



Hungary and Transylvania in Women's Travel Writing in the 19th Century

Borbála BÖKÖS

Partium Christian University (Oradea, Romania)

Department of English Language and Literature

bokosborbala@partium.ro

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3949-0820>

Abstract. Travel narratives written in the mid-nineteenth century served as valuable sources of information for the Western society regarding remote and exotic places as well as different cultures. Hungary and Transylvania became increasingly interesting and challenging destinations for British and American travellers, especially in the pre- and post-revolutionary periods. Julia Pardoe's *The City of the Magyar, or Hungary and Her Institutions in 1839–1840* (1840) and Nina Elizabeth Mazuchelli's memoir, *Magyarland* (1881), provided extensive accounts of a multi-ethnic Hungary, discussing various populations as being distinct from the mainstream society, as well as their folklore, history, manners, and customs. In analysing Pardoe's and Mazuchelli's memoirs, I am interested in the ways in which they portray Hungarian otherness as contrasted to Western, more precisely British national ideals. Making use of the theories of imagology, I will argue that the perceptions of a national character (hetero-images) as well as the defining of the (travellers') self against the Other (auto-images) are determined and perpetuated by cultural distinctions and by the various forms of cultural clash of the British and the East-Central European. Moreover, through a comparative approach, I will also look at the differences in the travellers' perception of the same country but in two very different historical and political time periods: Pardoe's journey in Hungary took place in 1840, before the War of Independence, while Mazuchelli visited the country in 1881, long after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise in 1867. The findings will indicate that the main features of the image of Hungarian national identity, as it is represented in the travelogues, are generated by the historical, cultural, and socio-political developments before and after the Hungarian War of Independence (1848–49).¹

Keywords: travel writing, historical time, 19th-century Hungary and Transylvania, otherness

1 This study was funded by Sapientia Foundation – Institute for Scientific Research.

1. Introduction

“Only the English go there” (Mazuchelli 1881, vol. I: 12), says the Italian “Inspettore” to Nina Elizabeth Mazuchelli and her husband upon being asked in which direction Hungary lies and whether other nations travel there frequently. One might correctly assume from this answer that Hungary in the nineteenth century seemed to be a strange, foreign place for the travellers of other nations, a *terra incognita* in East-Central Europe, a land of both exotic barbarism and civilized progress. Yet this country became one of the most favoured destinations of English travellers² throughout the century, who, very often after establishing relationships with the Hungarian elite, wrote quite passionately and positively about the Hungarian nation in their travelogues, thus raising the sympathy of Western Europe towards them. Among the most interesting travelogues, one can find Julia Pardoe’s *The City of the Magyar or Hungary and Her Institutions in 1839–1840* (1840) and Nina Elizabeth Mazuchelli’s memoir, *Magyarland* (1881).³

These texts are intriguing subjects of analysis not only because the writers visited Hungary and Transylvania in two different historical periods but also because there is a lack in the scholarship regarding their journeys in Hungary that needs to be filled. Both Pardoe, English poet and historian, and Mazuchelli, the wife of an army chaplain, were courageous explorers of exotic countries and thoroughly reported their experiences and observations, yet their accounts of Hungary and Transylvania did not raise extensive academic interest. Pardoe, for example, was the first travel writer who described Hungary’s institutions and contributed to the construction of the nineteenth-century British image of Hungary.

Pardoe travelled to Hungary in 1839, a decade before the Hungarian War of Independence (1848–49), and provided an image of a nation, of enlightened Hungarian people – members of the gentry and of the aristocratic elite – who were ready for great social and political changes as well as welcomed technical and economic progress – in short, attempted to establish good relations with England in order to ensure the future of their country. Pardoe was greatly impressed by the open-mindedness of her Hungarian friends and found that Hungary is similar to England in many aspects and that the Hungarians are receptive to many British ideas not only in terms of culture and civilization but also in terms of economy and politics. A spirit of optimism and enthusiasm pervades Pardoe’s text.

2 In a previous research (funded by Sapientia Foundation – Institute for Scientific Research), we have analysed travelogues by John Paget, Charles Loring Brace, Arthur J. Patterson, and Archibald Andrew Paton (<https://en.partium.ro/hu/kutatas/angol-es-amerikai-utazok-a-19-szazadi-magyarorszagon-es-erdelyben>).

3 This essay is part of a larger research that analyses the travelogues written by women: Julia Pardoe, Nina Elizabeth Mazuchelli, Emily Gerard, and Julia Clara Byrne (<https://en.partium.ro/hu/kutatas/angol-noi-utazok-a-19-szazadi-magyarorszagon-es-erdelyben>). Making use of the current findings, further research will explore the travelogues of Gerard and Byrne.

In the Age of Reform, members of the wealthy Hungarian elite – mostly István Széchenyi and Miklós Wesselényi – became the advocates of liberalism, of transforming Hungary from a feudal state into a modern, democratic one. The Hungarian gentry had been abroad and adopted many West European, predominantly British examples, and thus their liberal ideas became increasingly influential. The proposed political transformation did not only cherish the idea of national self-determination but also brought about numerous economic and socio-political reforms: transforming the feudal economy into a capitalistic one, regulating the Danube and the Tisza rivers, promoting railway constructions, navigation, regulating commerce and speeding up credit transactions, promoting external trade, and renewing social life through various civil associations and societies.⁴ As András Gergely and Gábor Máthé argue, “[f]rom about 1830 on, a powerful revolutionary movement started developing with the aim to transform the feudal economy into a capitalistic one, and the half-feudal, half-absolutist political system into a bourgeois-liberal one” (Gergely and Máthé 2000: 176). They also add that “it was the reform era that made it possible for Hungary to come abreast of the most advanced parts of contemporary Europe” (2000: 179).

Mazuchelli's description of the same country roughly thirty years later offers an entirely different view: while the cities and the people are portrayed in a similar manner – highlighting the contrast between urban and rural areas –, the general atmosphere of the country seems to be dominated by depression, and the population is seen as extremely backward and uncivilized. Such differences are due to various reasons: on the one hand, Mazuchelli visited the country in 1881, that is, long after the defeat of the 1848–49 War of Independence and after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise in 1867, a historical period in which, despite significant social, economic, and political development, there were still regions in the country that seemed less developed. The economic development was slower in Transylvania and in Northern Hungary after the Compromise due to the geographical limitations (mountainous regions) and problems of transportation, but one could also observe a significant development compared to earlier periods, for example, in the construction of railroads.

In the age of dualism, the post-Compromise Hungarian governments brought about the development of the bourgeois state. Dualism is often regarded as a calm and stable period in which certain progress could be observed such as the development of the railroad network, of public administration, the telegraph and banking networks, the proclamation of the freedom of industry and that of the press. As Miklós Kásler claims, “the country experienced breath-taking development in the fields of economy, culture, health care and education. The GDP grew fifteen-fold and the railway and road network tenfold. Growth in other areas

4 István Széchenyi established the Casino in Pest and organized the first horse races, thus bringing about a social life very similar to British standards.

of the economy was similar to that. Hungary produced one of the highest rates of development in Europe. One issue, however, could not be solved: the matter of the nationalities” (2017: 313). However, as László Kósa argues, the country lacked a significant manufacturing industry, and when major public works, such as regulating rivers, railway constructions were completed, many people remained without work, and for them emigration became the only possibility: “One and a half million people left the country, most of whom chose America as their destination” (Kósa 1999: 182). Mazuchelli refers to this massive emigration many times throughout her travelogue, and truthfully describes the general poverty and apathy that characterizes many of the nationalities living on the territory of Hungary. According to Miklós Kásler, based on the last authentic census made in 1910, in the second half of the nineteenth century, 54 per cent of the entire population was ethnic Hungarians. “The population was reduced by the wars in the 19th century, permanent emigration to America totalling up to one and a half million by the time of World War I, and by epidemics” (2017: 314). It is also worth mentioning that, based on the findings of József Galántai, one can observe a certain shift in the ethnic composition of Hungary in the half century of the dualistic era.

According to statistics of 1880, the proportions of Magyars in Hungary was 46.7%, while it is 54.5% in the 1910 statistics. This shift, though not without significance, did not bring about any change in the nationality composition of Hungary. This shift was motivated by several factors: the growth of the Magyar population was slightly higher than that of the nationalities, and emigration on the side of the nationalities was also more significant at the turning of the century. (Galántai 1993: 184)

Mazuchelli also provides a somewhat similar number when she mentions that the Magyar language is spoken by 40 per cent of the entire population (vol. II. 1881: 253).

On the other hand, the differences between the two travelogues might also be due to the fact that Pardoe did not travel beyond the eastern borders of Hungary – as Judit Kádár mentions, Budapest “can be regarded as Ms. Pardoe’s base of operation” (1990: 223) –, while Mazuchelli’s journey consisted of mostly travels in Transylvania, and a considerable part of her text is dedicated to the detailed description of the various ethnic groups living there. In Mazuchelli’s text, one can also observe a striking difference between more and less developed places, that is, between cities and villages. Moreover, while Pardoe’s text prefers to employ mostly the viewpoint of the Hungarian elite, the members of the gentry being her friends and guides, and she rarely talks to the common people, Elisabeth Mazuchelli actually engages in conversations with the members of the various ethnic groups, local communities, and lower-class people. Thus, Mazuchelli’s

narrative contains the perspective of the average people on various issues (politics, economy, etc.), as well as local stories, legends, customs, and lots of adventurous incidents. We see her entering the house of a Romanian priest, sketching the Slovaks, talking to a Gypsy girl, engaging into a quarrel with an Austrian officer, and so on, thus providing first-hand experiences and information.

2. Cultural shocks, auto- and heterostereotypes

The images of Magyars and other ethnic groups living in Hungary and Transylvania as depicted by the two women travellers reflect the conflict between the readiness to apply well-established stereotypes and preconceived notions about the visited nations and the urge to offer a somewhat objective perspective and empirical data for informative purposes. In both texts, English standards are constantly juxtaposed with the strange, foreign customs of the locals, often resulting in cultural shock and the affirmation of the travellers' cultural superiority. Studies in imagology look at the origin and spread of prejudices and the various ways that contribute to the development of certain stereotypes – as Waldemar Zacharasiewicz states, the “concepts of one's own group (the autostereotype) and notions of the ‘other’ with which they are juxtaposed (the heterostereotype)” (2010: 12). According to Joep Leerssen, “[t]he nationality represented (the *spected*) is silhouetted in the perspectival context of the representing text or discourse (the *spectant*). For that reason, imagologists will have particular interest in the dynamics between those images which characterize the Other (*hetero-images*) and those which characterize one's own, domestic identity (*self-images* or *auto-images*)” (2007: 27).⁵

In the case of the two travelogues, it is safe to say that autostereotypes and heterostereotypes are constantly intertwined. Pardoe's and Mazuchelli's descriptions of the local people many times relate them back to the autostereotype of the English, more precisely, the English genteel woman (even if Pardoe and Mazuchelli were genteel only in their manners since they had a middle-class background). Such a cultural model brought about a certain style of superiority, a patronizing tone of the travelogues, as the travellers encountered supposedly inferior cultures. Susan Bassnett argues that the British models “posited their own culture as the most desirable, yet at the same time there was widespread interest in those cultures perceived as less developed, less civilized, and more primitive” (2014: xii). Therefore, the tone of superiority in the texts can be attributed to the travellers' cultural background on the one hand but also to the general travel writing conventions, that of blurring the line between novel and travel book on the

5 Leerssen also asserts that “[t]he ultimate perspective of image studies is a theory of cultural or national stereotypes, not a theory of cultural or national identity. Imagology is concerned with the *representamen*, representations as textual strategies and as discourse” (Leerssen 2007: 27).

other. Christopher Mulvey talks about a certain mythopoesis coming into play, as soon as “nations and national characteristics were described” (1990: 7). He adds that as travel literature is a form of fiction, and in the nineteenth-century travel literature the text reflected the “gentility of the writer and reader” (1990: 7), “the writer-travellers were therefore obliged to adopt a tone of voice which suggested very often that they were of higher social standing than that to which their actual incomes or birth might otherwise entitle them” (1990: 7). The genteel ideal spread quickly in several levels of English society, which, according to Mulvey, “reinforced class prejudices and assumptions even as it seemed to deny them” (1990: 10).

Although Pardoe and Mazuchelli offer a sympathetic view of Hungary and its inhabitants, they are also very critical about social and cultural progress, and many times bitterly reflect on the backwardness of the visited nation, especially when certain elements are in sharp contrast with their English standards. At the beginning of her journey, for example, Mazuchelli makes ironic statements about the laziness of Hungarians, that they do not have any sense of punctuality. “No one thinks of hurrying himself in Hungary, where everybody has plenty of time for everything [...] The traveller seems here to have been suddenly carried back to some remote period of the world’s history, everything is so heavy and so slow” (vol. I. 1881: 31–32). It is quite a cultural shock for her that neither trains nor people respect time or schedules. “[T]ime, as we have seen, being no object in this primitive country” (vol. I. 1881: 33). However, she immediately tries to find excuses for the backwardness of the country by saying that “[t]he Hungarians are a manly, brave, and chivalrous race, but lately emerged from barbarism, for the Turks held the greater part of their country in possession until a comparatively recent date” (vol. I. 1881: 21). Pardoe also complains about the ill-treatment of time, but as she begins her journey in Germany, she considers it a typically German cultural backwardness: “in Germany time is never considered, and appears to be of no value” (vol. I. 1840: 1).

Both travellers mention the problems of infrastructure and the bad condition of the roads. Pardoe admits that Hungary can actually become a great tourist attraction, but only through extraordinary reforms, as in its present state it brings about “delay, disappointment, and even danger” for the traveller who has to endure “the trials both of nerve and patience” (vol. I. 1840: 55). She adds that innovations will be difficult to carry out because “the ancient and obsolete laws of Hungary have condemned the peasant to repair the public roads and to keep up the public bridges” (vol. I. 1840: 57). She admits that the open-minded Hungarian politicians were striving to “render the Danube, the great highway of Europe [...] a magnificent mean [sic!] of opening out the treasures of their country to other nations”, but adds that they should not neglect the country roads, the by-ways, “which should equally allure strangers to its mountain wonders” (vol. I. 1840: 60).

Both travellers showed a fascination for the country and the nation, the beautiful landscapes, the curious manners, and loved the excitement of venturing

into a less developed land and observing strange cultures. Cultural shocks stemmed from the various encounters with the locals and, sometimes, from the misperception of each other's cultural standards. Pardoe's text is less focused on such cultural shocks, as she meets almost exclusively members of the nobility, and her journey does not include any visit to Transylvania. Mazuchelli, on the other hand, not only gets into conversations with the locals but is also able to reflect on concrete and detailed cultural differences. One cultural shock that she recounts occurs when she and her husband find accommodation in a fine hotel in Budapest and are eager to taste some specific Hungarian food for dinner, but the waiter, who learns that the guests are English, offers them "ros-bif" or "bif-stek", if they do not mind waiting for the dish a bit longer. Elizabeth Mazuchelli feels offended by this gesture and says:

Now, as an Englishwoman, I object to the belief commonly entertained by all foreigners that in our island habitat we live and move and have our being solely by the agency of those two sources of nutriment. [...] But here, not only in the heart of the Magyar capital, but in the seclusion of a Magyar hotel, where English persons so rarely come, to be thus reminded of our national weaknesses, and have them in a manner thrust down our throats, is more than provoking. [...] [W]e sank considerably in the waiter's estimations, for how could we be true *Ángolok* and not require our *ros-bif* and *bif-stek*! (vol. I. 1881: 127)

What this excerpt divulges is precisely the clash of auto- and heterostereotypes. Mazuchelli's irritation at what were rude manners to her showed that due to the British social codes, she did not register the fact that the waiter was, in fact, demonstrating his social refinement as much as his cultural knowledge by the gesture of offering them a British national food. Ironically, she presumed the rudeness of the Hungarian waiter, who was, according to his own standards, giving expression to a highly cultivated, civilized behaviour.

On other occasions, the cultural shock occurs due to a limited knowledge of each other's cultures and national characteristics. For Mazuchelli, the locals' knowledge of England (*Ángolország*) gives ground to funny and bizarre incidents, which are somewhat offending for her, but she is able to write about these with a pleasant and humorous style, also demonstrating the tone of British superiority in her narrative. Upon visiting a Slovak village and entering an inn, a young Slovak girl learns that they are English and says the following:

"English? Then you live in London; and is it possible that you have come all the way to see this country, where there are no fine houses and shops

and streets? What can you have come here for?” and she looked at us attentively, as though to feel quite sure we were not demented.

We did our best to convince her that although we were English we did not live in London; but in a fair green country like this. (vol. I. 1881: 189)

Later on, when visiting Transylvania and meeting the Saxons, a local resident tells her that a few years earlier another Englishman stayed there many months, and wrote a book about them. This man was named Mr Bonar, but then he never returned.

[A] happy thought occurred to him, “You live in the same country and may see him; if so tell him how he lives in our memories still.”

“We will”, I replied, thinking that as England was such a very small place we should in all probability be able to deliver the message! (vol. II. 1881: 118)

The hetero-image of the English formulated by the Slovak girl in the first scene stems not only from a limited geographical knowledge but also from the constraints of the social class to which she belongs. To her, the measure of civilization is urban life, pretty shops and streets, in short, a rich and genteel lifestyle, and, as a consequence, she could not understand the motivations of the travellers, who, leaving behind their safe and beautiful city, came here to see wild, foreign places for pleasure. The British traveller, however, interprets this question and behaviour as coming from the girl’s narrow-mindedness and limited geographical knowledge. In the second case, again, the heterostereotype triggers an autostereotype: the British mentality, that of taking pride in being an extremely civilized nation and empire that has colonized many lands, feels deeply offended by the Saxon’s remark. The remark triggered a national anxiety, that of being a little, insignificant island, an average nation among nations. Therefore, what was intended to be a simple courtesy, a kind gesture on the part of the Saxon host, brought about an unsettling experience for the British traveller.

The heterostereotype of the British, more broadly speaking of Western culture, as being more “civilized” and advanced appears many times in the travelogue, especially in the second volume, where Mazuchelli notes that she had witnessed painful scenes, as “[m]ore emigrants are starting for ‘Amurica’, that country whose streets are paved with gold” (vol. II. 1881: 246). In the age of dualism, indeed, as work opportunities were very scarce, more and more people decided to leave the country and go West, especially to the United States, the land of dreams. Mazuchelli is wondering what the reason behind so many people emigrating is and blames the Hungarian government, which does not “offer inducements to the laboring classes under these circumstances to remain in their

own country" (vol. II. 1881: 206). Although Mazuchelli does not mention the ethnic composition of those who emigrated in this period, and she generally talks about Hungarians, it is worth mentioning, however, that from the masses who emigrated a significant part was composed of different nationalities. This is why, as we have previously seen, the proportion of Hungarians in Hungary and Transylvania actually increased from 46.7% to 54.5% according to the 1910 statistics. Ferenc Glatz asserts that mass emigration started in the 1880s, and people emigrated from the less developed regions of Hungary. The most popular destination was the United States. It was not only poverty that made people leave their homeland but also a sense of adventure. Agents travelled across the country and persuaded the poor to emigrate. The emigration fever started in the Polish regions as well as in the south-western regions of the Monarchy, gradually moving towards the central areas. In Transylvania between 1880 and the First World War, approximately 170,000 people emigrated to the United States. One third of them were Hungarians, especially Szeklers (Glatz 2006: 503).⁶

Upon meeting a Hungarian gentleman who has just come back from America and has been there for ten years, Mazuchelli gets many answers to her questions regarding emigration. The man tells her that when Hungarian emigrants arrive to the United States, they do not speak the language, and, therefore, no one will employ them, so they spend all their money and starve right away. The man claims that it is the government newspapers that spread lots of lies and misinformation about the wonderful things people might find overseas, that they would become rich very quickly, come back home with lots of money, and be able to buy lands and, thus, become landowners. Referring to the Austrian government, and the ways in which they manipulate young Hungarians, this man says: "they only want to get them out of the way that they may Austrianize our country the easier by colonizing it with their own people" (vol. II. 1881: 208).

What is revealed from this discussion is the intertwining of two heterostereotypes: one of the American dream, of the more civilized and cultured West, where everyone can thrive and become rich very quickly, and the other one is the image of the wicked German, the Austrian government, the source of all Hungarians' suffering, because it deprives the Hungarian nation of its own national independence. In this case, Mazuchelli has a quite objective and detached attitude, and she does not take sides. She says: "[w]ether the above statement is correct or not, I cannot say; I only repeat exactly what we heard" (vol. II. 1881: 208).

Throughout the travelogue, one can also find several examples of autostereotypes and various episodes in which the traveller is able to reflect on her own nation with a critical eye. On another occasion, while being among Slovaks and sketching them, Mazuchelli finds herself in a group of simple Slovaks all begging

6 Translated by the author of this article.

her to sketch them and take their picture to England. She completes her task, pays everyone a drink, lets an old Slovak man kiss her hand, and thinks back home of what certain genteel ladies and members of the elite would have said could they have witnessed the previous scenes:

[T]heir voices came wafted towards us over the Alföld and Felföld, as they exclaim one to the other:

“How dreadful my dear! What vulgar people! We cannot read any more of this horrid book. Fancy fraternizing with those low-born savages the Rusniaks and Slovaks! So dirty, and common, you know, and all that sort of thing!” (vol. I. 1881: 194)

With such humorous remarks, Mazuchelli proves that she is open-minded enough to look beyond English prejudices and steps out of the perspective of the English superiority.

Another cultural shock that comes to the light, especially in Mazuchelli's travelogue, is the English traveller's perception of the religion of Hungarians and of other nations living in Hungary. She looks at “Hungary, a country peopled by many nations” (vol. I. 1881: 40), as also a place where one can find a great variety of religions (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and so on). During her journey to Hungary, Mazuchelli and her husband, being good Protestants, decide to visit a Reformed church but become very disillusioned by the experience:

The Protestant religion as represented in Magyarland is, however, of a very unattractive character. Its buildings, painfully destitute of all ornamentation, are bare and wretched. The one we visited had white washed walls; the women sat on one side of the church, the men on the other (vol. I. 1881: 109)

She compares this type of church to a Catholic one, which they visit on their way back home: “What a contrast everything presented to the ‘Reformed Church’ which we had left so bald in its surroundings! What earnestness was there in the devotion of the people! Some of whom were kneeling, with clasped hands [...] How different! how pathetic! And, above all, how sad!” (vol. I. 1881: 109). What emerges from this fragment is the appreciation of the Catholic religious culture in contrast with the Protestant one. As Marius Crişan argues that “the religious and the cultural links between the Protestants of Transylvania are frequently emphasized in 19th century British travel literature” (2011: 87), yet Mazuchelli finds the Reformed church and its religious practices dull and disappointing, thus suspending the discourse of Protestant cultural superiority as well as appraising the more intense devotion of Catholic and/or Orthodox worshippers.

Such devotion and deep religiosity appears in the second volume of the travelogue, when she visits Transylvania and observes the Romanian (Wallach) churches and people. In Grosswardein (Nagyvárad, Oradea), she observes the very different ceremonials of the Eastern Churches (Orthodox and Greek Catholic) on Good Friday. In the Greek Catholic church, “there was perfect stillness and a hush almost supernatural, and our hearts were moved by the strong faith and love which the people evinced in and for the Holy Hero of the day” (vol. II. 1881: 73).

Travelling throughout Hungary and Transylvania, observing and describing the beautiful manners and customs of the various ethnic groups, Mazuchelli many times goes against the typical British colonialist attitude and feels sad about such beautiful, old traditions fading away because of the intrusion of Western civilization. When she and her husband arrive to Pest, she mentions that travellers who expect to see the locals in national costumes might feel disappointed, as Pest is already very much similar to any Western capital city. The loss of old values, the slow but steady disappearance of the local customs are due to the expansion of the railway. According to her: “The so-called civilization of the West is likewise toning down not only the costumes, but the primitive customs of this part of Eastern Europe” (vol. I. 1881: 132). Then, in the second volume, she goes on with this idea:

The railways, extending their iron arms into the very centre of Transylvania, are gradually weaving this former terra incognita into the duller web of Western civilization, and the beautiful and graceful costumes, which so delighted us once, are day by day being absorbed and replaced by those Gallic abominations invented to conceal and render hideous the human form. [...] [T]he silent march of – in this case misnamed – “civilisation”, which threatens ere long to obliterate all the distinctive external characteristics of nations and render every country alike. (vol. II. 1881: 58–59)

This fragment not only reflects the travellers’ ability to appreciate otherness without constantly linking it to Western standards but also proves how she is able to display herself as someone capable of admitting the shortcomings of Western civilization. Moreover, this also demonstrates how she believes that diversity, rather than uniformity, would ensure the survival of national values and traditions.

3. Images of “other” groups and of “other” women

The images of Hungarians are very similar in the two travelogues, and one can observe that both Mazuchelli and Pardoe speak about them with sympathy and enthusiasm. The descriptions of the people differ based on the historical period in which the journeys took place, the visited geographical region and the social class

to which the locals belong. Both travellers are very familiar with other European cities, so they have a keen eye on everything that renders a city a truly civilized milieu. In both travelogues, the image of Budapest and its inhabitants are depicted as the most advanced ones, very close to British standards, while the regional towns and villages are seen as less civilized and their people as less refined. Pardoe, for example, writes about the capital in the following way: “Pesth is decidedly one of the most cheerful-looking cities in Europe [...] [M]any of the streets are as handsome as any in Vienna, and most of them considerably wider; [...] and the shops handsome and well fitted-up” (vol. II. 1840: 175). In Pardoe’s text, one can see a capital city that is on its way towards progress: “all so fresh, so bright, and so indicative of growing prosperity” (vol. II. 1840: 41). Mazuchelli also describes the city forty years later with words of astonishment, and mentions that one can find in the streets “a mosaic of nations” (vol. II. 1881: 247), a Babel of tongues, a real cosmopolitan city, which, in “the matter of costumes and diversity of peoples and tongues, differs little from that of other countries” (vol. II. 1881: 249).

The Hungarian character is described similarly in both travelogues although Pardoe deals more extensively with the national characteristics of the Hungarians: “The Hungarians are ardent in their love, and fervid in their hate; full of animal courage and stern endurance; capable of strong attachment, and chivalric in their ideas of right and wrong” (Pardoe, vol. II. 1840: 143). A similar description of the passionate Magyar character can be found in Mazuchelli’s text when she claims:

There is an inborn chivalry and heroism in the character of the Magyars – traits evinced not only in their past, but recent history; the same noble and dauntless spirit that dwelt in their heroes of the Middle Ages lives in them now, and there is a bold but fearless independence, a straightforwardness, and high principle that cannot fail to win the love and admiration of all who really know them. (vol. I. 1881: 40)

Such a heterostereotype reinforces the autostereotypes, that is, the ways in which Hungarians had seen themselves for centuries: the true protectors of Europe and Christianity, men of great honour and chivalry. Moreover, it also reinforces the image of freedom-loving Hungarians, an exotic stereotype that appeared in the age of Romanticism. As László Marácz rightly observes, “the romantic image of freedom-loving Hungary was especially popular among Western liberals who saw the Hungarians as champions of national self-determination in Central and Eastern Europe against Viennese absolutism” (2007: 175).

As both travellers had observed, the country was a multi-ethnic one, where lots of ethnic groups lived together, and there were great tensions between them. Pardoe writes about the conflicts and the stereotypes between the nations in the following way:

The Slave hated the Magyar, as the smitten warrior ever loathes the strong hand that has beaten him down; the Magyar despised the Slave because he had permitted himself to be vanquished; and the German looked with contempt on both, as on savages, who could neither comprehend, nor value him. (vol. II. 1840: 267)

As a result, all these nations refused to learn each other's languages. The conflicts persisted even stronger in a later historical period, as Mazuchelli's travelogue demonstrates. When Mazuchelli visits the country, although there is a relatively peaceful period of the Dualism, the wounds after the lost War of Independence are still deep in the Hungarian mind, and the hatred towards the Germans is stronger than ever. "The Hungarians entertain a deep-rooted dislike to Germans individually as well as to everything German; and to pretend to mistake a Magyar for one of the hated race is a favourite and very effective mode of insult" (Mazuchelli vol. II. 1881: 80–81).

Both travellers compared these three nations, the Germans, the Hungarians, and the Slovaks, and dedicated lengthy descriptions to the differences between their languages, customs, physical appearance, and national characteristics. Pardoe, while describing the common people of both nations, mentions that:

The Magyar peasant is bold, warlike, and courteous; of melancholy temperament; [...] and universally proud of his nation and of the antiquity of his descent. [...] The Slavonians⁷ are [...] much poorer, but infinitely more cheerful in temperament than the Magyars; fond of music and dancing, good-humoured, totally devoid of national pride, insinuating in their manners, deceitful, and intriguing. (vol. II. 1840: 272)

Mazuchelli describes the hostility and the jealousy between the Slovaks and the Hungarians in an almost identical way, when she says that the Hungarians despise their neighbours so much that they do not even consider them human, as the Magyar call them "tót", a word signifying 'not a man at all.' 'A tót nem ember' being a favourite motto of the ancient Magyars when alluding to the Slavs" (vol. II. 1881: 316). The exact same proverb and national heterostereotype appears in Pardoe's narrative (vol. II. 1840: 273). Such quotes demonstrate that, because of the ongoing conflicts and hostilities between the various nationalities in Hungary, the hetero-images of Hungarians changed throughout the nineteenth century. In the period of the Dual Monarchy, "Western, in particular British and French, sympathy for 'liberal and constitutional Hungary' was replaced by criticism of 'Magyar Hungarians as brutal oppressors of the country's other nationalities'" (Marác 2007: 176).

7 Pardoe refers to the Slovaks here.

As much as Pardoe and Mazuchelli sympathize with the Hungarian nation, they also talk about the defects in their national characteristics. Pardoe, for example, openly claims that the “besetting sin of the Magyar is vanity. He is proud of his nation, of his liberty, of his antiquity, and above all, of his privileges. In short, he admits no superior, and scarcely an equal” (vol. II. 1840: 287). Mazuchelli also gives us a little story when she met a Magyar gentleman, who, being well aware of the deficiencies of his own nation, was able to reflect on the characteristics of his own people:

we Magyars are the proudest race living, and likewise I fear the most prejudiced. A Magyar who has not travelled beyond his own country is deeply imbued with two ideas, one being that the world was created for his express benefit, the other that his is the only language that ought to be spoken. Another characteristic trait is his dislike of all foreigners with the exception of the English, whom he condescends to regard as an enlightened and advanced people [...] Hungarians often speak of themselves as the “English of the East!” (vol. II. 1881: 192)

The differences between the nations and the heterostereotypes are also very visible in the case of Mazuchelli’s travels when she visits Transylvania. Transylvania, according to her, is “the border-land separating civilization from barbarism” (vol. II. 1881: 96). Besides offering very vivid descriptions of the Transylvanian cities, she dedicates long chapters to describing the various traditional costumes, manners, habits, and even local legends. The most extensive encounters that she recounts happen with the Saxon and the Wallach nations, and a great part of her narrative is dedicated to the images of these ethnic groups. Prejudices and stereotypes appear in the ways the two nations look at each other:

The Wallachs regard their “Saxon” neighbors as a “canny folk”, prone to get rich too fast and sometimes by practices that are scarcely within the bounds of honesty; whilst the “Saxons” look down upon their Wallach brethren as idle, thriftless loons, possessing lax notions as to the respective merits of meum and tuum, and the exclusiveness of individual property. (vol. II. 1881: 126)

The cultural stereotypes are further mentioned in the part where Mazuchelli talks about the Oriental hospitality with which they are welcome wherever they go in Transylvania, and she goes on with recording the differences between the Wallachs and the Saxons not only in terms of differences in their clothing but also in their manners. “The Wallachs as they pass us lift their hats, and in their soft and melodious tongue exclaim “Bune deminiace!” (good morning) [...] ‘Saxons’ take

no notice of us whatever, and go trudging on their way in dogged silence" (vol. II. 1881: 137). The traveller admits that the courtesy of the Wallachs is very pleasing, and, as English manners require, they are always very careful to return it.

The English traveller, however, finds that the Saxons are more "industrious and prosperous," but they are "not only losing their political ascendancy but are fast dying out, and the Wallachs will soon take their place as the dominant race" (vol. II. 1881: 99). Mazuchelli describes how the heterostereotypes come alive based on each nation's cultural standards: the Saxons, for example, consider the Wallachs as inferior ("Mean, dirty, shabby, idle Wallachs!") [vol. II. 1881: 125]), and, in their eyes, the respectability of a nation is estimated by the number of "washes" they may have. "The Wallach women, therefore, muddling in their weekly wash-tub, are held in great contempt by the thrifty 'Saxon' dames, who possess clothes in their lockers they have never even worn" (vol. II. 1881: 126). Images of Wallachs (Romanians) in the nineteenth century as being lazy and indolent were "perpetuated as a cliché by foreign observers" (Deletant 2007: 224). Dennis Deletant also mentions that "[a]pathy and resignation are traits singled out in early nineteenth century accounts by foreign travelers of their contacts with Romanians" (2007: 224).

Mazuchelli sees, however, Wallach women to be very industrious, real hard workers, so the prosperity of a Wallach household is generally due to the wife's industry rather than to the husband's. Comparing Wallach and Saxon women and their households, the traveller experiences another cultural shock. Upon entering the cottage of a Wallach, she thinks that such cottages are shops meant for selling native manufacture, as "the walls were covered, not only with rows of jugs and cups, but square pieces of striped drapery likewise" (vol. II. 1881: 130). To her great astonishment, she learns that these serve merely as decorations, a strange habit she has already observed in Magyar households. "[W]hereas the 'Saxon' Hausfrau prides herself in her stock of linen, the glory of the Wallach matron, like that of her Magyar sister, consists in the number of articles of crockery she has hanging round her walls" (vol. II. 1881: 130). This, to the Englishwoman's eyes, is a very confusing habit, as she cannot understand why the Wallach women decorate their walls with such "useless [...] patches of woollen fabric" (vol. II. 1881: 130).

The Englishwoman's standard for being civilized and advanced as a nation is determined by such expectations as hard work, industry, orderliness as well as cleanliness. In both Pardoe's and Mazuchelli's travelogues, we find references to certain national characteristics as being civilized or less civilized based on someone's level of industry and cleanliness. For the English genteel woman, idleness is a sin, a true mark of a nation's backwardness, and in both travelogues we find numerous references to the laziness of either the Hungarians or other nations. Mazuchelli, for example, scorns both the Magyars and the Wallachs for their laziness. The Wallachs are very sympathetic, because of their courtesy and

hospitality, but she mentions that the men are very superstitious as they believe in “ghosts, vampires, and changelings” and spend a lot of time “inventing charms against the machinations of the Devil” (vol. II. 1881: 129). As for the Hungarians, she elsewhere mentions that she has observed a group of men working on the construction of a new railway line, but they were rather smoking instead of working, and Mazuchelli adds “we marveled that anything was ever completed in this land of slow workers. [...] These slow [...] Hungarian navvies would soon drive an English engineer absolutely mad” (vol. II. 1881: 88).

On another occasion, while travelling towards Grosswardein, she observes two scenes: once she sees a woman making brick, while her husband is just standing near her, smoking and watching her movements, “for the male Wallach is a creature who loves to take life easily” (vol. II. 1881: 67), while a little further a similar scene is visible: a local woman is working hard on the “hard, sunbaked ground of her cottage garden”, while the man is sitting on the doorstep, nursing the baby. “In this country it would seem that ‘women must’ not only ‘weep,’ but women must also work; whilst, by an inversion of the order of things, the men remain idle” (vol. II. 1881: 66). This kind of attitude was impossible to reconcile with British social patterns.

The image of the Wallach women, with all their positive features, is also strengthened by physical descriptions in the travelogue, as Mazuchelli depicts them as beautiful and graceful. “The delicate and refined features, the pouting lips, the broad, low forehead, the lithe figures of women” (vol. II. 1881: 58) fascinate the traveller. Discussing the image of Romanian women in fiction and in travel literature, Judit Pieldner argues that the beauty of Romanian women becomes an international stereotype in the nineteenth century, and the Otherness, represented by the Romanian women, is viewed with sympathy and respect and is based on an already established ethno-cultural stereotype (2011: 208). The same appreciation can be observed in Mazuchelli’s travelogue: she praises not only the beauty of the Wallach (Romanian) women but also their diligence, modesty, and endurance.

Genteel women’s view of certain nations as being idle should be seen, as Domotor argues, in the context of “Protestant European discourse on idleness” (2014: 95). In such a context, idleness was not only seen as a sin but also as an activity that stood in sharp contrast with the Christian work ethics. Therefore, “it becomes very clear why respectable British women were sometimes offended by the sight of idle people who did not seem to make the best use of their time” (Domotor 2014: 95). Much in the same fashion, the two travellers, Pardoe and Mazuchelli, provided a somewhat very similar description of another ethnic group, that of the Gypsies. The ethnographic account of the Gypsies is similar in both texts, yet in Mazuchelli’s travelogue is more detailed as she recounts many more encounters with this ethnic group throughout her journeys in Transylvania, as well. The images of the Gypsies are contradictory not only in the travelogues

but also in general. As Jean Kommers states, “at times they even shaped the prototype of ‘the stranger.’ The images oscillated between positive (romantic) ideas and negative (felonious) representations” (2007: 171). They were mostly seen as “thieves and impostors, as lazy, as immoral, and even as cannibals. As a rule, these pictures are in absolute contrast with the social and cultural ideals cherished by non-gypsies themselves” (Kommers 2007: 171). When Pardoe first encounters them, she is shocked by their appearance:

Nothing can be more wretched than their appearance – the men scantily covered by a single garment of woollen cloth; the women veiled rather than clad in rags and patches; and the children without the covering of any kind. Like the gypsies of England, Zigeuner wander over the face of the land, voluntary outcasts. (vol. I. 1840: 167)

Their nomadic lifestyle, their darker skin colour, as well as their idle, lazy behaviour shocks the English traveller. Mazuchelli also offers a similar description of this ethnic group, but she paints a more complex picture of their national characteristics and records more details about their lifestyle and customs. She enumerates different types of Gypsies: the musicians, the “sátoros czigánok” (vol. I. 1881: 53), i.e. the ones who still follow the wandering life, and the settled ones, who have become blacksmiths. She mentions that the wandering Gypsies, “sátoros czigánok”, are considered to be the most despised, “the worst specimen of the race”, while the musicians are considered to be the most respectable ones (vol. I. 1881: 63). Notwithstanding, she calls them “wild, half-savage-looking beings, with their secret language” (vol. I. 1881: 249), who cannot understand the notions of Christian religion, and, therefore are extremely difficult to integrate. In a rather judgmental tone, she adds that “these settled gypsies seem no more civilized than their wandering brethren, and possess the same sad, oppressed and down-trodden expression of countenance inseparable from their race” (vol. I. 1881: 248).

Otherness in the case of the Gypsies is thus not appreciated by the travellers but is seen as a serious social and cultural backwardness. As Domotor argues, “the work ethic and housing were thus two issues that were fundamental to the judgement and classification of other people” (2014: 95). Since the nomadic, Gypsy culture differed to a great extent from the two genteel women’s social standards, they produced a description of their way of life from a heterostereotypical point of view, always highlighting the superiority of their own class norms. Deborah Epstein Nord states that Gypsies were considered the “perennial other [...] a recurrent and apparently necessary marker of difference” (Epstein Nord 2006: 3). In describing the Gypsies, British travellers often used a certain colonial attitude, but “unlike colonial subjects [...] Gypsies were a domestic or internal other” (Epstein Nord 2006: 3) onto whom lots of cultural stereotypes were ascribed.

Such stereotyping is well visible in both travelogues, yet in Mazuchelli's case one can observe a certain tendency towards romanticizing the Gypsies. While on many occasions she considers them entirely backward, even dangerous, utterly incapable of civilized life, she still feels fascinated by and finds beauty in their wild, exotic lifestyle. In her ethnographic descriptions, she offers quite picturesque descriptions of the Gypsies, as in the case of the encounter with a Gypsy girl with a baby on her back in Transylvania. This girl was singing a specific Romanian song, a *doina*, and Mazuchelli and her husband found her voice very sweet and tender. "Like nearly all the Transylvanian and Roumanian Gypsies, she was exceedingly pretty, with small features, full lips, and large lustrous eyes" (vol. II. 1881: 143). She was carrying some baskets, which she said she would take to Hermannstadt for sale. When Mazuchelli asked her where she would sleep at night, she pointed to the woods opposite. The travellers imagined the lonely girl sleeping alone in the woods, in the darkness, but Mazuchelli immediately added the following statement:

To the free, unfettered, true-born gypsy, however, the canopy of heaven is her roof, the horizon the boundary of her habitation, the stars her companions, and grim nights itself the kind and gentle mother soothing her to sleep, for familiarity with nature has made her one with it, and it with her. (vol. II. 1881: 144)

This description is an excellent example of romanticizing a representative of an ethnic group, in which the formerly negative stereotype, that of homelessness, wandering, living as outcast, turns into a positive one, that of freedom, and living in close connection with nature. Moreover, in my reading, it reveals an attitude of admiration towards a(n Other) fellow traveller, a female adventurer, for whom, just like for Mazuchelli, travelling is a way of life, a way of expressing personal freedom, and a way of breaking free from social norms. What is revealed by this quote is the secret, Romantic wish of being on the road, of escaping society's judgmental eyes, as well as the exotic attraction towards a more primitive, more ancient, and consequently a purer, more innocent way of living.

Conclusions

Pardoe's and Mazuchelli's travelogues share one striking similarity: both travellers portrayed Hungarian otherness against Western, more precisely British national ideals. The level of civilization and progress is always and almost entirely measured against their own social and national patterns and models, thus bringing about various images that might stem from the history of colonial ways of perceiving (and misperceiving) the Other, as well as from the class background of the two genteel women travellers. While their travelogues are abundant in reciprocal "misunderstandings" and "misperceptions" whenever they encounter the shocking otherness of the Hungarians, Pardoe and Mazuchelli are also able to look at Hungary and Transylvania with an open mind, and thus, on many occasions, to move beyond the rhetoric of English cultural superiority.

References

- Bassnett, Susan. 2014. "Introduction" to *Literature of Travel and Exploration. An Encyclopedia*. Ed. Jennifer Speake. London: Routledge. xi–xv.
- Crișan, Marius-Mircea. 2011. 19th Century Oradea: The Reflections of a Multiethnic City in British Travel Literature. *Revista Română de Geografie Politică* (13(1)): 82–99.
- Deletant, Dennise. 2007. Romanians. In: Beller, Manfred & Leerssen, Joep (eds), *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey*. Leiden: Brill, 223–226.
- Domotor Ildiko. 2014. Nation, Empire and Gender: Two Genteel English Women Writing about Australia and Hungary in the Mid-Nineteenth Century. *The Journal of the European Association for Studies of Australia* (5(1)): 90–103.
- Epstein Nord, Deborah. 2006. *Gypsies and the British Imagination 1807–1930*. New York: Columbia UP.
- Galántai József. 1993. Dualistic Transformation of the Habsburg Monarchy and the Nationality Problems of Hungary. *Annales Universitatis Scientiarum de Rolando Eötvös Nominatae. Sectio Historica* (26): 177–197.
- Gergely András & Máthé Gábor. 2000. *The Hungarian State. Thousand Years in Europe*. Budapest: Korona.
- Glatz, Ferenc (ed.). 2006. *A magyarok krónikája* [The Chronicle of Hungarians]. Budapest: Helikon–Alexandra.
- Kádár Judit. 1990. Two English Authoresses on Hungary in the Early Victorian Age. *Neohelicon* (17(2)): 213–228.
- Kásler Miklós. 2017. Ethnic and Demographic Changes in Hungary's (More Than) 1100 Years Long History. *Civic Review* (13(Special Issue)): 295–325.

- Kommers, Jean. 2007. Gypsies. In: Beller, Manfred & Leerssen, Joep (eds), *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey*. Leiden: Brill, 171–174.
- Kósa, László (ed.). 1999. *A Companion to Hungarian Studies*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Leerssen, Joep. 2007. History and Method. In: Beller, Manfred & Leerssen, Joep (eds), *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey*. Leiden: Brill, 17–32.
- Marác, László. 2007. Hungarians. In: Beller, Manfred & Leerssen, Joep (eds), *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey*. Leiden: Brill, 174–176.
- Mazuchelli, Nina Elisabeth. 1881. *Magyarland: Being the Narrative of Our Travels through the Highlands and Lowlands of Hungary*. 2 vols. London: Sampson Low, Marston – Scarle and Livingston.
- Mulvey, Christopher. 1990. *Transatlantic Manners: Social Patterns in Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Travel Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Pardoe, Miss. 1840. *The City of the Magyar, or Hungary and Her Institutions in 1839–1840*. 3 vols. London: George Virtue.
- Pieldner, Judit. 2011. Román nők – magyar szemmel [Romanian Women – From a Hungarian Perspective]. In: *Tükörben. Imagológiai tanulmányok* [In the Mirror. Studies on Imagology]. Cluj-Napoca: Scientia, 205–211.
- Zacharasiewicz, Waldemar. 2010. *Imagology Revisited*. Amsterdam–New York: Rodopi.