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**On Hungarian and Transylvanian
Stereotypes in Arthur J. Patterson's
Travelogue**

Nyári Adrienn

Partiumi Keresztény Egyetem, Nagyvárad

Bölcsészettudományi Kar

Angol nyelv es irodalom, II. év

E-mail: adriennyari@yahoo.com

Témavezető:

Dr. Bökös Borbála, tanszékvezető: Partiumi Keresztény Egyetem, Nagyvárad

E-mail: bokosborbala@yahoo.com

Arthur J. Patterson was born in London, 1835. He became a student of the University of Cambridge in 1855. In 1862 he finally arrived to the country which piqued his attention from his early childhood: Hungary. His first time here lasted for five months, but one year later he made a large trip in Transylvania, and in 1865 he returned to Hungary, stopping by at Pest, Debrecen, and Győr. Due to his passionate interest towards Hungary, he learnt the Hungarian language at such a high level that in a short period he managed to translate books from Hungarian into English and vice versa. With courage, passion, and seeking for adventure, he did research in Hungarian history, politics, and social matters. Through his travels, he managed to acquire great and long-lasting friendships. His life ended in 1899.

With courage and previous knowledge that dated from his early childhood, Patterson started his journey enthusiastically examining the politics, ethnic groups, religion, and everyday life of Hungarians, by assailing and inquiring information from locals. His travelogue reveals several facts from everyday events and real life stories that he was told during his travels in Hungary and Transylvania. When the Irish author, Bram Stoker first visited Transylvania, he described his view of it in his famous Gothic novel *Dracula* (1897) in the following way: “We are in Transylvania, and Transylvania is not England. Our ways are not your ways, and there shall be to you many strange things” (Stoker 31). Foreigners, such as Stoker, Patterson and others¹, not necessarily only writers, arrived to Hungary and Transylvania in the nineteenth century amazed to experience something new about the country and its people by seeing, feeling, understanding, and sensing things that were either known, unknown or, were simply rendered as misbeliefs of the Hungarians.

George Bizstray explained the definition of a traveler, being different from a regular tourist, in the following way: “A traveller is a different person: an educated lady or gentleman who savours the foreign places that she or he visits, compares experiences and learns from them” (1). Many Anglo-American travelers, similar to the ones defined by Bizstray, found a new interest in wandering around Hungary and the neighbouring countries (Romania, Slovakia, Austria, etc.) in the nineteenth century, as one can see in the case of Stoker and Patterson, as well. This paper focuses on Patterson’s travelogue, the representations of auto- and heterostereotypes, that is, the image of Hungarians in their own- and other nationalities’ eyes, as they appear in Patterson’s text.

¹ Other prominent visitors were, among others, John Paget (1808-1892), Charles Loring Brace (1826-1890), and Andrew Archibald Paton (1811-1874).

Manfred Beller summarizes in three questions what the present paper aims to provide answers for regarding Patterson's travelogue: "Are we sure that we see what we think we see? Are our opinions about other persons or peoples true? And what do we know about the way we see ourselves?" (4). The two perspectives this paper is going to examine Hungarians through are: autostereotype, which "is an adjudgement (in the sense of an opinion) that an ethnic group forms about itself" and heterostereotype, which "is more an association, a prejudice used by an ethnic group to define others" (Lighter n.p.). Eugenia Irimias's study on "Behavioural Stereotypes in Intercultural Communication" (2011) calls attention to the multifaceted perspectives that need to be taken into consideration when doing research on cultural differences:

[a]s far as culture is concerned, a special notice should be taken into account here: the same person can belong to several different cultures depending on their birthplace, nationality, ethnicity, family status, gender, age, language, education, physical condition, sexual orientation, religion, profession, place of work and its corporate culture. (168)

Irimias, at the same time, points out that "culture is the 'lens' through which you view the world. It is central to what you see, how you make sense of what you see, and how you express yourself" (168). Despite the fact that Hungarian and Transylvanian people resemble one another in many respects, contrasts can also be observed in their cultural constructions, thus they can be looked upon as representatives of different cultures. It has to be taken into consideration that a traveler's travelogue may create new-, or may even eradicate negative national stereotypes by being subjective towards people and cultures, and since Patterson mostly analyzed the Hungarians' situation according to what he heard from local citizens, a comparison of Patterson's text with other research works shall provide a more complex image of Hungarians in the nineteenth century.

László Marác discusses in a nutshell the case of Hungarians in the following way: "The Western images and stereotypes of the (Magyar) Hungarians and the Hungarian self-image oscillate between two poles: the negative variant of Hungarians as inferior, backward, plundering Asiatic, barbarian intruders in Europe and the positive variant of Hungarians heroically fighting for the defence of Christian Europe and European liberal values" (174).

Marác also adds that from the very beginning, from the kingdom of St. Stephen, Hungarians (in general) have already been “praised for heroism, bravery, stalwartness and chivalry” (175). Patterson also claimed that, before the French Revolution, “the Hungarians had cared but very little indeed for the ideas or opinions which might be entertained about them abroad” (8) and “[a]s for the rest of his neighbours, Rouman or Slav, the Magyar, in most instances, considers it derogatory to the national dignity to be placed in comparison with them” (Patterson 41).

Marác mentions in his essay that even Pope Sylvester II² defined Hungary as “the living rampart and the shield of Christian Europe”; at the same time, mainly in Transylvania, Hungarians were also called collaborators with the Turkish infidels, uncontrollable traitors and unreliable cowards, because some Transylvanian princes³ were demonized among Protestants. Then in the Romantic period, the Hungarians were known as freedom-lovers, giving the impression for the Western liberals of being the “champions of national self-determination in Central and Eastern Europe against Viennese absolutism” (Marác 175). What most of the research on this topic reveal is the evidence that the characteristics (i.e., the attitude towards other nations, ethos, and behavior) of Hungarians depend, first of all, on the contemporary political status of the country from the viewpoint of foreigners.

One can also observe such a typical foreigner’s approach in Patterson’s travelogue where he claims that everything he saw in Hungary was patriotic, and the Revolution of 1848 had its detrimental effect years later. The “worst effects” that he writes about refer, among other things, to the situation of young Hungarian boys who during the Revolution had to leave school to join the army, a private regiment called ‘honvéd’⁴. The educational life of Hungarians was also affected by the Revolution. After 1848, according to the new law, school attendance became compulsory to all Hungarians. Learning languages diligently was a marked idiosyncrasy of the Hungarians; knowing four languages was typical of those in higher level of wealth and social status, and Patterson mentions that when they mastered at

² “French head of the Roman Catholic church (999–1003), renowned for his scholarly achievements, his advances in education, and his shrewd political judgment. He was the first Frenchman to become pope.” (Lattin n.p.)

³ Such as János Szapolyai (1487-1540), István Bocskai (1557-1606), and Imre Thököly (1657- 1705).

⁴ Literally translated as “home-defence,” that is, people charged with defending the nation were appertained to such regiments.

least four languages,⁵ they might as well have learnt English as the fifth one, and if they were interested in further languages, then they tended to deal with languages they were not in direct contact with: Spanish, Turkish, and Russian, for example. This statement, of course, would not be true if exceptions were not mentioned, such as the case of a man Patterson met, who only knew one language, but had visited London, and wanted to learn English as his second language. The traveler also gives account of once meeting the wife of a “kurucz táblabíró”⁶, who said to him that “now-a-days children were treated as amusing toys,” and she also added that she regretted to have never learnt French, therefore teaching this language to her daughter was a must (Patterson 29-30).

This diligence of the Hungarians in studying languages gives to every foreign visitor the positive impression of Hungarians as being persistent and ambitious. Another interesting thing for the traveler was that many Hungarians regarded geography as a separate ‘language’ that needs to be learnt like any ordinary language, and he adds that “for many the study of languages has become an end instead of a means,” moreover, “[n]or does it discourage sciolism, like the study of Greek and Latin at our own universities, as but few students study any one modern language with sufficient severity and accuracy to get out of it all the mental discipline which it might afford” (35-36). Serving as assisting information to understand the behaviour and attitude of Hungarians, these information help the traveler see resemblance between Hungarians and the English in the way they each look upon science as a subject: “[they] do not value science for its own sake, but only for the advantages, whether personal, sectarian, or national, which may be obtained from it” (36); despite this fact, science was taught in schools.

By examining the pros and cons of the contemporary educational system, Patterson warns his readers about the educational system before 1848 being not better at all than the contemporary one; he supported his statement by the affirmation he received from many *laudator temporis acti*.⁷ This older Hungarian educational system Patterson writes about was acknowledged to be thorough, and all those young “finished men”⁸ with a diploma in their

⁵ For example, the languages that were mostly learnt by Hungarians were, among others: the Hungarian, German, Slovak, and Wallachian (Patterson 35).

⁶ Before 1848 in Hungary, the ‘táblabíró’ was a judicial assessor.

⁷ Latin for people who praise past times (www.merriam-webster.com).

⁸ Patterson’s translation of the originally Hungarian expression “bevégzett ember” which referred to graduated people.

hands were considered to be part of that social stratum, which no longer needed books because of the knowledge they acquired. Patterson agreed with the ideology of conservative eulogists: “the studies were severely prosecuted, and made unpleasant and laborious to the scholars. Such a system may have taught the better class of students subjected to it habits of diligence and industry, but could have inspired but few with a love of learning” (39-40). Thus, I argue that by giving the impression of, but not necessarily being interested in what they learn, Hungarians may seem to be very unauthentic in what they represented.

After the Revolution of 1848, Hungary changes in many aspects (political-, social-, economic structure). The attitude Hungarians take up goes through changes, as well. From being a rather optimistic nation, they become very negative, atrabilious people who keep living in-, and focusing on the past and its affairs; recalling the past as a better period of life than the contemporary situation. The political system, life circumstances, economy - everything seemed to be better before the Revolution. They become known as the nation that is melancholic, grief-stricken and who drown in sorrow as the Revolution is over. This attitude continues years later, as well.

At the time of Patterson’s travels in this region, newspapers everywhere in Hungary were discussing the changes the Revolution generated. “One part of the country,” said he,⁹ “neither knew nor cared to know what the rest of it was doing; we certainly were barbarians then” (Patterson 40), by being “rapacious, wandering, horse-riding nomads ill-placed in civilized Europe” (Marác 175) during the Revolution. The expression ‘barbarian’ is frequently used as a hetero-image signifying “uncivilized brutes, uncouth in appearance and manners” (Beller 266). Three main directions exist for the usage of this word¹⁰ out of which the one that refers to the Hungarian people is the image of being “men of the newly discovered continents ‘savages’” (Beller 268), and such an image was created by European explorers and conquerors. What Marác also added is that, according to the Germans and Habsburgs, Hungarian backwardness can be clearly felt by being lazy and arrogant (175).

⁹ An editor of a newspaper Patterson was talking with.

¹⁰ The other two allude to the classical Roman perspective where the Germanic tribes appear as uncivilized, brutal barbarians, and the religious differentiations and defamations (Palestinian Christians and other Levantine sects appear as barbarians during the first three centuries AD) (Beller 267).

Despite these negative heterostereotypes, as a positive characteristic, Patterson, a member of the Kisfaludy Society,¹¹ considered patriotism to play an important part in the development of Hungarian literature, that it “impelled many modern Hungarian authors, such as Francis Kazinczy and the elder Kisfaludy, to the pursuit of literature” (Patterson 192); nevertheless, Patterson saw the negative side effects as well, such as prioritizing spontaneity: “The greatest productions of literature and art have not been those which were produced of set purpose and to effect some external object, whether moral, political, or religious, but rather those which were the spontaneous outcome of the artist’s soul, in which art itself was its own end” (192).

What was also compelling for Patterson, and he claims that this would be interesting to every foreigner visiting Hungary, is the reading habit of foreign books that Hungarians demonstrated. “Many Magyar *littérateurs*¹² devoted themselves to gratifying the tastes or satisfying the wants of women, children, and other classes not amenable to the influences of literature of the highest kind, so that annuals and fancy bindings occupy an exceedingly visible portion of a Hungarian bookseller’s shop” (193). This serves as a positive heterostereotype shaped by Patterson, complimenting the vigor the Hungarians work with as regards to literature and humanities. He connects literature with the inner patriotic temperament he observes in Hungarians; by writing a book in Hungarian, one was considered to be a patron of Hungary, meanwhile every other citizen felt an urge to buy that book as patriotic duty. Yet, he argues whether the readers had ever read at least one quarter of the book (194). Oddly enough, even Hungarian aristocrats spoke Hungarian only out of duty or interest, so Patterson remarks that if this is the case with speaking, reading must be even worse. He writes about a Transylvanian who claims to have read, at most, three or four Hungarians books, and this was the case with the majority. After the Revolution, the literary works that originated from that period also had that negative and cheerless atmosphere that

¹¹ “A private association which devotes itself to the encouragement of Hungarian *belles lettres* (“Essays, particularly on literary and artistic criticism, written and read primarily for their aesthetic effect” www.en.oxforddictionary.com). “It is named after the younger poet of that family, Karoly or Charles. It was established in 1836 for the purpose, as M. Horvath tells us, of keeping up the standard of literary taste, and maintaining the purity of the language, which were at that time suffering from the very sudden expansion of national life. Besides encouraging the composition of original works, the Kisfaludy Society has brought out several translations from foreign languages” (Patterson 197).

¹² French for “a person who is interested in, and knowledgeable about, literature” (www.en.oxforddictionaries.com).

Hungarians demonstrated, for example the poems of Sándor Petőfi, Pál Gyulai, Mihály, Tompa, and so on.

Next to Patterson's observations, it is very important to mention the boosting phenomenon that appeared in the nineteenth century and had a great impact on the country: the anglomania. The term appeared officially at about 1750, before it got the attention of France and it means "excessive admiration of English customs" (Oxforddictionaries n.p.). László Országh's study "'Anglomania' In Hungary, 1780- 1900" gives a very detailed description of what anglomania was and how it affected Hungary. England, as a country and a culture, meant a new and unknown language, a model civilization, and governing system for the some parts of the world, especially for Eastern and Central Europe. By boosting and developing the economy, improving and creating new literature and literary works that were, moreover, translated into other languages, English culture soon roused the whole Europe's interest. Before Országh gets absorbed in details he emphasizes the fact that "two hundred years ago Hungary, a part of the vast Austrian empire, was a somewhat backward, insufficiently civilized country, under an oppressive, arch-conservative, foreign (i.e. Hapsburg) government upholding an antiquated feudal social order" (21). At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Hungarians became more and more interested in England and local newspapers started to publish news of "that happy, free country," of the poets, the people, and English culture, etc. Hungarian aristocrats¹³ took trips to England which meant that later, when they came back to Hungary, they brought home some of the English ideas and standards that they could build in the Hungarian culture: English gardens which were designed according to English patterns, agricultural improvement, and new English words appeared in Hungarian language as well (such as flannel, beefsteak, tourist, torpedo, utopia, etc.).

These innovations occurred only at the richest houses in Hungary but were noticeable even by foreign travelers. Patterson does not write about the anglophile signs but other travelers, such as John Paget (travelled in 1839 to Hungary) and Julia Pardoe (travelled in 1840 to Hungary), immediately recognized them and also the fact that a great amount of English literature was present in the Hungarian bookstores. This struck their eyes, because

¹³ For example, Brunswick, the Teleki brothers, George Festetich, Francis Széchenyi, Andrew Forray, among many others (Országh 22).

they had the possibility to read books in their own language in Hungary. Besides these improvements, Országh mentions Stephen Széchenyi's name because when he travelled to England, he came back with five technical innovations that he planned to introduce in Hungary (and so he did): rotary caps on chimneys, double doors swinging in both directions and closing automatically, rectangular oven-pans into which bread-dough is squeezed before baking to give bread a uniformly square shape, coal-gas lighting of streets and homes, and last, but not least, water closets. All these ideas came from England and were successfully implemented and used in Hungary. In the eyes of many Hungarians, Great Britain was "the perfect country," therefore, for example, the younger generation of educated class "were seized by a mild form of anglomania which manifested itself not so much in the externals of dress or wear and speech, behaviour, etc. but in an earnest endeavour to transplant something of that spirit which had made England great" (Ország 27-28). This fact serves as an autostereotype for the Hungarians and a positive heterostereotype from the perspective of travelogue-writers. Towards the end of his study, Országh concluded four main English influences in Hungary which appeared until the end of the nineteenth century: "the fógrowing influx of English loan-words, English names (Arthur, Victoria), fashion of sailor suits for middle-clas schoolboys and schoolgirls, sports and games" (34-35).

Analyzing nationalities can also be done by comparing them to each other, such as Patterson did when he went further with the examination of the 'Hungarians versus other nations,' and saw some differences in the ways Hungarians treated others. Firstly, Patterson pointed out some basic characteristics and attitudes the Hungarians revealed: "prejudice generally entertained in favour of foreigners belonging to nations acknowledged to be further advanced than themselves," and "a Hungarian may be said to despise his neighbours" (41). Towards Germans, "he [the Hungarian] reluctantly and grudgingly acknowledges his inferiority;" approaching Italians, "he is still more impressed with a sense of his own excellence," and as for every other neighboring country, the Hungarian, "in most instances, considers it derogatory to the national dignity to be placed in comparison with them" (41). As a further feature of the Hungarians, Marácz adds the following: "[t]he Hungarians' self-image has, over the centuries oscillated between the same polarities as did the Western perception. The image of Hungarians as defenders of 'Christian Europe' in the style of St. Stephen is cultivated under the humanist reign of the national king Matthias Corvinus (1443-1490), and by later Church leaders" (176). Furthermore, Patterson also studied and compared

to each other the relationships between other nations and, according to those results, he analyzed Hungarians from new perspectives: “From some reason or other the Magyar lives on better terms with his Slav and German neighbours, than these do with each other” (85), also, he acknowledged that the Hungarians consider themselves as “poetical beings,” as he further examined them from the perspective of Serb, German, and Wallach people:

The Wallachs, or Daco-Romans, are said to share the vices of bigotry, superstition, ignorance, laziness, and improvidence, with the Raizen. In two points they, at any rate, differ from them. The Hungarian despises the Wallach for his cowardice, as much as he respects the Serb for his desperate courage. On the other hand, the Wallach, so far from diminishing in numbers like the Serb, appears to gain ground, and encroach upon the Magyars and Germans with whom he comes into contact The race seems to be not only physically prolific, but to possess, in an eminent degree, the faculty of assimilating and "wallachizing" the heterogeneous elements in its midst. (87)

Gyula Csaba Kiss goes further with stating the case of the Hungarians' heterostereotype: “those Hungarian characteristics which appertain to the noble nation's inheritance chivalry, courage, love of freedom, wear of pleasure, etc. — are appealing for the Polish, but are antipathic in the eyes of Romanians and Slovaks, because they display their own plebeian nation (shepherds, countrymen) in their national self-image, despite of the Hungarians, who are the lords, the oppressive in their eyes. There is a lot of simplification and prejudice in the image of nations created by themselves and by others”¹⁴ (n.p.). Patterson once met a surgeon who belonged to the Romanian army and who told him that “there were five nations whom he hated,—the Turks, the Austrians, the Hungarians, the Poles, and the Russians: and all of them for one and the same cause, because they claimed a right to rule over his country” (315). The surgeon's views, by being a Transylvanian, bore resemblance to the views of Hungarians of Hungary, as well. To understand why that surgeon, and most probably other people, felt the same way, one must examine the autostereotypes of these nations that were mentioned by him earlier. Starting with the Turks, they have a long history of being barbarians in the eyes of other nations because of the brutal manner they gained power with. They used to emphasize their ferocious attitude of what they were proud of: “Our claws are

¹⁴ My translation.

sharper than eagle claws, we dig our nails into the flesh, grab, and never let it go until our claw is cut down” (Demeter 126). Nevertheless, Pál Fodor says that in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Turkish- Hungarian relationship became quite friendly which later on strengthened even more between them (n.p.). But Patterson’s view of them (including the opinion of Finns, as well) was “on the one hand, how little the Turks have done for humanity, and, on the other, that the Finns are a civilized, Christian, nay, Protestant people, with much more of literary originality than the Turks or even than the Magyars themselves” (164). As for the Austrians, Franz Grillparzer, Austrian writer, defined them as “open and sincere, less intellectual, perhaps, and less educated than the Germans, preferring to keep their opinions to themselves and to let other do the talking, yet with sound judgment” and what, in his judgment, separates the Austrians from the Germans of his time (1925) is: “[m]odesty, healthy common sense and true feeling” (96), therefore, his opinion serves as autostereotype.

Due to political reputation¹⁵ the Polish image appeared in being “a rustic nation of proud petty nobles with a passionate sense of honour but little practical sense” (Gerrits-Leerssen 217) and the friendship between Hungarians and the Polish was quite strong, as well. Patterson discovered resemblance in Hungary and Poland the following way: “The distinguishing feature of Hungarian history — and if I mistake not, of Polish also — is the insignificant part played by the towns of these two countries as compared with those of Western Europe” (262). As regards to the Russians, they were considered a “backward, sparsely populated realm of nobles and serfs, with little political organization and no cultural or intellectual achievement” (Naarden-Leerssen 227). What Patterson, as a traveler, observed as similarity between Hungarians and Russians is this:

The Hungarians imagine themselves to be great linguists, which they attribute to the difficulty of their own language. In like manner the Russians and the Dutch entertain similar theories respecting their own linguistic attainments. That these three nations learn foreign languages readily, and that individuals among them attain to a high degree of perfection as linguists, I am willing to admit. (176)

¹⁵ “The system of elective kingship made Poland a natural object of foreign interventionist geopolitics, and the Polish parliament (*sejm*) was so unmanageable that it became a byword for wayward unruliness [eighteenth century]” (Gerrits- Leerssen 217).

“The nations whom he [the Transylvanian surgeon mentioned earlier] regarded with favour were the French and the Italians” (Patterson 315). A popular image of the French that was told by Julius Caesar Scaliger in his *Poetices libri septem* in 1561 was “aristocratic, well-bred and hospitable, yet also changeable, fickle and profligate” (Florack 154). After the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, the image of France changes worldwide and the country appears “as a positive counter-model, enabling a critical attitude towards one’s home country” (Florack 155). As for Patterson, he admits to be amused by the French people having caricatured images of the English, his own people (8). On the subject of the Italians, Beller emphasizes the fact that their “hetero-image is determined, even nowadays, by the travel writings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” and that “the basic modality is the contrast between aesthetic beauty and immorality” (197).

Arthur J. Patterson loved Hungary, loved both the Hungarians and the Transylvanians, and enjoyed visiting these regions. He diligently learnt our Hungarian language with a strong want of conformism. By acquiring information of local citizens, he helped in strengthening stereotypes—either auto- or hetero-stereotypes—as he was encountering various national groups living on the territory of Hungary and Transylvania. As for answering Manfred Beller’s questions from the beginning of the paper: we might not be sure that we see what we think we see, our opinions about other persons may not be totally true, and we definitely do not know everything about the way we see ourselves.

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