theresianische Militärakademie, Wiener Neustadt, Austria) donde por sus resultados obtuvo el diploma de oro. Trabajó en el Estado Mayor del ejército austríaco.

Su carrera tomó otra vía en el período de la revolución y la guerra de independencia húngaras de 1848-1849. Se puso a prestar servicios revolucionarios en el Ministerio de Guerra húngaro, al lado del ministro Lázár Mészáros y en el Consejo Militar Revolucionario. Después fue nombrado Jefe de Estado Mayor del ejército revolucionario de Transilvania y pasó a ser el colega del general Józef Bem, militar polaco y veterano del Levantamiento de Noviembre de 1830-1831, quien apoyó al joven armenio-húngaro de 27 años en alcanzar el grado de general con el consentimiento de jefe revolucionario Lajos Kossuth.

A pesar de la derrota de la causa revolucionaria, Czetz, en memoria de la campaña de Transilvania, escribió un libro sobre los acontecimientos militares en lengua alemana *Bem's Feldzug in Siebenbürgen in den Jahren 1848 und 1849*, editado en Hamburgo en 1850 y traducido para el húngaro en 1868.⁵² El veterano de 1848, quien sufrió una herida en la

⁴⁷ Hadtörténelmi Levéltár AKVI (Tiszti személyügyi és anyakönyvi lapok, minősítési táblázatok) fondja, 6199 Geőcze István szds.

⁴⁸ Era la Academia Militar en Hungría para la formación de oficiales, fundada en 1808 con el auspicio de la Emperatriz María Luisa de Austria-Este, tercera esposa del Emperador Francisco I.

⁴⁹ A. M. Kir. Honvédségi Ludovica Academia Tanári Kara, ed. 1873, 51–52., 57.; BACHÓ 1930, 966.; SIPOSNÉ KECSKEMÉTHY, – B. KALAVSZKY 2011, 228.

⁵⁰ GEŐCZE I. István (szendrői), *Kislexikon*, www.kislexikon.hu/geocze.html (30. 08. 2017.)

⁵¹ GAZDOVITS 2006, 379.

⁵² CZETZ 2001, 31, 38, 76, 87.

pierna y por eso usaba un bastón con empuñadura de plata, decidió emigrar de Hungría. Recorrió gran parte de Europa (Hamburg, París, Portugal, España). En Sevilla conoció a Basilia Ortiz de Rosas, sobrina del exdictador argentino exiliado Juan Manuel de Rosas, con quién se casó en 1857.⁵³ Después del Tratado de Villafranca de 1859, conforme a los consejos de sus parientes, salió de Europa, ya que apoyaba la lucha de los italianos en contra de los austríacos, haciendo planes de batallas a petición de Cavour y György Klapka (otro veterano de 1848).⁵⁴

En 1860 Czetetz llegó a Argentina. En aquellos tiempos Argentina experimentaba la transformación en un Estado-Nación, cuyas características principales eran la unificación territorial iniciada en las guerras civiles periódicas argentinas y la expansión territorial con la Conquista del Desierto en la región pampeana y Patagonia (1878-1879). La consecuencia de la unificación era la entrada del capital inglés mayoritariamente. Comenzó el desarrollo de las líneas ferroviarias y del telégrafo.⁵⁵ Czetetz se encargó de tareas de ingeniería. Preparó el plan de la línea ferroviaria Santa Fe — Esperanza — San Germino y la línea del telégrafo Rosario — Santa Fe — Paraná — Concepción del Uruguay.⁵⁶ No participaba en la Guerra del Paraguay por razones de enfermedad, pero emprendió el reclutamiento de los voluntarios para las maniobras militares contra Paraguay y la elaboración de las obras cartográficas sobre los territorios fronterizos con Paraguay y Brasil.⁵⁷ En 1865 se ocupó de la organización de la Mesa de Ingenieros que contribuyó a la modernización militar por la necesidad de resumir las experiencias de la Guerra del Paraguay.⁵⁸ Por esta razón, por medio de la promulgación de la Ley 357 el 11 de octubre de 1869, se fundó el Colegio Militar de la Nación, institución para promover, en marco de la institucionalidad, el entrenamiento moderno de los oficiales argentinos y Czetetz era designado como primer director.⁵⁹

En 1883, en una exposición internacional ganó la medalla de oro con los mapas Argentina, Chile, Paraguay y Uruguay.⁶⁰ En 1885 fue el jefe de la IV. Sección de Ingenieros Militares, Topografía y Cartografía que perteneció al Estado Mayor General del Ejército creado el 1884, eliminando y sustituyendo así la antigua Inspección y Comandancia General de Armas.⁶¹ Czetetz, aplicando las experiencias que consiguió a través de sus cargos “presentó un proyecto de ley al Jefe del Ejército que dio lugar al decreto por el cual se creó la Escuela de Ingenieros Militares”, la primera escuela encargada exclusivamente de “la formación específica de un tipo de arma, la de ingenieros”, con “una duración de cuatro años, y los aspirantes debían haber terminado de cursar en el Colegio Militar de la Nación

⁵³ CZETZ 2001, 106–109.

⁵⁴ GAZDOVITS 2006, 381.

⁵⁵ La dinámica de la expansión de las líneas ferroviarias en Argentina se desarrolla así: en 1857 10 km, en 1875 1.331 km y en 1877 1.800 km. Durante la presidencia de Sarmiento (1868-1874) se construyeron líneas de telégrafo de 7613,69 km. ANDERLE 1970, 225–232, 227–229.

⁵⁶ TORBÁGYI 2004, 84.

⁵⁷ CZETZ 2001, 118.; GAZDOVITS 2006, 381.; TORBÁGYI 2004, 84.

⁵⁸ MAZZITELLI MASTRICCHIO 2017, 35–36.

⁵⁹ *Reseña histórica hasta nuestros días*. Colegio Militar de la Nación, www.colegiomilitar.mil.ar/esp/el-colegio-militar_historia.html (12.09.2017).

⁶⁰ TORBÁGYI 2004, 84.

⁶¹ MAZZITELLI MASTRICCHIO 2017, 39.

con calificación sobresaliente.”⁶² Dicha escuela abrió sus puertas el 5 de febrero de 1886, bajo la dirección de Czetz.⁶³

En 1887 el primer director del Colegio Militar de la Nación se esforzó en la modernización de la cartografía y de la impresión de mapas por un precio reducido, pero la iniciativa fracasó “probablemente porque la cantidad de mapas impresos no era la suficiente como para afrontar un gasto semejante. Recién en 1904, con la creación del Instituto Geográfico Militar, se empezó a dar importancia al tema de la impresión de los mapas y se incorporó al personal una dotación de técnicos especializados (dos litógrafos, dos fotógrafos, dos impresores, un maquinista y dos ayudantes fotógrafos) para la realización gráfica de los mapas.”⁶⁴

Se jubiló en 1895 como coronel. Tenía dos deseos últimos: 1. devolver el bastón con empuñadura de plata para los familiares residentes en Transilvania, 2. un puñado de tierra de la casa familiar en Szamosújvár.⁶⁵ Falleció el 6 de septiembre de 1904. Fue enterrado con ceremonia militar en La Recoleta — Buenos Aires, en la cripta de la familia Rosas Prudencio.⁶⁶

La memoria de Czetz sigue siendo viva. Una escultura equestre en Buenos Aires recuerda el destino excepcional de un aventurero húngaro en el extranjero.⁶⁷ Con la ocasión del 195 aniversario de su nacimiento la Universidad Nacional del Servicio Público de Budapest, Hungría conmemoró al militar húngaro en una conferencia el 26 de mayo de 2017. Después de cuatro meses una escultura equestre, obra del maestro húngaro Benedek Nagy, fue donada a la Embajada de la República Argentina en Budapest.⁶⁸

El diplomático y la mediación de los Estados Unidos en la Guerra del Paraguay

Sándor Asbóth nemeskéri descansa en el Cementerio Nacional de Arlington, en los Estados Unidos, entre otros militares, que evoca una vida llena de aventuras y luchas. Nació el 18 de diciembre de 1811 en Keszthely, Hungría, de un tatarabuelo inglés. Su padre era el director de Georgikon, la primera escuela superior agrícola en Europa, fundada en 1797 por el noble ilustrado György Festetics.⁶⁹ Estudió en la Bergakademie Schemnitz y trabajaba como ingeniero en la regulación de ríos y en la construcción del Puente de las Cadenas, el primer puente permanente que une Buda y Pest, a través del río Danubio. En la revolución y la guerra de independencia húngaras de 1848-1849 prestó servicios al lado de Klapka y después de Kossuth que lo consideró de carácter recto y un excelente soldado. Derrotada la revolución, emigró con Kossuth y después del exilio en Turquía viajó a bordo del navío

⁶² MAZZITELLI MASTRICCHIO 2017, 57.

⁶³ PEREZ ARRIEU 2016, 4.

⁶⁴ MAZZITELLI MASTRICCHIO 2017, 137.

⁶⁵ María Czetz, su hija, durante su visita a Transilvania conoció al József Budai, profesor universitario de pomología de Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár en húngaro, actual Rumanía), con quien se casó. La pareja cumplió los dos últimos deseos de Juan Czetz. En la actualidad el bastón con empuñadura de plata es la propiedad de los descendientes de József Budai.

⁶⁶ GAZDOVITS 2006, 382.

⁶⁷ BONA, 1995, 12–13.

⁶⁸ Czetz János tábornok lovasszobra az Argentin Nagykövetség rezidenciáján 2017.

⁶⁹ SZABÓ 1982, 160.

Mississippi llegando a Nueva York el 10 de noviembre de 1851 y solicitó la ciudadanía estadounidense.⁷⁰

En los Estados Unidos comienza el segundo ciclo de su vida que se puede estudiar a base de la correspondencia con Kossuth entre 1852-1860.⁷¹ Se estaban organizando en espera de aprovechar las condiciones internacionales favorables para volver a iniciar la lucha armada contra el poder de los Habsburgo en Hungría.

La primera posibilidad era la Guerra de Crimea (1853-1856).⁷² El plan de Kossuth era volver a iniciar la guerra de independencia húngara desde los Balcanes que perteneció entonces al Imperio Otomano.⁷³ Los preparativos para la nueva misión revolucionaria eran organizados por Asbóth quien no acompañó a Kossuth en su gira para atraer al público estadounidense para la causa húngara desde Nueva Inglaterra hasta Nueva Orleans. Ausente de la campaña, Asbóth promovió la compra de armas y la fabricación de cartuchos en Nueva York.⁷⁴ En Morningville, cerca de Nueva York, se abrió una fábrica para la pólvora, el cartucho y la metralla donde se realizaron experimentos militares, comparando la metralla húngara con la americana, considerando mejor la primera. En el rancho de Weawertown (propiedad del emigrante polaco conde Teodor Dembinski, sobrino de Henryk Dembinski general de descendencia polaca en el ejército revolucionario húngaro) cerca de Hoboken, se instaló una fábrica de talabartero.⁷⁵ En la Guerra de Crimea Inglaterra y Francia, aliados del Imperio Otomano, se enfrentaron al Imperio ruso, mientras Austria optó por la neutralidad, favoreciendo los intereses de las potencias antirusas que en la causa húngara veían una amenaza contra la política neutral de Austria. A continuación, la causa húngara perdió el apoyo internacional en aquel tiempo.⁷⁶

La segunda posibilidad era la Guerra franco-austríaca de 1859. Kossuth pidió a Asbóth que elaborase una lista con emigrantes de confianza que podrían luchar al lado de los franceses y en contra de los austríacos. Kossuth esperaba que el ejército francés avanzase hasta la tierra húngara por lo que resurgiría la guerra de independencia húngara. Sin embargo, la guerra de 1859 terminó rápido que obstaculizó la realización del plan de Kossuth y los emigrantes.⁷⁷

Tras trabajar en el oeste americano como constructor e ingeniero de minas, Asbóth regresó a Nueva York. Según Szabó se dedicó a la planificación urbana como diseñador de Central Park y Washington Heights.⁷⁸ Las investigaciones de Várdy demuestran que Frederick Law Olmsted (¡no Asbóth!), el reconocido arquitecto paisajista estadounidense

⁷⁰ SZABÓ 1982, 161.

⁷¹ Conocemos 31 cartas, 19 fueron escritos por Kossuth, 12 por Asbóth. SOLYMOSI 2012, 65.

⁷² SOLYMOSI, József (2003): „Barátja, Kossuth” *Forráskiadvány Kossuth Lajos Hadtörténelmi Levéltárban és Hadtörténelmi Múzeumban őrzött irataiból*. Budapest, Petit Real Könyvkiadó. 78; SOLYMOSI 2012, 65, 73.; VÁRDY 2012, 58.

⁷³ SOLYMOSI 2012, 66.

⁷⁴ SOLYMOSI 2003, 57.; VÁRDY 2012, 57.

⁷⁵ SOLYMOSI 2012, 66.; VÁRDY 2012, 58.

⁷⁶ SOLYMOSI 2012, 67.; VÁRDY 2012, 58.

⁷⁷ SOLYMOSI 2012, 68.

⁷⁸ SZABÓ 1982, 162.

era el diseñador de Central Park.⁷⁹ En el caso de Washington Heights parece que funcionó como un subcontratista auxiliar.⁸⁰

La Guerra Civil interrumpió los años pacíficos y entró en el ejército de los unionistas. Era un soldado talentoso bajo el general John C. Fremont, pero sufrió muchas heridas en los combates, la más grave por una bala en el cráneo. Abandona la escena bélica y el Congreso acepta la solicitud de jubilación con la promoción al grado de *Major General*.⁸¹

Terminada la Guerra Civil, los Estados Unidos veía con preocupación la Guerra del Paraguay y su impacto en la zona de influencia de Washington. Para evitar la intervención de las potencias europeas, sobretudo Gran Bretaña y Francia, en el conflicto, en 1866, en la resolución del Congreso, el país neutral ofreció su mediación entre las partes suramericanas y apuntó a Asbóth el 12 de marzo de 1866 como Ministro a Argentina.⁸² Antes de ocupar el puesto, Asbóth decidió viajar a París (junio de 1866) para una operación con el fin de curar el cráneo, la cual no tenía éxito y falla en sacar la bala. En agosto partió de París.⁸³

El 20 de octubre del mismo año presentó las credenciales al vicepresidente Marcos Paz, encargándose de las tareas diplomáticas como residente en Buenos Aires y acreditado también a Uruguay.⁸⁴ Se encontró con Czetzy y pasaban mucho tiempo juntos. Asbóth entregó un documento para el Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores Rufino Elizalde sobre la oferta de mediación por parte del Congreso norteamericano para hacer la paz, pero Brasil y Argentina la pospusieron. El Gobierno argentino rechazó sus iniciativas considerándolas como actos de intervención en los asuntos estatales. Por eso Asbóth expresó sus lamentos y los combates sangrientos seguían durando.⁸⁵

La herida en el cráneo se empeoró. El 21 de enero de 1868 Asbóth murió en el puesto.⁸⁶ Czetzy recuerda en sus memorias a su amigo, manifestando el pesar por la muerte.⁸⁷

Conclusión

El rasgo político de la Guerra del Paraguay no era nada extraño en los procesos subcontinentales, ya que los países de la región se metieron en las luchas por la creación y la consolidación del Estado-Nación, cuya clave era conseguir posiciones económicas favorables a lo largo de los ríos platinos. En la contienda de carácter regional entre Paraguay y el grupo de los aliados participaron extranjeros de forma directa o indirecta. Desde los aventureros y profesionales hasta los simples viajeros la escala es larguísima. En ambos bandos podemos encontrar nombres húngaros que, como soldados o testigos de los hechos,

⁷⁹ VÁRDY 2000, 186.

⁸⁰ SOLYMOSI 2012, 68.; VÁRDY 2012, 61.

⁸¹ SZABÓ 1982, 162–163.

⁸² DORATIOTO 2012, 257–258.; *Alexander Asboth (1811-1868)*. Office of the Historian, Department of State, United States of America. <https://history.state.gov/departments/history/people/asboth-alexander> (30. 08. 2017.)

⁸³ SZABÓ 1982, 163.

⁸⁴ SZABÓ 1982, 164.; *Alexander Asboth (1811-1868)*.

⁸⁵ SZABÓ 1982, 164–165.

⁸⁶ Asbóth fue enterrado en Buenos Aires y sus restos fueron trasladados al Cementerio Nacional de Arlington el 23 de octubre de 1990. PETTERSON, Michael Robert: *Alexander Sandor Asboth, Major General, United States Army*, www.arlingtoncemetery.net/asasboth.htm (31.08.2017.)

⁸⁷ CZETZY 2001, 119.

se involucraron en la violencia de largos años. Aquellos húngaros, forzados de abandonar la patria, muestran el ejemplo de aquellas vidas que sufrieron las consecuencias de la época pos-napoleónica, el dominio de la restauración y la aniquilación de las revoluciones: el Levantamiento de Noviembre de 1830-1831 y la revolución y la guerra de independencia húngaras de 1848-1849.

El triunfo de la restauración estimuló las nuevas oleadas de migraciones en las que individuos profesionales en busca de un futuro mejor llegaron hasta el otro lado del Atlántico. Poseían el alto nivel del conocimiento de lenguas extranjeras que les permitió contribuir al progreso y jugar un papel importante en la construcción de Estados-Naciones en América Latina, trayendo consigo su talento.

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The Unknown Kálnays – From their Birth to their Emigration

Zoltán Bács

Introduction

Sometimes it happens that the information you received once becomes important a few years later. It has happened to me, too. When I was the Deputy Head of Mission in Buenos Aires between 2004 and 2008 I met the Chairman of the Board of the Hungarian Engineers in Argentina, Antal Balogh Kovács quite often. He drew my attention to the Hungarian born architect András (Andrés) Kálnay who became one of the most famous architects in Argentina in the 1920s and 1940s. He gave me a book published by the Latin American Architectural Documentation Center, CEDODAL, in 2000 and presented in 2002.¹ The essays in this book described in details the buildings designed by András Kálnay but there were only two shorter studies about András Kálnay himself² and his early years in Hungary.³

András Kálnay and his younger brother, György Kálnay – about whom I received information later –, played a leading role in the architecture of Buenos Aires. Their buildings, style and decorations were a mix of new European ideas that moved away from the old standards and had some Hungarian national or Transylvanian touch. Despite their vast contribution to the building culture of one of the biggest Latin American countries, they are unknown among Hungarian architects. It was interesting to discover during this research that in Buenos Aires I lived just two blocks from one of the Kálnay-built apartment buildings on Pampa Street. Another famous building he designed we visited several times in the town of Tigre. The building was meant to be the local casino first and then was transformed into the Municipal Art Museum.

The next couple of years passed with the speed of light. Some months ago when I started to overview materials for this volume, I rediscovered the volume on Kálnay. That was when I decided to start research to find out who this engineer was, where we can find his works in Hungary, what kind of data can we add to those published earlier?

¹ MÉNDEZ 2000.

² KÁLNAY 2000, 11–15.

³ BALOGH KOVÁCS 2000, 31–37.

The Beginning of the Research

Obviously, the starting point of the study was the book. As a source, it had to be carefully double-checked. It turned out that the information published came mostly from oral sources: Kálnay's daughter, Eugenia Kálnay and his son, Esteban Kálnay. The narrated stories could contain uncertain references, yet other studies were also based upon these. Mariana Leidemann, an outstanding member of the Hungarian community in Argentina and also an architect by profession made a presentation about the Kálnays in Argentina on 26 August 2016.

In Hungary I could only trace some interest in the works of the Kálnay brothers.

- An article entitled *The Hungarian brothers who changed the streets of the Argentinian capital for good*⁴ is devoted mostly to the activities of the Kálnays in Argentina.
- András Kálnay is mentioned twice in Zoltán Bolla's book *The Hungarian Art Deco Architecture* where the author lists seventeen buildings in Buenos Aires built by Kálnay.⁵
- György Merényi was planning to make a publication about the Kálnays in 2013 but after receiving information from the Budapest Art Deco Facebook community that the photos of practically all the buildings of the brothers had already been published on the Internet by Antonio Machado and that the CEDODAL book had also been published in Argentina, Mr. Merényi dropped the idea of publication. His last Facebook message of 29 August 2013 proves this.

Basic Data and the Family

First of all András Kálnay's personal data had to be clarified. As it was written by Antal Balogh Kovács, he was born in Jasenovac, Croatia, on 4 April 1893. His father, József Kálnay was an officer of the Hungarian Royal State Railroad Company, MÁV. At that time their surname was written *Kálnai*. This difference did not make research or the verification of personal data easier.

Records of his mother's name were not available at the first stage of the research. This would have been useful to be able to find other data in different municipal or national archives supposing that the documents survived all the cataclysms of the 20th century. Later, however, I found the maiden name of the Kálnay brothers' mother on www.geni.com: Margulit Rosza. Supposedly the correct name is Margit Rózsa.⁶

After contacting the local authorities in Jasenovac, it became confirmed that András Kálnay was really born in Jasenovac, but his father was not a simple railroad officer. József Kálnay was a Chief Supervisor, responsible for the region and he was commissioned to be the first stationmaster of the newly built Jasenovac train station. Miroslav Juric from the Jasenovac Municipal Authority wrote the following about him and his carrier: "When the railway was built (it was under Hungarian leadership), Hungarian workers came to Jasenovac. With them, also came Jozef, the father of Andres. Jozef Kalnay is mentioned

⁴ VINCZE 2015.

⁵ BOLLA 2016.

⁶ Geni s. a.

as the first stationmaster in Jasenovac.⁷ Andres Kalnay was born on April 4th in 1893 in Jasenovac, where he started school. His father was relocated in Koprivnica, (Kapronca) where Andres finished school.”⁸

After a careful search in different sources, I found the correct data about the most important milestones of József Kálnai’s carrier in the archive of the Hungarian State Railways (MÁV). As a context, it is necessary to know that the city of Jasenovac has always been an important hub. It is almost halfway to the only significant seaport of Hungary on the Adriatic Sea, to Fiume. For eight hundred years the Sava River played an important role in the transportation system and trade of the region and the country but in the 19th century it could not cope with the growing requirements of the developing trade any more. The idea to develop a wide railroad network in Hungary rose during the Diet of 1832–1836 in Pozsony (Pressburg, today Bratislava). Law No. XXV about the development of the railway system foresaw thirteen directions, among them the Southern Railway to Fiume.⁹

The first section from Szeged to Szabadka (Subotica) was opened on 11 September 1869. A year later the railroad reached Eszék (Osijek). The original owner of the railway was the Alföld–Fiumei Vasút. This Company was substituted later by the Austro–Hungarian State Railways. Due to financial problems, the Government decided to sell the railroads to private companies. After the promulgation of Law XXV of 1891 on the redeeming of the railroads of the Austro–Hungarian State Railways,¹⁰ the wealth of the company became property of the Hungarian State Railways. The construction of the railroad line which crossed Jasenovac started in 1888. Supposedly this year József Kálnay and his family moved to the city. The region badly needed the modern railroad for its developing industry. According to Miroslav Juric there were over 120 crafting workplaces and industrial facilities (a brickyard, a tanner, a mill, a chain factory, a processing factory of wattle).¹¹ He also informed me about the Kálnay family’s move to Koprivnica due to the new position of the head of the family, but the details, as for example the date when they moved is still unclear.

What refers to the new findings in the Railways’ Archive, it helped to clarify that the pre-construction works of the railroad crossing Koprivnica were authorised by the Minister of Trade in 1893.¹² The station had to be built by 1985 because Koprivnica is referred in the document quoted above as a starting point in the List of Fares.¹³

According to the Yearbook of the Austro–Hungarian Railways (*Eisenbahn Schematismus*)¹⁴ and the Railroad Almanac (*Vasúti Almanach*),¹⁵ József Kálnai was stationmaster of Koprivnica between 1899 and 1909.¹⁶ This time his monthly allowance was 1,400 crowns in the category

⁷ Actually the population of Jasenovac is less than 700 (!).

⁸ Miroslav Juric’s letter addressed to the author.

⁹ 1836. évi XXV. törvénycikk 1§ 8. pont [Law No. XXV of 1836, para. 1, item 8].

¹⁰ 1891. évi XXV. törvénycikk a szab. osztrák-magyar államvasutttársaság magyarországi vasutvonalainak megváltásáról [Law XXV of 1891 on Redeeming the Railroads of the Austro–Hungarian State Railways, running on the territory of Hungary].

¹¹ Miroslav Juric’s letter addressed to the author.

¹² Railway and Transport Bulletin 1893, 1050.

¹³ Railway and Transport Bulletin 1895, 250.

¹⁴ *Eisenbahn Schematismus* 1892–1905.

¹⁵ *Vasúti Almanach* 1905–1912.

¹⁶ The first reliable information about his position as stationmaster in Jasenovac is from 1895 but there were also data from 1892 without naming his exact position in the railways system. I suppose he was stationmaster from 1892.

VII. 2. In 1910 a new stationmaster took his position but Kálnai remained active although his allowance was reduced to category VII. 1. He kept his job until 1911 when he probably retired. I did not find his name in the yearbook of 1912. Unfortunately, the List of Railways' Pensioners and the Service Records are incomplete, a large part of the documents disappeared during the last century, and therefore it was impossible to find more data about József Kálnai's professional carrier. Once again, the way his surname was written – Kálnai or Kálnay – made the research rather complicated. In the list of railroad officers in the Yearbook of the Austro-Hungarian Railways his surname was written *Kálnay* while in the list of stations and personnel it was written *Kálnai*. This is the reason why I use different spellings, too. Later, his sons used the form *Kálnay*.

New Members of the Family Emerge

András had a younger brother, György, who – according to some sources – was born in Budapest.¹⁷ Based upon my research, I can clarify that György Kálnay was also born in Jasenovac, on 18 May 1894. The fact was proven by the documents of the brothers from their elementary and high schools in Kaposvár and Csurgó. Their surname in this period was still written *Kálnai*.

My attempts to receive a copy of their birth certificate remained unsuccessful due to the sorrowful fact that the recent wars on the Balkans in the 1990s destroyed a huge part of the local archives in Croatia, especially in Jasenovac where a concentration camp was set up – half a century after the end of World War II. What survived the 1940s, disappeared in the 1990s. In his article, Antonio Balogh Kovács wrote that the birth certificate of András was written in Croatian language. Possibly, a copy was preserved in the family's archives, but I have certain doubts whether that document is an original one or only a late copy. My doubt is based on the fact that according to Law XXXIII of 1894 on State Matriculation, civilian registration of births, marriages and deaths was introduced in Hungary only from 1 October 1895, thus András Kálnay's birth had to be registered by the ecclesiastic authorities. According to the school documents, his denomination was Israelite. I have no available records whether he was baptised later.

Another promising point in the search for data about the Kálnays was finding Mr. George Christian Kálnay, György Kálnay's grandson. Mr. Kálnay lives in Boca Raton in the U.S. and gave me some really important information. András and György had another younger brother, Ferenc, who emigrated to the U.S. and later became an officer of the Office of Strategic Services, the predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency. The OSS operated between 1942 and 1945.

Altogether there were seven children in the Kálnay family. Until now only three of them have been known as émigrés. First I was surprised but decided to make some efforts to clarify the identity of all the Kálnay children. They were:

- András Kálnay (Jasenovac, 4 April 1893 – Buenos Aires, 28 December 1982)
- Barbara Kálnay (Jasenovac, 1892 – Budapest, 2 December 1944)
- György Kálnay (Jasenovac, 18 May 1894 – Buenos Aires, 13 August 1957)

¹⁷ Casa Kálnay 2011.

- Ferenc Kálnay (Koprivnica, 18 July 1900 – Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, U.S., 2 December 1992)¹⁸
- Margit Kálnay (Jasenovac, ? – Budapest, 1948)
- Ilona Kálnay (Jasenovac, ? – Budapest, 4 May 1974)
- István Kálnay (Jasenovac, ? – Budapest, 1980)

As an old family photo shows István could have been the oldest brother.

Childhood in Kaposvár and Csurgó

The *Sitio al Margen*, an Argentinian digital cultural and historical review, in an article about the presentation of the book *Andrés Kálnay un húngaro para la renovación arquitectónica argentina* wrote that when András was 7, his mother died, therefore his father decided to send him and his brother to one of their aunts living in Zagreb to continue their studies there.¹⁹ In his article about András Kálnay, Antal Balogh Kovács wrote that “due to the move to Zagreb, András probably lost a year in school and he could continue his studies in a lower grade only and he had to live in a zone of permanent conflicts on ethnic basis due to his Hungarian origin”. His older age and his Hungarian nationality could have made him an object of jokes from the other Croatian pupils, so he could not integrate successfully in the class. Although there were no open hostilities among the different national or ethnic groups at that time, the coexistence in the region was far from being easy. The information above was probably based upon a conversation between Antal Balogh Kovács and possibly Eugenia or Esteban Kálnay but I did not find any written or documented confirmation of it. A couple of lines later I found the first reference to the younger brother, György saying that “then their father decided to take András and his brother György, who later accompanied him to Buenos Aires, to a school in Kaposvár”. It was an important moment when this information received a documental confirmation.

Why Kaposvár? The question is reasonable. This city is roughly 100–120 kilometres away from Koprivnica, the administrative centre of Somogy province, to the south of the Balaton. It is situated in a strategic point, therefore its history since the 14th century has been full of struggles. It is not clear when the village became a city but in 1690 it already had 100 households. The first *gymnasium* i.e. secondary and high school was opened in 1812. At that time the language of instruction was Latin. The situation changed in 1844 when the language of instruction was switched to Hungarian.²⁰ The land for the actual building of the high school where originally the Hungarian State Railways’ Education Centre was

¹⁸ Referring to the year of birth there are some mismatches. According to the archival records, he was born in 1900, while www.geni.com says he was born a year earlier, in 1899. He received one of the most important awards in literature in the U. S., the Newbery Honor in 1959 for his book for children *Chucaro: The Wild Pony of the Pampa*. Source: Newbery Medal and Honor Books, 1922–Present. American Library Association, Francis Kálnay, Goodreads.

¹⁹ *Sitio al Margen* 2002.

²⁰ Homepage of the Táncsics Mihály Gimnázium s. a.

situated was purchased by the municipal authorities in 1896.²¹ The first school day was 8 September 1896.²²

During the development of the national railroad network, Kaposvár became an important hub. Due to the growing number of the personnel, it became necessary to set up a residential, training and educational centre not only for the officials but also for their families. Although Law XXXVIII of 1868 provided that an appropriate opportunity for education at a basic level had to be granted close to the living area including families of the railroad workers, it was impossible to do so near the so-called Croatian–Slavonian railways.²³ The Hungarian State Railways recognised the significance of well-founded and systematic education, therefore it established one of the biggest educational complexes for the children of the railroad workers in Kaposvár independently of their denominations. The democratic principles and the well selected teaching staff made the Kaposvár Education Centre an acknowledged institution. Instruction started in the autumn of 1897. Another education centre of the Hungarian State Railways Company was opened in Szeged a year earlier, in 1896.

An Argentinian source wrote the following about András's academic achievements: he studied in a "secondary grammar school for boys in Kaposvár (Hungary) where he was known as a good student having outstanding results in mathematics and religion. He started to speak not only his native Hungarian language, but also German, French, Latin and Spanish."²⁴ At that time it was compulsory at the secondary grammar schools to study German and Latin. It is also possible that he attended some extracurricular courses of French too, but Spanish was not a popular language at that time and one can hardly imagine that in a public school or even in the city of Kaposvár, András had the opportunity to study Spanish as well. In my research I did not find information confirming it.

András (and his brother) spent the second half of their secondary school education in the famous secondary grammar school of Csurgó, in a small city just 25 kilometres from Koprivnica, from their father.

What about Csurgó?

Since the secondary grammar school of Csurgó was founded in 1792, it has always been a centre of open-minded education aiming to give extensive knowledge to the students in many fields, in philosophy, languages and natural sciences. The staff, the teachers came from the most prestigious College of the Reformed Church, in Debrecen. One of the most well-known and recognised Hungarian poets, Mihály Csokonai Vitéz was also Director of the Secondary Grammar School of Csurgó for a certain period after 1799.

When the Kálnay brothers arrived there, the secondary grammar school was one of the best secondary schools of the country which gave a wide range of knowledge and skills to the schoolboys. The method of teaching encouraged the students to think, to elaborate their own approaches, and to solve problems in general. This attitude became very useful

²¹ Hungarian State Railways' Education Centre s. a.

²² Homepage of the Táncsics Mihály Gimnázium s. a.

²³ BERECK 1925, 116.

²⁴ Sitio al Margen 2002.

for the brothers. It helped them not only to absorb the knowledge and skills received during their future studies at the Royal Superior College of Industry but also to develop new ideas and after 1920 to integrate in the professional life of the architects in Argentina, taking there fresh notions from the old continent.

The open-minded attitude of the Secondary Grammar School of Csurgó is proven by the fact that the students belonged to different denominations. There were Catholics, Greek Orthodox Christians, Greek Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists and also Judaists like the Kálnay brothers. This time their surname was still written Kálnai and the status of their father was stationmaster of Koprivnica.²⁵ At that time András Kálnay was a freshman and his grades were not the best. The following year he significantly improved his marks.²⁶ In 1906 András finished his studies in Csurgó.²⁷ György was a year younger, so he probably graduated in 1907.²⁸

As the childhood of the Kálnay brothers was over, the first phase of the research came to its end, bringing up many interesting results. Some preliminary questions received answers but various new ones emerged, which motivated me to continue the research to find the reasons and the way how the brothers grew up, what they studied and how they became émigrés.

Adolescence – Professional Studies

András started his studies at the Royal Superior College of Industry in the 1907–1908 academic year and graduated in 1910–1911. György followed him two years later in 1908–1909 and graduated in 1911–1912.

To show how important the role of the Royal Superior College of Industry was in the training of highly qualified construction workers and construction managers and also in the development of the scientific basis for the architecture in Hungary beginning from the 1880s, it is indispensable to introduce this academic centre.

The process of urbanisation that started in Hungary in the last third of the 19th century provoked a construction boom which required highly qualified specialised workers. While there were not enough Hungarian specialists, German engineers and construction managers led the constructions. Facing this situation József Eötvös and Ágoston Trefort – both Ministers of Cult and Public Education – founded the Intermediate School with faculties of architecture, engineering, and chemistry on 7 December 1879. Its first building stood on Elder Street in Budapest.²⁹ In 1891, the institution moved to a new place closer to the downtown on Népszínház Street. After the number of students exceeded two hundred and thirty, the Minister of Trade, Ernő Dániel transformed it into an independent institute in 1898 with the only specialty of architecture. Since then its name has changed to Royal Superior College of Architecture. The temporary building was in a three-storey

²⁵ *Csurgói Államilag Segélyezett Evangélikus Református Főgimnázium Értesítője 1903–04* (1904). Csurgó. 44.

²⁶ *Csurgói Államilag Segélyezett Evangélikus Református Főgimnázium Értesítője 1904–05* (1905). Csurgó. 91.

²⁷ *Csurgói Államilag Segélyezett Evangélikus Református Főgimnázium Értesítője 1905–06* (1906). Csurgó. 90.

²⁸ During the first phase of the research I concentrated on András's life because I did not have information about György at all, thus I did not request information about him from the school archives.

²⁹ Actually, the name of the street is Szilárd Rökk Street.

house at 18/b, Damjanich Street in one of the most rapidly developing areas of Budapest. Considering the importance of the education of the new generation of construction workers, the authorities of the Hungarian capital offered a piece of property nearby. The new building was opened in 1901 at 74, Thököly Avenue in Budapest, and is the present-day Miklós Ybl College of Architecture.

At the Royal Superior College of Architecture there were two types of courses: full time training and winter school. The latter one was organised for the architects in winter when there were no constructions. The full time training lasted for three academic years while the winter school lasted for four academic years. As a complementary activity, the students gathered information about the architectural monuments of the country during their summer vacations. These targeted excursions were organised and led by Ernő Foerk, one the most outstanding lecturers of the institution.

That time, according to the legislation, the graduates of the Royal Superior College of Architecture could apply for a license of individual practice after graduation and two years of work in the building industry. If they spent three years of internship led by a master builder,³⁰ they could pass the special exams to become master builders. The only Examination Commission for master builders in Hungary worked at the Royal Superior College of Architecture. Its first chairman was Miklós Ybl, one of the most recognised architects of the country of all times.

According to the Bulletin of the Royal Superior College of Architecture for the academic year of 1907–1908,³¹ András started his studies in a class of almost fifty students. His registration number was 14 and his surname was written *Kálnai*. His marks for the first year showed a mediocre student with some behavioural challenges. Seemingly, discipline was not his strongest point. The freshmen had the following subjects: Hungarian Language, Mathematics, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, Designing Geometry, Geometric Drawing, Stonework, Stonework Drawing, Carpentry, Carpentry Drawing, Free-hand Drawing and Calligraphy. Looking at Kálnai's marks, it becomes clear why his drawing designs were so spectacular.

György Kálnai, the younger brother, had always been an exemplary student. According to his academic records of 1909–1910, he had a scholarship of 100 crowns granted by the Israelite Craftsmen's and Farmers' Guild and won a book as an award for his outstanding results.³² At the same time, András continued his studies in the senior class and improved his marks a bit.

The following year the form master of György's class was Ernő Foerk. Under his guidance the younger Kálnai's results became even better than the year before. His scholarship was doubled and he received another award at the end of the academic year.³³ During the last year of his studies, the marks of György were outstanding: he received "excellent" in Book-keeping, Mechanics and Practice, Planning (Design) and Decorative Drawing. His results were very good in the History of Hungarian Literature, National

³⁰ A highly qualified specialist with long practice and numerous edifices built by him. A master builder was not an architect, he did not have a license to design whole edifices. He was the leader of the construction works at the working area.

³¹ KOLBENHEYER 1908, 31.

³² KOLBENHEYER 1910, 38.

³³ KOLBENHEYER 1911, 42.

Economy, History of Architecture, Architectural Drawing, Practical Design and Health Sciences. Once again, he received a scholarship of 100 crowns granted by the Israelite Craftsmen's and Farmers' Guild, and won a book as an award for his results in the students' self-study circle.³⁴ That was in 1912, two years before the outbreak of World War I.

Preparing for the Professional Carrier

From 1910 up to 1912, András Kálnai spent several months learning and practicing at the studios of famous Hungarian architects and engineers, for example, Manó Pollák, Oszkár Fritz, Ambrus Orth, Emil Somló, Dr. Dezső Hüttl, Ödön Bleuer and the company Sugár & Sajó. He wanted to become an architect, therefore he systematically learned from the best professionals of the time.

The Great War

He was drafted when he was 21. At the beginning of the war that was the generation which was drafted first.³⁵ According to the information published in Buenos Aires on the Kálnay brothers' works in Argentina,³⁶ based probably on the narratives of Eugenia Kálnay, András Kálnay's daughter, he first served in the 7th Tirolian Artillery Regiment. As soon as the commanding officers realised Kálnai was talented in drawing, but not in geometry, they enrolled him in the School of Field Artillery and Fortification in Komárom. After graduation he was sent to Transylvania. Probably András Kálnai joined the 7th Field Artillery Brigade of the 7th Army Corps located in Nagyvárad. I tried to find some traces of the artillery school but unfortunately the Hungarian Military Archive could not identify that one in Komárom. The reason can be that from 1860, the courses of the training of the sub-officers of artillery were usually organised at the headquarters of the regiments. The documentation of these courses practically disappeared after the collapse of the Austro–Hungarian Empire and the end of war. It was surprising that the Yearbook of the Imperial and Royal Armed Forces of the Austro–Hungarian Empire for 1918 did not have any record about the Komárom Artillery and Fortification School. I also made an attempt to request data from the Austrian Military Archive, but unfortunately I did not receive any answer in ten months.

To follow András Kálnai's military carrier once again I have to quote and compare the book on the Kálnay's works in Argentina on the one hand, and the letter from the Director of the Hungarian Military Archive on the other. According to the congruent data András Kálnay became first lieutenant (reserve) on 31 May 1916 after repulsing the attack of the Romanian infantry. He received several medals: Military Cross of Merits 3rd class, Silver Military Medal and the Bronze Military Medal. At that time he served in

³⁴ KOLBENHEYER 1912, 47.

³⁵ Letter reg. No. Lev-219-1/2017 of the Director of the Military Archive addressed to the author on 10 February 2017.

³⁶ MÉNDEZ 2000.

the Imperial and Royal 35th Kolozsvár Artillery Regiment. András Kálnay participated in the operations in Transylvania and Italy where he received a minor injury.³⁷

The Stormy ‘Peace Time’

After the war was over András Kálnay returned to Budapest.³⁸ The political changes, the collapse of the empire and the birth of the republic in October 1918, the pro-Soviet revolution and the bloodshed during the dictatorship of the proletariat in March 1919 turned his life upside down. There is no documented information about the life of the Kálnays for the period of October 1918 – November 1919. Thus, it is really difficult to find out the truth about the brothers’ attitude. Different sources offer different narratives. Some say the brothers opened their studio in the apartment of their father in Budapest.³⁹ The same year András Kálnay obtained the necessary qualification not only to lead construction works but to design buildings, as well.⁴⁰ The family sources state that András Kálnay participated in the building of the new enlarged compound of the Generali Insurance Company and forty-eight houses for the people harmed by the recent war. Unfortunately, there were no traces in the Budapest City Archives.⁴¹ It is reasonable to suppose that after the war and because of the severe conditions of the peace treaty, the state financing of wide-range building projects was impossible. But what about a privately financed project? According to the information found at the Budapest City Archives, the old smaller building of the Insurance Company was near the Chain Bridge, in the heart of Budapest, on Dorottya Street. In the same compound there was another very nice building built in 1830. That was the so-called Lloyd Palace designed for the Commercial and Trade Society of Pest by József Hild, one of the most respected Hungarian architects.⁴² Any enlargement of the Generali building could not have been implemented without affecting the Lloyd Palace. All the official documents confirm that the compound of the Lloyd Palace was not altered until World War II, more precisely until December 1944 – January 1945, although there were different plans for modifications. In the end, the Lloyd Palace had to be demolished in 1949 due to the damages caused during the war. The territory was empty until the Atrium Hyatt was built in 1983.

At the Verge of Emigration

It seems the Kálnays’ expectations regarding the desired boom in construction works did not come true. Some sources say András Kálnay became a leader of the organisation

³⁷ Letter reg. No. Lev-219-1/2017 of the Director of the Military Archive addressed to the author on 10 February 2017; MÉNDEZ 2000.

³⁸ As I wrote earlier not only András served in the Army but György, too and their two other brothers did as well. Due to the limited time I did not make an in-depth investigation of their military careers.

³⁹ According to the Budapest Phone Book of 1916, József Kálnay (the only one with this name) lived at 14 Kende Street in the 1st district of Budapest. (See Budapest Phone Book 1916, 1752.)

⁴⁰ Sitio al Margen 2002.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Pest, Buda and Old Buda were separate cities until 1873 when they were united under the name Budapest.

of the construction workers or engineers, but the actual Association of the Hungarian Architects does not possess any document proving this. Due to the absence of information, it is impossible to determine exactly the reasons for the emigration of the Kálnay brothers. If we suppose that András played a role under the Bolshevik regime, he could have become a victim of repression when the new, right wing nationalist regime came to power.⁴³ A contrary opinion is expressed in the article *András Kálnay: un arquitecto húngaro en Argentina*.⁴⁴ According to this, the brothers welcomed the fall of the Empire but did not support the Bolsheviks. Therefore, their situation and perspectives in Hungary became more than difficult. If we add the frustration they felt about the projects which were not implemented, we can see some firm basis for the decision to emigrate to the United States where architectural development reached unprecedented levels.

Final Departure

All the sources agree that the brothers left for Italy, and some even add that they went there on foot.⁴⁵ At last they boarded a ship in Naples which they supposed would depart to the U.S.⁴⁶ The emigrants usually left Europe through the ports of Hamburg, Bremen, Antwerp and Genova. Naples was not the primary port to board for America. Due to geographic reasons, the Hungarian emigrants preferred Genova because this port was the closest one to Hungary. The distance from Budapest to Genova is roughly one thousand kilometres while the other ports were and are farther. There were many agencies organising emigration, selling tickets, organising transfer and accommodation. After the Great War and due to the political, economic, social and demographic changes that occurred as consequences of the armed conflict, huge masses intended to obtain passports, visas and purchase tickets for ships going overseas. The most popular destination has always been the United States, so to buy a ticket to the U.S. was very difficult and the queue was very long. If a person wanted to leave the old continent as soon as possible, he or she could buy a ticket to another destination on the American continent in hope of having a chance to get to the U.S. at least in an indirect way. According to the article in the *Al Margen*, the Kálnay brothers boarded a ship under Hungarian flag in Naples as free riders and the ship suddenly turned to Argentina on high seas instead of going to the U.S.⁴⁷ The same article stated that they arrived in San Nicolás de Arroyos in Argentina 230 kilometres to the northwest from Buenos Aires. From this city they went to the Argentinian capital, where they arrived on 15 March 1920.⁴⁸

⁴³ VINCZE 2015.

⁴⁴ Sitio al Margen 2002.

⁴⁵ Ibid. The author of the article states that the brothers went to Venice first then crossed Lombardy walking to get to Naples.

⁴⁶ VINCZE 2015.

⁴⁷ Sitio al Margen 2002.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Epilogue

From 1920 up to the late 1940s András and György Kálnay played an essential role in the architecture of Argentina, one of the largest countries in the world. Although the architectural development of the country included only a few major cities, their impact became a source for the local tendencies in decorative art, architecture and in Latin American culture in general. First they worked together having a joint studio, but later – when the evolution of architecture overpassed András Kálnay's style – they separated. György remained in the mainstream of architecture practically until his early death in 1957.

András devoted the last decades of his life to painting. He died in Buenos Aires on 28 December 1982. He could have returned to Hungary twice. For the first time he came to Budapest in the 1930s to participate in the international congress of architects as a member of the Argentinian delegation. Unfortunately, the documents that could prove it burnt down during World War II just like some other parts of the old archive of the Hungarian Architects' Association.

For the second time, he probably visited the country in 1968. The only source where this information was published is Miklós Vincze's above mentioned article.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, this second visit has not been confirmed either.

The emigration of the Kálnay brothers was a loss for Hungary where the appropriate conditions to develop their art and abilities did not exist. Their immigration to Argentina gave two wonderful architects to the country that was developing faster than many other countries in the world. This country became their second homeland where they received the recognition they deserved which they did not receive in Hungary for many reasons. This study aimed to be a late tribute to the talent and merits of András and György Kálnay. Although almost a century later, they should also be known and recognised in their native country.

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⁴⁹ VINCZE 2015.

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A Bridge between Hungary and Argentina: László József Bíró's Life and Achievements

Barbara Hegedűs

*"Discovery consists of looking
at the same thing as everyone else
and thinking something different."¹
(Albert Szent-Györgyi)*

You may not know the name Ladislao José Bíró (in Hungarian Bíró László József), but you certainly know his most famous invention: the ballpoint pen. He never received a PhD or even a university degree, as painting and inventing took up all his creative energy. He kept working on new inventions until the day he died in 1985 in Buenos Aires. László Bíró is one of the many 'science celebrities' who we Hungarians love to be proud of, but only in the usual way: after they have become famous abroad, and after they have died.

In general, the lack of any conflict between Hungary and Argentina, the good feeling between the people of the two countries are important facts that provide a good basis for relations. If somebody mentions Argentina in Hungary, people mostly think of tango, football, wine, steak and pampas. This shows that Hungarian people have a good general picture of Argentina, but there is also a lack of information about its history, its cultural heritage and about the most important connecting threads between the two countries. That is why in my study first I would like to give a general outline about the most important meeting points between Argentina and Hungary. My main aim is to present one of the most important inventors who can be a key figure of the cultural relations between the two countries: the inventor László József Bíró. His name is known worldwide of his most famous invention, the ballpoint pen, which keeps his surname alive as biro-pen or birome. Even though his invention and his name are widely known, his life and his other achievements are unfamiliar not only in Hungary, but in Europe, too. László József Bíró, as it says in his biography, was Hungarian–Argentinian, so his life-work is a significant bridge between the two countries which can connect the two distant states.

General Information about Argentina

Argentina shares the Southern Cone of South America with its neighbour, Chile to the west, and is bordered by Bolivia and Paraguay to the north, Brazil to the northeast, Uruguay and

¹ Attributed to Albert Szent-Györgyi, *Bridging the Present and the Future* 1985, 14.

the South Atlantic Ocean to the east, and the Drake Passage to the south. The Argentine Republic is the eighth-largest country in the world with a territory of 766,890 km², and the second largest in Latin America. The total population of the country is 43,418,000 and it is the third largest populated South American country.² Compared to Hungary, Argentina is approximately eight times larger, whereas its population is only four times bigger. While the nominal GDP of Argentina in 2015 reached 629.6 billion U.S. dollars, in Hungary it was 121.7 billion dollars.³

Table 1
Export and import rates between Hungary and Argentina in 2016

	Export	Import
Hungary	47.1 million USD to Argentina (0.05% of the total export of Hungary)	13.9 million USD from Argentina (0.02% of the total import of Hungary)
Argentina	9.6 million USD to Hungary (0.02% of the total export of Argentina)	149.5 million USD from Hungary (0.26% of the total import of Argentina)

Source: Compilation of the author based on Global Edge s. a.

The geographical distance and the considerable difference in size greatly contributed to the fact that the two countries have not had continuously intensive contacts in the field of politics, economy and culture. The first official interstate relations were established in 1870 with an economic and trade agreement. After World War II, the countries renewed their diplomatic relations and these ties have been uninterrupted since 1949.⁴ Hungary's current "Southern Opening" strategy seeks to strengthen relations with Latin American countries and find new markets for Hungarian companies. Its aim is to encourage bilateral trade, mutual investments (especially in agriculture and pharmaceuticals), and to strengthen cooperation in science, technology and education.⁵ From this point of view Argentina can be an important partner, which is demonstrated by an Agreement on Economic Cooperation signed by the two governments in 2013.⁶ Export and import rates are not yet significant though (see Table 1). Comparing the countries as trade partners, Argentina is the 68th of Hungary, the country's main Latin American partners at present are Mexico, Brazil and Chile. For Argentina, Hungary is the 100th, well behind Spain, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands.⁷

Hungarians in Argentina

Despite the great distance, the two countries have developed close cultural ties mostly based on the Hungarian minorities living in Argentina. Until today the strong and well-organised Hungarian community in Argentina has meant an important bridge between

² United Nations s. a.

³ IHS: Country Risk Profile 2016.

⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade s. a.

⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2016.

⁶ Government Decree 2013.

⁷ Global Edge s. a.

the two countries. Today, there are approximately 40,000 to 50,000 people of Hungarian descent living in Argentina, mostly in Buenos Aires.⁸ Most of them arrived in the three main emigration waves: before World War I, between the two World Wars, and after World War II. In small numbers Hungarians arrived even after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.⁹ Generally the Hungarian people assimilated easily and became useful members of the society; they were open to Argentine culture, learned the language, and established good relationships with the white Argentine elite. There are still nineteen Hungarian associations and four registered Hungarian religious communities throughout the country.¹⁰

It was in the 18th century when the first Hungarians – Jesuit priests – arrived in the territory that is today Argentina. After the failure of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, a few dozen Hungarian officers and nobles fled to Argentina. The most famous among them were János Csetz, the founder of the Argentine National Military Academy (Colegio Militar de la Nación) and Alexander Asboth, who served as the United States Ambassador to Argentina.¹¹

In the late 19th century, small groups of Hungarian people started to arrive in Latin America and in Argentina because of free lands and agricultural opportunities, but before World War I only a small community lived here.¹² There are various estimates on the approximate overall size of the Hungarian immigration to Argentina, but they show huge discrepancies, ranging between 3,000–14,000 Hungarians. The reason for this vagueness can partially be explained by the Treaty of Trianon of 1920, when two-thirds of Hungary was partitioned among its neighbours and the inhabitants became de facto citizens of Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Austria and they obtained documentation from these countries, even though they were ethnically Hungarian.¹³

The immigrant groups arriving in this period were heterogeneous, and usually lived in poverty in the countryside or in the slums of Buenos Aires. Political emigrants, mainly leftists, and Hungarian Jews, arrived from the 1930s.¹⁴ The next significant Hungarian immigrant groups came after World War II, fleeing mostly from the Soviets invasion. These immigrants were mainly members of the middle class, the military, bureaucrats, university professors, physicians, artists, scientists, gendarmes, diplomats, engineers, writers and jurists. The newly arrived undertook the intense cultural activity, and sparkling intellectual life was born in their adopted land, the effects of which are still apparent today.¹⁵ Their assimilation was seemingly delayed in some respects, they maintained their language, formed their own institutions and cultural groups. Due to the fact that no significant new immigrant groups arrived after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the community subsists entirely by force of reproduction.

⁸ CSIBI 2017.

⁹ SZONDI-SERES 2011, 190–192.

¹⁰ ANDERLE 2008, 174–181.

¹¹ For more on their lives, see Asqui Jorge Kristóf's essay *Aspectos interculturales de la Guerra del Paraguay: El papel de los húngaros en el primer conflicto moderno de América Latina (1864–1870)* published in this book.

¹² ANDERLE 2008, 175.

¹³ NÉMETHY KESSERŰ 2012, 3.

¹⁴ ANDERLE 2008, 176.

¹⁵ NAGY 2014, 268–287.

The post-war Hungarian exiles chose Argentina largely because they knew they could not return to their native land in the near future, so they wanted to go as far as possible. Most had spent years in dire conditions in Austrian and Bavarian refugee camps, and strict immigration limits were in effect in many places. The countries of South America, however, accepted displaced persons with almost no preconditions. Argentina offered the most advantageous opportunities, together with a favourable climate, a good standard of living and economic development.¹⁶ The Argentine government's objective was to develop the economy through newcomers who could contribute to society. In 1946, the government of President Juan Perón published the First Five-Year Plan, which authorised an annual immigration of 50,000 persons, giving priority to farmers, fishermen, technicians and specialised workers.¹⁷ The enormous European refugee camps represented another valuable source of man-power for the country. Argentines still refer to their country as a "crisol de razas" (crucible of races), or melting pot.

Nowadays in Argentina, especially in the capital the members of an active Hungarian community keep their traditions that contain around 300 families. The *Argentínai Magyar Hírlap* is published online. In addition, Hungarian language instruction, scouts, congregational and social life, a library, a vocational theatre and folk dance groups still flourish, and make a decisive impact on the life of the Hungarian community. The most important Hungarian institutions are the Hungária Club cultural centre, the Catholic Centre (Mindszentynum), and the Zrínyi Ifjúsági Kör (ZIK) youth organisation.¹⁸

In addition, the famous and talented people, who could achieve great success in their new home persist and strengthen the reputation of Hungary, as well. That is why it is important to present their life-work and achievements not just in their first and second home countries but all over the world. The next part of the article therefore intends to describe the life and work of the well-known Hungarian inventor László Bíró, who perfected and patented his invention, the ballpoint pen – also known as biro – after his emigration to Argentina.

László József Bíró's Life

László Bíró had a very adventurous life, with politics, intrigues, fortunate and unlucky moments. Successes and failures followed throughout his life, but he was never afraid of the fiascos and always went further. As he said it in his biography, he was an extremely curious person who just wanted to solve everyday problems with his inventions.

László Bíró is known as Ladislao José Biro in Spanish-speaking areas, and his biography, written by Hector Zimmermann, was published first in Spanish, in Argentina, with the title, *Una revolución silenciosa* [A Silent Revolution]. In 1975, Tibor Kóródy and Lajos Pálfi translated it into Hungarian, but only an abridged version was published in Hungary under the title *Csendes forradalom* [A Silent Revolution]. Another book, *A végtelen vonal, Legenda a golyóstollról* [The Endless Line: The Legend of the Ballpoint

¹⁶ H. KAKUCSKA 2016, 63–71.

¹⁷ NÉMETHY KESSERŰ 2012, 3.

¹⁸ NÉMETHY KESSERŰ 2012, 2.

Pen] was written by the Hungarian György Moldova in 2001, and was translated into English in 2012 as *Ballpoint: A Tale of Genius and Grit, Perilous Times, and the Invention that Changed the Way We Write*. The book traces the pen's development and the intrigue that accompanied this process. The Hungarian national television released a documentary about the famous inventor in 1995 with the title, *The Silent Revolutionary*. The movie presents the life of László Bíró through interviews for example with his daughter, his grandchildren, the President of the Argentine Association of Inventors, the representative of the Argentine Atomic Research Institute, and the owner of the factory that still fabricates the birome based on the original models. The above mentioned books and the movie were the starting points of my investigation.

László Bíró was born in Budapest on 29 September 1899, in a middle-class Jewish family with the name Schweiger László József. The family name was "Hungarianised" to Bíró in 1905. His father was Mátyás Bíró, a dentist, but he made research about a water-fountain pen, so probably László inherited the inventor skills from his father and the idea for the development of a writing tool came from him. László had an elder brother, György Bíró, who participated in the invention of the ballpoint, too. László Bíró married Erzsébet Schick, and from their marriage one daughter, Mariana Bíró was born.¹⁹

László Bíró's activity was far more varied than being limited to one profession. He was an inventor, a painter and a journalist. "I studied medicine, I did car racing, I was a graphologist, I did research on biology, I was an insurance clerk, I was in cargo shipping, I was a painter, and I was a journalist, a book publisher, a sculptor and an inventor. To tell the truth, my profession was not to have a specific field of expertise."²⁰

His father was a dentist, and his brother also went to medical school. So his family expected that László would choose the same profession. He started the school, but he was not interested in medicine, he just did research on hypnotisation. According to his biography, after a few experiments he lost interest in it and the strict system of the medical school did not fit him, so he left the school.²¹ During this period, he worked on different devices. His first registered invention was the "water-fountain pen", no details are known about it. The second patent was a washing machine in 1930, but it was not a great success, probably it did not function well. The next invention did not succeed either, but his electromagnetic transmitting device exceeded his age, and later the concept was used in the Japanese railway system. According to his daughter, once she asked her father why he did not put more effort in promoting his invention and he answered: the world was not prepared for it.²²

He did not give up and never accepted the word "impossible". He had a practical view, and his ideas came from everyday problems. According to Bíró: "Maybe it is in my genes. A man does what he has to do, in the order of nature, but an innovator must have a great fantasy, good perceptive capabilities, courage and perseverance. He has to risk failure, because the future is always uncertain. One thing is for sure: a real inventor considers failure as a basis for a new challenge, and he has to preserve his personal fantasy, which happens to be his real driving force."²³

¹⁹ Bíró 1975.

²⁰ Bíró 1975, 77.

²¹ Bíró 1975, 78.

²² *Bíró László emlékkiállítás* 2015.

²³ *Ibid.*

According to Bíró, he was working as a customs administrator, which meant a good living, and he could afford a Bugatti sports car to race, even before he could drive. After a few weeks of practice, however, he drove in a race and, according to his biography, he won. This experience inspired him to find a way to drive without using the clutch. The invention got Bíró and a friend to Berlin in his car, although nobody believed it. Bíró presented his invention to General Motors in Berlin. They saw possibilities and offered Bíró a contract with monthly payment. The agreement also had a negative part that the inventor failed to notice though. Bíró always thought of himself as an inventor and artist, and he had little knowledge of economics, law and business. This deficiency caused him serious problems, and this was not the last time Bíró had patent-related problems. The contract with General Motors contained no information about the beginning date for production or the number of gear-shifts to be produced. It was only later that Bíró and his partner realised General Motors did not want to produce his invention, because the company had another kind of development; they just wanted to prevent the competition from getting hold of the technology.²⁴

It is important to describe the milieu which influenced Bíró's achievements. László Bíró lived in the period when Budapest was one of the important cultural centres of Europe. The cafés and bars were the intellectual meeting places where the writers, artists and inventors gathered. His favourite café was the Japán (Japan) on Liszt Ferenc tér.²⁵ Bíró always highlighted how important this period was in his life. In these clubs he met some of the most famous artists and journalists, like Ferenc Molnár, Jenő Heltai, Zsigmond Móricz, Dezső Kosztolányi. In these places he did not only make friendship with famous people, but he also experienced the emigration flow of part of the Hungarian intellectual elite for the first time. From them he got the idea and the advice to leave Hungary before the war begins.²⁶ While Bíró worked as a journalist, he worked on mechanical inventions, too. He edited the *Hongrie–Magyarország–Hungary* art magazine and worked as a journalist for the weekly paper *Előre*. He was not an outstanding journalist, but this period inspired him to return to the improvement of writing instruments, and to perfect the ballpoint pen.

The Story of the Ballpoint Pen

According to Bíró, he was inspired to invent a new type of pen when as a journalist wanted to write something down quickly but his fountain pen failed to work. He became so angry that he decided to solve this problem. On one occasion while he was watching the printing machine in the printing house, he realised this rotary method could be used for the pen, too. This was the moment when László discovered the key technique for the new pen, but the road to the invention was long and hard.²⁷

Bíró saw the chance for the emigration in his new invention, and he was justified in the coming years. From the beginning of this period, he started to work intensively on the ballpoint pen. As the international political situation escalated, and the atrocities and

²⁴ MOLDOVA 2001, 19–22.

²⁵ BISHOP 2014.

²⁶ BÍRÓ 1975.

²⁷ BÍRÓ 1975.

measures intensified against the Jewish people in Hungary, László Bíró decided to leave the country. In order to get money and a visa, he made greater efforts to perfect his new invention. Although he did not manage to finish it in Hungary, the tool helped him to leave Hungary first for France, and a little bit later to emigrate from Europe to his new home, Argentina. From 1935, it was more and more difficult to get a visa, but some fortunate encounters helped him in the hardest times, too.

First in 1938 László Bíró accidentally met a woman in his brother's consulting-room who was just about to get married in Argentina to a Hungarian entrepreneur living in Buenos Aires. László Bíró showed his invention to Mária Pogány, and the woman saw an opportunity in the new type of pen. They agreed to form a common firm in Argentina and share proceeds from the sale. Bíró did not attach too much importance to this meeting at that moment, still this represented a key moment in his life.²⁸

Another chance meeting in Yugoslavia, where Bíró had gone to negotiate with a potential business partner, also led him to South America. General Agustín P. Justo,²⁹ a former president of Argentina, glimpsed the ballpoint pen while staying in the same hotel. He invited Bíró to settle down in the South American country.³⁰

It is essential to present another important person in László Bíró's life, Andor Goy.³¹ He was an entrepreneur in Budapest who dealt with typewriters. He became an important partner in Budapest because he agreed to finance, help and participate in the improvement of the ballpoint pen, but later their relations deteriorated and Goy even went to court for the patent rights.

Finally, on 29 December 1938 Bíró left Hungary as a member of the migration flow which departed due to the imminent war. Bíró made this step in the thought that he would never return to his home country. He had to act rather quickly, because the government was about to make a regulation which prohibited the export of Hungarian intellectual products and this new law was to come into force on 1 January 1939. Bíró first went to Paris, and he continued to work on the ballpoint pen in the Ewelco Company but the production of the ballpoint pen was soon overshadowed by preparations for war. The beginning of World War II made Bíró's situation vulnerable in Paris. To be able to stay in France, he had to cooperate with the government and even participated in inventing tools for military purposes. He worked on a chemical compound which could not be extinguished by water and spread quickly when ejected from an aircraft. He did not finish this invention, and hastily searched for the opportunity to leave Europe with his family.³² The Argentine contacts came to his mind and, with the help of Mária Pogány, he left Paris for Barcelona, en route

²⁸ MOLDOVA 2001, 35.

²⁹ President of Argentina from 1932–1938. During his presidency, he had to make progress on the problems relating to the Great Depression, that is why he tried to establish economic and trade agreements with European countries, too.

³⁰ Bíró 1975, 34.

³¹ On 25 April 1938 László Bíró presented his fountain pen at the Royal Hungarian Patent Court. Bíró agreed with Goy in the patent and manufacturing rights, which meant that Goy and his partners had the exclusive right for production and marketing in Hungary, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, and France with the Ewelco factory, in exchange, they shared the profit. Goy did not receive a share or patent rights, because finally the new pen became so different from the earlier prototypes. MOLDOVA 2001, 42.

³² Bíró 1975, 138.

to Buenos Aires. With his friend János György Meyne,³³ Bíró arrived in Barcelona on 13 May 1940; and they reached South America in August.³⁴ He was a member of the third big Hungarian migration flow which arrived in Argentina during World War II.

In Argentina Bíró and the Lángs (Mária Pogány and her husband) founded the Biro South America Ltd. to sell the patent rights of the ballpoint pen. Bíró's life confirms that there are no friends in business. In this case it turned out that Bíró was not a businessman, and because he was also in a vulnerable situation, he signed a disadvantageous contract with the couple. According to the agreement, Bíró received only one third of the profit, and the partners gave a promise to help Bíró's family to escape from Hungary.³⁵ But later he had to give up more to be able to see his family again. Arguing that the costs of the fares were high, the Lángs helped on the condition that Bíró gave up half of his share. Naturally he agreed on these terms.³⁶ Despite the fact that Bíró did not profit as much as he could have from his most famous invention because of his own business mistakes and the greedy people around him, he confessed that without the Láng family, and their persistence, he would probably have given it up.³⁷

It was a long and exhausting process to find the adequate technique and materials. Eventually the basis of the pen was the technique used in printing by which a rotary cylinder ensured continuous and uniform application of the ink that could be adapted for use in a pen. The ink flew continuously to the paper by a slender tube filled with ink with a small ball bearing at the end.³⁸ This method required precision-made ball bearings, and it is interesting to note that it took years to find out that the prototypes did not work perfectly because of the imperfect balls. Finally, a Swedish company was able to produce to the standard required by László Bíró. Another problem was to produce ink of suitable viscosity. From the beginning, his brother as a chemist helped Bíró to develop the suitable component and by the beginning of the 1940s, they had found it.

According to the patent rules, despite the fact that there are similar inventions already registered, the inventor who finishes the functioning tool owns the patent and the manufacturing rights.³⁹ During this time, there were other inventors who experimented with new types of pens, that were similar to some extent to the Biro, but László Bíró was the first one, who could make a functioning tool. In the summer of 1943, the first commercial models were made and the pen has been manufactured in large numbers for the public since 1945. It was first marketed in Argentina under the name of *Eterpen*.⁴⁰

³³ The word "birome" came from the conjunction of the surnames Biro and Meyne. Clarín 2013.

³⁴ Bíró 1975, 140, 151.

³⁵ MOLDOVA 2001, 101.

³⁶ Bíró 1975, 169.

³⁷ Bíró 1975, 167.

³⁸ OMIKK s. a.

³⁹ MOLDOVA 2001, 41.

⁴⁰ McGOOGAN 2016.

The Effects of the Ballpoint Pen

*“Have you got a biro I can borrow?
I’d like to write your name
On the palm of my hand, on the walls of the hall
The roof of the house, right across the land
So when the sun comes up tomorrow
It’ll look to this side of the hard-bitten planet
Like a big yellow button with your name written on it.”
(Have You Got a Biro I Can Borrow? By Clive James)*

Bíró invented other things but his name will always be associated with the ballpoint pen and his invention keeps his name alive. “I just became part of the ball pen” wrote in his biography.⁴¹ The ballpoint pen spread all over the world because it was easier to use than the fountain-pen, it was reliable, it did not leak, and did not need special maintenance. It can be made from cheap materials and sold at a low price and because of that, it is available to everyone.

Because of World War II, each country searched for new inventions that could be useful during the battles. The first major buyer of the newly created pen was the Royal Air Force in 1944 that ordered 30,000 of the tools, because they worked at high altitudes unlike traditional fountain pens. After the war, another battle was just beginning: the war among the manufacturers across the world. For example, the pen entered commercial production just after the war in Great Britain.⁴² In France Marcel Bich (later shortened his name to Bic) licensed the ballpoint pen from Bíró. He started manufacturing his pens according to Bíró’s design and established the BIC Company which until today is the biggest corporation. Its pens are now recognised across the world, because it could develop an industrial process for manufacturing ballpoint pens that lowered the unit cost dramatically, so it could release the cheapest tools.⁴³ In Argentina the Sylvapen became the biggest Argentine pen manufacturing company and László Bíró returned partly to the ballpoint pen when accepted the offer of the company to give his name to the product, and supervise the quality control.⁴⁴ Bíró let the ballpoint pen live its own life and turned his interest to other inventions, but this opportunity probably compensated him for the earlier disappointments and struggles.

His Other Inventions

After he perfected the ballpoint pen, he started to deal with new ideas. One of them was a kind of rudimentary deodorant, which used the ballpoint pen technology. The aim was to produce a luxury perfume, which doses the liquid evenly. With his business partner Meyne, they chose the American market to sell this product, so they entrusted a businessman

⁴¹ KÖVÁRI 1995.

⁴² MCGOOGAN 2016.

⁴³ Our Heritage, Your Passion s. a.

⁴⁴ MOLDOVA 2001, 188.

in New York to organise the firm there and control the production. Just before they put the product on the market, however, Bíró realised that one part was designed incorrectly and it could not be launched. Bíró did not have the capital to finance re-design. He lost not just the capital of his firm, but had to sell three-quarters of his stake in the Birome factory to the Lángs to compensate for the losses.⁴⁵

The failure did not dampen his enthusiasm, and Bíró started to work on another invention. This was a clock shaped device which could constantly measure the blood pressure of a person. But for the improving and launching the tools, Bíró had to ask for financial support from the Lángs. Mária Pogány gave a loan to him in exchange for the deposit of his shares. Bíró trusted in his new invention and the woman's cordiality did not evoke mistrust either. When Bíró had to leave Argentina on business, Mária Pogány offered to postpone repayment until he returned to Buenos Aires. Bíró took this gesture as a sign of friendship, but Pogány wanted to exercise the shareholders' rights in the interim as collateral. He never regained his shares. The device kept his name ("biro" in English, "birome" in Spanish), but actually the inventor had no more stake in its success. This is how László Bíró lost his shares in the company which was created for his invention, at the time when the ballpoint pen started to spread globally. This time nobody knew that the inventor actually did not participate in the manufacturing and its success. Bíró did not become a millionaire, but never had financial problems in his life because of his other inventions. From his biography we know that he felt disappointment because of the ballpoint pen but he was able to close this part of his life and continued his inventor career.⁴⁶

László Bíró's Legacy

The ballpoint pen reformed handwriting. Today it is popular to talk about the decline of handwriting because of the electronic devices and typing, but it is interesting that a few people date the beginning of this decline to the appearance of the ballpoint pen. According to them, the new tool has changed the way of writing because the ink flows differently from ballpoint pens and it requires more pressure, making it more natural to separate letters (in print) than to join them together (in cursive). That is why some people saw the new pen as responsible for the decline of formal handwriting, especially cursive writing.⁴⁷ According to Bíró's daughter, the inventor replied to the criticism that people are writing from their heart, and they are always grateful if they can express their thoughts and feelings easily.

It is hard to collect all the inventions he worked on during his life. His legacy is far more varied than it is known. For example he patented a procedure to produce phenolic resins, another one for enhancing the strength of steel bars, he invented the inviolable lock and the clinical thermograph.⁴⁸ Until his death on 24 November 1985, he worked together with the Atomic Energy Commission of Argentina on projects related to the separation of gases in molecular and isotope systems.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Bíró 1975, 208–209.

⁴⁶ MOLDOVA 2001, 153.

⁴⁷ NELSON 2016.

⁴⁸ László Bíró memorial exhibition 2015. OSZK.

⁴⁹ Fundación Biro s. a.

Argentina considers László Bíró its native citizen and he is also highly respected in the Hungarian community in Buenos Aires. In his life he tried to help Hungarians arriving in Argentina, and until today his daughter is an honoured member of the community who participates in the most important Hungarian events in Buenos Aires. In memory of his father, Mariana Bíró founded the Fundación Biro which is a non-profit institution with the aim to form and stimulate activities and projects related to inventiveness and education. To commemorate Bíró's life and inventions, the Inventors' Day in Argentina is celebrated on his birthday, on 29 September.⁵⁰ The collection of some of the original models of birome was donated by the Biro Foundation to be exhibited at the entrance of the *Centro Argentino de Ingenieros* in Buenos Aires.⁵¹ Articles are still published about Bíró's works in several world-famous media, for example in *BBC* or in *The Telegraph*. On his 117th birthday, in 2016, Google honoured the Hungarian genius and the ballpoint pen with a front-page doodle on its search page.⁵²

In his Argentinian years, Bíró was very active and in addition to his inventions, his paintings keep his name alive. In the 1930s, Bíró painted his first pictures and he was quite talented, as he could make a living by selling his works in Budapest. The motivation for painting remained with him throughout his life and in his new home-country he could also sell paintings. He kept saying that he used the same creativity and special perspective as in the inventing procedure, as he could see and show the world in a different way.⁵³

Summary

László Bíró probably never returned to Hungary, although in Moldova's book there is a story about a journey to Budapest. It might only be the writer's imagination, because firstly, in the autobiography of Bíró there is no reference to it and secondly, during the Communist era in Hungary the emigrated, successful people were not welcome. Probably this is the reason why it took so many years to publish his book in Budapest and why little attention was paid to his legacy. However, the fall of the Socialist bloc brought about a change: his daughter returned to Hungary several times to speak at exhibitions and to build his father's fame. The first significant exhibition in Hungary was organised in 1996 at the National Technical Museum, with the cooperation of Mariana Bíró to introduce the life and inventions of László Bíró.⁵⁴ On the 30th anniversary of the inventor's death in 2015, the Hungarian pavilion at the Expo Milano commemorated him with a memorial exhibition. After that the exhibition was displayed in the National Széchényi Library and in different parts of Hungary, for example, in Balatonfüred and in Hévíz.⁵⁵ The last time when Mariann Bíró visited Hungary was in June 2017 when she opened a temporary exhibition commemorating the life and work of Bíró at The Hungarian Museum of Science, Technology and Transport hosted by

⁵⁰ Foro Argentino de Inventores s. a.

⁵¹ REGGINI s. a.

⁵² SHEPHERD 2016.

⁵³ Bíró 1975.

⁵⁴ VAMOS 1996, 281–285.

⁵⁵ Híradó 2017.

the Ábrahám Ganz Foundry Collection.⁵⁶ This time a ceremony was also held on which occasion the memorial tablet which preserves László Bíró's name at his last Hungarian address in Cimbalom Street, Budapest was renewed.⁵⁷

Another link between the two countries is that in 2016 the László Bíró Prize was created together with the Embassy of Argentina in Budapest to intensify the relations in honour of the great Hungarian–Argentinian genius and inventor.⁵⁸ The first prize was given to László Scholz,⁵⁹ for his work and achievements in the field of Argentinian–Hungarian cultural relations, especially in terms of literary science.⁶⁰ In 2017, the award was presented to the owners of the Hungarian Polo Club, Dr György Ivanics and his family, who do a lot for the promotion of horse polo in Hungary, which is considered Argentina's national sport.⁶¹ Furthermore there are plans to name streets after the famous inventor in Budapest in the future, and to establish a permanent exhibition in Hungary.

His most famous invention may even have helped save Bíró's life and that of his family, it gave him his new home and made his name alive, as “birome, biro or biropen”. Biro was not the first to come up with the idea of a ballpoint pen but he was the first to perfect it. His creativity, enthusiasm, different way of thinking and courage could make a change in the world and reformed writing. It made it easier for people to communicate with each other, to express their thoughts by making the tool available for every social stratum. Now we find a ballpoint pen in every bag and on every table, even if the computers and electronic devices start to take over the role of handwriting. Still, it is hard to imagine our lives without it.

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⁵⁶ Exhibition 2017.

⁵⁷ At all of the events, Argentina was represented by its Ambassador to highlight and strengthen the importance of the inventor in the bilateral relations between the two countries.

⁵⁸ Diplomata 2017.

⁵⁹ László Scholz is a literary historian, and professor at the Spanish Department of Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. For example he worked on the Hungarian edition of José Ortega y Gasset's oeuvre, translated the works of the Argentine writer, Jorge Luis Borges and published the short history of Spanish–American literature.

⁶⁰ Kulturport 2016.

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Hungarian Artists in Mexico at the Beginning of the 20th Century – The Activities of Antal Illés, Pál Horti and Gyula Schmidt

Mónika Szente-Varga

The Porfiriato and Europe

“Mother of foreigners and mother-in-law of Mexicans” is a saying that is used to refer to the period of the Porfiriato (1876–1910) in Mexican history. During this era, Mexicans undoubtedly admired foreign (European and U.S.) culture, technology, science and civilization in general. Many also wished to attract capital and knowledge from abroad to foment the development of the country: a process that various Mexican intellectual and political leaders thought would be impossible without outside help.

Yet the relationship of the Porfiriato with Europe was not devoid of ambiguities. Let us start with Porfirio Díaz himself: his career was very much shaped by the victory against the French intervention at Puebla on 5 May 1862, in which he played a significant role as a 32-year-old brigadier general fighting under the orders of General Ignacio Zaragoza. Although the French succeeded in taking the city a year later – only to be reconquered by Díaz in 1867 – the Battle of Puebla is considered a crucial moment in Mexican history, as it “symbolizes Mexico’s determination to thwart foreign aggression”.¹ This military success paved the way for Díaz’s further ascent in the ranks and legitimised his active participation in political life. Thus, the Porfiriato had to have a certain degree of anti-foreign sentiment – or to put it in another way, a dose of nationalism – as part of Díaz’s proper charisma.

On the other hand, the history of independent Mexico is characterised by repeated foreign interventions. “At the time it won its independence, Mexico was the largest of the Spanish American countries. [yet] its geopolitical problems were enormous: international isolation; border difficulties; regional separatism and the deterioration of its roads” coupled with economic devastation during the struggle for independence, disruption of commercial relations, bankruptcy, etc. all of which contributed to political weakness and a rather chaotic situation.² During the first forty years of its existence, Mexico had more than fifty governments.³ The weak state was liable to foreign ambitions,

¹ Britannica s. a.

² COSÍO VILLEGAS et al. 1985, 98.

³ FOSTER 1999, 103.

including a Spanish intervention landing in Tampico (1829), the first French intervention, also known as the Pastry War (1838–1839), the U.S.–Mexican War (1846–1848), resulting in the loss of approximately 2 million km² of national territory, an allied French, Spanish and British intervention blocking the harbour of Veracruz (1862) and the second French intervention (1862–1867) installing the reign of Maximilian of Habsburg as Emperor of Mexico (1864–1867), which came to an end via a military defeat and the execution of the emperor.

These armed conflicts interfered with the development of Mexican–European relations, leading to a complete break in the 1860s. Diplomatic ties were first restored with Spain (1871), and later, already in the years of the Porfiriato, with other countries such as Belgium and Portugal (1879), France (1880) and Great Britain (c.1884).⁴ A notable absence was that of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy. In the latter case, the re-establishment of diplomatic relations took place thirty-four years after the execution of Maximilian in Querétaro (1867), at the very beginning of the 20th century.

By that time, Mexico's mineral resources and land had become increasingly attractive for the Dual Monarchy. The Mexican leadership, which adored European culture, wanted to normalise the country's relations with the state in the heart of Europe, which spanned more than 600,000 km². The Monarchy was not only the biggest country in the region, but was also an important player in maintaining Europe's status quo. Diplomatic ties were thus restored in 1901. The Monarchy opened a legation in Mexico City, while Mexico established one in Vienna. Besides diplomatic relations, consular ties were also formed with the principal aim of fomenting bilateral commerce. Consulates were typically instituted in industrial centres and harbours. In order to save on costs, they were run on an honorary basis. The Monarchy had honorary consulates in the ports of Tampico, Veracruz and (Mérida)-Progreso, as well as in Monterrey and Mexico City. The honorary consulates of Mexico functioned in Brno, Pressburg, Budapest and in the harbours of Trieste and Fiume (today Rijeka, Croatia). The diplomatic staff and the honorary consuls could play a role not only in promoting commercial relations but also cultural ties.

As part of the cultural exchange between Mexico and the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy, the first ten years of the 20th century saw one of the most intensive periods of Hungarian–Mexican cultural relations. These ties were solidified by Hungarian participation in the construction of one of the most emblematic buildings of Mexico City, the National Theatre, which was intended to commemorate the centenary of independence in 1910.⁵ It is now the Palace of Fine Arts: a must-see destination in the Mexican capital. Some of its most attractive details are connected to Hungarian artists, and in particular, to Géza Maróti (1875–1941).⁶ They include a group of sculptures featuring the female allegoric figures of Music, Song, Tragedy and Dance on the outside of the principle dome of the building, together with an eagle devouring a serpent: a reminder of the Aztec myth of origin found on the Mexican coat of arms and flag. Inside the building, Hungarian artists designed the stained-glass ceiling of the auditorium with the theme of Apollo and

⁴ RIGUZZI 1992, 374.

⁵ For related articles published in the Hungarian press at that time see Pécsi Napló 1907a, 6; Pécsi Napló 1907b, 4; Magyar Iparművészet 1908a, 44, 49; Magyar Iparművészet 1908b, 70; Pécsi Napló 1908, 5–6; Pécsi Napló 1910, 3.

⁶ Other Hungarian artists involved were Miksa Róth, Aladár Körösfői and Ede Telcs.

the nine Muses, the 55 m² art nouveau mosaic over the proscenium arch that runs around the stage-curtain, and the first design of the glass stage-curtain, displaying a Mexican landscape with plants and volcanoes.⁷ The details of the Hungarian artists' contribution were forgotten for decades. This started to change from the 1980s,⁸ both owing to Mexican efforts to shed light upon the construction of the building for its 50th anniversary (1984), and to the opening of Hungary towards the world after the change of regime (1990). The Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest organised a major Maróti oeuvre in 2002,⁹ and recently there was an exposition in the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City on the occasion of the 140th anniversary of Géza Maróti's birth.¹⁰

Whereas the Hungarian works of art related to the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City have been thoroughly investigated, and a slowly but steadily increasing number of Hungarians and Mexicans have knowledge of their existence, the activities other Hungarian artists carried out in Mexico at the beginning of the 20th century are much less known. Therefore, this paper will focus on the painter Antal Illés, the architect Gyula Schmidt and the applied artist Pál Horti.

Antal Illés

Antal Illés was born in Szolnok in 1871. He studied arts in the capital, Budapest, and later continued his studies in München and Paris with the support of a scholarship from his hometown. He was a disciple of the Hungarian Ferenc Újházy (b. Szolnok, 1827–1921), as well as the French artists Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848–1884) and Jean Paul Laurens (1838–1921). Illés travelled to the United States in 1908 and prepared several works of art including oil paintings and watercolours. On the initiative of the Hungarian Association in New York, he met President Taft and painted a portrait of him.¹¹ Illés wrote to Elek K. Lippich from Texas for a letter of recommendation in November 1909, explaining his plans to visit Mexico and organise an exhibition of his overseas works upon returning home.¹² These ideas were not new. Illés already had the intention to travel to Mexico, and before setting out for his American journey, asked for a letter of recommendation from the consul

⁷ For more see SZENTE-VARGA 2010a, 139–152; 2010b, 147–157; 2002a, 113–123; 2002b, 112–113.

⁸ The pioneering research of Sára Ivánffy-Balogh preceded that, but unfortunately did not receive due attention. See IVÁNNFFY-BALOGH 1964, 24–27; IVÁNNFFY-BALOGH–JAKABFFY 1976, 127–149.

⁹ ÁCS 2002.

¹⁰ Reforma 2015, 22; Boletín de prensa 2015. The exposition was open from December 2015 until April 2016.

¹¹ It was placed into the office of the association.

¹² Letter of Antal Illés to Elek K. Lippich, councillor of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education, 28 November 1909. El Paso, Texas. Collection of the Széchényi National Library (OSZK).

general of Mexico in Hungary, Jenő Bánó.¹³ “Thanks to the excellent recommendation of Bánó, I could paint the portrait of the president of the Mexican Republic, Porfirio Díaz”¹⁴ – he wrote enthusiastically.

“Illés was animated and recommended by Jenő Bánó, and thus arrived in the Mexican capital. The Austro–Hungarian envoy, count Hadik,¹⁵ presented him to Porfirio Díaz, and Illés painted a portrait of the president. He ventured to one of the most picturesque regions in Mexico: Tehuantepec. One of the attractions of his works done there is the fact that until that moment no European artist had painted the locals of the Isthmus”¹⁶ wrote Károly Lyka, art historian and critic in 1911.

Although Lyka does not mention any fellow travellers, Illés did not travel alone. He was accompanied by a close relative, the widow of the painter Sándor Bihari (1855–1906), herself an artist. She wrote three letters home on their experience which were first published in the daily paper *Pesti Hírlap*, and later in 1912 as a 44-page travelogue.¹⁷

“It is difficult to take photos because people immediately realize what is going on and they leave. They believe in the superstition that those who were photographed would die. It was even more difficult to paint them because they are lazy to model and when you convince someone with money to do it, hundreds gather around to watch. Yet if it were their turn, they would leave, saying “mucho trabajo”.”¹⁸

Via the text, we can get an insight into such details of the trip as the visiting and painting of the Mexican president. Porfirio Díaz is presented as a very kind and gracious person, and is quoted as stating, “I am very thankful for the attention on behalf of the Hungarians.

¹³ Jenő Bánó (1855–1929). Jenő Bánó studied at the Naval Academy in Fiume. He worked for the navy and later the railways. This experience could have contributed to his desire to travel, but the reason he gives for setting out on a trip around the world, was the death of his wife, Kamilla Münnich. Bánó got to the American continent, visiting first the United States, then Mexico. He decided to stay in the latter place, founding his own plantation and marrying Juanita Yanez from the state of Oaxaca. The contacts of Bánó reached the highest levels, getting even to the Mexican President. Porfirio Díaz named him honorary consul general of Mexico in Budapest and the returning Bánó opened his office in 1903 under Andrassy Street number 83. He was a great promoter of intensifying economic and cultural contacts between Mexico and Hungary. He published three books and various articles on Mexico to share his experience and shatter the negative image the country had in Hungary. With respect to artists, besides Antal Illés, he also helped Géza Maróti and actually travelled to Mexico to be personally available and translate during the negotiations related to the works in the National Theatre.

¹⁴ *Újság*. Szolnok, 04 January 1911.

¹⁵ Count Max Hadik de Futak was the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy in Mexico in the years 1910 and 1911. He was preceded by Baron Karl Giskra and followed by Baron Ferenc Riedl in this position. Hadik was an experienced diplomat. Before getting to Mexico, he had worked in Berlin, Dresden, London, Brussels, Paris, Athens, the Holy See and München, in different ranks. Magyarország tisztí cím és névtára 1901–1918. Also see GODSEY 1999.

¹⁶ LYKA 1911, 351–357.

¹⁷ BIHARY 1912.

¹⁸ BIHARY 1910, 38.

Besides an enthusiastic feeling of sympathy, I am also very grateful towards Hungarians, because I was freed from my captivity by a Hungarian prince¹⁹ (sic).”²⁰

The French intervention of the 1860s and the empire of Maximilian in Mexico reappear once more in the travelogue when József Brájer [Breyer] is mentioned. “József Brájer is the [honorary] consul general of Sweden. It seems difficult to believe what I say: he came to Mexico 47 years ago with Emperor Maximilian. From a simple soldier, he made it to an important person.²¹ He still speaks Hungarian very well and remained Hungarian in his heart. Even the Spanish [sic] call him “verdadero húngaro” / a real Hungarian.”²²

Apart from Mexico City, Illés visited the village of Hueuetoca (and stayed at the residence of Guillermo Landa y Escandón²³) and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The latter was possibly the place that inspired them most. Sándorné Bihari recalls it this way:

“[Tehuantepec] is a garden of palm trees surrounded by mountains, converted into a peninsula by the River Tehuantepec. The suffocating tropical air is freshened by the breeze coming from the sea. Every coco-palm a gigantic pinwheel.

There are so many colours, fruits and flowers, so much beauty, sunshine, singing of birds, and each of them lures you; the pleasure calls to dream in the arms of star-gazing, but the strong desire to work kept us away and our dwindling force was renewed upon seeing so much harmony and beauty.”²⁴

Unlike his niece, Antal Illés had little time to share his overseas experience. He died untimely in an accident in Szolnok in 1911. The following year an exposition displaying 213 of his works (134 oil paintings and 79 watercolours) was organized.²⁵ Most of the works depicted Native Americans, especially Mescalero (Apache) people in New Mexico and Tehuantepec Indians living in South Mexico. Prices ranged between 50 and 2,000 Kronas (korona).²⁶ It is interesting to note that the oil canvases included two portraits of the President of Mexico, Porfirio Díaz; a portrait of the consul of Mexico in Hungary, Jenő Bánó; and a portrait of the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations, Louis Crill (sic), possibly Enrique C. Creel, who filled that position in 1910–1911. The paintings of Illés have since been scattered among private homes and collections.

¹⁹ The person in question was Baron János Csizmadia (born in Körmend), first lieutenant of the hussars. See JANCÓ 2011a, 75; 2011b, 423.

²⁰ BIHARY 1910, 37.

²¹ József Breyer (b. 1844 in Kassa, today Kosice, Slovakia) was far from being a simple soldier. He was a veterinarian. TARDY 1990, 150. After the fall of the empire of Maximilian, Breyer stayed in Mexico, and worked as a veterinarian and a wine merchant, according to Pál Sarlay, another member of the Volunteer Corps.

²² BIHARY 1910, 37.

²³ Guillermo Landa y Escandón (1842–1927). Politician, member of the positivist circle of advisers to President Díaz, called Los Científicos, Governor of Mexico City.

²⁴ BIHARY 1910, 38.

²⁵ The National Salon 1912–1915.

²⁶ Official currency of the Austro–Hungarian Dual Monarchy from 1892 until 1918.

Pál Horti

Pál Horti had been to Mexico a few years before Illés. Horti, originally called Hirth, was a well-known applied arts designer (furniture, carpets, etc.) in Hungary with a promising career.²⁷ For example, he won the Grand Prix at the first International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Art at Turin in 1902. “His designs featured at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1900 where he was awarded a gold medal for his carpets and furniture, as well as his ornamental design. Such was his reputation as an important advocate for Art Nouveau, that in 1904 he was asked (with the support of a small group of architects and designers including Géza Maróti and Ede Thoroczkai Wigand) to oversee the design and installation of the Hungarian display at the St. Louis International Exposition.”²⁸ He stayed overseas.²⁹ “I am planning to stay abroad for about two years. During this time I would like to study indigenous crafts as well as Aztec art treasures and architectural ruins in America. In case of China, Japan and India, I would like to investigate bronze casting, enamelling and ceramics”, wrote Horti in 1904 from St. Louis.³⁰ Yet he was not sure about the complete itinerary of his journey. “Mexico is the closest destination where I have to study Aztec and Toltec objects. I might need to continue my investigation in Peru and Bolivia.”³¹ The reason for this uncertainty was the real motivation behind this study trip and research: he was driven by the idea of eventually finding the place of origin of the Hungarians.

“He was not only urged by a simple interest in the arts of other countries and races when widening the horizon of his interests towards North America and the East, but by the desire to find a connection between the eastern and the western cultures where the culture of our ancestors might fit. The only possible thing that interested him more than art, was the history of our origins.”³²

Horti, together with Gyula Schmidt, a Hungarian architect who joined him in the United States, travelled to Mexico and spent various months there. They visited Mexico City, Oaxaca, Mitla, Chichén Itzá, the excavations in Orizaba³³ and consulted the art collections of the National Museum and of the architect Guillermo de Heredia.³⁴ The Mexican trip had a profound impact on Horti. The decorative motifs reminded him of Hungarian folk art, and

²⁷ See Koós 1974, 173–190; 1982.

²⁸ BANHAM 1997, 584–585.

²⁹ On his U.S. works, see SOMOGYI 2008, 131–143; 2007, 105–122.

³⁰ Letter of Pál Horti to Elek K. Lippich, St. Louis, 08 December 1904, OSZK Collection. It is important to point out that both Illés and Horti wrote to Elek K. Lippich in order to get financial support. Lippich had a doctoral degree in liberal arts, had studied in Budapest, Leipzig and Berlin, travelled widely in Europe and visited numerous museums and collections. He started to work at the Department of Art of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education in 1886, and rising steadily in ranks and prestige, became a councillor two decades later. He is also referred to as the head of the official art politics of the country. JURECSKÓ 1982, 15.

³¹ Letter of Pál Horti to Elek K. Lippich, New York, 09 April 1906. OSZK Collection.

³² SCHMIDT 1907, 173.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ He was a notable collector of Prehispanic Art, councillor of Mexico City, and designer of the Neoclassical Benito Juárez Hemicycle. TABLADA 1992. The construction of the hemicycle began in 1906 on the centenary of Juárez's birth and was finished in 1911. Horti and Schmidt could have taken a glimpse at the monument dedicated to the Mexican statesman and the nearby National Theatre, both in the early phase of construction.

he started to assume a kinship between ancient Hungarians and the Tarascan/Purépecha cultures in Mexico, based on common Hunnic ancestors.³⁵ “The Huns not only rode across all Europe”, he wrote, “but also roamed all America having crossed the Bering Strait.”³⁶

In order to prove his hypothesis, he copied (drew, painted, made plaster moulds, etc.) different motifs and folk artefacts, and also bought original objects. Fearing that some of these might be confiscated by Mexican authorities checking packs to be sent abroad, he kept several of his findings with him as personal luggage and sent the rest back home, including 150 plaster moulds and more than a dozen pots³⁷ from Tonolá.³⁸

As Horti’s personal records reveal, the study trip in Mexico was far from an easy one:

“In no way can we talk about roads. It is impossible to travel by cart. People and luggage can only move forward on horseback and muleback. Of course, this is true for places where there is no train. Yet, it needs to be added that there are very few railway lines and that if one makes a research trip of this sort, he or she should not investigate along those lines, because Indians flee and perish from areas where trains work. It would be useless to look for folk art there. Those who contemplate Mexico from trains, can see very little.”³⁹

Horti basically complained about two obstacles in his letters: dwindling financial backing and the lack of Spanish knowledge. The first hindered his plans to travel more extensively and acquire more objects, the second prevented him from approaching locals and talking to them, and learning their tales and legends. Gyula Schmidt comments on Horti’s intentions:

“Connected to the migration of people and cultures, he was to trace the route that can take us back to the place of our origins on the basis of remaining reminiscences. He hoped that assiduous research and observation would bring facts and data that could prove his idea, and thus our misty history of origin would acquire a more accurate image.”⁴⁰

In order to disseminate his work, Horti planned to write a monumental book on his findings in the span of ten years, and publish it both in English and Hungarian. He even had the title: *The Language of Forms and Lines*.⁴¹

The premise of Horti’s hypothesis, the Hunnic origin of indigenous Americans, was erroneous. Yet it is interesting to note that he was insisting on the Asian roots of American people when the dominant paradigm was still the African origin due to apparent similarities, like the construction of pyramids.

Horti stayed in Mexico longer than originally planned. He travelled from New York via Cuba and arrived in Veracruz in July 1906. Then, after almost five months, he finally returned to San Francisco in December 1906. By 1907, Horti had travelled to Asia, where he visited Yokohama, Kyoto, Manchuria, Singapore and Bombay, among other locations. He

³⁵ HORVÁTH 1991, 200–204.

³⁶ Letter of Pál Horti to Elek K. Lippich, New York, 09 April 1906. OSZK Collection.

³⁷ Letter of Pál Horti to Elek K. Lippich, Colima, Mexico, 15 October 1906. OSZK Collection.

³⁸ Tonolá is in the state of Jalisco and is a major handcraft centre.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ SCHMIDT 1907, 173.

⁴¹ Letter of Pál Horti to Kálmán Györgyi, Colima, Mexico, 23 October 1906. OSZK Collection.

died of yellow fever in Bombay on 25 May 1907. His ashes were brought back to Hungary and deposited in the National Pantheon, *Kerepesi temető*. The tombstone was designed by Géza Maróti and Ede Telcs.⁴² Horti's possessions were donated to various ministries and museums:

“Plans, images, the ancient Mexican collection as well as photos that belonged to the heritage of Pál Horti, were purchased by the Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education. The Mexican collection, together with the photos taken in Mexico, were partly acquired by the Museum of Applied Arts, the plans and the ceramics collection of modern times are to be shared among vocational schools supervised by the Ministry of Trade. Besides all these, there were some rather valuable plans and sketches in the heritage that the widow of the noteworthy artist donated to the National Hungarian Association of Applied Arts.”⁴³

Horti's widow partly sold and partly donated the Mexican collection of her late husband. The Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest acquired a considerable share, with 450 new objects catalogued.⁴⁴ As János Gyarmati points out, the objects were probably purchased by the Museum of Applied Arts instead of an institution with an ethnographic field of study because of Horti's friendship with Kálmán Györgyi, the President of the Association of Applied Arts. The association had financed some of the acquisitions of the Museum. Györgyi most likely tried to provide financial support for the widow of his old friend by making sure that Horti's collection was purchased at a high price. The Museum of Applied Arts paid 10,000 crowns for it in 1908.⁴⁵ The collection was exhibited right after it was purchased, at the beginning of the 20th century. It was exhibited again in 1926. Later, some pieces were moved to the Museum of Ethnography in the same city, but “the delivery of the collection did not take place in one go, and neither was it done in circumstances properly documented.”⁴⁶ Nowadays the Museum of Applied Arts only preserves about 30 objects, principally watercolours made by Horti,⁴⁷ whereas some objects of Horti's original collection were identified in the Museum of Ethnography by Gyarmati.⁴⁸

Another contribution Horti, a former teacher, made to Hungarian knowledge of the Americas was didactic material he prepared on American cultures. Horti sent some of this material to Hungarian schools that specialised in arts, while additional material was given to institutions that were training future artists, after his death. These pieces influenced the following generation of Hungarian artists, as can be seen, for example, in some of the ceramics of Hajnalka Zilzer (1893–1947).⁴⁹

⁴² Related articles in *Magyar Iparművészet* 1906a, 246; 1906b, 299; 1907, 171–172; 1908c, 179; 1908d, 222; 1910, 241.

⁴³ *Magyar Iparművészet* 1908e, 298.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ GYARMATI 2007, 159.

⁴⁶ GYARMATI 2007, 162.

⁴⁷ MLT 250/1-266/2.

⁴⁸ GYARMATI 2007, 155–167.

⁴⁹ KISS 2014, 48–52.

Gyula Schmidt

Much less is known about Horti's travel companion and friend, Gyula Schmidt (1879–1915). Schmidt was born into a well-to-do bourgeois family. After completing his studies in his native city of Budapest, he moved to the United States where he worked for various architectural studios.⁵⁰ He met Horti in the U.S. and joined him on his study trip. This did not mean, however, that they always travelled together. For example, Schmidt moved on to Japan one and a half months before Horti, who stayed longer in the Americas.⁵¹ Schmidt seems to have figured as a kind of side character in Horti's Mexican "adventure" and the overall trip as well, yet it should not be forgotten that he must have played a major role in preserving what he could of Horti's possessions left behind in Bombay. He also wrote a necrologue about his friend, published in 1907.

Schmidt, like Horti, contracted malaria, but he recovered, returned to Hungary and worked as a stone mason and architect until his death. His works include primary schools in the capital (Dembinszky Street) and in the town of Kiskunhalas, the Lutheran orphanage and hospital in Pressburg (today Bratislava, Slovakia), as well as artistically beautiful tombs⁵² decorated with sculptures and mosaics in Budapest's Fiumei Road Graveyard.⁵³ The list is rather short because Gyula Schmidt died in 1915 at the age of 36. The complications of the malaria suffered in Mexico, as well as the hardships of World War I could have contributed to his early death.

Conclusions

"Insertion in world capitalism resulted in growing trade with Europe and also in a phenomenon that Angel Rama called "a gust of Europeism": the wines, the textiles, the furniture together with the values and the cultural norms [all came from the old continent]."⁵⁴ The high value placed on European art stimulated demand for the work of European artists, including people from the Central/Eastern part of the continent. Yet the attraction of Mexico was not necessarily strong enough to create direct links with artists from East Central Europe, as the lives of Illés, Horti and Schmidt make it clear. They all arrived in Mexico via the United States.

They stayed and worked in Mexico at the beginning of the 20th century, when there was no sizeable Hungarian or Austro–Hungarian colony in the country which could have preserved the memory of their visit.⁵⁵ They all came from an Empire – the Austro–Hungarian Dual Monarchy – that would soon disappear at the end of World War I, and

⁵⁰ Schmidt Gyula 1915.

⁵¹ SCHMIDT 1907, 175.

⁵² Designed for Ferenc Stiașny and his wife, the Mauritz family, György Sváb and his family, the family of Nándor Wagner and the Vértessi family. See www.kozterkep.hu/a/6031/Schmidt_D_Gyula.html (Accessed: 29.01.2017.)

⁵³ Schmidt had a firm specialised in stone masonry, working in the 1910s.

⁵⁴ SEFCHOVICH 1987, 27.

⁵⁵ The Hungarian colony in Mexico began to grow due to limitations on immigration introduced in the U.S. in the 1920s. It never became very numerous, though, at most it counted approximately 3,000 people. See SZENTE-VARGA 2007.

arrived in a Mexico under the rule of Porfirio Díaz. The Porfirian system would perish, too, destroyed by the 1910 Revolution, which laid the basis for a new, modern Mexico. Cultural ties and tastes, including the Europeism of the old system, were abandoned. Mexicans increasingly embraced nationalism and tended to relegate foreign cultural contributions to the background, discarding what seemed almost obligatory before. All these underlying factors made it unlikely that the activities of the Hungarian artists in Mexico described above and their artistic work related to Mexico would attain much fame. Their short lives and careers also jeopardised their legacies.

Taking into account the normalisation of Austro–Hungarian – Mexican relations in 1901 and their growing intensity at the beginning of the 20th century, as well as the above mentioned historic reasons, it would not be surprising to discover through careful research that more Central and Eastern European artists worked in Mexico and took artistic inspiration from the Latin American country in the above mentioned period.

Because the successor states of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy embraced a variety of national languages and historical frameworks, research on subjects of the monarchy who travelled to the Americas generally focuses exclusively on members of one linguistic group. However, this is rather problematic because the Monarchy was a multinational empire, and subjects of the monarchy who travelled to the Americas were characterised by differences not only between official and personal identities, but also between their old world identities and the ones they acquired in the eyes of the locals. An example can be found in one of the emblematic buildings of Mexico City, the *Casa del Conde del Valle de Orizaba*, which is today known as the *Casa de los Azulejos*, or the House of Tiles, due to its decoration. Various sources mention that the peacock mural painting of the first floor – seen by hundreds of people every day who eat in the popular restaurant which is located there – was designed by Jean de Paleologu (Bucharest, 1855 – Miami, USA, 1942), an artist contacted by Frank Sanborns in New York in the second half of the 1910s. He is mostly referred to as Hungarian, sometimes as Romanian, and rarely as French. Most records call him Pacologue (sometimes Palcologue in Mexican sources).⁵⁶ Paleologu is principally known as a magazine illustrator and poster designer. He worked and lived in London and Paris, and in 1900 he moved overseas.

His contribution to Mexican architecture inevitably raises the issue of identity. Why is he remembered as Hungarian by various Mexican sources? Does it have to do with the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy or with Géza Maróti, who had visited Mexico a decade earlier and contributed to the interior design of the Mexican National Theatre? What did the Mexican elite think about Hungarians in the 1910s, and did they have a prevailing positive or negative impression?

It is important to note that although Antal Illés, Pál Horti and Gyula Schmidt remained little-known after their deaths in part as a result of their short lives, their brief careers were not the primary reason why they were quickly forgotten. Paleologu was also largely forgotten in Mexico, despite the fact that he died in 1942. Paleologu's relative obscurity in Mexico confirms the hypothesis outlined in this essay that works by Central and Eastern European artists in Mexico at the beginning of the 20th century tended to sink into oblivion

⁵⁶ He is mentioned as Pacologue, for example, in *Pavorreales de Pacologue en la Casa de los Azulejos* 2013; Cronicas s. a. He also figures in the novel of RAMÍREZ 2011. Appears as Palcologue in CHÁVEZ FRANCO 2007.

primarily due to historic events and processes on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, such as the Mexican Revolution, World War I and World War II, the formation of the Soviet Bloc and the Cold War, which tempestuously destroyed old systems and created new ones while cutting links between Mexico and East Central Europe.

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En los límites de la realidad y la ilusión: el marco en las artes plásticas y en la literatura

Mercédesz Kutasy¹

Llama la atención que los orígenes de la palabra española “cuadro” tal como la utilizamos a la hora de hablar sobre artes plásticas, se remonta a la palabra italiana *quadro*: desde la época del quattrocento un *quadro* (originalmente: *quadro all’antica*) significa un altar cuadrado, enmarcado de pilastras clásicas, coronado de una cornisa² frente a la conocida estructura del retablo gótico, y es aproximadamente desde la divulgación de la palabra *quadro* que se usa la metáfora “cuadro=ventana al mundo”.³ La pintura de Jan van Eyck, *Virgen del canciller Rolin*⁴ ilustra bien el paralelismo existente entre el cuadro y la ventana: a través de los marcos del cuadro el espectador contempla una sala dibujada según las rigurosas leyes de la perspectiva donde se ve al canciller en compañía de la Virgen y del Niño Jesús; en el fondo los soportales enmarcan otras ventanas, a través de las cuales la ciudad con el río en el medio alude a los atributos de Rolin y de la Virgen. El marco entonces es, a su vez, ventana, y en su interior la ventana sirve de marco a otros cuadros, mientras la frontera distingue diferentes niveles miméticos: lo que veo dentro del vano de la ventana (marco) es *otro* mundo, concebido siempre con algo de sospecha, con una intención enfocada hacia la interpretación.

Sea como fuere, el marco pictórico a lo largo de los siglos sembraba la certeza en los espectadores de que lo contemplado en su interior no pertenece a nuestra realidad, sino es un ejemplo, historia narrada con recursos visuales, y como tal, participa de otra naturaleza que la apariencia que nos rodea y a la que llamamos realidad (o bien, la cueva de Platón). José Ortega y Gasset en su ensayo titulado *Meditaciones sobre el marco* esboza una analogía entre la relación del cuadro con su marco y el cuerpo con la ropa, y afirma que el

¹ La autora es becaria Kállai Ernő por el Ministerio de Recursos Humanos (EMMI).

² Véase THOMAS 1995, 115–117.

³ Anabel Thomas publica la descripción de un retablo encargado por Bernardo Carneseccchi en octubre de 1455 al artista Neri di Bicci. En la nota (ricordanze) del artista aparece que su cliente le encargó un tríptico gótico (“It must be made in this way, with three pointed panels with little leaves and flowers above the points of these panels, and ciborium (‘civori’) between each panel and pilasters beneath the ciborium, columns at the side without figures and at the base a *predella* appropriate to the altarpiece panel.” Santi B.: ‘Dalle „Ricordanze” di Neri di Bicci, in Studi di storia dell’arte in onore di Roberto Salvini, Florence, 1984. Lo cita THOMAS 1995, 115.), porque sus formas le eran más conocidas que los retablos recientemente extendidos y más modernos, hechos de una sola tabla. (“It is perhaps no coincidence that the patron asked for a comparatively old-fashioned style of altarpiece frame; Carneseccchi was no doubt more familiar with this kind of design than with the new single panel structures (known as *Tavole all’antica*) which had emerged earlier in the century, but were not yet commonplace.” THOMAS 1995, 115.)

⁴ 1435, hoy en París, Louvre.



marco siempre supone la presencia de una imagen en su interior; incluso si se halla vacío, el espectador tiende a interpretar lo limitado por él como cuadro. El *quadro* entonces rodea y limita, a su vez delimita, separa y con toda seguridad protege de las trampas de la ilusión.

La ventana y la cortina

En la conocida rivalidad entre Zeuxis y Parrasio la derrota del primero con toda seguridad tiene que ver con la falta del marco: el artista puede ser lo más fiel posible, sin embargo si su representación se encierra en un marco, es como si fuera una *ars poetica*, una evidente declaración. El marco, a modo de un signo de exclamación, señala que la realidad por él rodeada funciona de acuerdo con otras leyes, a saber, según las leyes estéticas de la creación de la ilusión, y si me gustaría hablar de él, mi posicionamiento necesariamente tiene que ser de carácter estético. En el momento del desafío de los dos artistas Zeuxis pinta uvas, que se traduce como “representación”, así la reacción adecuada de parte del público es la admiración de la técnica pictórica de las uvas pintadas. Que las aves empiecen a picar las uvas muestra —aparte del genio de Zeuxis— la superioridad estética del ser humano que conoce las leyes y sabe posicionarse frente al cuadro que es imagen, ilusión pintada. Parrasio llega abolviendo este convencionalismo y, de hecho, las leyes, cuando con su cortina pintada borra el marco y muestra la ilusión como parte de la realidad.

Este dilema es de similar naturaleza que aquel de la época de la querella iconoclasta: el marco bien definido es frontera que indica que la pintura está hecha por manos humanas, es algo fabricado, por lo tanto tiene otro estatus; sin embargo si el creador lo esconde con intención, la realidad representada en el cuadro con facilidad pasa a formar parte de la realidad del espectador que la percibe como real. Este flotar en la frontera de la realidad y la ilusión provoca el fracaso o al menos la perturbación del posicionamiento estético anhelado. No es en vano que la escultura hiperrealista, tan popular en nuestros días, también hace uso de este recurso: el marco de la escultura es el pedestal, sin embargo estas esculturas asombrosamente verosímiles, al igual que nosotros, están sentadas o de pie en el suelo de la sala de exposiciones y con este gesto de borrar el límite transforman la ilusión en realidad. En el Museo Arken de Copenhague hasta agosto de 2017 se pudo visitar la exposición titulada *Gosh! Is it alive?*⁵ que a través de sus 39 esculturas busca las fronteras entre lo real y lo fabricado, indaga ese marco detrás del cual nuestra existencia está a salvo. Lo mismo ocurre con la ballena que se escolló en pleno centro de París, en julio de 2017: el único detalle que pudo levantar sospechas es que apareció con una dramaturgia demasiado buena. En pleno verano, en medio de las cámaras de hordas de turistas, casi perfectamente detrás de la Notre Dame, y sin embargo desapercibida, de repente apareció ahí, para llamar nuestra atención al cambio climático del planeta. Como mencionaron varios de la multitud que se amontonó alrededor: es nuestro asunto, todos estamos metidos, es la culpa de todos nosotros. Después, en el clímax del remordimiento colectivo se llegó a saber que efectivamente se trataba de una obra de arte hiperrealista y la ballena pertenece al artista belga Captain Boomer⁶ quien, siguiendo otros ejemplos anteriores, enfoca su obra como un *trompe l'oeil*

⁵ <http://uk.arken.dk/exhibition/coming-up-shudder-is-it-alive/> (15.03.2017.)

⁶ www.captainboomercollective.org/projects/whale/the-why-of-the-whale/ (15.03.2017.)

de tres dimensiones para disturbar a su público, para crear una distancia entre la percepción primaria (“¡mira, una ballena!”) y la interpretación de la misma como obra de arte (“pero... no es una ballena real. Entonces ¿qué significará?”).⁷

Una manera eficaz de esconder el marco es entonces el énfasis en el *techné*, es decir, cuando el artista se propone crear obras perfectamente verosímiles, a su vez coloca los cuadros o las esculturas en un interior real, igualando con este gesto lo real y lo ilusorio. La otra posibilidad es la elección de Parrasio: la cortina, la ocultación. La curadora de la exposición de Copenhague anteriormente mencionada, Naja Rasmussen, menciona que el fenómeno del ilusionismo hiperrealista radica en la época del Barroco cuando la principal meta de los artistas era representar el *milagro*.⁸ El milagro sin embargo tiene que ver con lo trascendental, con lo divino, por lo tanto es irrepresentable; su representación adecuada será entonces, si no la exageración (hiperrealismo), el ocultamiento. No es en vano que en el Barroco se representen cortinas con tanta frecuencia. Liliane Louvel⁹ habla de una pintura extraordinaria, pintada alrededor de 1822: la *Venus Rising from the Sea — a Deception (After the Bath)*¹⁰ de Raphaëlle Peale, que es, a su vez, copia de la Venus de James Barry, pintada en 1772. La diferencia entre las dos obras es que Peale, con gesto parrasiano, pintó un velo blanco delante de la Venus desnuda, y después, con otro gesto, esta vez prestado de Magritte (“ceci n’est pas une pipe” — éste es un velo que es más verdadero que el cuadro de Barry, sin embargo, comparado con la realidad, es solo una pintura), llegó a firmarlo. La pintura original de esta manera se convierte en palimpsesto a la vez que el artista deja a la fantasía del espectador la tarea de evocar/imaginar a la Venus ocultada de manera púdica (-irónica).

Liliane Louvel enumera ejemplos prestados del ámbito de la literatura, entre ellos el cuento titulado “The Blank Page” de Karen Blixen, donde la página en blanco, el ocultamiento o el silencio cobra un papel eminente; yo sin embargo me refiero a otro velo blanco bien conocido, aquel que oculta la ventana del carro de Emma Bovary y Léon durante la carrera de casi seis horas en Rouen, y detrás del cual —al igual que en el caso de la Venus de Peale— aparece nada más una mano de vez en cuando para dejar a la fantasía del lector imaginar lo ocurrido.

Louvel llama la atención a que el velo a su vez se interpreta como signo de un estado intermedio en el tiempo: oculta a la Venus recién nacida de las olas y al mismo tiempo, debido a su semejanza con el velo de Verónica, alude a aquel que acaba de morir. Estas dos Pasiones colocan a los dos amores (carnal y espiritual) en la misma posición, mientras Louvel recuerda que la *imago mortis* proyectada en el velo blanco en la época romana era “representación de la ausencia”.¹¹

A mediados del siglo XV, Benozzo Gozzoli recibe el encargo para pintar los frescos de la capilla San Girolamo de la iglesia San Francesco de Montefalco. En la pared que se cierra

⁷ Como lo afirma el mismo artista, “The game between fiction and reality reinforces this feeling of disturbance.” Ibid.

⁸ www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-G04AOWqTo (15.03.2017.)

⁹ LOUVEL 2016.

¹⁰ Raphaëlle Peale: Venus Rising from the Sea - a Deception (After the Bath), ca. 1822, Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri.

¹¹ Évoquant l’*imago*, “La place vide de l’absent, comme place non vide, voilà l’image”, in: NANCY 2003, 128. Lo cita LOUVEL, Ibid.

con un arco de medio punto pinta un *quadro* de cornisa horizontal, una especie de *trompe l'oeil* en el que representa un tríptico gótico delante de un fondo azul, donde las decoraciones del ático del retablo proyectan sombras ilusorias sobre el fondo azul del *quadro*. En el lado izquierdo del *quadro* el artista pinta una cortina azul oscuro que alude a las cortinas góticas que en esa época efectivamente colgaban con frecuencia delante de las pinturas para protegerlas. A la vez, como bien afirma Scott Nethersole,¹² el mismo altar muchas veces funcionaba como cortina en la iglesia ocultando la reliquia y ocultando igualmente a las monjas que rezaban detrás del altar. El fresco de Benozzo Gozzoli por lo tanto, si es posible, acentúa aun más el gesto de Parrasio: si el pintor griego expuso su pintura de la cortina en un espacio real, Gozzoli coloca un altar delante de un espacio pintado según las leyes de la pintura tradicional y lo representa de manera más real enmarcándolo con una cortina *trompe l'oeil*. Así crea una tensión entre el fondo —ciclo sobre la vida de santos, representado de forma tradicional, en franjas horizontales— y el retablo en el medio que con sus niveles de realidad superpuestos anuncia, a modo de un *paragone* visual, la soberanía de la pintura.

La cortina pintada a modo de *trompe l'oeil*, como los ejemplos anteriores lo indican, en la mayoría de los casos es a la vez ocultamiento, cita y autorreflexión, que nos habla sobre las posibilidades de reflexionar, con métodos visuales, sobre la definición y la función del arte. ¿Qué es el arte? ¿La evocación de la realidad? ¿La ilusión de la perfección? O al contrario, ¿ironía cuyo blanco es la credulidad del espectador? La cortina de Parrasio crea la perfecta ilusión de la realidad y tan solo se delata en el momento cuando Zeuxis recurre a un campo diferente de la percepción, al tacto, tocando la superficie de la pintura.

Existen a la vez pinturas en las que la pareja de la realidad/ilusión se desenvuelve en la dicotomía del acercamiento—alejamiento: son así los numerosos retratos de Giuseppe Arcimboldo, entre ellos *El cocinero* donde (como en el patoconejo de Wittgenstein) basta darle la vuelta al cuadro para que el plato lleno de carne se transforme en el retrato de un hombre. En lo que al método concierne, de aquí solo un paso a la técnica del puntillismo, donde los diminutos puntos de color se convierten en la ilusión de formas y tonalidades de colores en la retina del espectador.

Una característica común en estas obras es que lo que el artista muestra en sus lienzos, no es de lo que quiere hablar: pinta manchas y puntos aparentemente incoherentes, sin embargo reflexiona sobre el ilusionismo, sobre fenómenos ópticos; ofrece al lector un bodegón pintado con un virtuosismo técnico, a la vez llama la atención en las trampas de la ilusión; lanza un velo delante de una pintura previamente existente y con ese simple gesto plantea una serie de preguntas estéticas, técnicas y sociales. Otro ejemplo es la serie de frescos pintados por Fra Angelico en las celdas del monasterio de San Marco en Florencia: la característica común de estos frescos es que el fondo en todas las escenas es de idéntico color que la pared en la que están pintadas. El fraile en este caso recurrió al vacío, a la ausencia del color (azul) para predicar a los frailes contemplativos las virtudes de la abstención y la pobreza. El hecho de que el artista se desdiga de sus propios recursos pictóricos, en este caso de la pintura hecha del costoso lapislázuli, anuncia que el arte es más que el conjunto de líneas y que el contenido ausente en el cuadro también puede formar parte de la obra al igual que los elementos representados, prestados del mundo real; la obra de esta manera

¹² NETHERSOLE 2011, 31.

representa el *ars*, la invención, frente al *techné*, es decir a la obra artística elaborada con una corrección de colores.

Pero volvamos al *quadro*, al recorte cuadrangular que abre una ventana al mundo: *La Virgen del canceller Rolin* o los frescos de Fra Angelico revelan ventanas a través de las cuales recibimos ayuda para la interpretación de las cosas presentes en la pintura o para saber cuál es la actitud requerida de parte del receptor a la hora de contemplar la obra. Ortega y Gasset sin embargo habla de otra ventana,¹³ una especie de marco universal que es aplicable a todas las obras de arte y que, según su intención, no llama la atención a la obra que enmarca sino —de acuerdo a su propia naturaleza— a los fenómenos más allá del arte. Ortega opina que la buena obra de arte (y el espectador sensible) se reconoce de su capacidad de mostrar, a través de la ventana (=obra de arte) no solo el paisaje que se vislumbra al otro lado (referencialidad) sino el mismo vidrio, es decir que más allá de la función mimética del arte es capaz de reflexionar sobre su naturaleza, sobre la sensibilidad del artista o sobre algún detalle del proceso creativo. Aunque Ortega, al mencionar la metáfora de la ventana, evidentemente habla del arte del siglo xx, son bien conocidas otras obras de épocas anteriores que comparten esta naturaleza. Y está el caso particular cuando tras la ventana hallamos la oscuridad, los cuadrados negros y blancos,¹⁴ representaciones de la nada o del todo, los cuadros monocromáticos, ejemplos de la anulación o de la ampliación de la obra, que al fin y al cabo es lo mismo, la serpiente que se muerde la propia cola: la página en negro de Sterne en *Tristram Shandy*, los cuadrados de Malévich o la lista de los cuadros no pintados de Endre Tót, pero tal vez no sea exagerado mencionar aquí algunos casos del arte efímero, la *Revista Oral*¹⁵ de Macedonio Fernández, los versos escritos en el aire de Raúl Zurita,¹⁶ las pinturas quemadas y convertidas en galletas de John Baldessari¹⁷ o la obra de Jean Tinguely titulada *Hommage to New York* que se autodestruye entre llamas.¹⁸

Blanco y negro

La pintura monocromática, como pudimos ver en los ejemplos anteriores, muchas veces se propone negar las formas hasta ese momento conocidas del arte para definir nuevos marcos. Sin embargo el cuadro no pintado / la palabra no pronunciada supone la alteración radical del soporte de la obra del arte. Cuando Endre Tót publica sus cuadros no pintados, con toda seguridad podría elegir para ello lienzos intactos, sin embargo el artista opta por la vía borgiana: no escribe una novela sino una reseña sobre la novela imaginada, es decir

¹³ ORTEGA Y GASSET 1925.

¹⁴ Sobre la cuestión de los cuadrados negros véase el magistral análisis de FÖLDÉNYI 2010, 9–21.

¹⁵ “Revista” de Alberto Hidalgo y Macedonio Fernández que funcionó entre 1925 y 1926 y no tuvo ningún número. El comité editorial se encontraba en el café Royal Keller de Buenos Aires para leerse y leer al público sus escritos. Aunque la revista no llegó a publicarse, sí se publicó un suplemento gráfico de la misma en el que aparece la lista de los fundadores: Macedonio Fernández, Norah Lange, Carlos Perez Ruiz, Francisco Luis Bernárdez, Emilio Pettorutti, Roberto Ortell, Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz, Brandán Caraffa, Eduardo González Lanuza, Leopoldo Marechal, Jorge Luis Borges y Alberto Hidalgo. Sobre la reconstrucción de las reuniones véase con más detalle en VILLANUEVA 2008, 151–160.

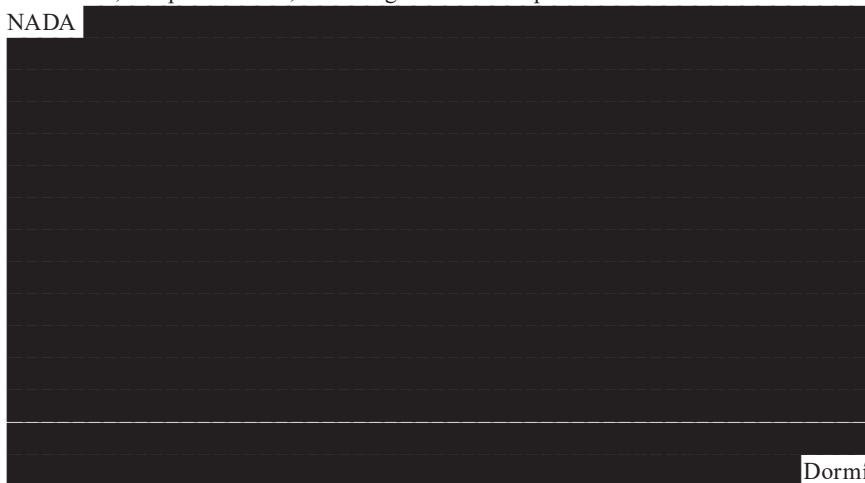
¹⁶ ZURITA 1986. La documentación fotográfica se publicó en el tomo *Anteparaíso* (University of California Press).

¹⁷ BALDESSARI 1970.

¹⁸ *Hommage to New York*, 1960.

los cuadros no pintados no cuelgan de las paredes de salas de exposiciones sino aparecen en catálogos de la obra del artista, anotados en hojas de papel, listados según tamaño.¹⁹ Antes mencioné el famoso monocromo de *Tristram Shandy*, el cuadrado negro enmarcado entre las páginas de una novela. “¡Pobre Yorick!”, lamenta el narrador de Sterne mientras sale del ámbito de la literatura, al igual que Endre Tót traspasa sus propios marcos genéricos, tan solo que lo hace en otra dirección: el negro pasa a ser de calidad literaria, una calidad visual. Y viceversa, la paráfrasis de Yorick, por Endre Tót: en el tomo titulado *Örülök, ha egyik mondatot a másik után írhatom* (Me alegra poder escribir una frase tras otra) hallamos este fragmento lleno de tachaduras y de “monocromos” blancos y negros:

Aunque viví lejos, me era imposible tomar cualquier medio de transporte. Salí caminando a Farkasrét, con pasos tristes, solo. Llegado a casa no pude dormir. Estuve velando en la NADA



Dormí

hasta la primera hora de la tarde. (...) ²⁰

Se aprecia que los marcos de la hoja negra de Endre Tót o de Sterne igualmente son meta-marcos, es decir traspasan sus propias fronteras, prestando sus recursos desde el ámbito de otras artes. Su objetivo con toda seguridad es el del marco descrito por Ortega y Gasset: no habla sobre lo representado sino sobre la naturaleza de la representación. No quiere hablar sobre la tristeza o sobre la nada de manera elocuente sino que ilustra el carácter limitado de los recursos de las artes, por ejemplo que existe una tristeza tan grande que es imposible describirla con palabras, que la descripción del paso de tiempo es una banalidad, mientras que el cuadrado negro es la concreción de la nada palpable. Regresaremos a este punto.

Ahora echemos otro vistazo a Rodchenko y a Malévich, los representantes más auténticos de los cuadrados negros y blancos. Malévich intenta captar la sensibilidad pura cuando priva sus cuadros primero de la mimesis, de las figuras, después de los colores, para

¹⁹ TÓT 1971. En parte envía esta misma obra a Buenos Aires, a la exposición del CAYC, véase KUTASY 2010.

²⁰ Texto original: “Bár messze laktam, képtelen voltam bármire is felszállni. Gyalog indultam Farkasrétre, szomorú léptekkel, magányosan. Hazaérve nem jött álom a szememre. Hajnalig virrasztottam a SEMMISÉGBEN. (...) Kora délutánig aludtam.” TÓTH, 191. La traducción al castellano es mía.

llegar al *Cuadrado blanco sobre fondo blanco*, en 1918. Rodchenko un año después llega más allá en la negación y termina negando incluso la obra de Malévich cuando en su diario comenta así su propia serie negra: “Color died in the color black, and now it plays no role. Let the brushstroke die out too.”²¹ A la vez reflexiona sobre la referencialidad de la abstracción geométrica, mientras critica el método compositivo de Malévich: “Therefore, it seems to me that Malevich wasn’t aware of what the existence of form should be, and he simply jumped into painting things white without destroying the real existence of the surface-plane.”²²

El mismo Rodchenko define su propio método compositivo partiendo de la representación mimética del cubismo cuando escribe en 1920 que al igual que los cubistas descomponen su objeto para construir una composición a base de sus piezas, él descompone el espacio del cuadro para experimentar con planos y colores. Para él las formas no reales (es decir, las que no imitan el mundo objetual) tienen que existir de una forma no real (no mimética) en un espacio no real (*unreal*)²³; a su vez siempre compone sus obras —sean éstas pinturas o más tarde carteles, fotos— en un marco de *quadro* tradicional: las masas y las formas tienen que hallar su dinamismo entre los límites del cuadrado que las contiene.

La forma de la ventana

Rodchenko halla el final del arte en tres lienzos pintados en 1921 —los monocromos rojo, azul y amarillo—, pero mientras predica la muerte del arte, no va más allá de los marcos cuadrados del lienzo. Sus pinturas, si bien son monocromáticas, muestran el mundo no objetual a través de un recuadro tradicional. En su nota anteriormente citada se atribuye la deconstrucción del espacio pictórico tradicional, pero si echamos un vistazo a sus fotografías posteriores, es bien llamativo que sus pinturas hechas a finales de los años 1910 son como bocetos compositivos a sus fotografías en blanco y negro. En las fotos compone vehículos, hombres en marcha, elementos arquitectónicos en orden geométrico, como si estos elementos de la realidad fuesen triángulos, cuadrados, circunferencias; es decir, aunque el espacio de la obra está fuertemente compuesto y obedece a normas estéticas, lo representado en las fotografías es totalmente identificable.

²¹ LAVRENTIEV 2005, 92. (Nota fechada 31.08.1919).

²² LAVRENTIEV 2005, 98.

²³ Véase su nota escrita el día 14 de junio de 1920: “It was yesterday, I think, that it became clear to me that my work of the circles period, and the cut surface-planes intersected by lines, historically somewhat resemble Cubism in non-objective painting: just as the Cubists decomposed the object, anatomized it to create their composition, so my works cut through the real surface-plane, put color aside and show that a single plane can be rendered with no one, but several colors of varying weight and tonality. The same goes for the particular compositional tasks derived from these anatomized surface-planes; but you have to look at the works of this period as material works nonetheless – though they are non-objective in form and color – given their obvious existence in space (that of the canvas). They exist, move, fly, or glide in a certain way, in a certain place, of a certain material color, weight, and tonality.

The pieces of the black period mark the beginning of the new existence of form in space, and a new space where it is hard to grasp what is space and what kind [of space it is], and what is a form in it, and how that form exists, although weight still remains, it’s true, though of a different quality.”, LAVRENTIEV 2005, 98.

Es el mismo concepto que el que vemos en el cuento titulado “Genealogía”²⁴ del escritor-pianista uruguayo, Felisberto Hernández: los protagonistas del texto fragmentado en seis partes son una circunferencia y un triángulo —éstos se persiguen, se transforman en elipse y pentágono y más tarde en cuadrilátero para abrirse y unirse a la línea horizontal infinita hasta llenar el espacio—, sin embargo los adjetivos de las formas geométricas sugieren características humanas y tras sus movimientos se perfila una historia de amor. Al igual como ocurre en las fotografías de Rodchenko, Felisberto Hernández también simplifica la narración hasta llegar a las formas geométricas más esenciales; aun así vemos claramente que la circunferencia-elipse y el triángulo-pentágono-cuadrilátero representan caracteres e historias humanas a la vez que el soporte en ambos casos es tradicional: en el caso de Rodchenko, el espacio pictórico cuadrado y en Felisberto Hernández la página del libro que encierra el texto lineal, algo fragmentado.

El punto de partida del arte de otro artista ruso, Vladímir Tatlin es el ícono tradicional, cuadrado, sin embargo el artista llega a la abstracción de la abstracción y en sus contra-relieves de rincón supera la forma del *quadro*. El ícono no representa las auténticas facciones del santo representado, sino las características genéricas de un tipo iconográfico, unas convenciones visuales a base de las características espirituales del santo, además en un orden tradicionalmente establecido, ritual. El pintor del ícono, mientras trabaja, lleva a cabo una labor espiritual: el proceso pictórico es un encuentro con el santo, a la vez el mismo pintor se purifica. Para lograr esta purificación el artista ha de seguir las tradiciones: no puede usar pintura negra, empieza su trabajo con las partes más oscuras para ir aclarando su paleta, en todo momento respeta las convenciones, proporciones y colores que requiere su tarea. En el momento que Tatlin empieza a pintar contra-relieves de rincón, opta por simplificar estas estructuras ya alteradas y simplificadas (el “rincón sagrado” donde se colocaban los íconos en los hogares rusos), es decir, representa una representación, generalizando aun más sus proporciones y formas. Para el final del proceso de abstracción se conserva el lugar (el rincón sagrado donde esta vez aparece una representación desacralizada), y en un principio también se conservan las proporciones, sin embargo se transforma el significado: la belleza espiritual del santo representado se ve sustituida por la belleza estética de las proporciones de la representación. Del método ceremonioso de la pintura de íconos queda tan solo el “hacer” y el “construir”, sin embargo el artista oculta el porqué, la causa original. Ya no pretende que su obra se parezca cuanto más a la pintura milagrosa original (ya sabemos, la semejanza formal es garantía de que la obra participa de la naturaleza divina), no imita su modelo, sino el método de pintar el modelo. Imita proporciones, colores, estructuras, superficies, convirtiendo así la representación y la mimesis en un gesto, para llegar al final, en lugar de la naturaleza divina, a su propia persona.

De espaldas a la ventana

Con respecto de las pinturas monocromáticas pudimos ver que traspasando los marcos de la forma de expresión artística (p. ej. una página negra en un libro, una lista de pinturas

²⁴ HERNÁNDEZ, Felisberto (1902-1964): *Genealogía*. *La Cruz del Sur* (Montevideo). 10.03.1926. Vol. II. No. 12. Más tarde se publica en *Libro sin tapas*, Rocha, Imprenta La Palabra, 1929.

no pintadas en una hoja de catálogo) los artistas declaran que en lugar de la descripción (anécdota, fidelidad a la forma o al género etc.) necesitan cada vez más recursos que sean capaces de revelar, en vez de una semejanza superficial, una identidad profunda y esencial entre la intención artística y la obra. ¿Qué puede ser más triste que el abandono a las palabras, cuando el silencio se vuelve tangible y la página del libro se borra? ¿Qué manera mejor de privar al espectador del espectáculo existe, si no el de presentarle una hoja de catálogo con el listado de lienzos inexistentes? Parece evidente que para representar la nada, tengo que traspasar el marco; el vacío se ve más grande desde el otro lado; pero ¿qué ocurre con el marco si el tema de la obra es *algo* y el artista pretende dar la espalda al mismo tiempo al mundo al que el marco-ventana se abre y al vidrio orteguiano? El poeta chileno Vicente Huidobro en su poema “Ars poetica” escrito en 1916 habla de la necesidad de una poesía que no imite la realidad, a su vez la belleza de la expresión artística (ver la nueva sensibilidad de Malévich) tampoco le atrae; en su lugar anhela una expresión igual de concreta que la hoja negra de Sterne: el poema no ha de representar la rosa sino tiene que serla.²⁵

Huidobro en esa época vive en París, conoce bien las aspiraciones de las vanguardias y en 1918 en Madrid conoce a Robert y Sonia Delaunay: esta última participa en el París de los años 1940 en la fundación del *Salon des Realités Nouvelles* que se convertirá posteriormente en la base principal de las tendencias de la pintura geométrica.²⁶

Huidobro entonces profesa la necesidad de construir nuevas reglas en el arte capaces de crear, en vez de la mimesis, un mundo autónomo, independiente de la realidad: usando el ejemplo anterior de las artes visuales, que el cuadro no sea una ventana al mundo, que no solo describa, narre el mundo, sino que sea el mismo mundo y si puede ser, un mundo bien diferente del mundo real.

No cabe duda de que Huidobro en sus obras *creacionistas* deja atrás la mimesis descriptiva tradicional, concebida en el sentido poético, cuando a través de sus inusitadas metáforas (p. ej. “El pájaro anida en el arcoiris”) habla de fenómenos que efectivamente no ocurren en nuestro entorno real; a la vez, con sus caligramas cuestiona la competencia de lo verbal. Sin embargo el “marco” de su arte sigue siendo la forma poética y en su abandono a lo referencial no llega a la abstracción de algunas obras fónicas, es decir, todas sus palabras tienen un denotado existente, mientras sus caligramas (p. ej. “La torre Eiffel”) evocan su objeto a través de la tipografía. Su *Manifiesto creacionista* a su vez muestra analogía con las tendencias dadaistas que rechazan el papel decorativo (anecdótico, “vistoso”) del arte para proclamar la vida como acto artístico.

Huidobro, vemos, pretende crear un arte cuyo lugar es nuestro mundo, sin embargo con éste no pretende relacionarse en absoluto. El “pequeño dios” que es el poeta no es ningún maestro que copia la creación del gran Demiurgo, sino se coloca fuera del mundo para crear un universo textual completamente autónomo. En este deseo sin embargo no llega más allá que Rodchenko: del mismo modo que el pintor ruso negó a Malévich, Huidobro también

²⁵ Borges llama la atención en los peligros y en la paradoja de las representaciones de esta índole en su cuento titulado “El espejo y la máscara” donde la representación perfecta de la batalla condena a la desgracia tanto al poeta como al rey.

²⁶ El efecto de Sonia Delaunay en España se ilustra bien por el hecho de que en la revista vanguardista más ilustre de los años 1919-20 (*Grecia*) Isaac del Vando Villar le dedica un poema en el que las palabras de la mujer son “plumas de colores”, de los espejos de su cara “el arte nuevo (...) sonríe” y en la cúpula de su sombrero “se posarán los aeroplanos domesticados”. *Grecia*. Madrid, 01.09.1920. Vol. III. No. 48. 3.

da la espalda a la ventana. La versión chilena de la actitud deconstructora de Rodchenko es el poema titulado *Altazor o el viaje en paracaídas* (1931), al final del cual Huidobro efectivamente se deshace de la lengua, soporte de su arte, sin embargo el paracaidista ficticio cae en la nada, sin llegar a construir el nuevo mundo artístico.

El nombre *creacionismo* de Huidobro viene de los argentinos que denominaron así la tendencia porque el poeta a partir de los años 1910 decía que la tarea del artista era crear; a este credo artístico rima perfectamente lo que el húngaro Lajos Kassák afirma en 1922 en su texto titulado *Képarchitektúra* (Arquitectura de la imagen): “Porque la arquitectura de la imagen es arte, el arte es creación y la creación es todo.”²⁷ Kassák observa el sistema desde la inversa: si hasta el momento el arte era una función estética del mundo real, a partir de ahora la realidad cae en manos del arte, la situación cambia y las cosas cobrarán sentido desde el otro lado. Como lo dice Kassák: “no hay una sociedad en particular, no hay un arte en particular.”²⁸ Pero ¿qué relación tiene la arquitectura del cuadro y la mimesis? Según la definición de Kassák: “la arquitectura de la imagen no es ilusoria sino real, no es abstracta sino el naturalismo más estricto,” en lugar de una pintura mimética, es “naturaleza objeto de mimesis”, en suma, “la arquitectura de la imagen ya no es imagen en el sentido académico de la palabra.”²⁹ La semejanza llamativa entre las ideas de Kassák y Huidobro se explican en parte con la relación entre los dos artistas: algunos poemas prematuros de Huidobro se publicaron en la revista *MA* de Kassák³⁰ y en *Magyar Írás*, a la vez investigaciones recientes estudian que la colaboración de los artistas podía ser más estrecha de lo que hoy sospechamos.

Ideas parecidas al creacionismo de Huidobro o a la arquitectura de la imagen de Kassák aparecen en el *Manifiesto ultraísta vertical* (1920) de Guillermo de Torre: en este texto ya se evidencia que la pintura y la poesía se rigen por ideas análogas, la subversión del marco se lleva a cabo paralelamente en la poesía y en las artes visuales. La meta del manifiesto es “modificar las estructuras pictóricas y líricas, y construir nuevos módulos auténticos de Belleza espacial” y fija el origen del arte nuevo en tiempos posteriores a la mimesis de la realidad objetiva. En este espacio ultraespacial crea tanto el poeta como el pintor: “El Arte Nuevo (...) comienza allí donde acaba la copia o traducción de la realidad aparente: allí, en aquel plano ultraespacial donde el poeta forja obras inauditas y creadas que no admiten confrontación exterior objetiva.”³¹ Efectivamente, como si ese mismo manifiesto se propusiera evocar este espacio: el texto se interrumpe por pequeños dibujos, en la tipografía aparecen líneas en diagonal. Estas diagonales sin embargo no son las de *La torre Eiffel* de Huidobro, donde las palabras ascendentes del poema evocan la forma de la torre, es decir, cuyo sentido se desenvuelve desde el significado del texto, sino una diagonal que llega a estructurar y construir el cuerpo textual. La diagonal aporta oblicuidad al texto, es una “descoyuntamiento tipográfica”, como lo llama el mismo Guillermo de Torre y aunque su manifiesto se llama *vertical*, la verticalidad se define como la superación de la tradición, un desarrollo explosivo, vertiginoso: en este contexto parece que la diagonal que aparece en la tipografía expresa mucho mejor aquello que a nivel del texto el autor

²⁷ KASSÁK 1922, 54.

²⁸ KASSÁK – MOHOLY-NAGY 1922.

²⁹ KASSÁK 1922.

³⁰ Véase además en SCHOLZ 2005, 159.

³¹ DE TORRE 1920.

denomina como *verticalidad*. La diagonal borra el marco porque anula el *quadro*: no existe más la forma tranquilizadamente cuadrangular, o si existe, como si la diagonal pretendiera rajarla visualmente. Aunque el manifiesto formula un programa afín al de los futuristas o ultraístas, su espíritu es el de otro texto de tesis. En 1944 Rhod Rothfuss escribió un texto corto sobre el marco en el primer (y único) número de la revista *Arturo* que marcó los inicios del movimiento MADÍ en Argentina.³² En su artículo Rothfuss critica la práctica del cubismo y del non-objetivismo de colocar marcos rectangulares a obras cuya composición se construye a base de circunferencias, elipses o polígonos. Por el marco rectangular artistas tan notables como Man Ray, Fernand Léger, Georges Braque o el cubista argentino Emilio Pettoruti rebajan sus obras en mero fragmento, ya que el marco simétrico las corta mutilándolas. Rhod Rothfuss opina que la interpretación del marco como ventana al mundo plasma la sospecha en el espectador de que el espectáculo visto en el cuadro continúa fuera de él, participa de la realidad; este equívoco se suprime tan solo si el artista moldea el marco de acuerdo con la composición, ya que “una pintura debe ser algo que empiece y termine en ella misma. Sin solución de continuidad.”³³

Las obras de László Péri ejemplifican bien la intención de Rothfuss. En las composiciones de madera y de hormigón expuestas a partir de los años 20 en la galería Der Sturm los contornos de las obras definen los marcos de las obras, es lógico que tanto Carmelo Arden Quin como Bolívar Gaudin hayan considerado al artista como precursor del movimiento MADI. En lo que se refiere a su serie titulada *Construcciones espaciales* (Térkonstrukciók), tanto el nombre como la concepción de la obra evoca las *Arquitecturas de la imagen* de Kassák.

Anteriormente mencionamos el contacto entre Vicente Huidobro y Sonia Delaunay y el papel del *Salon des Realités Nouvelles* fundado por ésta última en París en la promoción de las ambiciones geométricas; es bien posible que el *Manifiesto invencionista* del artista argentino Tomás Maldonado tenga que ver igualmente con las ideas de Huidobro. En el texto fechado en 1946 Maldonado se propone “no buscar ni encontrar: crear” y en ese mismo año, en Buenos Aires, Gyula Kosice, de procedencia húngara, redacta el *Manifiesto Madí* cuya última frase fusiona el credo de Maldonado con el de Huidobro: “Madí, por lo tanto, INVENTA Y CREA.”³⁴ El *Manifiesto Madí* sostiene las ideas profesadas por Rothfuss sobre el marco cuando exige “marco recortado e irregular”³⁵ para las pinturas MADI, a la vez que considera anticuadas las obras cuyo tema es exterior, es decir, la obra imita la realidad. En su lugar invita a crear piezas concretas, geométricas, una obra que “domine el espacio y el tiempo en todos sus sentidos y la materia hasta sus últimas consecuencias.”³⁶

Aunque hay discusiones acerca del inicio de MADI —Zsuzsa Dárdai señala dos posibles fechas, el manifiesto de 1946 y la exposición de Carmelo Arden Quin y el grupo MADI en el Salon de París, en 1948³⁷—, es bien llamativo que comparando con los demás grupos y tendencias vanguardistas MADI es un movimiento muy longevo y extendido: mientras los demás ismos, basados en la negación, en algunos años crean sus obras

³² ROTHFUSS 1944.

³³ ROTHFUSS 1944.

³⁴ Museo Kosice, <https://kosice.com.ar/otros-recursos/los-textos/de-kosice/manifiesto-madi/>

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ DÁRDAI – SAXON-SZÁSZ 2016, 5.

emblemáticas para extinguirse de inmediato, MADI florece hasta hoy en muchas partes del planeta y los artistas pertenecientes a sus círculos acaban de cumplir el 70 aniversario de la fundación. En lo que a *Arturo* concierne, los editores planeaban publicar cuatro números anuales, sin embargo finalmente apareció nada más ese primer y único número, de 1946; aun así bastó para señalar nuevas directrices en el arte. *Arturo* con su característica portada de letras en diagonal grabadas arriba a la derecha es el credo estético de MADI, y a su vez es su marco más emblemático, por abierto: con él se lanza el único movimiento vanguardista que no se ha agotado hasta hoy. Como si las cuatro letras (Movimiento—Abstracción—Dinamismo—Invención) fuesen sinónimas de aquellas otras que una vez pronunciadas pueden crear vida.

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Cultural Events and Community Building in the Diaspora: Hungarians in Latin America, Latin Americans in Hungary

Béla Soltész

Introduction

Cultural connections between countries or regions come into being in different ways. More often than not, these connections are created by people who travel from one country to another, becoming agents of cultural exchange. In the case of Hungary and Latin America, famous intellectuals and artists, as well as infamous troublemakers, travelled back and forth across the Atlantic, giving rise to a rich historiographic record of individual lives.

Yet many times the more enduring and robust connections were created by “everyday heroes” whose names are not recorded in the annals. Hungarian migrants to Latin America, as well as Latin American migrants to Hungary, helped foster cultural ties on a grassroots level. These exchanges are covered in part by historians (most importantly in the case of the Hungarian emigration to Argentina and Brazil in the 19th and early 20th century), but there is still a lot of work to do.

An even more neglected field, however, is the current situation of Hungarians in Latin America and Latin Americans in Hungary. This is understandable, as in 2017 Hungary and Latin America are not significant migration partners: the annual flow of people migrating between the two is unlikely to exceed a few hundred.¹ Social scientists interested in migration, therefore, do not engage in in-depth research regarding these processes.

There is, nonetheless, a humble body of cultural anthropological texts that describe the everyday practices and livelihoods of these communities. Starting from these articles, this study will attempt to move towards a more “social” analysis of these diaspora groups, focusing on cultural exchange. Understanding diasporas as a community of immigrants and their descendants who created formal or informal institutions in order to preserve themselves as a group, this paper describes four cases.²

The study examines the role of cultural events in Hungarian diaspora communities in Latin America and Latin American diaspora communities in Hungary. Based on four diaspora events observed by the author, the study describes how local migrant or diaspora

¹ For the main processes concerning current Latin American migration, see TEXIDÓ–GURRIERI 2012.

² For a more complex set of definitions see BRUBAKER 2005, 1–19. The cases are partially analysed in SOLTÉSZ–SZAKÁL 2014, 141–164; SOLTÉSZ 2016.

communities use their ethno-cultural ties to the motherland to create a community, and how this is conceived in a space of interculturality and exchange. These events are:

- A lunch at the Hungarian House in Caracas, Venezuela.
- Hungarian–Swabian food festivals in Jaraguá do Sul, Brazil.
- A pan-Latino football tournament, ‘Copa América’, in Üröm, Hungary.
- An Andean sun ritual, ‘Inti Raymi’, on Váci Street in Budapest, Hungary.

I am grateful to a number of people who made my participation at these events possible: Ildikó Kunckelné Fényes and Imre Gózon in Venezuela, Gabriella Mándy and Bernadete Panstein in Brazil, and Javier Zea and László Letenyei in Hungary.

The Hungarian Diaspora(s) in Latin America and the Latin American Diaspora(s) in Hungary

Hungarians have been migrating to Latin America ever since the continent was discovered and colonised. From the early times of Jesuit priests in the 1700s and exiled revolutionaries in the 1800s, through the massive peasant emigration of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, to the politically motivated migrations of the later 20th century, there have been many waves of Hungarian emigration to Latin America. Argentina and Brazil were the most popular destinations, while Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela and Mexico also received Hungarians in certain historical and political contexts.³ A rough estimate is that somewhere around 250,000 Hungarians migrated to Latin America altogether.

Latin Americans never have had Hungary as a primary migration destination. It was only in specific contexts that migrants of a given nationality appeared in Hungary in large numbers. One of these special cases was the Cuban–Hungarian bilateral guest-worker exchange during the 1980s, which occasionally resulted in the formation of mixed couples who settled down either in Cuba or in Hungary.⁴ Another remarkable pattern was the influx of Ecuadoreans and Peruvians in the 1990s, many of whom made a living playing music on the streets or selling handicrafts.⁵ Currently, students and corporate employees from Latin America are a relatively populous group, the latter being moved within their company from other countries to shared service centres or assembly plants in Hungary. The total historical flow of Latin Americans to Hungary, however, is unlikely to exceed 20,000 people.⁶

It is challenging nonetheless to establish how many Hungarians live in Latin America or how many Latin Americans live in Hungary as of 2017. The most recent estimate, published

³ For a detailed analysis of the Hungarian emigration to Latin America see ANDERLE 1999; ANDERLE 2008, 174–181; SZABÓ 1982; TORBÁGYI 2004. Country- or city-specific historical analyses also exist, such as PONGRÁCZ 2008; SZENTE-VARGA 2008, 57–86; SZILÁGYI 2009.

⁴ See MARK–APOR 2015, 852–891; ZALAI 2000, 69–77.

⁵ For an economic and political overview of the background of these flows see LEHOCZKI 2007, 157–171. Migration patterns are summarised by DURAND–MASSEY 2010, 20–52; HISKEY–ORCES 2010, 116–136. For a diaspora policy perspective see GONZÁLEZ GUTIÉRREZ 2006. For the cases of Ecuador and Peru see ARTETA–OLEAS 2008; ÁVILA 2003, 167–261. See also SZÉLI 2008, 256–296.

⁶ A categorisation is offered by SOLTÉSZ–SZAKÁL 2014.

by the World Bank in 2013 and based on the country of birth of each inhabitant of a country, not on self-identification or citizenship, appears in Table 1.

Table 1.

Estimated data of Latin Americans in Hungary and Hungarians in Latin America, 2013

	Number of Latin Americans in Hungary by country of origin	Number of Hungarians in Latin America by country of destination
Argentina	354	941
Bolivia	63	23
Brazil	550	1,546
Chile	172	410
Colombia	215	137
Costa Rica	36	45
Cuba	664	72
Dominican Republic	38	70
Ecuador	120	316
El Salvador	14	1
Guatemala	19	0
Honduras	12	0
Mexico	459	424
Nicaragua	24	8
Panama	28	51
Paraguay	22	0
Peru	237	77
Uruguay	74	121
Venezuela, RB	208	836
TOTAL LATIN AMERICA	3,309	5,078

Note: Data are estimated based on country of birth, not on self-identification or citizenship.

Source: World Bank 2013

The estimates of the number of Latin Americans in Hungary seem realistic, although they might slightly underestimate those nationalities that arrived more recently (e.g. Ecuadoreans). The number of Hungarians in Latin America is more difficult to assess, given the vast territorial and historical scope of these individual life stories. What needs to be clarified is the difference between the number of persons born in Hungary but currently living in Latin America (around 5,000) and the estimates of those of Hungarian descent born in Latin America (100,000 or more in some sources).

The most reliable source would be the census data, but neither in Hungary nor in Latin American countries do censuses have a separate question on the country of birth of parents or grandparents. Ethnic belonging or identification is asked about in several censuses, but it is always a voluntary question. It is only occasional surveys or expert analyses, therefore, that can provide a rough estimate of the number of a given diaspora group. Recently, a paper published by the Research Institute For Hungarian Communities Abroad (*Nemzetpolitikai Kutatóintézet*) estimated the number of ethnic Hungarians in Latin America to be around

125,000 (of whom 75,000 live in Brazil, 40,000 in Argentina, 4,000 in Venezuela, 3,000 in Uruguay and 2,000 in Chile).⁷

The “Hungarianness” of these people is disputable though. Several theories on diaspora, assimilation and acculturation discuss identity related,⁸ political⁹ and developmental¹⁰ dimensions of a diaspora. Yet, for the purposes of the current analysis, Alan Gamlen’s concept of ‘thin’ and ‘thick’ diaspora membership seems most appropriate.¹¹ In this conceptual framework, migrants – as well as their descendants – take part in the diaspora’s life to varying degrees.

‘Thin’ membership means that there are Brazilian, Argentinean, or other Latin American individuals who are aware of their Hungarian ancestors, but this is not central to their identity and lifestyle. ‘Thick’ membership means there are Hungarian descendants in these countries who actively maintain their Hungarian cultural heritage through artistic, folklore, social and other events; they keep their linguistic and literary heritage alive. Given the socio-demographic characteristics of the Hungarian diaspora in Latin America (mostly second- or third-generation), the concept of ‘thick’ membership likely applies to only a couple of thousand people.

The analysis in this study therefore focuses on the cultural heritage (and the maintenance thereof) in the diaspora supported by formal or semi-formal institutions. Cultural heritage is a dual-nature asset: it creates group cohesion (within the diaspora), even as it provides distinct features to its members (vis-à-vis the majority society). Both features provide paths for cultural exchange between the country of origin and the country of residence; therefore, these diaspora institutions and events are at the core of the case studies.

The Hungarian diaspora in Latin America is not a homogeneous group, as (obviously) conditions in Brazil are different from those in, for example, Venezuela. The same applies to Latin Americans in Hungary who have different migration histories and different socioeconomic status. Yet diaspora events (either ‘internal’, for the community members only, or ‘external’, for the members of the majority society) are important occasions in building cultural ties between Hungarians and Latin Americans. Because migrants or diaspora members are ‘natural’ agents of intercultural exchange, it is in their best interest to use their cultural heritage as an asset.

Social Events at the Hungarian House, Caracas, Venezuela

The Hungarian community in Caracas, Venezuela, is traditional, rich, and conservative.¹² Its core is a group of highly educated 1956 émigrés who settled in the capital during Venezuela’s golden age (the 1960s and 1970s). From the 1970s onwards, the Hungarian community grew rich and powerful, and built a sizeable community centre in a wealthy suburb of Caracas:

⁷ *Magyar diaszpórapolitika – stratégiai irányok* 2016, 29–30.

⁸ See BERRY 1992, 69–86; BRUBAKER 2005.

⁹ See VERTOVEC 2005.

¹⁰ See PORTES et al. 2005.

¹¹ GAMLEN 2008, 840–856.

¹² For a detailed background see BANKO 2016, 63–75, as well as the information on the Latin American Hungarian Associations’ website: LAMOSZSZ s. a.

the Hungarian House (*Casa Húngara*). This building, decorated with wooden carvings and a huge map of the pre-1920 Kingdom of Hungary on its ceiling, was the home of a dozen cultural associations, from kindergarten education to folk dance and charity.

Yet after 1998, when Hugo Chávez's left-wing populist regime came to power, the Hungarian community found itself in a slowly but steadily worsening condition as the wealthy entrepreneurial elite to which many of them belonged became a target of hostile government policies and actions. The subsequent 'return' fever also weakened the Hungarian community in Caracas and led to a decrease in the number of members with a primarily Hungarian identity. Those who had been born in Venezuela often did not have sufficient knowledge of the Hungarian language and did not want to move to Hungary. Nonetheless, the worsening economic conditions in the 2010s encouraged many members of the community to leave Venezuela and move to the United States or to Western Europe. Ironically, they often did so with a Hungarian passport they had obtained thanks to the laws of simplified naturalisation adopted by Hungary in 2011.¹³ The Hungarian House in Caracas is now emptying out and ceasing to exist as a lively community centre for a specific diaspora group.

The event I visited in February 2015 was called Hungarian lunch, and it was a regular meeting of the Hungarian community, organised once a month. In earlier days, every weekend had a community event where Hungarians could gather, but as of 2015, it was only the first Sunday of each month when a Catholic mass was held (in Spanish, with a part in Hungarian), followed by a traditional Hungarian lunch menu of *székelykáposzta* (Cabbage stew with pork meat) and pancakes. Most participants were elderly, upper-class Hungarians and their family members, the latter being either Hungarian speakers or Spanish speakers (spouses or younger children).

This was an 'internal' event that facilitated information exchange and social networking in the Hungarian community. Given the decreasing size and hybridisation of the community, however, Spanish-speaking Venezuelans are more and more common guests in the Hungarian House, and they are welcome as long as they are related to a member of the community. Yet Hungarians in Venezuela do not reveal themselves to the host society. To 'hide' from a foreign gaze, the community building is simple and unremarkable from the outside. This is perhaps because Hungarian cultural heritage (as well as any European, 20th-century immigrant heritage) in present-day Venezuela is associated with the belonging to a higher social class.

This is certainly a threat, given the current security problems of the country, so it is not surprising that Hungarians in Caracas do not want to take their regular activities to the streets. On the other hand, this closed circle offers a great, if paradoxical, asset to its members: it can be a key to an EU passport, as it creates access to simplified naturalisation. These factors certainly increase the attractiveness of being Hungarian for the second or third generation. It also facilitates emigration from Venezuela, however, contributing to the decline of the diaspora in the long run.

¹³ An analysis of the effect of the simplified naturalisation is offered by *Új magyar állampolgárok – Változások az egyszerűsített honosítási eljárás bevezetése után* 2017.

Food Festivals, Jaraguá do Sul, Brazil

Jaraguá do Sul is a prosperous industrial town in the state of Santa Catarina in southern Brazil.¹⁴ The town was established in the late 19th century by three major ethnic groups: Germans, Italians and Hungarians. Jaraguá's Hungarian settlers belonged to the German-speaking Swabian–Hungarian community from Veszprém County who left the Kingdom of Hungary in the 1890s. They had a strong national identification as Hungarians (their main church was named after Saint Stephen, King of Hungary), yet they spoke a dialect of the German language, mutually understandable with *Hochdeutsch*.

In the early 1900s, the Swabian–Hungarian community completely lost its connections to Hungary, and it was only in the second half of the 20th century that these ties re-emerged, thanks to Hungarian anthropologist Lajos Boglár, and to the Hungarian diaspora in São Paulo.¹⁵ It was after the Hungarian transition, in the early 1990s, that these connections to the motherland became sufficiently close to allow Jaraguá residents (belonging to the third or fourth generation) to re-discover their Hungarianness. It nonetheless was framed within a multicultural (German, Italian, Japanese, Polish, African etc.) Brazilian cultural setting, where the population had an extremely diverse racial background.

The re-discovery of the Hungarian roots enabled the members of the community to present themselves as an equally 'interesting' and distinct group of the local population, and significantly, to differentiate themselves from the German–Brazilians. In the late 20th century, all ethnic groups in Jaraguá already had the Portuguese as their first language, thus the Hungarian versus German language issue, while interesting from a historical point of view, no longer played a major role in the community's internal and external relations.

The Hungarian Government has recently shown some interest to the community's distinct heritage, and it has included Jaraguá in several diaspora policy initiatives, such as the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Programme for the Hungarian diaspora.¹⁶ Teachers of the Hungarian language and of Hungarian folk dances arrived from Hungary, and Hungarian researchers collected written and ethnographic material. The laws of simplified naturalisation were received ambiguously in Jaraguá, however; the 'Hungarian' language knowledge expected in order to have the Hungarian citizenship was different from the Swabian knowledge of the elderly. Nevertheless, several members of the community managed to learn Hungarian, at least on a basic level.

A peculiar representation of the ethnic diversity of Jaraguá are the various food festivals organised year-round, which are as mixed as the town itself.¹⁷ The major food-related event is the Polenta Festival (*Festa da Polenta*) of the Italian descendants, but other nationalities also have their food and beverages presented in the 'ethnic' events (such as the German *Schützenfest*). The Hungarian community has built its own festive identity around the *Strudel* (using the German name of the popular pastry instead of the standard Hungarian *rétes*, the latter having been introduced to their vocabulary only recently and due to the arrival of language teachers from Hungary). Also, while soups are not common in mainstream Brazilian cuisine, they are popular among Hungarians, and a 'Hungarian Soups Night' is organised

¹⁴ For a detailed background, see the following monographs: LOPES 2013; ÖRY KOVÁCS 2010.

¹⁵ BOGLÁR 2000.

¹⁶ Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Programme 2017.

¹⁷ SOLTÉSZ 2016.

frequently. In both cases, local flavours mix with traditional Hungarian recipes: there are banana and coconut strudels, as well as manioca soups unlikely to be found in Hungary.

'Hungarianness' in Jaraguá is an asset in being a 'respectable' and 'interesting' community in one of the world's most multi-ethnic regions. Just as with the Hungarian community of Caracas, the ethnicity is associated with a higher social status. Yet given the longer historical perspective, and the fact that no first-generation migrants are still alive, this nostalgic re-discovery of the ethnic origins is different from the 'organic' Hungarianness of the Venezuelan–Hungarian community, and also from other Brazilian–Hungarian communities, such as the one in São Paulo. Hungarian citizenship is also less attractive for Jaraguá residents than for Venezuelan–Hungarians, as there is no economic pressure to have a Hungarian passport as soon as possible.

The Hungarian identity in Jaraguá is a 'festive' one, and this helps cultural exchange, as all the 'typical' Hungarian identity items are received and recycled as items for the community's self-representation. The local cultural and social context facilitates this identity revival, thus – as opposed to the defensive Hungarian community in Caracas – the Swabian–Hungarians of Jaraguá are engaging other members of the local population in their activities.

Copa América Football Tournament, Üröm, Hungary

The Latin American communities in Hungary are small, fragmented, and based on personal and informal (or semi-formal) ties. While there is no open hostility between national groups, there is a somewhat distant relationship between Latinos from different countries. They might or might not recognise each other as belonging to the same 'ethnic' group. Social and occupational cleavages also make it difficult to speak about a 'Latin American diaspora' in Hungary, or in Budapest, in the same way as a 'Hungarian diaspora' in Caracas and in Jaraguá do Sul. As of this writing, the only opportunity for different Latin American communities and different occupational or status groups (musicians, handicraft traders, company employees, students etc.) to mix in or around Budapest was a self-organised, informal football and family event called Copa América.¹⁸

Every spring, on a Sunday in late April or early May, Latin Americans living in Hungary organise a football (soccer) tournament in the locality of Üröm, a suburb of Budapest. The tradition dates back to 2006. Men re-create the 'real' Copa América football matches by forming 'national' teams that they take rather seriously: they wear the uniform of the national team of the given country. Yet they are more receptive to foreign players than the real national selection process would be: teams can be mixed if a given nationality cannot present eleven players.

In the meantime, women (spouses or female relatives of the football players, either Latin Americans or Hungarians) prepare traditional food at a stall next to the football field, and children are entertained with handicraft activities by other female members of the community. Traditional gender roles are not questioned: football players are male, while those in charge of cooking and taking care of the children are almost exclusively female. The event has a relaxed and intercultural attitude, and while participants do not seek the presence of a Hungarian

¹⁸ SOLTÉSZ–SZAKÁL 2014.

‘audience’ (i.e. they do not advertise outside the community), they are not hostile to occasional Hungarian passers-by.

The organisation tasks are undertaken by the Inti Raymi Cultural Association founded by Peruvian and Ecuadorean immigrants in the early 2000s. The name of the association refers to the Andean-style street parade of the same name; however, the Copa América event is open to all Latin Americans. This pan-Latino universalism is unique in Hungary. While other Latin American nationalities organise specific events (either with the help of the respective embassy, such as the Mexican Day of the Dead festivity in late October, or on an entirely self-organising basis, such as the Brazilian music and dance parties), none reach out to other Latinos living in Hungary. The Copa América went even further: a team of Lusophone Africans (mainly Angolans) living in Hungary, as well as a team of Ecuadoreans living in Slovakia participated in some of the matches.

This event is valuable for creating an internal space for the ‘Latino’ immigrants in Hungary, who, in turn, do not want to reach out to the Hungarian majority society. Instead, Hungarian spouses and friends of Latin Americans are invited through the community’s different communication channels (mostly Facebook groups and pages). This provides the opportunity for informal social integration, while not necessarily seeking a ‘cultural exchange’ in its stricter sense.

Inti Raymi Festivities, Budapest, Hungary

Contrary to the Copa América football tournaments, the Inti Raymi street parade explicitly seeks to present Latin American (more specifically, Andean) culture to Hungarians. Inti Raymi is a re-discovered celebration of the summer solstice from Inca times: every year, around 23 June, a colourful parade is organised wherever Andeans live.¹⁹ This self-representation as ‘indigenous’ and ‘ancient’ comes from the 20th-century revival of Inca heritage in the Andean countries.

It took a new twist with the formation of the massive Peruvian and Ecuadorean diasporas in the United States and in Europe in the 1990s. In multi-cultural, global cities, other diaspora communities (Chinese, Indian, Arabic, etc.) already had a visual and symbolic presence in the urban landscape. By organising the Inti Raymi festivities as a street parade (instead of the ceremonial, performance-like festivity held in Cusco, Peru), Andean migrants had the opportunity to present themselves as an equally characteristic group of inhabitants of the metropolis. This meant that the representation of the complex, hybrid Andean cultural heritage ‘narrowed’ to include only the non-European element of Andean identities (dresses from Otavalo, *wiphala* flags, etc.), even if many participants are Creole or Mestizo Andeans.

Although on a far smaller scale than in North America or in Western Europe, Hungary is also the home for an Andean diaspora community.²⁰ Its size peaked in the late 1990s, reaching around a thousand persons living mostly in Budapest and often being involved in occupations of an ‘ethno-cultural’ character: street music or handicraft trade. Many times, these immigrants were holders of tertiary degrees (teachers, economists, etc.) but had to leave their home countries due to the economic hardships of the last decade of the past century.

¹⁹ See LETENYEI 2008, 326–340; SOLTÉSZ–SZAKÁL 2014.

²⁰ SZÉLI 2008.

Recently, many of them returned to Ecuador or to Peru, or moved further, to Western European countries. Yet in 2004, when their presence was still remarkable in Budapest, Andeans organised *Inti Raymi* for the first time in Hungary.

Ever since, this Andean ‘self-representation’ occurs once a year on the pedestrian portion of Váci Street in the centre of Budapest. Dancers and musicians take the street for an hour-long walking show, performing for the Hungarian audience (and for the tourists who abound in this neighbourhood). The costumes and dances are taken from the Andean highland’s indigenous heritage. The street parade is followed by a fertility ritual, performed on Vörösmarty Square by members of the community using fruits, vegetables and drinks. With this ritual, the public part of the event is finished, although in the evening a dance party is organised at a closed venue.

The main organising entity is the *Inti Raymi Cultural Association*. The parade is organised each year by a different *mayordomo* (‘host’), a volunteer elected by the community. The festival is inclusive in the sense that, despite its strong indigenous character, it welcomes the creole and mestizo members of the Andean diaspora, as well as their friends and relatives, allowing them to be ‘as exotic as possible’ in Budapest. In contrast with the *Copa América* event, however, the *Inti Raymi* parade does not include other, non-Andean Latin Americans (Mexicans, Brazilians, Argentinians, etc.). Yet this event is definitely the most remarkable ‘Latin American’ event occurring in Hungary, providing a good opportunity for locals to see a re-invented Andean tradition.

Hungarians in Latin America vs. Latin Americans in Hungary: A Comparative Conclusion

Based on the background information and on the selected case studies, a structured comparison emerges focusing on the historical, social and institutional characteristics of the respective diasporas, as well as their public image and the events (internal and external) that maintain these diasporas alive. The main features described above are summarised in the following table.

Table 2.

A comparison of the Hungarian diaspora in Latin America and the Latin American diaspora in Hungary

	Hungarians in Latin America	Latin Americans in Hungary
Characteristics of the diaspora	Older, better-integrated diasporas	Newer, sporadic, isolated diasporas
Social status of most diaspora members	Higher social status	Mixed social status
Diaspora institutions	Developed diaspora institutions	Semi-formal, self-organised events
Image of the diaspora in the eyes of the majority (host) society	Unknown to the majority society	Exoticised by the majority society
‘Internal’ diaspora event	E.g. Hungarian lunch in Caracas	E.g. <i>Copa América</i> in Üröm
‘External’ diaspora event	E.g. Food festivals in Jaraguá do Sul	E.g. <i>Inti Raymi</i> parade in Budapest

Source: Drawn by the author.

The Hungarian diaspora(s) in Latin America are older and better institutionalised; their members (mostly second- or third-generation immigrants) are usually well-off, and they are well-integrated into the host society – or, to be more precise, most of them have a primary identity of the host society, and the Hungarian identity comes only second. In contrast, Latin Americans in Hungary have a far shorter diaspora history and, as a consequence, their institutions are usually semi-formal and do not cover all Latinos in the country. Latin American immigrants are heterogeneous in terms of social status: self-employed, students and corporate employees are the main groups. They are usually ‘first generation’, i.e. immigrants to Hungary, therefore their connections to the motherland are closer and more functional.

There are also differences in how the majority society sees these diaspora groups. Hungarian culture generally is unknown to the majority society of Latin American countries. This is because Hungarians number less than 1% of the population in these places, and with the rare exception of the town of Jaraguá, they remain largely unnoticed. Hungarian majority society, however, is aware of the main cultural traits of Latin America (even if it might have a superficial and exotic view of these distant countries), and Hungarians are usually interested in meeting people or seeing cultural events stemming from that part of the world. Latin Americans, therefore, have it easier when it comes to cultural representation towards the majority society.

As a consequence, ‘external’ diaspora events are more appealing in the case of Latin Americans in Hungary, whose Inti Raymi festival is more ‘exotic’ to locals than Hungarian events in Latin America. Nonetheless, in the case of Jaraguá, there is a general multicultural setting where several ethno-cultural groups coexist. In such a context, being Hungarian (expressed through music, dance and, most importantly, food) enables members of the (ethnic) community to be proud members of the (multicultural) local community. In both cases, the majority society is receptive and willing to learn more about the diaspora culture.

‘Internal’ diaspora events also facilitate a sort of cultural exchange, yet on a lesser scale and in a person-to-person manner. Inevitably, diaspora communities are hybridised through mixed marriages, intercultural friendships, and different ways of interaction between immigrants and locals. ‘Internal’ events, such as the Hungarian lunch in Caracas or the Copa América in Üröm, forge the ‘core’ of the community and create linkages to ‘satellite’ circles of spouses, friends, colleagues, and other people from the majority society who get involved because of their personal relationship with a diaspora member. These sorts of micro-level interactions, while not as visible as the ‘external’ diaspora events, provide valuable spaces for intercultural experiences.

All four cases described here provide an opportunity for diaspora members and majority society members to enhance their knowledge about each other. By doing so, they contribute to strengthening the cultural ties between Hungary and Latin America.

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This book is the fruit of the conference *Latin America and Hungary – Cultural Ties*, held in Budapest. The 14 essays in this volume – written partly in English and partly in Spanish– range from the 19th to the beginning of the 21st century, and follow the movement of people and ideas across the Atlantic, from Hungary to Latin America and vice-versa. Of course, ideas do not travel alone; the human mind is necessary to create, transform and apply them. Encompassing a wide range of arts, migration movements and individuals, the book is meant as a resource for cultural diplomacy.

Este libro es el resultado de la conferencia *América Latina y Hungría – Contactos culturales*, celebrada en Budapest. Los 14 ensayos del volumen –elaborados algunos en inglés y otros en español– van desde el siglo XIX hasta principios del XXI, y examinan el movimiento de personas e ideas a través del Atlántico, en este caso de Hungría hacia América Latina, y viceversa. Naturalmente, las ideas no viajan solas; la mente humana es la que las forma, las transforma y las aplica. El libro abarca una amplia gama de artes, personajes y movimientos migratorios, y pretende con ello ser un recurso para la diplomacia cultural.

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