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(RE)DISCOVERING AMERICA IN BUENOS AIRES: THE CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP OF WALDO FRANK, SAMUEL GLUSBERG AND VICTORIA OCAMPO.*

*Rosalie Sitman***

TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY

Abstract:

Waldo Frank's first visit to Buenos Aires in 1929, organised by the Jewish editor Samuel Glusberg (Enrique Espinoza), was to impact greatly on the two hitherto epistolary friends, as well as on the aristocratic *salonnière* Victoria Ocampo, leading to profound changes in the Argentine intellectual field. A glance at the cultural politics practiced by these three ostensibly dissimilar 'American' figures, brought together by Frank's fateful lecture tour, will highlight the pivotal role that these cultural agents played, through the intellectual networks in which they circulated, in creating a polycentric 'American' space that transcended national, regional, and territorial paradigms and which necessarily implied the construction of a concomitant (Latin) American consciousness. The text will show how, as their individual vital projects blended into their collective cultural enterprises, the three succeeded in articulating their personal circumstance with the creation of integrated *inter-* and *intra-*American cultural spaces, where the cohesiveness of a perceived cultural identity or experiential commonalities, of aesthetic or political affinities, held more sway than barriers of nation, ethnicity or gender.

KEYWORDS: Americanism – literary reviews – intellectual networks.

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** Doctora en Historia Latinoamericana por la Universidad de Tel Aviv y MA en Modern Languages por la Universidad de Oxford, es directora de la División de Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad de Tel Aviv e investigadora en historia cultural e intelectual de América Latina en el Sverdlin Institute for Latin American History and Culture, también en la Universidad de Tel Aviv. Durante los últimos cuatro años, fue también directora del Sverdlin Institute. Adicionalmente, la Dra. Sitman es miembro del comité editorial de *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*, la revista de estudios culturales de la Universidad de Tel Aviv, la cual co-editó por varios años. Ha publicado ampliamente sobre la aplicación de nuevas tecnologías en la enseñanza del lenguaje, así como también sobre historia cultural latinoamericana. Sus publicaciones incluyen *Victoria Ocampo y Sur: entre Europa y América, Antología de la revista Sur* y en colaboración con Raanan Rein, *El primer peronismo: de regreso a los comienzos*. Actualmente ella trabaja en una biografía cultural de Samuel Glusberg. Contacto: rsitman@post.tau.ac.il

(RE)DESCUBRIENDO AMÉRICA EN BUENOS AIRES: LA GESTIÓN CULTURAL DE WALDO FRANK, SAMUEL GLUSBERG Y VICTORIA OCAMPO.

La primera visita de Waldo Frank a Buenos Aires en 1929, organizada por el editor judío Samuel Glusberg (Enrique Espinoza), tendría un gran impacto, tanto en los dos amigos epistolares como también en la aristocrática *salonnière* Victoria Ocampo, y provocaría profundos cambios en el campo intelectual argentino. Una mirada a las políticas culturales practicadas por estas tres figuras ‘americanas’, aparentemente disímiles y aunadas por la trascendental gira de conferencias de Frank, pondrá de manifiesto el papel clave desempeñado por estos agentes culturales, a través de las redes intelectuales por las que se desenvolvían, en la creación de un *espacio ‘americano’* policéntrico, por encima de paradigmas nacionales, regionales y territoriales, el cual implicaba la consiguiente construcción de una conciencia (latino)americana. El texto mostrará cómo, a medida que sus proyectos vitales se iban transformando en empresas culturales colectivas, los tres lograron articular su circunstancia personal con la integración de espacios culturales *inter-* e *intra*americanos, en los que el poder aglutinante de una identidad cultural percibida, de experiencias comunes o de afinidades estéticas y políticas, tenía más peso que barreras de nación, etnicidad o género.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Americanismo – revistas literarias – redes intelectuales

“The American chaos contains all the elements for the creation of a new world that is more complete than any world in the historic past [...] Men and women such as those I sense there are in Argentina, in Mexico, in Peru, and in the United States can capture this American chaos [...] But first they must understand that they are not alone. They have to discover themselves through communication with their brothers and sisters. They have to discover that their experiences intertwine marvelously...”

Waldo Frank pronounced these words in a lecture entitled “The Problem of Relations between the Americas,” which he delivered to a rapt audience of Friends of the Arts Association in Buenos Aires during his first visit to the Argentine republic in the fall of 1929⁴. The next morning (22 October 1929) his message of continental communality was reproduced in its entirety in *La Nación*, one of the capital’s most influential dailies, illustrating the keen

3 My translation. FRANK, Waldo. “El problema de las relaciones entre las Américas” in *Repertorio Americano* 468 (1929).

4 Concerning Frank’s first visit to Buenos Aires, see MIZRAJE, María Gabriela and María Rosa Lojo. “Waldo Frank: el hermano americano de una pasión argentina” in Hugo E. Biagini and Arturo A. Roig (eds.). *El pensamiento alternativo en la Argentina del siglo XX: identidad, utopía, integración (1930–1960)* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2005), 417–436. Also, MIZRAJE, María Gabriela. “Visita de vanguardia: Waldo Frank en Buenos Aires o el sueño literario de un judío universal” in *Sambatión. Estudios judíos desde Latinoamérica* 2 (2006): 61–80.

interest with which the local press followed the North American writer's sojourn 'south of the border'⁵.

The self-proclaimed leftist Jewish American intellectual was clearly the man of the moment, riding the wave of success that had greeted his protracted tour of first-hand experience of Spanish and Luso-America⁶. With equally successful stopovers in Chile, Bolivia, and Peru, invited by the Friends of Waldo Frank group at the behest of Peruvian Marxist intellectual José Carlos Mariátegui, Frank's southbound journey of 'discovery' would work in both directions, revealing Spanish America to him and simultaneously consolidating his reputation as possibly the most frequently read and certainly most influential 'good American' writer in Latin America during the critical 1930s and 1940s.

The warm welcome extended to Frank in literary circles and cultural institutions to the right and to the left of the political spectrum, whether in Buenos Aires, Santiago, Lima or Havana, owed much to the tireless efforts of Argentine editor and cultural promoter Samuel Glusberg, a low-key figure whose unassuming demeanour belied the dynamism and determination with which the son of Jewish immigrants from Kishiniev pursued his cultural campaigns and enterprises, propelled by an unwavering faith in the redeeming and rallying potential of (Latin) American letters. Better known by his *nom de plume* Enrique Espinoza⁷, this self-avowed non-professional Jew unabashedly used his contacts⁸, not to mention his publications – *Babel* and *La Vida Literaria*– and his publishing firm –also called B.A.B.E.L. (Biblioteca Argentina de Buenas Ediciones Literarias)– in order to engineer the visit and bring his erstwhile epistolary 'correligionario' (in the broader sense of sharing both religious and political beliefs) to the country and to

5 Frank's tour awoke interest throughout Latin America. Joaquín García Monge, the renowned Costa Rican editor, was quick to reproduce *La Nación's* piece on the front page of his *Repertorio Americano* (No. 468, 23 November 1929).

6 Such was the success of Frank's six-month lecture tour of Mexico and South America in 1929 that it prompted the publication of a volume of tribute –BENARDETE, M.J. *Waldo Frank in America Hispana* (New York: Instituto de las Españas, 1930)– including newspaper accounts of his lectures as well as appreciative essays and even poems in his honour. See FRANK, Waldo David. *Memoirs of Waldo Frank*. Edited by Alan Trachtenberg. (University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), 251. A detailed account of this trip within a broader framework of Frank's relationship with Latin America is to be found in ÓGORZALY, Michael A. *Waldo Frank, Prophet of Hispanic Regeneration* (Cranbury, NJ, London & Mississauga, Ontario: Associate University Presses, 1994), 78–83.

7 Tellingly inspired by Glusberg's admiration for the German poet Heinrich Heine and the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza. See MONTENEGRO, Ernesto. "Responso por *Babel*" in *Babel* 60 (1951): 159.

8 While he never renounced his Judaism, which was a central component of his identity, Glusberg distanced himself from official Jewish wheeling and dealing; ESPINOZA, Enrique. *Gajes del oficio* (Santiago, Chile: Ediciones Extremo Sur, n/d), 86.

the attention of Argentine and Spanish American intellectuals⁹. The crusade paid off. By the time the disaffected North American intellectual arrived in Buenos Aires, he was hailed as a great writer by an Argentine intelligentsia at once well acquainted with his critique of the materialistic orientation of contemporary American culture and favourably predisposed to his idea of a redemptive cultural community of the Americas spearheaded by a vigorous creative minority of artists and intellectuals. Reeling from the shock of the recognition uncharacteristically afforded to Spanish America by a North American visitor who not only appeared to be of a similar mindset but who also actually chose to speak to them in their own language, the Spanish American hosts were temporarily willing to suspend their traditional distrust of United States overtures and, if not overtly welcomed, at least showed themselves receptive to Frank's initiative for a North-South cultural rapprochement¹⁰.

Among the literati who echoed this sentiment was Victoria Ocampo, a woman, patrician *salonnière* and self-confessed autodidact¹¹, whose encounter with the North American thinker was to have such a profound impact on the Argentinean cultural landscape: "I met Frank after a conference about his friend Chaplin (...) Those conferences read in Spanish

9 In his autobiographical essay "Descubrimiento de Waldo Frank" (in *Trinchera*, Buenos Aires, B.A.B.E.L., 1932, 28–35), the Argentine editor describes how he became acquainted with the North American intellectual as well as the vicissitudes of the campaign he mounted in order to make possible Frank's trip to Buenos Aires. An earlier version entitled "Cómo conocí al maestro" appeared in *La Vida Literaria* in April, 1932 (No. 41, p. 63).

Glusberg's chance encounter with an item about *Our America* in *Repertorio Americano* in 1921 had led to copious correspondence and fruitful professional collaboration, not to mention a lifelong friendship between the US writer and the South American editor. While Frank himself translated Glusberg's short story "La Cruz, which appeared in *The Menorah Journal* in 1926, the latter personally oversaw the translation of *Our America* into Spanish at the same time as he methodically included a representative sample of Frank's texts in his publications – for example, "El milagro del Greco" in *Cuadernos literarios de Oriente y Occidente* (1927) and a chapter from *The Rediscovery of America* in *La Vida Literaria* (No. 5, November, 1928), culminating in a special issue of the broadsheet devoted to Frank that greeted his arrival in Buenos Aires in September of 1929 (*La Vida Literaria*, No. 14).

After overcoming many obstacles, Glusberg finally obtained the sponsorship of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Buenos Aires and of the Argentine–North American Cultural Institute that enabled him to bring the North American to Argentina. See, also, TARCUS, Horacio. *Mariátegui en la Argentina o las políticas culturales de Samuel Glusberg* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones El Cielo por Asalto, 2001), 27–35.

10 ROSTAGNO, Irene. "Waldo Frank's Crusade for Latin American Literature" in *The Americas* 46 (1989): 41–69; CHAPMAN, Arnold. "Waldo Frank in the Hispanic World: The First Phase", 632–633; CHAPMAN, Arnold. "Waldo Frank in Spanish America: Between Journeys, 1924–1929" in *Hispania* 47 (1964): 510–521; OGORZALY, Michael A. *Waldo Frank. Prophet of Hispanic Regeneration*, 79–83.

11 Three biographies of Victoria Ocampo are: MEYER, Doris. *Victoria Ocampo. Against the Wind and the Tide* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); VÁZQUEZ, María Esther. *Victoria Ocampo* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Planeta, 1991); AYERZA DE CASTILHO, Laura y Odile Felgine. *Victoria Ocampo* (Barcelona: Circe, 1993).

and translated by Mallea aroused a lot of interest. For the first time a North American spoke to us in Spanish (...) For the first time, also, a North American writer took us seriously..."¹² Indeed, Waldo took Victoria so seriously as to urge her to channel both her material, as well as her symbolic capital, towards founding what was to become one of the most durable and influential cultural enterprises that the Argentine and the realm of Spanish American letters would know in the twentieth century –the literary review *Sur*, whose emblematic arrow on the cover of each issue eloquently pointed southward, reminding readers of the locus of production, but which in reality projected northward and eastward, as it elevated Latin American literary production –throughout the continent and across the ocean– to its rightful seat at the banquet of world literature¹³.

A sweeping glance at the cultural politics of “persons and periodicals” espoused by these three ostensibly dissimilar ‘American’ movers and doers¹⁴, brought together by the North American’s fateful visit to Buenos Aires in 1929, will highlight the pivotal role that these cultural agents played, in tandem with the multisite intellectual networks through which they circulated and interacted, in creating a polycentric cultural space for intellectual dialogue and encounters that transcended national, regional, and territorial paradigms; a fluid space which propitiated and validated multidirectional –North–South, South–North, South–South– flows of ideas, discourses, texts, personal connections, cultural coalitions and interactions; an ‘American’ space which necessarily implied the construction of a concomitant (Latin) American consciousness¹⁵. This text will show

12 My translation. OCAMPO, Victoria. *Testimonios Novena Serie* (Buenos Aires: Sur, 1975), 36–37.

13 The bibliography on *Sur* is extensive. See, among others: CALOMARDE, Nancy. *Políticas y ficciones en Sur (1945–1955). Las operaciones culturales en los contextos de “peronización”* (Córdoba: Editorial Universitas, 2004); DA SILVA, Paulo Renato. *Victoria Ocampo e intelectuais de “Sur”: cultura e política na Argentina (1931–1955)* (Ph.D. Diss.: Campinas, SP, 2004); SITMAN, Rosalie. *Victoria Ocampo y SUR: entre Europa y América* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Lumiere, 2003); PASTERNAK, Nora. *SUR, una revista en la tormenta. Los años de formación. 1931–1944* (Buenos Aires: Paradiso Ediciones, 2002); HERMES VILLORDO, Oscar. *El grupo SUR. Una biografía colectiva* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Planeta, 1993); KING, John. *Sur. Estudio de la revista argentina y de su papel en el desarrollo de una cultura 1931–1970* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1989).

14 The term was used by Arnold Chapman to describe the kind of relationship that Waldo Frank forged with the Hispanic world. It is also very apt to describe the modus operandi that characterised both Glusberg and Ocampo in their entrepreneurial and cultural enterprises and endeavours. CHAPMAN, Arnold. 1961. “Waldo Frank in the Hispanic World: The First Phase” in *Hispania* 44 (1961): 633.

15 On the role and function of intellectual networks, see FERNÁNDEZ BRAVO, Álvaro and Claudio MAÍZ (eds.). *Episodios en la formación de redes culturales en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros, 2009), especially FERNÁNDEZ BRAVO, “Redes latinoamericanas en los años cuarenta: la revista *Sur* y el mundo tropical,” 113–135. Also by the same author, “Redes culturales. El latinoamericanismo y sus bordes,” VII Congreso Internacional Orbis Tertius de Teoría y Crítica Literaria, Centro de Estudios de Teoría y Crítica Literaria,

how, as their individual vital projects blended into their collective cultural enterprises, the *self*-proclaimed leftist Jewish American intellectual, the *self*-avowed non-professional Jewish immigrant turned editor, and the *self*-confessed autodidact daughter of the oligarchy cum editor succeeded in articulating their personal circumstance, their *self*-perceived difference or otherness, with the creation of integrated, *inter*- and *intra*-American cultural spaces, where the cohesiveness of a perceived cultural identity or experiential commonalities, of aesthetic or political affinities, held more sway than barriers of nation, ethnicity or gender; intellectual spaces where they could find legitimisation. As they debated, renegotiated, and constructed their idea of America, in the context of the political and cultural effervescence and ideological and aesthetic options that vied for the attention of intellectuals during the 1930s and 1940s –nationalism/cosmopolitanism; liberalism/totalitarianism; Fascism/Communism– their journey of ‘discovery of their America’ would mirror their personal quest for meaning and self-knowledge, for interpretation and discovery, that is inherent to the intellectual and existential itinerary of every human being.

1. WHAT WAS WALDO FRANK’S AMERICA?

In his memoirs, eloquently subtitled “The Boy Outside,” Waldo Frank wrote: “I have always felt like an outsider, anxious, struggling to *enter*. In my own home (...) in France (later in Spain), in the literary United States (...) in the Revolution (...) I never succeeded, and this explains the growing emphasis and importance of ‘in the cosmos’¹⁶”. It would be safe to say that Frank’s place ‘in the cosmos’ resides in the continuing interest and warm reception extended to his work by the Spanish-speaking world; only there, it seems, could he find fertile ground for his theories. Although his seminal cultural critique *Our America* (1919) was hailed as “The Manifesto of the Twenties,” its success was short-lived and his next books were dismissed by critics¹⁷. “A prophet without honor in his own country,”¹⁸ the former *Resurgent* circulated through Europe, North America and Latin America on a personal crusade to unite the Americas with cultural bonds. Inspired by an image of America as a new and promising world, he applied himself to

2010 and “Nuevas contribuciones para una teoría de las redes culturales” in *Cuadernos del Cíhla* 14 (2011): 209–215.

16 My translation. Cited in “Memoria y política en Waldo Frank,” a paper delivered by Florencia Ferreira at the II Congreso Interoceánico de Estudios Latinoamericanos, Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, Mendoza, Argentina, 11–13 September 2003.

17 NORMANN NILSEN, Helge. “The Status of Waldo Frank in American Letters” in *American Studies in Scandinavia* 12 (1980): 31.

18 GEISMAR, Maxwell. “Books and Things” in *The New York Herald Tribune* 29 May (1948): 7.

exploring, defining, and promoting what he regarded as American identity and the central tradition of American cultural life, all the while working tirelessly towards a common understanding of both Americas.

Although designed to explain the US to a French audience, *Our America* was also addressed to the author's fellow Americans, meaning the citizens that inhabited the political and geographical entity that stretched "from the Canadian Rockies to the Sierra Madre," i.e. the United States¹⁹. However, Frank's disgruntlement with the cultural conformity, the materialism and unbridled capitalism that he observed in mainstream America could hardly fail to strike a chord in a region accustomed to US interventionism and hegemonic presumption under guise of Pan-American overtures. In two articles published in Mexico City's newspaper *Excelsior*, the New York based Mexican poet José Juan Tablada celebrated both Frank's indictment of United States materialism as well as his generous praise of the Mexican people²⁰, in whose "spiritual world so true and so profound" lay the hope for a utopian future based on simpler, organic values of a pre-industrial past²¹. To Frank, Latin America represented a kind of organic society, closer to the land, with a strong sense of community and a spirituality that was missing in (North) American culture. From now on, he would turn to Spanish America for nourishment for the creativity that he felt was lacking in his native country.

Clearly, Frank's messianic New World rhetoric and theory that a totally new culture could emerge out of the Western hemisphere would resonate with his peers in Spanish America²². Many Latin American intellectuals, among them Peruvian Marxist Mariátegui, coincided with Frank's fundamental conception of a mobilized minority of creative artists and intellectuals, and rejected others' out-of-hand rejection of the United States, since this would preclude a very real chance to join forces with the enlightened elements in *Yanquilandia*:²³ "Waldo Frank, one of the new men of the North, in his studies about Our America, says things that are valid for the people of his America and of ours. The new men of Indo-Ibero-America can and must reach an understanding with the new men of Waldo Frank's America. The work of the new Ibero-American generation can and must join in solidarity with the work of the new Yankee generation. The two generations coincide. Language and race distinguish between them;

19 MILLER, Nicola. "Something else, something American...': The Idea of America in the Writings of Waldo Frank and Alfonso Reyes," unpublished paper, 5.

20 CHAPMAN, Arnold. "Waldo Frank in Spanish America: Between Journeys, 1924-1929," 512. Also ROSTAGNO, Irene. "Waldo Frank's Crusade for Latin American Literature," 44-45.

21 Cited in MILLER, Nicola. "Something else, something American...'," 5.

22 ROSTAGNO, Irene. "Waldo Frank's Crusade for Latin American Literature," 42.

23 CHAPMAN, Arnold. "Waldo Frank in Spanish America: Between Journeys, 1924-1929," 514; OGORZALY, Michael E. *Waldo Frank, Prophet of Hispanic Regeneration*, 74.

but they are linked and united by a common historical emotion²⁴". The two men, together with Glusberg in Buenos Aires, corresponded, referring to each other as brothers, until the Peruvian's death in 1930²⁵.

Frank's courtship of Latin America would see Alfonso Reyes, the eminent Mexican diplomat-writer, personally carry Frank's pioneer "Message to the Mexican Writers" across the Atlantic from Spain²⁶. Two years later, in *Virgin Spain*, his "symphonic history" of that country, Frank's salute in the dedication would extend "[to] those brother Americans whose tongues are Spanish and Portuguese, whose homes are between the Rio Grande and Tierra del Fuego, but whose America, like mine, stretches from the Arctic to the Horn²⁷". Clearly, the North American had gone too far in stretching the definition to include Canada and the United States, yet his enthusiastic endorsement of continental unity fell on receptive ears and was generally well received in Spanish America. Jewish critic Julio Fingerit, who understood very well the advantages (and disadvantages) of the perspective of being an outsider, consigned in Glusberg's *La Vida Literaria* that a Spaniard might not have been able to write such a book²⁸. Thus it was very likely Frank's mantle as an outsider -both as an American attached to an intellectual minority and as a Jew-that held the key to the North American's success in Spanish America, by setting him outside mainstream American culture while simultaneously lending credibility to his prophetic role²⁹.

24 My translation. MARIÁTEGUI, José Carlos. "El Ibero-Americanismo y el Pan-Americanismo," *Mundial* 8 May (1925). [Last accessed: 12 June 2015]. Available at:https://www.marxists.org/espanol/mariategui/oc/temas_de_nuestra_america/paginas/ibero.htm

25 The epistolary friendship among the three intellectuals is carefully documented and annotated in TARCUS, Horacio. *Mariátegui en la Argentina...* See, also, MORONI, Delfina. "Cartas entre Lima y Buenos Aires. Epistolario Mariátegui - Glusberg (1927 - 1930)," unpublished paper presented at the Fourth International CELEHIS Literature Congress, Universidad de Mar del Plata, 7-9 November 2011. [Last accessed: 13 June 2015]. Available at: <http://www.mdp.edu.ar/humanidades/letras/celehis/congreso/2011/actas/ponencias/moroni.htm>

26 The North American's overture to his Spanish-speaking peers spread quickly through the continent and was reproduced in important organs such as *Repertorio Americano* in Costa Rica, *Atenea* in Chile, and *Valoraciones* in Argentina. CHAPMAN, Arnold. "Waldo Frank in the Hispanic World: The First Phase," 633; OGORZALY, Michael E. *Waldo Frank, Prophet of Hispanic Regeneration*, 75.

27 *Ibidem*.

28 FINGERIT, Julio. "España Virgen de Waldo Frank" in *La Vida Literaria* 1 (1928): 6. The Spanish critic Guillermo de Torre, writing for *Síntesis* in Argentina, and the Chilean Raúl Silva Castro, in *Atenea*, also wrote laudatory reviews; OGORZALY, Michael E. *Waldo Frank, Prophet of Hispanic Regeneration*, 76.

29 CHAPMAN, Arnold. "Waldo Frank in the Hispanic World: The First Phase," 632; MILLER, Nicola. "'Something else, something American...'," 8.

Shortly before Frank's departure for the Argentine in 1929, his *Re-Discovery of America* appeared in New York. Well timed, it complemented *Our America* by expanding the analysis of American civilisation to include the two halves. It presented a mystic, synthesizing and inclusive vision of America as an organic 'Whole' with the potential to transform a world in crisis through the redeeming power of its new authentic cultural manifestations. It was a loud call to intellectuals to rise to the task and assume their leading role in this creative regenerative process³⁰.

During his lectures in Buenos Aires, Frank continued to expound his theory of the two potentially redemptive American "half-worlds," urging intellectuals to fulfill the promise of their spiritual heritage. Together, the two worlds –the mercantile, industrialized US and the agrarian, more spiritual Latin American nations– could forge a new culture³¹. He would elaborate this theory further in his *América Hispana: South of Us* (1930), which recorded his impressions of his journey of discovery to Spanish America –and for his own place in the world³².

As Europe descended into the chaos of fratricide and internecine conflagrations, and intellectuals everywhere were forced to choose sides between competing ideologies, Frank's redemptive Americanist message would find an echo in the two publications that had hatched in lieu of his projected *Nuestra América*: Samuel Glusberg's *Babel* and Victoria Ocampo's *Sur*. As the traditional European model lay in tatters, they would each offer a viable Americanist cultural alternative which would contribute to redefine the role of intellectuals and help shape the Latin American intellectual fields.

2. WHAT WAS SAMUEL GLUSBERG'S AMERICA?

Barely twenty, Samuel Glusberg had already become the sought-after publisher of such luminaries as Leopoldo Lugones, Horacio Quiroga, and Alfonsina Storni³³. Not bad for a young Jewish immigrant seeking upward mobility and acceptance to mainstream literary circles. By early 1929 he had

30 NORMANN NILSEN, Helge. "The Status of Waldo Frank in American Letters," 29–30; OGORZALY, Michael. E. *Waldo Frank, Prophet of Hispanic Regeneration*, 77.

31 ROSTAGNO, Irene. "Waldo Frank's Crusade for Latin American Literature," 50–51.

32 *Ibid.*, 52–53. Also, MILLER, Nicola. "'Something else, something American...'," 7.

33 For Glusberg as editor and the publishing world in Argentina, see DELGADO, Verónica y Fabio Espósito. "1920–1937. La emergencia del editor moderno" in José Luis de Diego (ed). *Editores y políticas editoriales en Argentina, 1880–2000* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2006), 59–89.; ESTRELLA GUTIÉRREZ, Fermín. *Memorias de la vida literaria* (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1966), 43; BEIGEL, Fernanda. "El editorialismo programático" in Hugo E. Biagini and Arturo Roig (eds.). *El pensamiento alternativo en la Argentina del siglo XX: identidad, utopía, integración (1900–1930)* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2004), 445–454.

replaced the monthly literary review *Babel* with *La Vida Literaria*, a broadsheet which exhibited a pronounced Americanist slant and practised a manifestly Americanist cultural policy, in the spirit of the message of continental solidarity, unity and sense of mission that Glusberg shared with Waldo Frank and José Carlos Mariátegui³⁴. The impressive roster of Latin American intellectuals included Dominican Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Mexican Alfonso Reyes, Chilean Ernesto Montenegro, Colombian Baldomero Sanín Cano and Venezuelan Mariano Picón Salas.

It is not surprising that the Jewish entrepreneur adopted the Americanist ideal that his epistolary friends promoted. Threatened by the xenophobia and rife nationalist sentiment that were fast making headway in certain right-wing sectors, with the blessing of the Argentine Church, an increasingly alienated Glusberg welcomed the alternative they offered of being part of an intellectual brotherhood that transcended national borders and barriers of ethnicity or faith. The three hatched the idea of publishing a literary journal of continental scope, which they significantly called “Nuestra América”³⁵.

After Mariátegui’s death in 1930, Glusberg willingly endorsed Frank’s suggestion of bringing the aristocratic Victoria Ocampo into the project, possibly hoping that this joint venture would gain him entrance to the elite cultural circles that she frequented. The Jewish wannabe’s aspirations were soon dashed as Ocampo took over and went on to publish *Sur* without him³⁶. Smarting from this rejection and deeply troubled by the economic, social and institutional crisis of the early 1930s, Glusberg became more radicalised and sought in the Left the place that the rightist nationalists and the liberal elite had denied him³⁷.

In 1935, eager to escape the stifling authoritarianism of ‘infamous’ post-coup Argentina, the disillusioned editor crossed the Andes to Chile, where exiled intellectuals and refugees fleeing Latin American dictatorships or persecution in Europe could find shelter in the climate of political tolerance

34 Horacio Tarcus’s studies remain the most comprehensive works to date about the Frank-Glusberg-Mariátegui triangle: TARCUS, Horacio. *Mariátegui en la Argentina...*; “Revistas, intelectuales y formaciones culturales izquierdistas en la argentina de los veinte” in *Revista Iberoamericana*, 208–209 (2004): 749–772; (ed.). *Cartas de una hermandad. Leopoldo Lugones, Horacio Quiroga, Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, Luis Franco, Samuel Glusberg* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2009); “Samuel Glusberg, entre Mariátegui y Trotsky” in *El Rodaballo* 4 (1996) and 5 (1996–7); “*Babel*, revista de arte y crítica (1921–1951)” in *Revista Lote. Mensuario de Cultura* 7 (1997): 6–9.

35 TARCUS, Horacio. *Mariátegui en la Argentina...*, 47 and “Revistas, intelectuales y formaciones culturales...”.

36 *Ibid.*, 47–56; *Ibidem*. See, also, MÉNDEZ, Jesús. “The Origins of *Sur*. Argentine’s Elite Cultural Review” in *Revista Interamericana de Bibliografía* XXXI/1 (1981); SITMAN, Rosalie. *Victoria Ocampo y Sur...*; King, John. *Sur. A Study of the Argentine Literary Journal...*

37 The editor vented his frustration and disillusionment in the pages of *La Vida Literaria* 28 (1931) as well as in his correspondence with his North American friend.

and ideological pluralism inaugurated by the rise to power of the Popular Front under Pedro Aguirre Cerda³⁸. A lifelong admiration for Trotsky, whom he had met in Mexico in 1938³⁹, led Glusberg to choose 1 May 1939 for the launch of the Chilean edition of *Babel*⁴⁰. The suggestive editorial, "Resurrection and Symbol," with its stress on continuity and survival "on both sides of the Andes," clearly reflected its director's own intellectual and existential itinerary⁴¹.

More mature than its apolitical predecessor, *Babel*-Chile would commit to the international leftist opposition, unable to stand by as intellectuals languished in jails or exile, victims of fratricidal war in Spain or persecution by repressive regimes in Hitler's Germany or Stalin's Russia⁴². In a clear statement of purpose - "free of prejudices, like good Americans, we will naturally give space to enlightening controversy, safe in the knowledge that in order to be right we need not cut off the head of our adversaries"⁴³-the editor chose to highlight the redeeming potential of the American common denominator that bound American intellectuals together and at the same time

38 Glusberg married his cousin, Catalina Talesnik, and stayed in Chile until shortly before the military coup of September 1973, when he returned to live in Buenos Aires, where he remained until his death in 1987.

The years of the Popular Front were characterised by an artistic effervescence that witnessed the rise of important literary movements such as the surrealists grouped around the *Mandrágora* magazine and the Generation of 1938. Among the refugees who arrived in Chile under the aegis of the government was Mauricio Amster, who was to become a key member of *Babel*-Chile and a lifelong friend of its director. BURGOS ARANEDA, Beatriz. "Lo Mejor de la Revista *Babel* (1939-1951). Ideario y alcance de la aventura editorial de Samuel Glusberg en Chile," unpublished M.A. Thesis, Universidad Diego Portales/ Universitat Pompeu Fabra, October (2009), 15.

39 In "Cuaderno de México," his diary for 1938, Glusberg meticulously recorded his encounter with Trotsky. He also wrote extensively about the Russian ideologue; for example, *Trotsky Escritor* and *Lenin y Trotsky*. All these originals may be consulted in the archives of the Centro de Documentación e Investigación de la Cultura de Izquierdas en Argentina (CeDInCI), in Buenos Aires. The Argentinean also became Trotsky's literary representative for Latin America; MIRANDA, Nicolás. *Contribución para una Historia del Trotskysmo Chileno (1929-1964)* (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Clase contra Clase: 2000), 31.

40 Recently, much scholarly attention in Chile has been devoted to Enrique Espinoza's *Babel*. Particularly noteworthy are the six anthological volumes, with their respective introductory studies, edited by Jaime Massardo, Pierina Ferretti and Lorena Fuentes, with the collaboration of Patricio Gutiérrez, and published by LOM Ediciones (Santiago, Chile) between 2008 and 2011. See, also, BURGOS ARANEDA, Beatriz. "Lo Mejor de la Revista *Babel*..." and HERNÁNDEZ, Sebastián. "Samuel Glusberg/Enrique Espinoza: revistas culturales y proyectos editoriales en Argentina (1921-1935)" in *Universum* 27 (2012): 211-221.

41 ESPINOZA, Enrique. "Resurrección y símbolo" in *Babel* (Chile) 1 (1939): 1-2.

42 MASSARDO, Jaime. "Los tiempos de la revista *Babel*," in *Babel. Revista de arte y crítica. Tercer Trimestre de 2008* (Santiago de Chile: LOM Ediciones, 2008), 7-31.

43 My translation. *Ibid.*, 1.

set them apart from the European model teetering on the brink of collapse under the onslaught of “barbarous” forces on the other side of the ocean.

The logo of *Babel*-Chile: “Here come together all who aspire to heaven, and construct the *Babel* where one understands the other;”⁴⁴ from Rubén Darío’s “Song to Argentina,” condensed the editor’s ideal of a cosmopolitan intellectual community, united by ideological affinities, working towards a common ideal of justice (in the Trotskyist sense) to which one could belong, irrespective of narrower categories of ethnicity, nationality, or class⁴⁵. As the network expanded at the service of an ideologically cohesive group capable of forging a new American identity, Chilean *Babel* aspired to offer “a more elevated vision of the New World,”⁴⁶ pointing both to the locus of production –from the new world– and as an expression of the collective purpose to create a new and better world, impelled by the moral imperative of “keeping alive the feeling of freedom, in the belief that man is the yardstick for everything⁴⁷”.

The tightly-knit group behind the review included Manuel Rojas and José Santos González Vera, both anarchist sympathisers of humble origins who would go on to win the national prize for literature⁴⁸. The designer was Mauricio Amster, a (Polish)-Spanish Jewish anarchist exiled in Santiago. A far cry from Ocampo’s elitist *grupo* Sur, Glusberg’s growing network now comprised intellectuals with whom the double immigrant could easily identify, in terms of ideological affinity, class, immigrant condition and attitude towards literature and the literary task⁴⁹.

Adopting an international humanist/pacifist stance, in “Defense of political independence which is equivalent to intellectual independence,”⁵⁰ *Babel*-Chile threw open its pages to anarchists and representatives of the revolutionary Left (Victor Serge, Jean-Paul Sartre, James P. Cannon) as well as to prominent intellectuals from Europe (Hanna Arendt, Thomas Mann, Stefan Zweig) and from Latin America (Reyes, Henríquez Ureña, Germán Arciniegas)⁵¹. Its bitter critique of Fascism and Stalinism led to special issues

44 My translation. *Ibid.*, 2.

45 BURGOS ARANEDA, Beatriz. “Lo Mejor de la Revista *Babel*...”, 17.

46 From *Babel* 13 (September–October 1940), this appeared as a second subtitle in the cover of the publication. *Ibid.*, 30.

47 My translation. Loose Separata in *Babel* 28 (1945).

48 González Vera in 1950 and Rojas in 1957.

49 ESPINOZA, Enrique. “El diario, la revista, el libro” in *De un lado y otro*, Santiago, Chile, Editorial Universitaria, s/f, p. 13.

50 My translation. ESPINOZA, Enrique. “*Babel* cumple diez años en Chile” in *Babel* 50 (1949): 70.

51 For example: SERGE, Victor. “El viejo (Trotsky)” in *Babel* 40 (1947): 182; SARTRE, Jean-Paul. “El fin de la esperanza” in *Babel* 56 (1950): 221; CANNON, James “Adiós a un *pioneer* socialista” in *Babel* 44 (1948): 103; ARENDT, Hanna. “Franz Kafka: una revaluación” in *Babel* 53 (1950): 11; MANN, Thomas. “La guerra como solución desesperada” in *Babel* 2 (1939): 37; ZWEIG, Stefan. “La Rebelión de Tolstoi” in *Babel* 5 (1939): 137; REYES, Alfonso. “Aduana

devoted to the Spanish people ten years after the civil war, to the death of Trotsky, the Jewish question and the situation of writers in the USSR⁵².

By the time *Babel*-Chile ceased to exist in 1951, it enjoyed widespread recognition among Chilean cultural circles, earning praise from Nobel Laureate Gabriela Mistral, herself a contributor⁵³. Evidently, "the foreigner of such intellectual quality" had succeeded in translating his double immigration experience⁵⁴, as well as his cultural enterprise - "this tower that I myself have been"⁵⁵ - into a successful collective venture of universal scope, produced by and within a Latin American context. It was a universalism born out of an exclusionary xenophobic and conservative Argentine context that engendered manifestly louder and more inclusionary Americanist overtones as *Babel* crossed the Andes, and finally burst into ecumenical internationalism in the new Chilean circumstance, in a dialectic process that mirrored the roadmap of its director's personal quest for identity.

3. WHAT WAS VICTORIA OCAMPO'S AMERICA?

The Americanist project of Victoria Ocampo's *Sur* may have been a far cry from Frank and Glusberg's original design, but it was not a dismissal of Americanism; rather, it was a redefinition, as much a product of the personal tastes and whims of its founder as of the shared aesthetic, ethical and political preferences of the group of intellectuals who comprised the 'grupo SUR'⁵⁶. Ocampo launched *Sur* in January of 1931. It was a courageous undertaking

Lingüística" in *Babel* 4 (1939): 118; HENRÍQUEZ UREÑA, Pedro. "Enrique José Varona, el maestro de Cuba" in *Babel* 50 (1949): 71; ARCINIEGAS, Germán. "Sobre los idiomas" in *Babel* 58 (1951): 52.

52 "Homenaje al Pueblo Español, A Diez Años de la Guerra Civil Española", *Babel* No. 34 (1946); "Número especial dedicado a León Trotsky", *Babel* No. 15-16 (1941); "La Cuestión Judía", *Babel* No. 26 (1945); "Situación de la Literatura en la URSS", *Babel* No. 48 (1948).

53 MISTRAL, Gabriela. "Recado sobre un mito americano: el Caleuche de Chile" in *Babel* 6 (1939): 183.

54 My translation. MISTRAL, Gabriela. *Babel* 60 (1951): n/p.

55 My translation. ESPINOZA, Enrique. *Ibid.*

56 For an interesting examination of Waldo Frank's motivation and design when suggesting to Ocampo the idea of the magazine, see ORTIZ, Mariana. "Interpretaciones sobre la revista *Sur*. Waldo Frank y John King" in *XIII Jornadas Nacionales de Investigadores en Comunicación. Itinerario de la Comunicación. ¿Una comunicación posible?* (San Luis, 2009), 6-13. A thorough analysis of *Sur*'s editorial policy and its early Americanist efforts is found in MAJSTOROVIC, Gorica. "An American Place: Victoria Ocampo's Editorial Politics, the Foundation of *Sur* and Hemispheric Alliances" in *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 9 (2005): 171-180. For an incisive study of Ocampo's relationship with the United States, see PLOTKIN, Mariano. "Aprendiendo a entender. Victoria Ocampo y su descubrimiento de los Estados Unidos" in *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* LIX (2002): 565-588.

for a woman of her time and social class, and she would continue to finance and direct the magazine and namesake publishing house during some four decades of regular publication.

Conceived as a cultural bridge between the Americas and Europe, *Sur* was cosmopolitan and firmly positioned within the liberal democratic tradition that the Argentine right-wing nationalists rejected. At the same time, and despite the criticisms leveled against it because of its refusal to turn its back to Europe, Ocampo's magazine would remain unquestionably American, on its self-declared quest for an "America of secret treasures," as Ocampo had expressed in the letter to Waldo Frank with which she opened the first issue, in recognition of the North American writer's foundational role⁵⁷. Whether building cultural bridges across oceans or searching for treasures the length and breadth of the continent, Ocampo's *Sur* remained committed to "publishing the very best," in consonance with the group's own particular conception of human existence –the essence of man being freedom and creativity (echoing Frank's own theory of personal freedom and cultural renewal). Thus, in an intellectual climate convulsed by absolute and exclusionary ideologies, *Sur* would practise an inclusionary and essentially cultural Americanism, with ethical and political overtones, sprung from an equally inclusive conception of identity, where the various components – Argentinean, American, European–co-existed and took centre stage, or retreated backstage, according to the winds and needs of the moment⁵⁸.

Sur's Americanism was, in fact, twofold: on the one hand, it is possible to distinguish a *deliberate* American praxis, exercised from the very first issue and already evident in Ocampo's dedication of the journal to "those who have come to America, those who think about America, and those who are from America";⁵⁹ on the other, a *circumstantial* and more *discursive* and full-blown Americanism elicited by Europe's descent to war and consequent shift of focus to America as a continent of salvation from the European *malaise*. Moreover, as Europe turned upon itself and shut its gates, interrupting the flow of contributions from the Old World, the need to substitute cultural imports by turning to the New World would only activate and reinforce in *Sur* an American commitment that *already* existed in practice⁶⁰.

Sur's initial Americanist direction was apparent from the inclusion of Alfonso Reyes and Pedro Henríquez Ureña in the editorial board; from the contents of the early issues, featuring essays by Reyes and Jorge Luis Borges in praise of regionalist and gauchesque literature; from the attempts

57 OCAMPO, Victoria. "Carta a Waldo Frank" in *Sur* 1 (1931): 7–18.

58 SITMAN, Rosalie. *Victoria Ocampo y Sur*.

59 OCAMPO, Victoria. "Carta a Waldo Frank", 16.

60 SITMAN, Rosalie. *Victoria Ocampo y Sur*, chapters 2, 4 and 5.

to articulate the promise of America such as Frank's "The Atlantic World," and Eduardo Mallea's "Knowledge and Expression of Argentina"⁶¹. Most importantly, throughout *Sur*'s protracted existence, the names of its contributors would showcase Ocampo's (and *Sur*'s) wide network of inter- and intra-continental contacts –Octavio Paz, Gabriela Mistral, Erskine Caldwell, Archibald MacLeish⁶².

As the war in Europe intensified, *Sur* organised a series of debates, with the participation of leading intellectuals, in order to discuss pressing political issues that were of concern to all Americans: "Inter-American Relations" was followed by "Do the Americas have a common history?", inspired by the outburst of Pan-American solidarity throughout the continent in the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941⁶³. In a special issue devoted to "The War in America," Ocampo and her group reiterated their adherence to the Allied cause, demanding intervention and enthusiastically extolling the notion of "an indivisible America [stretching] from the Behring Strait to Cape Horn"⁶⁴. *Sur*'s impassioned espousal of Pan-Americanism acquired added meaning when seen as strong criticism of the Argentine government's refusal to abandon its policy of neutrality⁶⁵.

The special issue that *Sur* devoted to Brazil is paradigmatic for several reasons⁶⁶. Fruit of the network of intellectual contacts made by *Sur*'s María Rosa Oliver during her stopovers in Brazil, on the way to her post in the Office for Inter-American Cooperation (an initiative of Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy)⁶⁷, it showed that *Sur*'s understanding of Americanism had stretched to include its Luso-speaking neighbor, underscoring the

61 REYES, Alfonso. "Un paso de América" in *Sur* 1 (1931): 149–158; BORGES, Jorge Luis. "El coronel Ascasubi" in *Sur* 1 (1931): 129–140; FRANK, Waldo. "El mundo atlántico" in *Sur* 4 (1931): 7; MALLEA, Eduardo. *Conocimiento y expresión de la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sur, 1935).

62 For an analysis of *Sur*'s intellectual networks, see FERNÁNDEZ BRAVO, Álvaro. "Redes latinoamericanas en los años cuarenta: la revista *Sur* y el mundo tropical", 113–135. *Sur* held two debates on the impact of MacLeish's controversial *The Irresponsibles*: "Comentario a 'Los irresponsables' de Archibald MacLeish", *Sur* 83 (1941): 99–126 and "Nuevas perspectivas en torno a 'Los Irresponsables', de Archibald MacLeish", *Sur* 84 (1941): 83–103.

63 "Relaciones Interamericanas" in *Sur* 72 (1940): 100–123; "¿Tienen las Américas una historia común?" in *Sur* 86 (1941): 83–103. For an overview of the various positions and conceptions of America that emerged in these debates, see PASTERNAK, Nora. "Americanismo de la Revista *Sur*", in *Cuadernos Americanos* 9 (1988): 198–209.

64 OCAMPO, Victoria. "América indivisible" in *Sur* 87 (1941): 7–9.

65 On Panamericanism from an Argentinean perspective, see the special issue of *Todo es historia* devoted to "Cien años de panamericanismo", 270 (1989).

66 "Homenaje al Brasil", *Sur* 96 (1942).

67 For a first-hand account, see OLIVER, María Rosa. *Mi fe es el hombre* (Buenos Aires, 1981).

equalizing and unifying effect of intellectual networks⁶⁸. Again, it would appear to be a show of political support for Vargas' declaration of war on the Axis, in stark contrast to Argentina's dogged neutrality⁶⁹. Likewise, *Sur's* special issue focusing on the United States in 1944, and designed to help Frank's efforts to secure Argentina's support for his country, may be interpreted in this way⁷⁰. The volumes introduced Latin Americans to Jorge Amado, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Ribeiro Couto, as well as to Mary McCarthy, E.E. Cummings, and Marianne Moore, among others. Both cases illustrate the importance of translation for constructing cosmopolitan and continental bridges, and highlight *Sur's* agency in the diffusion of literature in translation, this time from and within Latin America, and for a Latin American public, at a time when imports from Europe were interrupted⁷¹. But it would really be with Borges and his group of experimental writers (i.e., Ocampo's sister Silvina and her husband Adolfo Bioy Casares) that the "America in the making" about which Victoria had written would finally come of age in the pages of *Sur* and, from there, would travel in all directions to occupy its place, as a late arrival, yet an equal partner, at the banquet of Western civilisation⁷².

4. CONCLUSION

Waldo Frank, Samuel Glusberg, and Victoria Ocampo's successful "persons and periodicals" policies of cultural entrepreneurship empowered them to overcome their personal circumstance and translate their perceived marginality into collective cultural projects that left a deep imprint on the cultural landscape of Latin America. In that fluid American space of "difference and encounter" that they constructed, as they debated, negotiated and constructed certain idea or ideas of (Latin) America, they not only contributed to the development of a Latin American consciousness,

68 FERNÁNDEZ BRAVO, Álvaro. "Redes latinoamericanas en los años cuarenta: la revista *Sur* y el mundo tropical"; KING, John. *Sur...*, 107–110.

69 SITMAN, Rosalie. *Victoria Ocampo y Sur...*, chapter 4.

70 "La literatura de los Estados Unidos", *Sur* 113–114 (1944). Waldo Frank had returned to Argentina in 1942, under the auspices of the Office for Inter-American Cooperation, in order to garner support for the U.S. war effort. He was declared persona non grata by the Castillo government and was attacked by thugs shortly afterwards. Both Ocampo and *Sur* denounced this aggression, which they attributed to the purportedly pro-Axis government. OCAMPO, Victoria. *Testimonios Séptima Serie. 1962–1967* (Buenos Aires, 1967), 185–188 and "Postdata. Waldo Frank y *Sur*" In *Sur* 303–305 (1967): 23–36. Also, "Calendario" in *Sur* 100 (1943): 123.

71 SITMAN, Rosalie. *Victoria Ocampo y Sur...*, chapter 4.

72 *Ibidem*.

infused with new meanings, but in so doing, they (re)discovered America(s) –for themselves and to themselves, as well as for and to others– at the same time as they found their own place in the world. Yes, Americas, with an “s” but in the singular. As practitioners of this inclusive Americanism, Frank, Glusberg and Ocampo redefined the role of intellectuals, did much to promote Latin American letters, and went a long way towards redefining the concept. In this vein, I would suggest that perhaps the time is ripe for a new paradigm of a singular *Americas* as a conceptual framework to define both our object of inquiry and our field of research: *Americas Studies*, plain and simple.

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